

THINK DEEP

MIKE UDAM

THINK DEEP

- EVANGELISM
- SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS
- SPIRITUAL HEART DISEASES
- PARABLES OF JESUS

PART 1

Evangelism is the preaching of the Gospel or the practice of giving information about a particular doctrine or set of beliefs to others with the intention of converting them to the Christian Faith.

In this part, we shall dwell on evangelism and the evangelist. We shall look at several possible ways of doing evangelism and relate it to the goal of the church to win souls.

CHAPTER 1

THE EVANGELIST AND HIS EVANGELISM

*I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom: Preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears, and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, **do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.** (2 Timothy 4:1-5)*

INTRODUCTION

Think:

A man said he is a cobbler (shoe mender). A whole day went by, he did not mend any shoe. A full month went by, he did not work on any shoe. Ok, it was he who said we should call him, a *Cobbler* (shoe mender).

A man said he was a fisherman. A whole day went by, he was not found near the river, not even a stream. A full month went by, the story was the same. Ok, it was he who said we should call him a *Fisherman*.

A man said he is a Preacher. A whole day went by, he did not preach to anybody. The situation gets worse as the month draws to an end. He was too busy in the office, so he did not preach. If he is still a preacher, then maybe the name has to change.

WHO IS AN EVANGELIST?

Merriam Webster Online Dictionary defines an *Evangelist* as “a person and especially a preacher who tries to convince people to become Christian; someone who talks about something with great enthusiasm.”

Wikipedia.org sees an *Evangelist* as “a person who seeks to convert others to the Christian Faith, especially by public preaching.”

Synonyms for the term, *Evangelist* include: preacher, missionary, gospeler, proselytizer, and crusader.

Simply put, an evangelist is a preacher of God’s Word. A *Preacher* is a Christian who has decided to lead a group of Christians in a particular location to heaven. This decision is borne out of personal passion for the work of leading the erring to Christ and guiding the saved to safely land in heaven.

BASIC FUNCTIONS OF AN EVANGELIST

He must be *Willing, Able* and *Ready* to do the work. In a congregation, a preacher has three basic functions:

1. *He speaks to the world to help bring people into the kingdom.* At that instance he is called an *evangelist* or *preacher*.
2. *He speaks to the church to help train men how to live here on earth and preparing them for heaven.* At this instance, he is edifying the saint and that qualifies him to be called a *Minister* or *Preacher*.
3. *He is seen as the image maker and a worthy example for both believers and unbelievers alike within and around his place of primary assignment.* This third function makes him automatically a leader.

DEFINITION OF ROLE FOR THE EVANGELIST

Our focus here is to clinically give a summary of the roles and expectations of an evangelist within the context of a local congregation. He is to:

1. ***Preach The Word In Season and Out of Season*** (2Timothy 4:2).

It is the job that you signed with Christ to do. It is your primary assignment. How can you lead people when you don't have time to talk to them? In preaching to your congregation, you inspire, awake in them and help direct them to Christ. The church is made up of different kinds of people.

II Timothy 2:20 says:

But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour.

The job of an evangelist is to mould them to be better.

2. ***Reach Out To The Lost*** (I Corinthians 9:6).

If the church must record any meaningful growth under an evangelist's watch, then he must go out and preach the Good News to the dying world. The only time David stayed at home when kings usually went to war, he ended up dinning with the devil that sparked off a chain reaction.

II Samuel 11:1 says:

And it came to pass, after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth to battle, that David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the children of Ammon, and besieged Rabbah. But David tarried still at Jerusalem.

So, if an evangelist does not provide leadership in this area, he has failed woefully as a preacher.

3. ***Encourage Your Congregation To Serve The Lord Faithfully*** (I Timothy 4:16).

Faith comes from hearing God's Word proclaimed by men who are grounded in the Word (Romans 10:17). Show them that their service to the Lord is not in vain. I Corinthians 15:58 says:

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

4. **Arouse The Interest of Your Members in Their Quest for God's Word** (II Timothy 2:15).

Prove to them that success in life comes from painstakingly studying God's Word. Hebrews 11:6 says:

But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.

Joshua 1:8 says:

This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

5. **Check The Spiritual Temperature of Your Congregation Daily as You Pray** (I Thessalonians 5:17).

It is your duty as a preacher to speak to God about your congregation especially when you measure their spiritual temperature being abnormal.

6. **Be Quick to Hear, Keep Secrets and Speak Boldly.** James 1:19 says:

Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.

As a preacher, you will hear a lot. Develop a filter mechanism to handle all the volume of information at your disposal. You will also learn to hold information at your disposal. In speaking boldly, you must analyze the person and the time.

7. **Evolve A Leadership by Example Style in All Your Ways**(I Timothy 4:12).

Jesus began to do and to teach (Acts 1:1-2). The *doing* must come first. Your dressing, food and family must meet global best practice within the pages of the Scriptures. The preacher must be at the front at all times.

8. **Review Your Life To See If It Is Matching With Your Preaching** I Corinthians 9:27 says:

But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

CURRENT TRENDS IN EVANGELISM

Evangelism is the preaching of the Gospel or the practice of giving information about a particular doctrine or set of beliefs to others with the intention of converting them to the Christian Faith. Consequent upon this, the evangelist shall be exposed here to the latest trends in evangelism so that his evangelism space can be expanded to vast opportunities that abound in that direction.

Website Evangelism

This is a platform where both individuals and congregation can tap into and spread the Gospel to the world. If one cannot afford a full-fledged website, then one can create a blog at *wordpress.com* or *blogspot.com*. This platform will allow the owner to publish evangelistic lessons that can be tapped by both believers and unbelievers. Apart from deploying blogs, congregations can employ websites, which can be powered to be interactive in nature. World Bible School (WBS) website is interactive. Below are powerful websites that can really be of assistance to those interested in evangelizing via the Internet:

- www.bible.ca.
- www.thebible.net.
- www.christiancourier.com.
- www.gospelway.com.
- www.biblecalproof.wordpress.com.
- www.wbsleadershipforum.org
- www.evangelismportal.org

E-Mail Evangelism

This type of evangelism requires a man of God to first have a list of recipients who have email accounts and use these accounts regularly. Here the evangelist prepares powerful sermons each day and send to these recipients who in turn have a right of reply by way of questions. There is a simple way you can build your emailing list. A preacher can ask his members to request and get the email accounts of their best friends for him to speak to them on issues of salvation. He may also keep a form where all the visitors to that congregation are encouraged to fill for effective follow-up. Alternatively, he can advertise it on his social media platform.

As a practical example, I maintain an email list of over 400 persons (some preachers, leaders and even non-members) who regularly receive lessons from me and share it around the globe. This very lesson has been shared online through this medium.

Social Media Evangelism

The social media is a wide platform and I shall focus only on *Facebook*, *Twitter*, YouTube, LinkedIn, Instagram and Snapchat

Facebook

Facebook is fast becoming the major evangelistic tool capable of harnessing all Internet tools into one platform. On *Facebook*, all that one is required is to make as many friends as possible. Then preach to them on daily basis. This is achieved by posting lessons on your wall and be sure that all your friends will read them and be waiting for excellent replies as the discussion continues. On your wall you can upload pictures with powerful messages and you can as well connect to powerful brothers who post

lessons and all you need to do is share the materials and all your friends will get that message of that your friend as if you were the one posting the material. It is fun on *Facebook*.

Twitter

Twitter is another platform that can be employed for evangelism. All that is required is for one to sign up for account and desire that people follow you. Once you have followers, the sky is your starting point. Once you have a message, you can Tweet it and all your followers will be alerted. The only limitation here is the length of the words. It cannot go beyond 140 letters. So you must be a person who can compress truth and deliver it in a brief manner. But, again you can connect to a powerful Twitter evangelist and simply be re-tweet his tweets. The beauty is that all those following you will get the message.

YouTube

YouTube is a little bit on the high platform. It require a little bit of technical expertise. This platform allows evangelists to use multimedia like video to speak to their audience. All that is needed is recording a 5 minutes lesson and uploading it online. The whole world can actually view that clip and make comments.

Bulk SMS Evangelism

This is a new and beautiful platform that can be employed by faithful brethren and even congregations at large. Here, phone numbers of all visitors and even new converts are assembled and bulk SMS is bought online. The SMS service has the ability of sending one text message to over 500 persons at a go. A text message like this: *“Wake up, today is the Lord’s Day. We expect you to come and worship with us at Church of Christ, Ukpagada, Ogoja where Brother Mike Udam shall be ministering on the topic, Our God is Alive. Worship starts by 9:00 AM”* can be sent to friends of the church, new converts and visitors to come for service. It can be a powerful alert and reminder to refocus the soul of men to God.

Tract Sharing Evangelism

This is an old and beautiful method of evangelism. Just imagine all the youths in a congregation go out to share 500 tracts with just one message once every month. You cannot underrate the impact if the sharing is done well.

WHAT SHOULD THE EVANGELIST DO?

1. ***Conduct a SWOT (Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) Analysis of your congregation*** and format your congregation into groups according to their abilities. Acts 6:1-4 comes handy. Some were devoted to preaching and prayers, while others were serving tables. Those who can actually handle the Word formed into a team of *House-to-house preachers*. Those who can translate their preaching into writing can form the *Tract production unit*. Some can be used for *Hospital/prison visitation* and *Backslider restoration team*. Others can be involved in

Visitors Care Unit where visitors are received after service and their contacts or other details taken with the intent of follow-up.

Honestly, Brethren and Ministers, we have a lot of **Unused** or **Under-Used Members**. We must all work in the Vineyard of the Lord (I Corinthians 15:58).

The church through her leadership should show members where they fit in.

2. *Pick A Method of Evangelism You Want To Focus on As Your Primary Evangelism Drive for The Year Using Your Analysis.*

When your energy as a congregation is well focused with a set target, the sky is your starting point. A congregation can be involved in tract production as her main evangelism drive for a decade while not neglecting other methods of evangelism. Others can be involved in TV evangelism while others focus their attentions on Radio and Internet.

The summary here is: let your congregation be known for one MAJOR form of evangelism and do it excellently.

3. *Focus Your House-To-House Team To Produce Results.*

What is currently in place is *Touch-and-Go* without effective follow-up. For example, a congregation can choose a particular location in a town or a village and mark it out for spiritual visitation with the Word. The final goal is to set up a congregation there as a result of the work. So that year, the entire focus of the church will be to preach there until all and sundry have heard the Gospel. The *Tract Team* can be the advance team that will go and share tracts in that location. The infantry men (*House-To-House*) team shall follow with ground assaults. The preaching of congregation B on radio is giving aerial attack and CDs/DVDs is providing home personal study after the operation.

If this is done with so much with commitment, I am sure a congregation will spring up there. The congregation will continue until she sees results. Once a congregation is established, few members are left behind to nurse her to growth while the other members of the team focus on yet another location. I am convinced that if we do this purposefully, we will have results.

4. *Plan The Feeding of Those Who Were Brought In.*

This idea of teaching anything or topic a person likes is gradually telling on us as the Body of Christ. The Minister of a congregation must take a critical analysis of the membership in determining what quality of food that should be fed both at weekdays and on the Lord's Day. The church is the best training ground known (II Timothy 2:2).

Some people are starters, so they need milk, others are old so they need solid food. Therefore, first, group the members into spiritual adults and infants and then plan a quarterly programme with a theme and topics selected that are under that topic. My submission is that

the church should have a wide door of entry and a narrow door of exit. There should be effective teaching to bring them in and effective teaching to keep them safe till Christ returns.

5. ***Change of strategy.***

Any strategy that is employed but is not working should be changed after one or two reviews and evaluations.

CHALLENGES OF EVANGELISM TODAY

1. ***Battling with those who introduce and practice doctrines that are strange to the Bible.***

There is just no trace of that doctrine in any part of the Bible in its entirety. Yet, people are excited to practice them.

2. ***Battling with those who claim to be Christians, yet rely heavily on Old Covenant Practices.*** These people worship on Saturdays but cook and travel on Sabbath day contrary to the pattern of Sabbath worshippers.

3. ***Battling with those who rely on the New Covenant*** but shoplifts convenient doctrines from Old Covenant that suits them – doctrines such as Tithe and deploying of Musical Instrument in worship.

4. ***Battling with those who promote and practice a high moral code*** but deny the importance of the church and her relevance today.

5. ***Battling with those who hold the doctrine very high but are sick in their moral standing,*** yet think their doctrinal excellence will cover for their moral ineptitudes.

6. ***Battling with those who just follow and believe anything their man of God says*** and will defend them without personally investigating the contents of what are taught.

7. ***Battling with those who are just unaware of Jesus and His teachings*** but know that He is supposed to be their Saviour.

It is, indeed, a great challenge to preach under this atmosphere. One must be careful to take all these groups along in his presentations.

1. Some need to be educated with the Word as milk.
2. Some need to be fed with meat and bones.
3. Some need to be corrected of practices contrary to the Commands of the one who they claim to be serving.
4. Some need to be rebuked for misleading others into disobeying the Creator
5. Some equally need to be guided to see their nakedness and come out them.
6. Some just require to be shown the road to Heaven.

In all these, the truth must be preached in love.

Ours is not to tire - we will continue teaching them the Truth in love (Ephesians 4:15). Who knows, perhaps, one day the Gospel may open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light and from the power of the devil to God (Acts 26:18).

CONCLUSION

Evangelism is key to the success of the evangelist. Drop the title if you are not prepared to do the job described by your appendage. The world is moving fast into the Internet space, do well to catch them there.

God bless you all.

CHAPTER 2

THE PREACHER AND EVANGELISM

PREACHER'S ACTION THAT COULD IMPEDE EVANGELISM

1. **POOR LEADERSHIP SKILLS:** When a preacher lacks the leadership skills, he will not be able to move his congregation to action in the area of evangelism. For a church to grow quantitatively, the preacher must work out plans to move the church in search of the lost. He is to lead the way. Once he is not there, the church will be in trouble.
2. **POOR INTERPERSONAL SKILLS:** Most preachers lack interpersonal skills with others in their community or in their domain of primary influence. Some preachers are simply timid and don't know how to create friendship that will create a platform for evangelism which will in turn grow the church.
3. **POOR SIN MANAGEMENT SKILLS:** Some preachers simply overlook the sins of some members and this sends a wrong signal to the immediate host community who may frown at that action. The church can't grow because the church is presented in bad light by the inactions of the preacher.
4. **BAD EXAMPLE COMING FROM THE FAMILY:** The family of the preacher is the first mirror of the church in the community. Ranging from the dressing, speech and general conduct of the family within the area of primary influence is capable of destroying his influence.
5. **NO GROWTH PLAN IN FOCUS:** Some preachers simply don't have a growth plan on their table. The church is exactly as they met it and are comfortable with the status quo.

WAY FORWARD

1. All preachers must realize that the eternal destinies of the souls of the entire congregation lie in his actions and inactions.
2. He must as a matter of urgency take a refresher course in the Epistles of Paul to Titus and Timothy.
3. The preacher must honestly evaluate himself and his style of leadership quarterly and also request honest criticism of his work.
4. The church equally should evaluate the preacher constructively to see if he is meriting the name he wears.
5. It has gone beyond the title. Jesus began to do and to teach. Preacher ought to copy from Jesus.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Our pulpits today are littered with so many great men who may not realize that they are the main reasons why the church is not rapidly growing.

A preacher got his wife well beaten and the entire village came to watch the event. He was provoked and lost his temper.

He equally forgot that he sold the growth of the church to devil in that fight. Only that fight.

The reason is that the preacher and his family are expected to be of impeccable character and high moral standing. Anything short of that will destroy evangelism.

The church cannot grow above the vision of the preacher.

CHAPTER 3

PREACHING IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Advancing science and technology makes most things obsolete in a matter of years. People have come to think that everything needs to be updated and modernized including the proclamation of God's Word. Anything man makes or originates can always be improved upon. But the things of God need no revision or improvement.

I. The good news of Jesus' death, burial and resurrection (I Cor. 15:1-4), cannot be improved upon. This gospel is God's power to save sinners who believe (Rom. 1:16-17). It is a "glorious gospel" (II Cor. 4:4). It is "everlasting" (Rev. 14:6).

II. The Bible cannot be improved upon. It is "inspired of God, (and) is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work" (II Tim. 3:16-17). How can fallible, finite men improve on a work of perfection from the infinite and perfect God? Every attempt to do so has resulted in folly or disaster.

III. Sinners have the same needs today as always. All fall short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). Sin still separates men from God (Is. 59:1-2). Sin is like a tyrant that dominates and ruins the lives of all it controls (Rom. 6:16-17; 23). Man is yet unable to free himself from sin's power without divine help. Good work, human wisdom and effort are still useless to rid one of sins (Is. 59:1-2; Tit. 3:5). Works of law-keeping are of no more value now than in ancient times (Rom. 3:20). Modern man needs the same Savior that Jews and Greeks of the first century needed. With Paul we cry out, "Wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver us out of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 7:24).

IV. The plan of salvation was given "once for all" (Jude 3). The God against whom we sinned and who freely offers us salvation has set forth terms for forgiveness. Faith in his Son, repentance for the wrong done and immersion in water brings remissions of sins (Acts 2:38). No one has yet found another way to receive forgiveness. Salvation being God's gift to impart, we can only humbly meet this terms for receiving it.

V. The church of Christ needs no modernization. The blueprint of the church originated in the mind of God before the world began (Eph. 3:9-11). It was purchased by the blood of Jesus on Calvary (Acts 20:28); set up and organized by the Holy Spirit (Acts 2). The divine nature of the church makes it "a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:27). We can always improve on our personal lives and the effectiveness and zeal with which we do God's work—but the church is a work of perfection that is always marred when men try to improve it.

The above being true, men are needed who believe the Bible and teach it faithfully without addition or subtraction (Rev. 22:18-19); men who love the church and work to promote her welfare and spread

her borders; men who are set for the defense of the gospel and the Lord's holy bride (Phil. 1:16). We need men who love the souls of lost sinners and are willing to pay any price and fight any battle to bring them safely to the Savior.

We now are confronted with a generation of preachers and professors who do not subscribe to these premises. They are eager to change the faith, worship and practice of the church which Christ built. What arrogance to think that they can do a better job than the Creator of the world, the founder and Savior of the church. May all who love the Lord and His church refuse their changes and reject those who propose them.

CONCLUSION

No matter what method one employs,

1. HOUSE TO HOUSE
2. RADIO EVANGELISM
3. TV EVANGELISM
4. TEXT MESSAGE EVANGELISM
5. NIGHT CALL EVANGELISM
6. TRACT SHARING AND DISTRIBUTION EVANGELISM
7. HOSPITAL VISITATION EVANGELISM
8. PRISON VISITATION EVANGELISM
9. ORPHANAGE VISITATION EVANGELISM
10. BUS EVANGELISM
11. FACEBOOK EVANGELISM
12. EMAIL EVANGELISM
13. CORRESPONDENCE COURSE EVANGELISM
14. YAHOO MESSENGER EVANGELISM

The ultimate goal is to preach and teach the Word of God into all the world. Matthew 28:19. The best news is that God's Word shall not return unto Him void, and will accomplish what God intends for it to accomplish (Isaiah 55:11). Let all those who are qualified to preach and teach God's Word be sent into all the world by the church, and by whatever method possible, let the gospel of Christ be PREACHED! 2 Tim 2:2f; Col 1:23.

CHAPTER 4

BASIC PRINCIPLES OF EVANGELISM

Congregational responsibilities (preacher and leaders take note)

- a. Put evangelism at the front burner of your congregation.
- b. Format the church in such a way that every member has one aspect of evangelism that he/she is engaged in. NO MEMBER SHOULD BE LEFT OUT.
- c. Some can go to prisons, some to restore backsliders, others still can go door knocking. Another pool can go and share tracts. Another chunk can do hospital visitation. Again some can be writing tracts while others can share invitational leaflet. NO MEMBER SHOULD BE LEFT OUT.
- d. Each group should have leaders who should report regularly to the church leadership.
- e. We must evaluate our evangelical effort. Let us carry out a survey.
- f. We must go beyond talking to ourselves.
- g. The motive is to take the gospel to a wider audience. Rom 10:14-15
- h. One must be equipped before you can tell others.
- i. If we don't go out for evangelism how do we know if we are learning well?

Personal membership responsibilities and strategies

- a. Evaluate your audience before speaking.
- b. Don't talk above their head and below their feet.
- c. Talk with the intention to convert.
- d. Don't talk aimlessly.
- e. You may use a conversational approach but the main aim is to convert.
- f. Spend time with the person.
- g. Make him feel at home. Be a part of his activities.
- h. Ask for an appointment if that day does not work. Jesus spent some time with the Samaritan woman.
- i. Don't monopolize the conversation.
- j. Make it interactive.
- k. Don't point fingers with an air of superiority.
- l. Acknowledge a question you can't deal with at that moment. Plan a follow up.
- m. We are in a soul saving business and the devil is not happy with you at all.

The gospel must be preached and I must offer myself to be used in this direction.

CHAPTER 5

EVANGELISTIC CHRISTIAN YOUTH

A Christian youth is a Christian within the ages of 18 and 45. He worships regularly in a local congregation and loves the work of the Lord.

An evangelistic youth can best be described if we critically study the characteristics of an evangelistic youth.

1. ***He is converted into Christ.*** You must be first converted to understand and experience contact with Christ to know what it means to preach to other. So many young people are simple washed inside water. They are yet to understand what it means to be in Christ. 2Corinthians 5:17. To be converted goes beyond baptism.
2. ***He is convinced he is on the right path.*** You must know where you are going and know you are on the right path. You can't preach to someone when you are not sure of where you are going. So you must study to be sure you are on the right path first before embarking to go to talk to someone about Christ and his kingdom.
3. ***He is committed to the promotion of the gospel.*** The message of the gospel must be his first priority. Like Paul in 1Cor 9:16, it is *functus onus* i.e. main function, on him to preach the gospel. His mission is "the world must hear Christ and his Church"
4. ***He is ready to share the gospel to his world.*** He is quick to deploy methods to ensure that the gospel is preached. From his phone, tablet, laptop and office, the gospel is spoken forth. No opportunity is allowed to go unutilized.
5. ***He is quick to learn and spends time to research deep into the word to build up his faith.*** After all faith comes by hearing. Rom 10:17. 2Tim 2:15. He fits into the image of the person described by the psalmist in the very first chapter of his book.
6. ***He is polite but firm in the presentation of the word to the lost world.*** 2Tim 4:2
7. ***His lifestyle is an embodiment of evangelism.*** 2Cor 3:2. He is conscious of the fact that his lifestyle can bring souls to Christ and at the same time can scare souls away from the truth. He is careful with what he does not to destroy his influence and by extension the gospel.
8. ***His time has room for evangelism despite his crowded schedule.*** Eph 5:16
9. ***He spends time to pray to God about his evangelical exploits.***
10. ***Above all, he is armed to the teeth with a burning desire to preach the gospel to the lost world.***

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHURCH TO THE EVANGELISTIC CHRISTIAN YOUTH

1. Create an enabling environment for him to function: the congregation must be evangelism driven if they want their youths to be evangelical. An evangelistic youth is most likely a product of an evangelistic congregation.

2. Encourage him with resources to make him excel: the church ought to have a library with books, a store with tracts, DVDs, CDs and if possible an evangelism bus bought for evangelism. In short the church should have a functional evangelism department that the youth can tap anointing from.
3. Bring out the best in him: the church is the training ground while the world is the battlefield. The evangelistic youth should be deployed to go preach the gospel. Practice makes perfection.
4. Build capacity in him to develop: the church should organize training and retraining for the youths to build their capacity. Sometimes the church ought to sponsor the youths to seminars outside their domain to get exposure on the word and evangelism strategies consistent with Biblical principles.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PREACHER TO THE EVANGELISTIC CHRISTIAN YOUTH

1. Pray for him
2. Teach and coach him to meet global best standards in evangelism
3. Mentor him to greatness
4. Bring out the best in him

POINTS TO NOTE AS AN EVANGELISTIC YOUTH

1. Your lifestyle is the first message
2. Your dressing is the second message
3. Your language is your third message
4. Your peer group is your fourth message
5. Your message is the last thing that is considered.

SIMPLE EVANGELISM STRATEGIES FOR THE EVANGELISTIC CHRISTIAN

OFFICE EVANGELISM – Design a tract box and keep on your table and load it with assorted tracts. Just put a small label on the tract box; IT IS FREE, TAKE AND BE SAVED. Leave the rest to God.

OKADA EVANGELISM – Design a tract bag that will fit into the side of the tank of your bike. Load it with tracts. Give it out to each passenger you render services to. Add a smile while doing it. Leave the rest to God.

LONG DISTANCE DRIVER EVANGELISM – Get good Bible lessons on audio CDs and use it as you make progress in your journey. They will resist it at first but midway they will fall in love with it. OR keep tracts on top of your dashboard and inform your passengers that it is free. Sometimes ask one passenger to share it to everybody making that trip. Leave the rest to God

INTRA-CITY DRIVER EVANGELISM – Keep tracts on top of your dashboard and inform your passengers that it is free. Sometimes ask one passenger to share it to everybody making that trip. Leave the rest to God.

HANDSET EVANGELISM: Load your handset with audio messages on various topics and play it to the hearing of friends. Leave the rest to God.

FACEBOOK EVANGELISM: Think of a message in your heart and post it for your friends to read. But as simple as sharing a post from seasoned preacher online will do a lot. Leave the rest to God.

WHATSAPP EVANGELISM: Just copy a sound Bible based teaching from a reliable Facebook account and publish same on your WhatsApp group. Leave the rest to God.

SALARY EVANGELISM: Dedicate a small fraction of your salary each month for radio or TV evangelism. Let the love of God reach your salary.

KINDNESS EVANGELISM: Practice acts of kindness in and around your community and leave the rest to God. It speaks volume about your God and the church you worship in. God is seen in your kindness.

CLOSING THOUGHT

The best thing to happen to a young Christian is to love evangelism.

The best thing to happen to a congregation is to have evangelical youths.

The best thing to happen to a preacher is to be surrounded with young people desiring lost souls to be saved.

CHAPTER 6

A DEEP LOOK AT THE JOB

Have you ever attended a church service, and listened to a gospel preacher preach, and marvel at their ability to illustrate the Word of God?

Just as a doctor or lawyer who is adept in their profession is prepared, so is a gospel preacher prepared. It takes a lot of study, and experience to develop the skills that most of us take for granted each Sunday morning, and evening. Just as Ezra, a preacher must prepare his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, in order to teach and preach the Word of God. Ezra 7:10; Rom 2:21, 22 As David, one must delight in God's law, and meditate on it day and night. Ps 1:2 As Paul taught the Thessalonians, one must love the Word of truth. 2 Thessalonians 2:10 One must give attention to reading, searching, and learning the Word. 1 Tim 4:13; Acts 17:11; Mt 11:29. As Paul commanded a young Timothy, one must seek diligently to be approved of God, rightly dividing the Word of truth. 2 Tim 2:15.

Once a preacher has learned the Word, one must be set for the defense of the gospel. Phil 1:17 As Jude wrote, one must earnestly contend for the faith. Jude 3 One must preach in and out of season, enduring sound doctrine in faith and love, neither adding to nor taking from the oracles of God. 2 Tim 4:2, 3; 2 Tim 1:13;

1

Pet

4:11

Once a preacher is well seasoned in the Word of God, his prime motivation is to seek, and save the lost. Luke 19:10; James 5:19, 20; Proverbs 11:30. Though his knowledge and experience of the Word is vast, he will simplify the Word of God so that even a child can understand it. 1 Corinthians 2:4; 2 Corinthians 11:3; Psalms

19:7

It's not easy being a preacher. He is often mocked, despised, and scoffed. 2 Chronicles 36:16

He is often under paid, under-appreciated, and has no job security; 1 Cor 9:14; Lk 10:7

Yet he is expected to be perfect, and without sin as if he were God himself. Mt 5:48; Rom 2:21, 22

So if you have ever wondered what goes into a gospel sermon preached by a gospel preacher, you need to look no further than the Word of God. It's the source of his knowledge, it's the source of his doctrine, and it's the source of the gospel he preaches. Jn 17:17; 2 Jn 9; Gal 1:8, 9.

Alfred J Shannon (Jnr.)

CHAPTER 7

SEVEN COMMON PITFALLS OF A PREACHER

The moment a man becomes a preacher especially for a local congregation, he has landed in a very important job taking the driver seat to lead men to heaven. His job is really challenging because he is the major human resource manager of the church. He is to help balance the spiritual and physical needs of the church.

During this process, the devil has planted several landmines that can explode and destroy his career. In this lesson, we shall attempt to discuss seven (7) of those landmines capable of shipwrecking even his faith.

1. Don't go near the treasury of the church. Just have a good idea about the figure and only show interest in what belongs to you. If you can, insist on not being a signatory of the church account with the bank. The list of preachers driven away subtly from the pulpit arising from going near the treasury is alarming.

Don't go there if you desire your job.

2. Don't admire married or single sisters beyond greeting level. Inspiration for this advice is drawn from 1Tim5:2. The preacher must be very careful dealing with this group especially those unmarried. Timothy was told to handle them with all purity. The list of preachers driven away from the pulpit or rubbished in their career from the single mismanagement of this group is alarming. Some that can endure shame manage on, others leave the pulpit completely.

3. Don't allow gifts from members blind your judgment. A lot of preachers lost their grip of the congregation when they shout at any sin committed by the low class and are perceived to condone sin committed by the high class. The single conclusion is that it is the gifts that you have received that have blinded your judgment.

4. Don't allow your family stray so as to infect the quality of your preaching. You must put your family under control. 1Tim3:4 is completely applicable here. Remember, the sin of a preacher's **child** sin is always louder than the sin of a member. Your family must lead by example in all aspects. 1Tim 4:12.

5. Don't play with prayers. Talk to God regularly about the people you are leading and ask God to help you lead them well. So many people who are weak in the pulpit are weak in prayers.

6. Don't use the pulpit to settle scores. No matter what you do, your sermon must prick people. Be careful how you transfer information from the inner house talk to the pulpit. Jam 1:19.

7. Don't joke with your self-control mechanism. You need to try your best to control your anger. You will for sure be provoked by the conduct and behavior of your members. Manage them along so that Christ will manage you too. Speak boldly when necessary. Speak softly when applicable. Human

management is not an easy task. 1Tim 4:16. All preachers should have these at the back of their minds that:

1. They may not see their work being appreciated immediately.
2. The church may be unkind to you even in your take home.
3. You may be unduly criticized
4. Remain focused or fall out of line. 1Cor 9:27

It is one thing to be a preacher and another to remain a preacher.

Preach the word in season and out of season.

BASIC TENETS OF A HEAVEN FOCUSED PREACHER

1. You must preach the word in season and out of season.
2. Your life must help the message sink into the souls you preach to.
3. Your congregation must be made to see the work of the Lord as a joint venture.
4. You must run away from hidden and “small” sins. It can destroy you right in front of the master.
5. You must make evangelism a top priority in all you do. Preach whenever the opportunity shows up.
6. Make your congregation permanently focus on one or more areas of evangelism.
7. Teach your congregation to appreciate all those who share the word with them.
8. Make the environment feel you beyond the world of preaching. Let them see you as their friend.
9. Watch your family, it can make or mar your preaching. Clean it up, if it has dirt.
10. Read wide and employ a lot of close thinking examples to drive home your message.
11. Pray for those you preach to and for yourself to be bold to preach.

May souls that are lost motivate you to preach.

MY LEADERSHIP ROLE AS A PREACHER

A preacher is a Christian who has decided to lead a group of Christians in a particular location to heaven. This decision is born out of personal passion for the work of leading the erring to Christ and guiding the saved to safely land in heaven.

He must be willing, able and ready to do the work.

In a congregation, a preacher has three basic functions viz;

1. He speaks to the world to help bring people into the kingdom. At that instance he is called an evangelist or preacher.
2. He speaks to the church to help train men how to live here on earth and preparing them for heaven. At this instance, he is edifying the saint and that qualifies him to be called a minister or preacher.

3. He is seen as the image maker and a worthy example for both believer and unbeliever alike within and around his place of primary assignment. This third function makes him automatically a leader.

1Tim 4:16 Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee

Jas 5:20 Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

As a preacher,

1. Know that you are a leader.
2. You are a model.
3. You are the Public Relations Officer of the church.
4. You are the father of all.
5. You are to fashion out the quality of spiritual food the members will eat always.
6. You are to direct their focus.
7. Be ready to answer all their questions. 1Tim 3:15

Common setbacks to effective preacher leadership

1. Ego associated with preacher-elders relationship where such leadership structure exist.
2. Lording over the church with your personal opinion.
3. Poor remuneration occasioned by poor giving or complete disregard for the office of the preacher.
4. Absentee preacher status. One week here and three weeks away.
5. Personal ego

May the church be more united when I am in a position of leadership.

Mt 15:14 Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.

CHAPTER 8

THE PREACHER'S MODEL

Recently a thought came to me to do a critical assessment of the various models of preacher we have in the church here in Nigeria and technically advice congregations which type of model to go for. So on the basis of this research, the following preacher models were identified.

THE WORKING CLASS PREACHER

This model of preacher are men who have a good job in the secular world but still find time to still manage a congregation.

Advantages:

- ✓ He does not depend much on the church for his survival.
- ✓ He can even help the church when they are down financially
- ✓ He is a good model for the children to copy as they look forward to being like him and still serve God.
- ✓ He can rebuke the church and some stubborn leaders who err without it affecting his job security.

Disadvantages:

- ✗ The church becomes lazy in the area of caring for a preacher.
- ✗ He may be epileptic and can't cover much in terms of interpersonal relationship.
- ✗ He may be arrogant since he is taking care of himself at some point.

Direction: this model will be good for the rural settings of Nigeria.

THE BUSINESS MAN PREACHER

This model fits for men who are businessmen and entrepreneurs yet still desire the pulpit.

Advantages

- ✓ He does not depend much on the church for his survival.
- ✓ He can even help the church when they are down financially.
- ✓ The church can benefit from his trade or skills.
- ✓ He cannot be pushed by leadership of the church anyhow because he is stable and his income is sure.

Disadvantages

- ✗ His business may becloud him from doing his job effectively.
- ✗ He may be a bad example to punctuality.
- ✗ The church becomes lazy in the area of caring for a preacher.
- ✗ He may be arrogant since he is taking care of himself at some point.

Direction: this model will be good for the semi urban settings of Nigeria like local government headquarters.

THE FULL TIME PREACHER

Like the name implies he is a completely devoted man to do the preaching job.

Advantages

- ✓ He is always available and as such the job will not suffer.
- ✓ He has plenty time to do his job.
- ✓ He also has plenty time to do research.

Disadvantages

- ✗ He is at the mercy of the congregation for all his needs.
- ✗ He has to be careful with the power brokers in the congregation.
- ✗ Gifts may influence him not to see some sins around him.
- ✗ He may be idle if not well monitored

Direction: This model will be good for big congregations that have the financial muscle to pay that kind of preacher.

SUMMARY

Each congregation should do a need assessment before engaging a preacher.

About 75% of sound preachers today are either businessmen preachers or working-class preachers.

About 50% of preachers that are afraid to speak up in the event of sin are full time preachers who have family.

Only about 25% of preachers today who are full time are truly doing full time preaching.

And only about 5% of these 25% can honestly rebuke a church stakeholder in the event of open wrong doing.

May we be guided accordingly as we strive to serve him better each day of our lives.

CHAPTER 9

THE FAMILY OF THE CHURCH LEADER AND CHURCH GROWTH

This discussion shall examine the relationship between the church leader's family and the growth of the church.

A family is a simple unit of individuals living together linked by blood through marriage. A family is formed when a man takes a wife in line with biblical injunction and cultural tone of the people.

From the bible we learn in Genesis 2:24, *Therefore, shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.*

From the eyes of sociology, the following are manifestations of families today

TRADITIONAL FAMILY – Here the man is the head of the family. He exerts pressure and leadership in his house. He is the main man and the only one whose voice is heard. His wife is viewed and treated as a property and the children are closer to their mum than him. His secrets are known by his friends and relative. His wife is not carried along. She is seen as stubborn and not submissive. The distance between him and his wife is so far that the woman now marries the children and stays in the marriage because of his children.

COMPANIONSHIP FAMILY – Here the woman is the breadwinner. She directs the affairs of the family and is even the one that motivated the man to marry her. The man is a messenger of the woman. He handles all her projects and pay loyalty to the wife. His empowerment comes from the woman. The children here shift respect to their mum and sees their dad as a parasite. Some families degenerate into this family type when the man loses his job and is sustained by his wife and if he was a tyrant when he had a job.

EGALITARIAN FAMILY – This model of family portrays both husband and wife as equal. Both are working class and earn a salary. All their expenditures are jointly financed. Everybody faces their extended family needs and sometimes the main family suffers need because of the unhealthy competition going on. The children here chose who takes care of them the most to obey. Their obedience is situational and drift as several events within the family evolves. There is also the possibility of collecting money from the two parents for one item by "sharp" children who benefit from the status quo.

GOD FEARING FAMILY – Here the man is the head of the family and the woman is his help meet. Gen 2: 18 ¶ *And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.*

She is a partner to help build the family. Prov. 22:6 ¶ *Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.*

The children are obedient and listen to the whistle of the father. Eph 6: 4 *And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*

This type of family follows the pattern that God has approved for mankind. Any family that does not fit into the mould of God is already a tool in the hands of the devil. No wonder Joshua declared;

Josh 24:15 ¶ *And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.*

We are going to discuss the role of the man in the family according to God's plan so that men may know how to be the kind of leaders Christ would have them be. We want to look at a man from the perspective of being the head and leader of his family.

A man ought to lead his family like Christ: Eph. 5:23

Whether a man fulfills his responsibility or not, it still remains that the success or failure of the home rests upon his shoulders. He ought to

1. Lead by example: John 13:15; 1 Pet. 2:21
2. Provide loving leadership: Eph. 5:28-29
3. Practice sacrificial leadership: Eph. 5:25
4. Practice tender, and caring leadership: 1 Pet. 3:7

It is the responsibility of a man to take initiative: Josh. 24:15

It lies squarely on the shoulders of the man as the leader of his family to initiate programmes and policies that will spiritually enrich and nourish his family. He is to give a policy guideline just like Joshua did "*As for me and my house, we will serve the lord...*"

Men, need to be leaders in spiritual matters, guiding the families in the counsel of the Lord.

We need to make sure our family is serving the Lord that children are learning of the Lord and the woman is also being edified.

We need to set the example in prayer, both personal and public, in Bible study, in serving others etc.

The church is not a house of representative where delegates are sent. It is a full family assembly where every single member of the family must be counted. So it rest on the shoulders of the man to mobilize his family to meet that goal.

The man must wake up if he is sleeping. He must shine his eyes if he is awake. After all he is the leader of the house. Whether a man fulfills his responsibility or not, it still remains that the success or failure of the home rests upon his shoulders.

Now our attention shall shift to knowing who is a church leader.

Within the confines of the scriptures the following persons are called church leaders. Eph 4:11; *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:*

However in most of our congregations beyond the preacher, we have a group of men who call themselves church leaders. While they are not recognized within the scriptures, the community sees them as church leaders.

We are gathered here to discuss about how their family could build or destroy the church.

What type of family leader is he?

Just think along with me;

1. If the man is a church leader and is yet to pay for the woman living with him and they have children from the relationship, can the community see him as light and a good example to be attracted to the church?
2. If a man is a church leader and fully married but usually in heavy dispute and conflict with his wife, will the community look at him as a model for them to follow and by extension be attracted to the church?
3. If a man is a church leader and very powerful in the scriptures but does not provide for the needs of his immediate family, can those watching be motivated to become a part of the church.
4. If a man is a church leader and his wife is noted to be a very troublesome woman in the community even though the man is a good man, will his message fly well in the village?
5. If a man is a church leader and his daughter is wayward or his son is a vagabond in the community, will his light still shine as expected?
6. If a man is a church leader and attends the service of the Lord punctually but his family are top late comers, will he function well in his capacity as a leader again?
7. If a man is a church leader and his children are in denominations right in front of him, how will he function well in evangelism?

Brethren you can agree with Paul when he wrote to Timothy in 1Tim 3:4 *One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; 5 (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)*

Let it be sounded very clear today that the first church the entire world sees is the one in the family of the church leader. If the impression from that church is good, then the church is good. If on the contrary it is nothing to write home about, then be sure to get a negative reaction.

As a church leader present here today, join me to answer the following questions

1. Are you married scripturally?
2. Is your wife a candidate of heaven being in the same faith?
3. Are your children Christians being baptized into Christ?
4. Are you a good example to your family?
5. Are you a good example to the community?
6. Is the church ashamed to mention your name as her leader in public?

7. Are you a light in the community?

8. In what light or perspective do your members view you?

Let us go back home to repair any damage done on our families as church leaders. Once the family of the leader is sound in moral conduct and lifestyle, the entire community will rejoice and the church will grow.

CHAPTER 10

PRESENTING YOUR LESSON BEFORE THE CONGREGATION

The last stage of preparing a sermon is the presentation. In presentation, three things are important. First the presenter, then the audience and lastly the message.

THE PRESENTER

The presenter is the one so appointed to come and lead the congregation to greater heights in the spiritual realm. The sermon presenter starts with his dressing. He ensures that his dressing is appropriate with the occasion. A simple dress, very clean is ok for the pulpit. An over-dressed presenter will cause distraction in his audience. Equally, a poorly dressed presenter will infect the minds of the listeners with poverty.

The next point for the presenter is his language. The bible recommended language of the pulpit is persuasion, rebuke and encouragement. Our language as Christians in the pulpit must not only be the truth, but spoken in love. Persuade in love, rebuke in love and encourage in love. Eccl. 10:12, Mark 9:50, Col 4:6. Eph 4:29. But a close look at the scriptures further throws light on rebuke Prov. 24:25, Prov. 27:5, Eccl 7:5, 1Tim 5:20, 2Tim 4:2. It is not only the truth that must hit the pulpit, it must be spoken in a loving manner. Eph 4:15.

The presenter must watch his tone. The tone of a lesson is vital to the success of that lesson. Good speakers employ this to send home their message.

THE AUDIENCE

The audience in a church setting is far different from an ordinary classroom. It is a really mixed audience. A good speaker will do an audience analysis to know which group are dominant and focus his lesson in that direction.

Also, a good speaker will know when to bow out from the pulpit from the study of the audience. By this I mean your audience will give you signals of no more interest in your presentation. Don't ever try to get to this level. Bow out when the ovation is loudest

THE MESSAGE

The message is a divine gift that is passing through you. 1Pet 4:11. We must speak as God's spokesman. Only the message from God should hit the audience. Leave your opinion outside. Be careful with words like; "maybe", "I think", "likely" and "I suppose".

POSSIBLE AREAS OF DISTRACTION

1. Watch you language, lest it drown your lesson.
2. Watch your preparation, lest it destroy your reputation.
3. Watch your opinion, so it does not drown the lesson

PULPIT DONTS

1. Never speak suggestively on doctrinal issues
2. Never cite an irrelevant passage.

Good luck.

CHAPTER 11

MANAGEMENT OF NEW CONVERTS

A new convert is an individual starting the journey to heaven fresh from the watery grave of baptism. 2Cor 5:17. He is a new creature in the spiritual world. His life is just being united with Christ and all his past sins forgiven.

In the process of taking this singular decision to follow Christ, he may have offended some or made others disappointed. He is fragile and capable of missing the mark if not given proper attention.

So as leaders, we need to adequately care for this new entrant into the race for eternity. In this lesson we will explore possible ways to growing the new convert as individuals and collectively as a church.

The preacher's role

1. Take note of the date he is baptized and ensure he is given a warm welcome. First impression matters. He should see the church as a family and himself as a new family member.
2. Assign him to a mentor that very day. A capable hand that will give him foundational orientation about the family of God. This mentor must be a very good example capable of using his lifestyle to make the new convert stabilize his faith in God and his word.
3. Get very close to him to know a little about his religious background so that you can know from where to start your help from. This is vital if the new convert must function effectively in the church.
4. Put him on your visitation list for the first three (3) months. Once in a while dash in to find out how he is doing.

The role of the church

1. The church should urgently put in place a new convert management team made up of capable hands that can midwife the growth process of the new convert.
2. Ensure that all new converts have a solid foundational class each Sunday and on weekday meetings.
3. Format the lessons to help them see the church exactly how God intends it to be.
4. Ensure that mature hands are involved in dealing with the lessons of this class.
5. Engage new converts in basic roles like Ushers, readers and smart ones as board writers.
6. Mix them with adults during evangelism.
7. Help discover their talents in congregation development.
8. Promote them into the main adult class as you see them do well in handling the word.

Generally, the church must begin to take the new convert very serious. If the new converts we have got over the years were painstakingly taken care of, the church would have recorded great quantitative and qualitative growth.

2Tim 2:2 And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also

1Peter 2:2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

Rom 6:4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

May God give us the grace to nurse these fresh ones he has given us from our labour in evangelism to grow to maturity and let the circle continue in Jesus' name. Amen.

CHAPTER 12

BEING SALESMEN FOR CHRIST

Today we are gathered here to discuss a topic completely in marketing as a human field of endeavour. A salesman is an individual who sells goods and services for a firm to other entities. Thefreedictionary.com defines a salesperson as, “a person who is employed to sell products and services”.

To get a full understanding of the briefs behind this topic, an attempt was made at visiting the Harvard Business School online and the work of Steve W. Martin on personality attributes of a successful salesperson is here discussed in detail

1. Modesty. Contrary to conventional stereotypes that successful salespeople are pushy and egotistical, 91 percent of top salespeople had medium to high scores of modesty and humility. Furthermore, the results suggest that ostentatious salespeople who are full of bravado alienate far more customers than they win over.

Are you modest in your dressing and conduct: 1Tim 2:9 and 1Pet 3:3 are very handy here to remind us that a salesperson must appear modest at all times.

2. Conscientiousness. Eighty-five percent of top salespeople had high levels of conscientiousness, whereby they could be described as having a strong sense of duty and being responsible and reliable. These salespeople take their jobs very seriously and feel deeply responsible for the results.

Are you serious with the Job of evangelism as a salesperson for Christ? 1Cor 15:58 ¶ Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord

3. Achievement Orientation. Eighty-four percent of the top performers tested scored very high in achievement orientation. They are fixated on achieving goals and continuously measure their performance in comparison to their goals.

Paul was a great man with several evangelical success on his score card. What motivated him is found in 1Cor 9:16 For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!

He even sees himself as a debtor. Rom 1:14

4. Curiosity. Curiosity can be described as a person's hunger for knowledge and information. Eighty-two percent of top salespeople scored extremely high curiosity levels. Top salespeople are naturally more curious than their lesser performing counterparts.

Are you curious in researching about the product that you are going out to sell? What do you know about the product you are representing? 2Tim 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a

workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. You need to work on your study skills to be able to be a successful salesman.

5. Lack of Gregariousness. One of the most surprising differences between top salespeople and those ranking in the bottom one-third of performance is their level of gregariousness (preference for being with people and friendliness). Overall, top performers averaged 30 percent lower gregariousness than below average performers.

6. Lack of Discouragement. Less than 10 percent of top salespeople were classified as having high levels of discouragement and being frequently overwhelmed with sadness. Conversely, 90 percent were categorized as experiencing infrequent or only occasional sadness.

Paul was a great salesman who refuses to be easily discouraged by the behavior of people towards his product the gospel. Rom 1:16 ¶ *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*

1Cor 1:18. *For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.*

7. Lack of Self-Consciousness. Self-consciousness is the measurement of how easily someone is embarrassed. The byproduct of a high level of self-consciousness is bashfulness and inhibition. Less than five percent of top performers had high levels of self-consciousness.

Just read the CV of Paul as a salesman and quietly reflect and run a comparative analysis of yourself. 2 Cor. 11:23 *Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. 24 Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. 25 Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; 26 In journeying often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; 27 In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.*

Not all salespeople are successful. Given the same sales tools, level of education, and propensity to work, why do some salespeople succeed where others fail? Is one better suited to sell the product because of his or her background? Is one more charming or just luckier? The evidence suggests that the personalities of these truly great salespeople play a critical role in determining their success.

Now we want to return to the scriptures. Using those qualities of a salesman in a worldly setting, can you truly say you are a sales person for Christ?

PART 2

SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS EVANGELISM ARTICLES PUBLISHED ON MY TIME LINE

A post online is made according to the spur of the moment. The articles listed below are posts shared on my timeline in my quest to preach the gospel of Christ.

POST 1 - MANAGING DECEPTION

It is your choice what you choose to believe.

If you refuse to believe the truth, you will believe a lie.

It is a serious thing to lie as if God is speaking through you.

Responsible people do lie and unsuspecting people use their societal standing to think it is the truth.

Choosing to believe a lie does not make it the truth.

You are free to believe that paying of tithe is the correct format for giving to God's work. Watch it, you have been lied to and have believed a lie. That will not make it the truth.

You are free to believe that the Lord spoke to you to open a church. You know you are lying. You are at liberty to believe the lie. It will not make it the truth.

You are free to group worshippers of God into clergy and priest on one hand and lay people or floor members on the other hand, be rest assured that today we are all priests before God. Again you are at liberty to believe the lie about the category. It still will not make it the truth.

You are free to choose days and observe in an attempt to please God. Christ left us a standard. Even if you like what you are doing, it will still not make it the truth.

You are free in worship to use instruments accompanying your songs just like David did in the Old Testament. That will not make you a Christian. The first century church had a simple worship plan that was devoid of deploying instrumental music in worship.

You are free to live with any woman of your choice and play around with her. The definition of fornication has not changed. If you like give it any name, before God it is still a sin.

You are free to enjoy life. It is your choice. Be sure that God is not mocked, whatsoever a man sows, that he shall reap.

Jeroboam moulded a calf and said it was the god that brought them out from Egypt. A thing he knew when it was created suddenly became old enough to deliver Israel from bondage in Egypt. Despite speaking as a king, it did not change the truth.

Even if Obama and the entire USA legalised homosexuality, it still does not make it right.

Exo 23:2 Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil

When the last curtain falls, it is only you that will stand before the judgment throne and answer God what you believed and how you lived what you believed.

POST 2- IT IS JUST A CALENDAR CHANGE

I woke up this morning to see my house and things arranged the same way it was last year. The only change I noticed was the influx of SMS into my phone heralding the arrival of a New Year.

Honestly, the day I start living anew based on sound bible teaching that held me captive and made me make a U-turn is my New Year.

The New Year concept will make meaning if we gradually start realigning with Christ and pursuing our goal of going to heaven after the last curtain falls.

For the fact that the calendar has changed from 2014 to 2015 today, I wish you all a new start towards a godly approach to life.

It is not how splendid the New Year service was, but how you apply what you take from the service.

Is there anything we will eat today that we have not eaten before today?

It is just a calendar change.

Teach us oh Lord to number our days and apply wisdom in our plans.

Happy New Year

POST 3 - GOOD INTENTION MISTAKE

I stumbled over a passage of the Bible yesterday and was excited to understand the dynamics of understanding the way the Lord deals with mankind when it concerns doing things for him in the name of worship or service.

In 2Sam 7:1-5, a story is told of David relaxing in his Cedar made house and thinking it was wrong for him to be inside a house but God lives in a tent.

He then sought spiritual approval for his plan to build God a house from Nathan a prophet and an anointed man of God. Nathan without consulting with God gave David a blanket cheque of approval. He even added that the Lord was with David.

The event took a twist in the night when God spoke to Nathan to go and address David on the subject matter. David was rebuked for trying to do something for God that he had not commanded him.

Today a lot of us are very busy arranging things for God that he has not commanded. Why not find out from his written word whether your action has a spiritual stamp on it. Jesus told the Devil, "It is written". That is the mentality we should employ for all that we want to do for God.

It is now clear why Matt 7:21-23 is written in the Bible.

Mt 7:21 ¶ Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity

No wonder Jesus said the road is narrow. *Mt 7:14; Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*

Now I see why Jesus limited his disciples to only the things he commanded them to do. *Mt 28:20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

No wonder Paul warned us to remain steadfast to the true gospel. *Ga 1:9 As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.*

No matter how good your plans for God are, please crosscheck to see if it has a spiritual stamp.

POST 4 - DON'T DECEIVE YOURSELF

1. You will be deceiving yourself if you think that God is responsible for your sins. *Jas 1:13 ¶ Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. 14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. 15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. 16 Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.*
2. You will be deceiving yourself to think that hearing the message of the will of God will give you eternity. It is one thing to hear and another thing to put it into practice. *Jas 1:22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.*
3. You will be deceiving yourself to think that God does not care how my speech profile goes. *Jas 1:26 If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain*
4. You will be deceiving yourself to think that you are something. We are nothing without God. *Gal 6:3 For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.*
5. You will be deceiving yourself to think that you can sow to the flesh and reap the benefit of the spirit. *Gal 6:7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.*
6. You will be deceiving yourself to think that your friends don't have a huge influence on you. You can influence them as they can influence you. *1Cor 15:33 Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits.*
7. You will be deceiving yourself to think that you can land safely in heaven with your current ungodly lifestyles. Our emotions may be deceiving us. If you don't do it as God wants us to do, you may have long ago deceived yourself. *1Co 6:9 ¶ Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, 10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.*

8. You will be deceiving yourself to employ human philosophy and standards and apply to godly principles. Let your earthly knowledge not deceive you. *1Cor 3:18 ¶ Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. 19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, "He catches the wise in their own craftiness"*
9. You will be deceiving yourself to think and say that you have no sin. Self-righteousness is faulty. *1John 1:8 ¶ If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*
10. You will be deceiving yourself to think that God will not punish us for our sins. *Jer 37:8 "And the Chaldeans shall come back and fight against this city, and take it and burn it with fire."9 "Thus says the LORD: 'Do not deceive yourselves, saying, "The Chaldeans will surely depart from us," for they will not depart.*

POST 5 - DON'T BE A FOOL

In our contemporary society today, nobody is willing to be addressed as a fool. The Bible even in Matt 5: 22 condemns anyone who calls his brother a fool. But as we study the bible, we are severally warned about some characteristics that will automatically make us a fool.

Our lesson today will x-ray those common things that could easily make us qualify as fools even when we don't think so. So who is a fool from the Bible's perspective?

1. A fool is one who does not listen to advice

Pr 1:7 ¶ The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction

Pr 1:22 How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? And the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge

Pr 12:15 ¶ The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise.

Pr 23:9 ¶ Speak not in the ears of a fool: for he will despise the wisdom of thy words

Pr 28:26 ¶ He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered.

So if you are here and you are not interested in being advised or generally hate advice from others, you are a fool.

2. A fool is one who will not pay attention to warning.

Pr 14:16 ¶ A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth, and is confident.

Pr 22:3 ¶ A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished. Once we move on in life without looking at several warning signs that are planted on our way, we are nothing but fools.

3. A fool is one who believes everything he hears.

Pr 14:15 ¶ *The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going.*

1Th 5:21 *Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.*

It only a foolish man that will take side in an argument without hearing the other side of an issue.

4. A fool is one who makes mockery of sin

Pr 10:23 ¶ *It is as sport to a fool to do mischief: but a man of understanding hath wisdom*

Pr 14:9 ¶ *Fools make a mock at sin: but among the righteous there is favour.*

You are foolish when you think that sin is nothing and you can get away with it. It is even foolish to underrate the impact of just one sin in your life. Don't be deceived; Gal 6:7 and Num 32:23 are handy to open our eyes from our foolishness.

5. A fool is a man with quick temper

Pr 14:17 ¶ *He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly: and a man of wicked devices is hated.*

Pr 18:6 ¶ *A fool's lips enter into contention, and his mouth calleth for strokes*

Pr 27:3 ¶ *A stone is heavy, and the sand weighty; but a fool's wrath is heavier than them both*

Any man that cannot manage his anger is a very foolish man.

6. A fool is a man who talks too much

Pr 10:19 ¶ *In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise.*

Prov 18:7 *A fool's mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul.*

Prov 13:3 ¶ *He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction.*

Eccl 5:2 *Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few. 3 For a dream cometh through the multitude of business; and a fool's voice is known by multitude of words.*

A foolish man is a man that does not know how to manage his tongue. A large chunk of brethren are guilty here. A good sermon is not by it length but by it quality. It is dangerous to talk before thinking.

7. A fool is one who is deceived by alcohol

Pr 20:1 ¶ *Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise*

8. A fool is a man that says there is no God.

Ps 14:1 *The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good.*

It is foolish not to take God seriously. Some have looked at God from a belittling perspective. Some even serve God only when it is convenient.

9. A fool is a man who is rich towards himself and not towards God

Luke 12:20 *A foolish man is one who thinks only of himself.*

A foolish man is a man building his house on sand. He hears Gods word but take it lightly and face the devastating consequences of his action.

May God open our eyes to see the dangers of foolishness. Amen.

POST 6 - CRITICAL THINKING

*Mt 28:18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 **TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER I HAVE COMMANDED YOU:** and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

1. First Jesus expects his disciples to go and make disciples of all nations.
2. Help baptize them
3. And then teach them what he has taught them

Today some are teaching what Moses and the Old Testament prophets taught the Jews and think they are obeying Christ. They pay tithe, sing with instruments and pray like Elijah did when he called down fire to consume his enemies.

Some are teaching what he did not even command or contemplate in his teaching and thinking they are obeying Christ. Their source of authority is their religious leader or General Overseer of the church. They observe feasts like Christmas, Easter and wear titles very strange from the scriptures. Titles that neither Jesus, Peter, Paul nor any other church leader wore.

Those who try to stick to Jesus and his teaching are termed old school and myopic in reasoning. They are mocked as not moving with the trend of event.

Yesterday church XYZ did not sing with instrument, today they have a band right in the place of worship.

Yesterday church PQR had a quiet and solemn worship service; today it is an entertainment galore.

Yesterday church ABC hated the TV with passion, today it is preaching on Satellite TV.

Yesterday church MNO condemned same sex marriage, today it priests even officiate in a same sex marriage.

Yesterday church DEF taught women are to be silent, today that same church has women bishops.

Yesterday church IJK did not preach tithe, today is now a full topic of sermon.

Was the vision not clear enough at that time and now clear?

Maybe we are having plans to go to our own heaven. If we must go to the heaven of God, then we must have a rethink.

We either do it God's way or face the consequences associated thereof. Just take your time to find out the mind of God on the doctrine you practice. There is a lot of slight modification of Jesus pattern going on.

Mt 7:21 ¶ Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

POST 7 – CORRECTION IS NOT PASSING JUDGMENT

A man sent two of his sons to the farm to work. He gave them instructions on their mode of operation while on the farm. Specifically, he told them to make ridges round the entire farm and make mounds inside the farm.

Both boys set out to the farm. After clearing and cleaning up the place, one of the sons started making mounds at the edge of the farm instead of ridges. When his brother drew his attention on the need to follow their father's instruction, he accused him judging him.

"Mind your business and allow dad to come and say I am wrong". The brother thought he was doing him a service by drawing his attention to an area where he had deviated but was shocked the way the other one reacted.

So many of us behave the same way when we are exposed to practices not traceable to the scriptures or practices that clearly are not in consonance with the plain teachings of the scripture.

One of the many uses of the bible is for correction.

2Tim 3:16. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

We have a very good example found in the scriptures. 1Samuel 15:1-25 is a classical story of Saul being sent by God with very clear instructions. He got there and modified the instructions but was the very first person to declare that he had accomplished the mission of God.

He lost his throne from that single "small" event.

Let us be careful how we react to correction. Correction is not passing judgment.

POST 8 - SEVEN PERSONAL BELIEFS THAT HAVE SHAPED MY FAITH

1. I believe that there is a God that created this entire universe and he is in charge of its workings and operations.
2. I believe that the Bible is the inspired and accurate word of God.
3. I believe that God has spoken to us through his word and is not speaking again through any prophet or man of God except through his word.
4. I believe that our God is powerful, merciful, kind and all knowing. So when I pray I am mindful not to shout at him or make him look like my house boy.
5. I believe that marriage is for life and that only sexual immorality can break the bond of marriage while the partners are alive.
6. I believe that Jesus empowered Peter and the rest of the apostles to establish a church which he purchased with his own blood with the expectation that all mankind will flow into it as a waiting place for Christ to come and take them to his father.
7. I believe that God has a pattern for everything he has asked man to do and even though He is merciful, a true child of His must follow his commandments strictly. And man has no right to modify God laws.

POST 9 - SEVEN PERSONAL UN-BELIEFS THAT I HOLD STRONGLY

1. I do not believe that any man can advise God.
2. I do not believe in modern day miracles as I see men claim today.
3. I do not believe that there are several ways to go to heaven.
4. I do not believe that the dead can pray for the living.
5. I do not believe that the church is in the heart.
6. I do not believe in doctrines of men not traceable to the scriptures.
7. I do not believe in salvation outside the church. As in the days of Noah, you are either inside or outside.

POST 10 - SIX THINGS THAT GOD LIKES

GOD LOVES A CHEERFUL GIVER

2Cor 9:7. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

Exo. 25:2 Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering.

Exo. 35:5 Take ye from among you an offering unto the LORD: whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it, an offering of the LORD; gold, and silver, and brass

GOD LOVES AN OBEDIENT SERVANT

Deut. 7:9 Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations

Exo. 20:6 And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments

Deut. 5:10 And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.

Neh 1:5 ¶ And said, I beseech thee, O LORD God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him and observe his commandments:

GOD LOVES PEOPLE THAT INSIST ON JUSTICE

Ps 33:5 He loveth righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of the LORD

Ps 33:18 Behold, the eye of the LORD is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy;

Ps 34:15 The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.

GOD IS PLEASED WITH RIGHTEOUS LIVING

Ps 146:8 The LORD openeth the eyes of the blind: the LORD raiseth them that are bowed down: the LORD loveth the righteous:

Ps 11:7 For the righteous LORD loveth righteousness; his countenance doth behold the upright.

GOD IS EXCITED WITH THOSE WHO PURSUE GODLINESS

Pro 15:9 ¶ The way of the wicked is an abomination unto the LORD: but he loveth him that followeth after righteousness

1Tim 6:11 But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.

GOD LOVES THOSE WHO FEAR HIM

Ps 103:11 For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him

POST 11 - 5 THINGS JESUS DID NOT DO WHEN PERFORMING A MIRACLE

1. He did not push the individual to fall first.
2. He did not fix a date that he will do a miracle.
3. He did not ask the audience to sow seed.
4. He did not pray and the person got healed after some days.
5. He did not sort out those he will heal and those he will not.

What we see today is a far cry from what we read from the Bible. I think someone is being deceived.

POST 12 - CHARACTERISTICS OF JESUS MIRACLES

1. There were situational. Not planned or days fixed for miracles.
2. The result was immediate. When Peter removed the ears of the High priest servant with a sword, Jesus replaced it immediately.
3. Some were done as a response to the faith of the individual. The woman with the issue of blood is a very good example.
4. Some had no single faith at all yet got their miracle. Lazarus is a solid example.
5. Jesus miracles were open to all and subject to verification. There was even a time the scribes had to interview the parents of the one healed.
6. He was a mobile miracle working person. He was not confined to one location as we see today.
7. Jesus miracles were simply amazing. How can anyone explain his speaking to the waves obey him or his walking on the sea or the feeding of 5000 with insignificant items.

Let us shine our eyes lest we are carried away from the faith. Faith cometh by hearing the word and not by miracles.

POST 13 - THINKING ABOUT TITHE PAYMENT TODAY

The entire Christian community is constantly reminded of Malachi 3:10 and warned seriously of the grave dangers of not paying tithes to the man of God or the church depending on where the speaker wants to put emphasis on.

Some religious groups that before now latently discussed tithe are gradually bringing it to the front burner. Her members are reminded to bring their tithes so that the church will grow.

Beyond these discussing, an average Christian ought to know exactly what the word of God says.

POINT 1

Abraham paid tithe voluntarily from the spoils of war even before the law of tithing was given.

Gen 14:20 And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all

POINT 2

When the law of tithing was finally given, four different types of tithes existed and were designed to serve different purposes.

Type 1 – General purpose tithe given by the tithe payer specifically to the Levites who were empowered to collect tithes by the lord.

Num 18:26 Thus speak unto the Levites, and say unto them, When ye take of the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then ye shall offer up an heave offering of it for the LORD, even a tenth part of the tithe.

Lev 27:30 And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD'S: it is holy unto the LORD.

Lev 27:32 And concerning the tithe of the herd, or of the flock, even of whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto the LORD.

Type 2- Tithe of Tithes. Inside the Levites existed the family of Aaron which produced the priests. After collecting the tithes from the tithe payers (Israelites), the Levites were directed by God to take a tenth of it (tithe) and give to the family of Aaron.

Neh 10:38 And the priest the son of Aaron shall be with the Levites, when the Levites take tithes: and the Levites shall bring up the tithe of the tithes unto the house of our God, to the chambers, into the treasure house.

Type 3 – Personally consumed tithe. God designed that yearly a tithe payer should enjoy himself from his proceeds. But he must do this only at Jerusalem with his entire family.

Deut. 14:22 ¶ *Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed that the field bringeth forth year by year.*

Deut. 14:23 *And thou shalt eat before the LORD thy God, in the place which he shall choose to place his name there, the tithe of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the firstlings of thy herds and of thy flocks; that thou mayest learn to fear the LORD thy God always.*

There was a clause here concerning money.

Deut 14:24 *And if the way be too long for thee, so that thou art not able to carry it; or if the place be too far from thee, which the LORD thy God shall choose to set his name there, when the LORD thy God hath blessed thee: 25 Then shalt thou turn it into money, and bind up the money in thine hand, and shalt go unto the place which the LORD thy God shall choose: 26 And thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth: and thou shalt eat there before the LORD thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou, and thine household*

Type 4 – tithe for the orphans, less privileged, strangers and widows.

Deut 14:28 *At the end of three years thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine increase the same year, and shalt lay it up within thy gates: 29 And the Levite, (because he hath no part nor inheritance with*

thee,) and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which are within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest.

Deu 26:12 ¶ *When thou hast made an end of tithing all the tithes of thine increase the third year, which is the year of tithing, and hast given it unto the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat within thy gates, and be filled;*

The tithe payer here is to say a special prayer designed by God.

Deut 26:13 *Then thou shalt say before the LORD thy God, I have brought away the hallowed things out of mine house, and also have given them unto the Levite, and unto the stranger, to the fatherless, and to the widow, according to all thy commandments which thou hast commanded me: I have not transgressed thy commandments, neither have I forgotten them: 14 I have not eaten thereof in my mourning, neither have I taken away ought thereof for any unclean use, nor given ought thereof for the dead: but I have hearkened to the voice of the LORD my God, and have done according to all that thou hast commanded me. 15 Look down from thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bless thy people Israel, and the land which thou hast given us, as thou swarest unto our fathers, a land that floweth with milk and honey*

POINT 3

Look at these passages below and you will agree all of the discussion on tithes has nothing to do with money, even though money was in circulation at that time.

Deut 12:17 *Thou mayest not eat within thy gates the tithe of thy corn, or of thy wine, or of thy oil, or the firstlings of thy herds or of thy flock, nor any of thy vows which thou vowest, nor thy freewill offerings, or heave offering of thine hand:*

Deut 14:22 ¶ *Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed that the field bringeth forth year by year.*

Lev 27:30 *And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD'S: it is holy unto the LORD.*

Lev 27:32 *And concerning the tithe of the herd, or of the flock, even of whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto the LORD.*

Neh 13:12 *Then brought all Judah the tithe of the corn and the new wine and the oil unto the treasuries.*

From the foregoing, it would not be difficult for the reader to appreciate why God was not happy with the people of Israel for robbing him. Those being addressed in Mal 3:8-10 understood God better and could appreciate his concern.

Mal 3:8 *Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. 9 Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. 10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith,*

saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

POINTS

Christ came and lived under the law (Gal 4:4), but frowned at the methodology of the tithe collection and the undue emphasis placed on its payment by the Pharisees of his days.

Mt 23:23 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

Luke 11:42 But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

A man even boasted about his regularity in tithe payment while Christ was on earth.

Luke 18:12 I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess

An interesting point here is that Christ lived under the Old Covenant and the church today operates under the New Covenant.

Heb 7:11 ¶ If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? 12 For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.

Starting from the beginning of the Church until recently, (precisely in the 1500s), the church had existed without Christian paying tithes.

Two major reasons could be fetched out.

1. The church is for the whole world and a practice given to a single nation operating an agrarian economy could not be foisted on all mankind.
2. Like circumcision (which was a spiritual exercise commanded for all Jews) it had to die with Judaism. That old priesthood following the order of Aaron is replaced with a priesthood of all believers with Christ as our only high priest.

1Pet 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:

Wait for just a minute

- Tithe was not given as money in the Bible, today it is money.
- Tithe was stored in a storehouse in the temple. Today it is stored in banks being held for the men of God.

- The tithe payers then were not priest and gave to the priests. Today we are all priests and still give to senior priests.
- The temple was a physical building and had a store house. Today we are the temple of the living God.
- The church in the New Covenant is not the temple in the Old Covenant. The church is not a physical building.
- The four ways tithe payers operated in the Old Covenant is sharply different from what is practiced today.
- Paul was the most widely travelled missionary and would have enjoyed the benefit associated with tithes, yet he was completely silent about the issue.

Christians today are to give for the growth and spread of God's word.

1Cor 16:1 ¶ *Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. 2 Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.*

2Cor 8:12 *For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.*

2Cor 9:6 ¶ *But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. 7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.*

Even the men of God were accommodated.

Gal 6:6 *Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things*

1Cor 9:11 *If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?*

1Cor 9:14 *Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel*

The payment of tithes today by Christians is a mix up of God's directives.

Although the tithe payer may be thinking he is right in doing so, it still does not make it right.

Although the tithe payer may be seeing results, the end does not justify the means if God does not give approval.

There is no direct command to Christians to pay tithe to the church.

The first century church did not pay tithes to the church.

Act 2: 44 *And all that believed were together, and had all things common; 45 And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.*

Act 4:34 *Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold,*

I pray this lesson will edify you and demand that you give to the lord beyond measure.

POST – 14 MATHEMATICS OF GEHAZI

2 Kings 5:19-27 Gehazi was a servant of a powerful prophet of God. In our modern day description, Gehazi was the chief of staff to Prophet Elisha. He was the manager of the physical resources of the man of God.

Their calling had a healing ministry inclusive. He was seeing the potential of turning the healing ministry into a profitable venture. But he was not on the same page with his master Elisha. So when Naaman, a rich general in the Syrian army came calling, he saw an opportunity of “making it”. But again his master turned down the offer even after much persuasion from Naaman. Gehazi was no longer himself.

2 Kings 5:20 ¶ *But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, "Look, my master has spared Naaman this Syrian, while not receiving from his hands what he brought; but as the LORD lives, I will run after him and take something from him."*

Only a lie could work the magic. He must design and develop a lie immediately to suit the situation. He then cooked one fast lie and it sailed through.

2 Kings 5:22. *And he said, "All is well. My master has sent me, saying, 'Indeed, just now two young men of the sons of the prophets have come to me from the mountains of Ephraim. Please give them a talent of silver and two changes of garments.'"*

It worked because Naaman had all along desired to pay or appreciate the man of God for his healing. He even begged Elisha who refused to accept his gifts. So this was an opportunity to express his joy about his salvation from leprosy. Gehazi won the battle but lost the war. It was time to explain his sudden disappearance from the presence of the man of God without due approval. Those who lie know that you need several lies to support an existing lie.

2 Kings 5:25 *Now he went in and stood before his master. Elisha said to him, "Where did you go, Gehazi?" And he said, "Your servant did not go anywhere."*

It was too late. Elisha knew where he had gone and what had transpired between him and Naaman. Every lie has a corresponding result.

2 Kings 5:26 *Then he said to him, "Did not my heart go with you when the man turned back from his chariot to meet you? Is it time to receive money and to receive clothing, olive groves and vineyards, sheep and oxen, male and female servants? 27 "Therefore the leprosy of Naaman shall cling to you and your descendants forever." And he went out from his presence leprous, as white as snow.*

The leprosy that left Naaman was now deposited on him and he could not enjoy the very things that he had craved for. He could not solve the mathematics.

QUICK LESSONS HERE

1. The work of God is not a financial profit driven venture. The earlier those who desire to lead God's people know this the better for us all.
2. Greed can drive you against the rule laid down by God. You need real self-control to hold it down in the face of huge temptation.
3. Once you start lying, just be prepared to lie consistently to support the foundational lie. It is a job that must be done and done well. Even at that, you will still fail.
4. Every sin has a corresponding consequence. Gal 6:7 *Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.*
5. Just be constantly reminded that God knows everything. Heb 4:13 *And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.*
6. Just work on your greed. So many sins are the result of greed. We invite you to worship with church of Christ near you where God's word is respected and used as the only authority in matters of faith. A warm welcome awaits you.

POST – 15: 5 PASSAGES FOUND IN THE OLD TESTAMENT THAT ARE NOT PRACTICED TODAY

Lev 23:22 *And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not make clean riddance of the corners of thy field when thou reapest, neither shalt thou gather any gleanings of thy harvest: thou shalt leave them unto the poor, and to the stranger: I am the LORD your God*

Duet 22:11 *Thou shalt not wear a garment of divers sorts, as of woolen and linen together*

Lev 19: 19 ¶ *Ye shall keep my statutes. Thou shalt not let thy cattle gender with a diverse kind: thou shalt not sow thy field with mingled seed: neither shall a garment mingled of linen and woolen come upon thee.*

Lev 20:10 ¶ *And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death*

Lev 20:21 *And if a man shall take his brother's wife, it is an unclean thing: he hath uncovered his brother's nakedness; they shall be childless*

AND TWO PASSAGES FOUND IN THE OLD TESTAMENT THAT PEOPLE DELIBERATELY LOVE TO PRACTICE

Mal 3:10 *Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it*

Psalms 150:3 *Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery and harp*

Please help me ask why the selection? Is it for convenience sake or for doctrinal suitability?

POST 16 - THE RELEVANCE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

1. Since you say the Old Testament is not relevant today, why not remove it from the Bible? No sir, the Old Testament helps us to understand the New Testament. Without the Old Testament we will have difficulties making meaning of events and actions of the New Testament. Example, The action on the day of Pentecost would not have been properly explained if not for the prophecy found in the Old Testament.
2. Since you say the Old Testament is not relevant today, why not remove it from the Bible? No sir, it is written for our learning, *Rom 15:4. For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.*
3. Since you say the Old Testament is not relevant today, why not remove it from the Bible? No sir, It contains great examples that will polish our faith, *1Cor 10:11 Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.*
4. Since you say the Old Testament is not relevant today, why not remove it from the Bible? No sir, it is still a valuable story book for archeological and historical confirmation of events. Example, recently archeologists confirmed the Genesis story of Lot's wife turning to a pillar of salt.

TECHNICAL POINTS

1. The Old Testament is the foundation upon which the New Testament is built on.
2. The personality of Jesus and his mission recorded in the New Testament has its roots in the Old Testament. *Isa 9:6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.*
3. You can build a powerful prayer vocabulary by spending time with the book of Psalms.
4. You can improve your bible history by looking at the works of Moses.
5. You can tap leadership skills by reading the works of Samuel in 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings and 1 & 2 Chronicles.
6. You can improve your speech skills by spending time with Proverbs.
7. You can grow your relationship with your spouse by spending time with Songs of Solomon.
8. The Old Testament has over 250 solid stories that can form a foundation for building up the family.
9. It is the testament that exposed God more to the nation of Israel.

Jesus, Peter and Paul all at one point or the other cited the Old Testament to buttress their arguments. We are free to study and develop our faith from there but are limited in the area of drawing doctrinal application and commands.

The New Testament of Jesus Christ is the new order of things today.

Heb 1:1 ¶ God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

Mt 17:5 While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.

2Cor 3:6 ¶ Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. 7 But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away:

POST – 17: WHY DID GOD SEND HIS SON TO EARTH?

He was sent to earth to save his people from their sins

Matt 1:21. *And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.*

Luke 24:47. *And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.*

He was sent to seek and save the lost

Luke 19:10 *For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.*

Matt 18:11 *For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.*

John 3:17 *For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.*

Luke 9:56 *For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village.*

Jesus was sent to create a pathway for man to reach the father

John 14:6 *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

God sent him to earth that we might have a little feeling with God and enjoy life

Matt 1:23 *Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.*

John 10:10 *The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly*

He was sent to create a pathway of salvation

John 3:16 *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.*

Acts 26:18 *To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.*

To destroy the works of Satan

1John 3:8 *He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.*

To set the captive free

Luke 4:18 *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised*

To set up the structures to build his church

Matt 16:18 *And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

Act 20:28 *Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*

POST – 18: 5 DISJOINTED QUESTIONS

1. If God were to place the gate ticket of heaven in the hands of your spouse, are you sure you will enter heaven?
2. If Jesus were to discuss you with your boss, what type of person are you? Can your boss call you a Christian indeed?
3. If your neighbours were to write a brief summary about your person? Will it help land you close to heaven road?
4. How will your life report look like if your colleague were to write and send it to God as a means of accepting you into heaven? Will it qualify or disqualify you?
5. Are you a nominal or practicing Christian?

2 Cor 13:5 *Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own*

POST – 19: REASONS WHY PEOPLE DON'T BELIEVE THE BIBLE

1.They usually think it is written by men.

2 Pet 1:20 *Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.*

2 Tim 3:16-17: *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

2 It is seen as a very difficult book for ordinary men to understand.

Eph 3:4 *Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ*

Heb 11:3 *Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.*

3. It is hard to practice its content

Rom 12:20 *Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.*

Further reading: Exo 23:4-5; Prov 25:21-22; Matt 5:44

4. It exposes their doctrine as false

1 Tim 4:1-3. *Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; 2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; 3 Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.*

2 Tim 4:3. *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;*

5. They want to live a free life

Rom 1:21-26: *Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, 23. And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. 24. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: 25. Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. 26. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:*

6. God has sent them a strong delusion

2 Thess 2:11 *And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:*

POST – 20: 5 MOST DIFFICULT BIBLE PASSAGES TO PRACTICE

1. Act 20:35 *I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.*
2. Matt 5:44 *But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;*
3. Rom 12:18 *If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.*
4. 2 Tim 3:12 *Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.*
5. Matt 6:14 *For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: 15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses*

It is not enough to just be called a Christian. It demands serious commitment that will touch your person and your life.

POST - 21: 5 THINGS THAT CAN DAMAGE YOUR INFLUENCE AS A CHRISTIAN

1. Engaging in an open quarrel with your spouse.
2. Fighting with a “bikeman” or bus conductor over your change.
3. Abusing a road user who blunders in front of you or on your lane.
4. Handling a bottle or can of beer
5. Lighting a stick of cigarette

When the salt in you loses its value, it is trampled by men.

POST – 21: WHY DON'T WE DEPEND ON THE OLD TESTAMENT?

The Old Testament is also referred to as the Law, old covenant, agreement. It was a guide that all the Jews were to follow strictly in order to be pleasing to God. It was given through Moses.

John 1:17

So why then do we not depend on it?

1. It had some faults Heb 8:7-13
2. There was promise of the new and as such we follow the new. Jer 31:31
3. It was focused on a single Jewish nation. Jer 31:31
4. Jesus ended the law Rom 10:4
5. Jesus redeemed us from the law Gal 4:4
6. It was nailed to the cross Col 2:14
7. It was a shadow of things to come Heb 10:1
8. It was a school master leading us to Christ Gal 3:24-25
9. Even the Jews could not keep it perfectly Act 15:10
10. We are no longer under the Levitical priesthood Heb 7:12

It is important to note that Jesus lived under the Old Testament and gradually started the process of fulfilling the law and getting set to put it to an end. We can't today copy most of what he did based on the Old Testament.

No one was able to keep the law so his mercy was generated when he send his son to come and die to redeem man from the challenges of keeping the law.

Matt 5:43 and 44 is a practical example. He was under the Old Law setting up his own.

Since a testament is also known as a will, it will only come into effect at the death of the testator.

Heb 9:16 *For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. 17 For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.*

POST – 22: DON'T TRY TO HELP GOD

Our God is all powerful and all knowing. The time-table of man is in his own hands. He does not need any help or advice from man his creature.

Isa 55:8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

But as we read through the Bible we see clearly how man landed in trouble in his quest to help God since God seems not to respond as at when due.

Right from Genesis, we read of a time after which God has promised Abraham of making a great nation from his lineage and “delayed” to fulfill it that Sarah advised Abraham to go into her maid and through there probably could be an avenue of fulfilling that promise of God. Abraham did and today we are feeling the impact of that single decision. Boko Haram, ISIS, Al- Qaeda and the likes are roots of that Ishmael-Isaac conflict. If Abraham had waited patiently for the time table from God, we would not have been in this mess today.

God knows us all one by one, Psalms 139:2 *Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. 3. Thou compasses my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways*

God does not need your effort. He can do it all alone.

On the contrary man is to help himself.

Php 2:12 ¶ *Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.*

Eph 6:11 *Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.*

Just allow God take his time to work on you.

POST – 23: TOO OLD SKOOL FOR MY LIKING

The first century Christians forgot a lot of things that we do today in an attempt to worship God. My recent research into the first century writings of early fathers and church leaders have shown a huge difference between what they believed and practiced and what we do today in our attempt and desire to worship God.

Maybe they forgot that Christ was born and as such did not think it necessary to fix a day to celebrate his birthday. Today we do it as if it is a command.

Maybe they forgot to teach their members to pay tithe even when Barnabas, a Levite sold all he had and gave ALL to the growth of the church. Maybe the famine prophesied by Agabus was a small type and as such demanded a free will giving. I just found out that tithe payment resurfaced in the dying days of the 19th century. Not even one missionary preached about tithe in all their exploits in the America and Africa.

Maybe they forgot to employ instruments in their worship even when they met instruments in the temple which was not far from John Mark's mother's house, venue of their worship. In fact my very good friend Thomas Aquinas openly declared that using instrument in worship is practicing Judaism in Christianity. Today we are sounder than our early father.

Maybe they forgot to dedicate their babies or forgot to instruct us to do so to make the world know are godly. Some of us here reading today were not dedicated just like our parents were not. But we are so zealous to dedicate our children.

Maybe they forgot to divide the church into clergy and laity and one group very powerful and adorable to the extent of their words being taken as if Christ is the one speaking.

Maybe they forgot to give Stephen and others a befitting burial and their congregation budgets did not accommodate elaborate burials

There are so many things we do in terms of worshipping God that Peter and his team completely forgot. I wonder why they did not remember. Was their inspiration limited and ours today full?

Some will query the use of social media in evangelism and wonder if Paul used it to preach. The simple answer is it did not exist at that time. If it existed and was not used by the apostles for stated reasons, I will not engage in it.

The more we fail to resemble the first century church in doctrine and practice, we are a denomination owned by the devil but professing to be of God. Your practice defines you

Study with a church of Christ near you and be liberated from the grip of philosophies of men as you learn the pure and undiluted gospel.

POST – 24: MINOR DISOBEDIENCE IS ALSO DISOBEDIENCE

Num 20:7 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 8 Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink. 9 And Moses took the rod from before the LORD, as he commanded him. 10 And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? 11 And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also. 12 And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.

That passage above is powerful interaction between Moses and God. God had in Exodus 17:5 and 6 directed Moses to strike the rock with his rod so that water could come out and feed the children of Israel.

That command was still fresh in his memory. So when he got another instruction about the rock and water again, he decided to do things the way he thought God had wanted him to do.

He took the rod as directed. Verse 9

He gathered the congregation of the people. Verse 10

His only problem was that of speaking to the people instead of directing his speech to the wrong people.

He was directed to speak to the rock but rather spoke to the people.

He was directed to speak to the rock instead he struck the rock.

He thought it made no difference speaking or striking the rock.

But when the result came, he was told he has lost favour in the eyes of the lord and what he did was called disobedience. He lost his ticket to the promise land.

A technical analysis showed that Moses had been 75% compliant with God's instruction. But my friend, that was not enough. God expects a 100% compliant.

The moment we modify any of God's law to suit our own selfish desire, we are disqualified

POST – 25: SICK CONGREGATIONS

A congregation is sick where members only know each other on Sundays.

A sick congregation is quick to withdraw fellowship that did not exist at all.

A sick congregation has title holders who are so powerful that no decision can be taken without due reference to them even when their titles are strange to the scriptures.

A sick congregation does not plan for spiritual leadership. They are comfortable with their status quo.

A sick congregation can spend 1 million on its building project and 100k for evangelism.

A sick congregation plays politics with sin depending on who is involved.

A sick congregation loves socials far and above evangelism.

A sick congregation does not take time to evaluate itself and their preacher.

Going forward

Serious prayers should be organized.

Qualified men should be ordained elders and deacons.

The church should push evangelism to the forefront.

POST – 26: RULES TO KEEP THE FAMILY GOING

Make it a point of duty to know the limit and boundaries of everybody in the house. The man is the head, the woman is the neck and the children are the body of the family.

Eph 5:23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church; and he is the saviour of the body.

Eph 6:1 ¶ Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.

The man must be respected and even worshipped by the entire family. The head must consult the wife in all major family decisions.

1Pet 3:6 Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement

POST – 27: SUITABLE SELECTION

It is amazing why zealous religious people are not conscious of how they have been made to select what is convenient for their religious belief to fly.

I was reading through the Old Testament and found a very powerful passage that people seems to sweep under the carpet.

Lev 19:9 And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest. 10 And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather every grape of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger: I am the LORD your God.

From there I landed in this one

Deut 24:19 When thou cuttest down thine harvest in thy field, and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow: that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hands. 20 When thou beatest thine olive tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow. 21 When thou gatherest the grapes of thy vineyard, thou shalt not glean it afterward: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow

And while further research brought me to

Mal 3:10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. 11 And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts.

Then my thought went wild. How come today Mal 3: 10-11 seems to be a more powerful command than Lev 19:9-10 and Deut 24:19-21?

Are both passages not in the Old Testament?

I thought Christ nailed the Old to the cross and himself is the giver of the New?

Mt 26:28 For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

Why have our men of God forgotten a powerful command of God found in Leviticus and Deuteronomy?

Could it be that these commands in Leviticus and Deuteronomy are less important today and the one in Malachi required to make the church leaders happy?

I am getting more confused.

In all my research in the works of early church fathers like Josephus and Iranius, it is very clear that the Church at its infancy forgot the commands of the Old.

But why are we selectively accepting Malachi prophesy and rejecting the works of Moses?

Was Moses a lesser prophet to Malachi?

I found only one answer.

Christian do not pay tithes and the Old Testament has been replaced by the new.

In an attempt to justify tithes payment, Malachi is drafted to frighten the unsuspecting follower.

Let us not be deceived any longer.

POST – 28: CONFESSION OF FAITH IS INSUFFICIENT FOR FELLOWSHIP.

There is a faith which comes by hearing the word of God. Rom 10:17. This faith was once and for all delivered. Jude 1:3. The faith is singular Eph 4:4-5.

Christian profess this faith which must be sought for diligently Heb 11:6

Some could not endure the teachings associated with this faith. 2Tim 4:3.

Some even departed from the faith and followed the doctrines of men. 1Tim 4:1-3.

A departure from the faith signals a departure from fellowship.

Confession of faith is insufficient for fellowship.

1. Confession of faith is only a single phase in the plan of salvation and not the final phase. Beyond it lies baptism and faithful living. Mark 16:16.
2. The one who confesses faith in Christ and live faithfully is disobedient to the gospel. He has completely disregarded baptism which is key to salvation 1Peter 3:20-21
3. New Testament examples are littered all over the book of acts to show that each one who was saved completed the phases involved in the plan of salvation.

Let us be careful.

POST – 29: LIFE ATTITUDE TOWARDS GOD’S WORD

INTRODUCTION

Any man planning to build a house first of all draws a plan. This plan is handed over to the builder who follows the plan strictly. Just imagine for a moment if the builder usually leaves the plan at home and goes to site without it.

We are on earth with a desire to go to heaven. The plan to use to arrive there safely is the Bible. If we desire to enter heaven, then we must desire to make the plan book our companion.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PLAN BOOK - BIBLE

The Bible is simply **AMAZING**. Written by 40 men who lived within a span of 1500 years. It remains the best seller year after year. It contains records of the greatest relationship between God and man. It is amazing in its brevity. Great events are simply rendered. Made so simple, that all can appreciate the mystery of God. Just imagine for a minute how CNN would have reported the crossing of the Red sea. Several attempts in history have been made to destroy it and all come to naught. Its content is amazing, its poetic value is amazing. Its narrative is simply amazing. So amazing, man cannot live well without it.

The Bible is **AUTHENTIC**. It contains the revealed thoughts of God.

1Cor 2:9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. 10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. 11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. 13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

It is authentic in all ramifications and a reliable tool that points the pathway to heaven to all who desire to dwell with the king when this life is over here. It is what it says it is.

It is **ACCURATE**.

John 17:17 ¶ Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

What is written there is the truth and nothing but the truth. It does not depend on how man thinks it to be. God can not lie. Heb 6:18. The entire Bible is filled with accurate stories that are verifiable to confirm its accuracy. It is indeed amazing how authentic and accurate God will reveal his thought to us today. The promises of God will come to pass exactly as he has promised. Just mark it down.

The truth of the Bible is **ABSOLUTE** and remains constant. *Psalms 119:89 For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven.* It does not change from generation to generation. God did not forget anything he will now remember and decide to add. The truth of the Bible was truth before we were born. It is the truth today and will remain the truth till the Lord comes. The doctrine contained therein cannot be

rethought. Homosexuality was condemned in the days of Lot and stands a sin till today no matter how man may decide to twist it. People were baptized for salvation when the church started and so it shall remain the route to salvation. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation and so it shall remain. Miracles shall not replace it. The truth of the Bible does not depend on you and me reaching a certain conclusion about it.

The truth of the Bible is **ATTAINABLE**. *Eph 3:3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words 4. Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)*. We need to study the Bible to know the mind of God in it. It is possible.

It is **AUTHORITATIVE**. It is God's final authority for man to tap in matters of doctrine and believe. If the Bible teaches it, then it is right. If it is not traceable to the scriptures, then it is wrong regardless of who told you. It does not matter since the same person will stand before God on the Day of Judgment. A man may be a talented author; he will not do you good unless he is telling exactly what the Bible says.

The import is this brief lesson is to simply impress upon you that the Bible is God's word. What we need today is not man's opinion. The main duty of a preacher is to preach the word. The word of God alone should be preached. After all faith comes by hearing the word. Rom 10:17.

Let us devote time to study it that we might be pleasing to God.

Stay close to the Bible, you will be far from opinion.

Stay far from the Bible, you will embrace opinion and think it is doctrine.

Ps 119:105 ¶ *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path*

POST - 30: SIX BASIC REASONS FOR STUDYING THE BIBLE

1. IT IS A FAITH BUILDING TONIC FOR DAILY CONSUMPTION

Taking a reading of the Bible daily will help nourish you and your faith and keep you close to the creator. After all Faith comes by hearing the word of God. *Rom 10:17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

2. IT IS A LEADERSHIP MANUAL

Reading the Bible will improve your leadership skills. The Bible is filled with different leadership styles and the result of deploying each. Any great leader without good knowledge of the Bible is sure to have difficulties in dealing with his subjects. *Dan 4:25 That they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.*

3. IT IS A MOTIVATIONAL DOCUMENT

The Bible is littered with powerful statements that will keep a man in touch with his creator. God is captured as the last bus stop for man. *Joh 15:5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.*

4. IT IS A STORY BOOK

With over 400 stories and powerful lessons to draw from there, reading one story per day will refresh you and nourish your soul all year round as you prepare to face the challenges ahead of life. Some stories will even leave you wondering if you can define the limit of the powers of God. *1Cor 10:11 Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.*

5. IT IS A POWERFUL TOOL FOR PARENTING

The Bible is rich with sound parenting tools that once any man neglect it will land him in trouble. Great countries in this world have missed the mark in parenting because they have rejected the model provided by the Bible. If you spend time reading the Bible, you will not regret one bit at all.

Prov 22:6 ¶ Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it

6. IT IS THE ROAD MAP TO HEAVEN

The Bible is the road map to heaven. You cannot desire to go to heaven without taking pains to diligently study the work of the owner of heaven. *Psalms 119:105 Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*

So pick up your Bible today and start reading today and when next we meet, you will be glad you did. There is absolutely nothing you need that you will not find within the pages of the scriptures.

POST – 31: 3 QUICK SIGNS YOU ARE DRIFTING

1. Looking at doctrine with skepticism
2. Emphasizing moral lifestyles over doctrinal purity.
3. Seeing those who think of doctrine as sectarian.

Your days in the church are numbered.

It is obvious you are on your way out. If you know anybody with these traits, know for sure he is no longer with us.

Don't say I did not tell you. Even from their postings, you can smell it afar off.

Preachers in the first century had just a single focused opposition to preach to – Jews who thought Judaism is right. So their method of preaching was direct and well-tailored to help rescue the zealous Jews who thought they were in the right way.

Today the scene is completely complex. First you have over 7 major world religions competing for space. Then within Christianity, we have over 400,000 different belief systems. So preachers today need to be tactful in helping people out.

Some groups promote doctrine far above morality while others advocate for high level morality far above doctrine.

It is indeed complex.

Take baptism alone for instance; some say it is important to salvation and as such a prerequisite for salvation. Others argue that it is an outward show of inward grace.

Some say it is by immersion, others say any method will do thus accommodating sprinkling, pouring and beating.

Still there is the issue of the age for baptism. Some argue for infants while others say it is only for adults. So in preaching, you need to have a solid background of your audience. Firing only at a direction makes you look like you don't understand the scope of your evangelism.

Sometimes too, the life of the one preaching becomes an obstacle for his evangelism. People are quick to leave the truth you are presenting to look at your lifestyle. Once they find a glaring sin, it beclouds the judgment. So we must be very careful how we present the gospel.

1Cor 9:27 But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

1Tim 4:16 Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

POST – 32: WHY PEOPLE DELIBERATELY SIN

1. They usually think God did not see them.
2. He is merciful after all and will not punish his children.
3. He is not quick action like during the Old Testament era.

Five common sins willfully committed by us;

1. Exams malpractice
2. Lying
3. Financial deceit in debt pay back
4. Sexual immorality
5. Idolatry

Please just read these passages carefully

Heb 4:13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

Heb 10:31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

2Pet 3:9 ¶ *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*

Gal 6:7 *Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.*

It is time to think again.

2Ti 2:19 ¶ *Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity*

POST – 33: GIVE HIM YOUR HAND

Psalms 139:10 *Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.*

Isa 41:13 *For I the LORD thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee*

Deut 31:6 *Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.*

Brethren and friends, any attempt to go solo without surrendering our hands for God to hold is an indication of grave danger and open rebellion.

1Pet 5:8 ¶ *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:*

It is the design of the devil that we think we can walk without the assistance of God. The prodigal son attempted it and we all know the result.

Once the Lord let go your hands or you wriggle out your hands from his grip, it is an indication of handing it over to the devil to hold.

You must be held by somebody. Who is holding your hands? You alone can answer the question. From the external stand point, man can suspect who is holding your hands by your character and conduct.

Col 1:13 *Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:*

Eph 5:8 *For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light*

God cannot hold your hands if you are not willing to let go of sin.

God cannot hold your hands if you are comfortable with the devil holding it.

God cannot hold your hands if your hand is busy fluctuating and slippery from one control to another.

Holding your hands means being in charge of your life.

Rev 3:20 *Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.*

Repent and submit your hands at baptism Act 22:6. If you have already been baptized, then make a U-turn and surrender to his Lordship over you.

God bless you all.

POST – 34: INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Music: sound produce by mouth, instrument or both.

Instrument was used in the worship of God in the OT Num 10:10

David added more instruments Psalms 150:1-6

2Chron 29:20-29

20 ¶ *Then Hezekiah the king rose early, and gathered the rulers of the city, and went up to the house of the LORD.*

21 *And they brought seven bullocks, and seven rams, and seven lambs, and seven he goats, for a sin offering for the kingdom, and for the sanctuary, and for Judah. And he commanded the priests the sons of Aaron to offer them on the altar of the LORD.*

22 *So they killed the bullocks, and the priests received the blood, and sprinkled it on the altar: likewise, when they had killed the rams, they sprinkled the blood upon the altar: they killed also the lambs, and they sprinkled the blood upon the altar.*

23 *And they brought forth the he goats for the sin offering before the king and the congregation; and they laid their hands upon them:*

24 *And the priests killed them, and they made reconciliation with their blood upon the altar, to make an atonement for all Israel: for the king commanded that the burnt offering and the sin offering should be made for all Israel.*

25 *And he set the Levites in the house of the LORD with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, and of Gad the king's seer, and Nathan the prophet: for so was the commandment of the LORD by his prophets*

26 *And the Levites stood with the instruments of David, and the priests with the trumpets.*

27 *And Hezekiah commanded to offer the burnt offering upon the altar. And when the burnt offering began, the song of the LORD began also with the trumpets, and with the instruments ordained by David king of Israel*

28 *And all the congregation worshipped, and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded: and all this continued until the burnt offering was finished.*

29 *And when they had made an end of offering, the king and all that were present with him bowed themselves, and worshipped.*

30 *Moreover Hezekiah the king and the princes commanded the Levites to sing praise unto the LORD with the words of David, and of Asaph the seer. And they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshipped.*

Deductions from this passage

1. The use of instruments was done in the house of the Lord in verse 20.

2. Levites and the priests were the ones that handled the instruments in the worship service as approved by God in verses 25 and 26.
3. The trumpet was first used as soon as the burnt offering began.
4. The congregation joined in the singing until the burnt offering was completed.
5. After the burnt offering, the Levites sang vocally without the accompanying of instruments.

SUMMARY

Musical instruments were used in worship.

Specified individuals were designated to sing with instrument while others sang without it.

This was done while the burnt offering was going on.

The priests and Levites were the only ones authorized to use instruments.

The use of instrument was restricted to a time frame and after that the entire congregation sang without instrument.

Once there was a slight violation, God rejected the deployment of instrument Amos 6:1-5

So one can safely conclude that God approved the use of instrumental music in his worship in the Old Testament. In approving it, he defined who will use, when and how. Any attempt to adjust it was resisted by God as in the case of Amos.

POST – 35: SOMETHING TO PONDER

Just wondering why we are not learning from the mistakes of the past.

Cain offered a sacrifice that did not meet the standard and it was rejected. Gen 4: 1-5. The lesson there is that you don't go to God in your own terms.

Nadab and Abihu thought they could offer any fire to the Lord and they were burnt alive Lev 10:1-3.

Moses lost entering the Promised Land for "striking" the rock instead of "speaking" to it Num 20:6-12.

Today people are very comfortable doing what they like in the name of God.

The say we are under grace and God does not care about "petty details" anymore.

"So if you like sprinkle and call it baptism, it is ok. You are also free to dip someone inside water. God accepts all of it.

So if you like use instrument in your worship or sing vocally or use both styles, the Lord shall accept them all. It is the mind that God sees not all our methods.

So if you like take tithe in form of money or just accept offering as weekly collections or both, do all to please the Lord. He accepts it all as long as it comes from the heart.

So if you like be baptized or not after all the thief on the cross was not baptized, you are ok with the Lord.

So you can attend any church of your choice, the more the better the options available, God is present every where his name is called."

This kind of thinking is very strange to the God of the Bible.

It makes God a God of any standard.

So God shall accept any standard especially since he loves man so much.

Relax and read from his word

Mat 7:13 *Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: 14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and **few there be that find it***

Mat 7:21 ¶ *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that **doeth the will of my Father** which is in heaven.*

Mat 15:8 *This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.9 But in vain they do worship me, **teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.***

Gal 1:8 *But though we, or **an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel** unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.9 As we said before, so say I now again, **If any man preach any other gospel** unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed*

1Tim 4:1 ¶ *Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall **depart from the faith**, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;*

2Tim 4:3 *For the time will come when they will not **endure sound doctrine**; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;*

Dear friends,

You will agree that it is not correct to think any way is a way. You are either doing it God's way or your way.

It is time we reflect on what we have believed and immediately investigate to see that it has biblical authority, if not we have wasted our time.

POST – 36: CONDITIONAL STATEMENTS OF THE BIBLE

The Bible is a great book that requires comprehensive thought combination to make a meaning from its content.

God knows the way man his creature behaves. Therefore he has carefully tied some vital issues in life to special conditions which must not be toyed with.

Mark my word, anyone that thinks he is fast and can shortchange God, is wasting his time.

These few passages will help you appreciate how God operates with mankind.

1Kings 3:14 ***And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days.***

1Kings 9:4 *And if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and wilt keep my statutes and my judgments: 5 Then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel for ever, as I promised to David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man upon the throne of Israel. 6 But if ye shall at all turn from following me, ye or your children, and will not keep my commandments and my statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods, and worship them: 7 Then will I cut off Israel out of the land which I have given them; and this house, which I have hallowed for my name, will I cast out of my sight; and Israel shall be a proverb and a byword among all people:*

Exodus 23:32 *Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor with their gods. 33 They shall not dwell in thy land, lest they make thee sin against me: for if thou serve their gods, it will surely be a snare unto thee.*

2 Chronicles 7: 14 *If my people, which are called by my 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.*

John 15: 7 *If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you*

POST – 37: DEAR YOUNG PEOPLE OF GOD,

I write you today to express my displeasure over some of your behavior that does not portray you at all as true Christians.

Yes you a leading youth but check yourself. How many sisters have you promised to marry and kept in the dark? You make them begin to feel safe in the hands of outsiders because you have pretended for too long. They don't have the chance of mounting the pulpit but you have. You use the pulpit to speak to the church but yourself, you are in a deep mess. Let me tell you, it either you start today and work your salvation with fear and trembling or just live in pretense and be on the path to hell fire.

My sister, don't think I will not touch you. You cry brothers use you and dump you yet the church does not have a rape case. Instead of directing any man that comes your way to the preacher or best your dad for approval of the relationship, you try to try alone and open yourself wide and cheap and allow yourself to be exploited. Once the man gets what he wants, he is gone. Then you start shouting that the church is a failure.

Singles are free to mingle to the extent that there is nothing attached. Once emotions begin to develop, the preacher should be brought into the picture. SEX IS NOT A PART OF EMOTION BUILDING. IF YOU BRING IT IN, THEN FACE THE MUSIC.

My very beloved youth, I will be happy if this piece will make you very angry with me. But as I write, a lot of leading youth in most congregations of the Lord are sick spiritually and their life "at the back" is

zero. The Church does not know. Maybe they know but are afraid to speak up. I have decided to tell all of you to start today to examine yourself.

1. Am I in a relationship that sin is bubbling inside it?
2. Am I in a multi-tasking relationship with more than one person?
3. Does the church know my “moves”?

Know today that you are polluting the Church and God is very angry with you over that and who knows, you may be the one destroying your destiny.

God cannot be mocked, whatsoever you sow, you will surely reap it.

The way forward is simple. Clean your hands and seek counseling immediately. Only those in a pure relationship will sail through.

God bless you.

A preacher that loves the youth.

POST – 38: GROWING THE CHURCH THROUGH PLANNING AND EXECUTION OF PROGRAMMES

The church leadership must adequately plan for evangelism to cover the various shades of personalities found in the congregation. House to house is still the best but not good enough for urban cities and estates with very high fences. People should be shared into different aspects of evangelism. There is nothing wrong for the church sponsoring internet evangelism.

The church leadership must plan a solid reception party for new converts by evolving a sound new convert management class with lessons tailored to meet their needs.

The church leadership must put adequate plans on ground for effective education and edification of her members. If the saved are not fed well and kept strong in faith, they will not be able to withstand the wiles of the devil.

The leadership of the local congregation must plan adequately for the building of capacity of the youths to meet and deal with relationship challenges. Regular interactive session should be devised to create a simple platform for all to share their views moderated by the scriptures about how to start a family. Family and parenting education should form the most vital curriculum of this group.

The leadership must plan to develop leaders that will grow to take up leadership roles in new congregations to be established by the congregation. As the church plan for expansion in evangelism and establish new congregations, they should also plan to grow men that will take up the mantle of leadership.

The leadership of the church must plan to regularly evaluate the congregation. They should evaluate their own leadership. The members’ aptitude and their zeal and commitment for work in the vineyard should be evaluated. The preacher should be evaluated. During the period under review, the number of

souls gained or lost should be known. Is there a decline in the number of backsliders or otherwise? So many things to evaluate, if we plan as leaders.

Finally the church should plan for new areas that are emerging in the church. ICT and sound management are new areas that urgently need capacity development.

If we want the church to grow as Christ expects it, then we plan about growth. The church must grow first in the heart of members and then physically seen by onlookers.

Planning is key, if this must be achieved. If personal giving to God must be planned, think of what will happen to congregations without a single plan.

Members can remind their leaders of planning in the event they have forgotten.

POST – 39: GROWING THE CHURCH WITH MY SUBSTANCE

2 Sam 24:24 And the king said unto Araunah, Nay; but I will surely buy it of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the LORD my God of that which doth cost me nothing. So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver. (KJV)

1. God is not lacking anything and man is incapable of satisfying the wants and needs of God if he should make them known. Psalms 50:10-14
2. God created and owns everything in heaven and on earth. Gen 1:1-10
3. The church is a creation of God to show forth his manifold wisdom Eph 3:10.
4. When Christian give, they give to God indirectly though the Church. God does not come down from heaven to take the offering. He is pleased to see them give. 2Cor 9:7
5. So the church grows from the giving of her members.

POST – 40: THE CRUCIFIED LIFE LIVES AS HE/SHE IS CALLED

Text:1 Corinthians 7:17 – 24

To live as you are called has 3 fundamental truths that will drive home our thoughts.

1. YOU MUST KNOW WHO CALLED YOU:

John 6:44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. 65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

2. YOU MUST KNOW WHY YOU WERE CALLED:

Acts 13:2 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them

Acts 16:10 And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them

Rom 8:28 *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*

3. LIVE A LIFE WORTHY OF THE CALL

1Cor 7:17 ¶ *But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches. 18 Is any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision? let him not be circumcised. 19 Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God. 20 Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called. 21 Art thou called being a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather. 22 For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant. 23 Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men. 24 Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God*

Think again

- We were called by God and bought with a price.
- We are no longer our own.
- We are God's own.
- We must live according to the purpose wherein we were called

Put this fresh in your memory

- A Christian is called to service
- A Christian is called to lead others to Christ.
- A Christian is called by God to live a life worthy of the gospel of Christ.

Once a man be in Christ, the ball game is over. He is the property of Christ. II Cor 5:17

The Israelites forgot who called them and it landed them in captivity. They forgot the love God had for them. Jeremiah spent the whole book of lamentation crying for their foolishness.

The Corinthians too quickly forgot that God had called them and this call demanded a new pattern of life. Paul reminded them in the text we are considering today.

Some of us like the people of Corinth forget we were bought with a price.

1Cor 6:20 *For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.*

1Cor 7:23 *Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men.*

As we reflect on this talk, please meditate along with me.

1Pet 2:21 *For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps*

Jas 2:7 *Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called*

Heb 11:8 *By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went*

Heb 9:15 ¶ *And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance*

2 Tim 1:9 *Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,*

1Tim 6:12 *Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.*

1Thess 2:12 *That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.*

May God give us the strength to live as we are called to serve him faithfully to the end. Rev 2:10

POST – 42: A RICH KING WITH FOUR WIVES

Once upon a time there was a rich king who had four wives. He loved the fourth wife the most and adorned her with rich robes and treated her to the finest of delicacies. He gave her nothing but the best. He also loved the third wife very much and was always showing her off to neighboring kingdoms. However, he feared that one day she would leave him for another man.

He also loved his second wife. She was his confidante and was always kind, considerate, and patient with him. Whenever the king faced a problem, he could confide in her, and she would help him get through the difficult times.

The king's first wife was a very loyal partner and had made great contributions in maintaining his wealth and kingdom. However, he did not love the first wife. Although she loved him deeply, he hardly took notice of her!

One day, the king fell ill and knew his time was short. He thought of his luxurious life and wondered, 'I now have four wives with me, but when I die, I'll be all alone.'

Thus, he asked the fourth wife, 'I have loved you the most, endowed you with the finest clothing and showered great care over you. Now that I'm dying, will you follow me and keep me company?'

'No way!' replied the fourth wife, and she walked away without another word. Her answer cut like a sharp knife right into his heart.

The sad king then asked the third wife, 'I have loved you all my life. Now that I'm dying, will you follow me and keep me company?' 'No!' she replied. 'Life is too good! When you die, I'll remarry!' His heart turned cold. He then asked the second wife, 'I have always turned to you for help, and you've always been there for me. When I die, will you follow me and keep me company?' 'I'm sorry, but I can't help this time!' replied the second wife. 'At the very most, I can only walk with you to your grave.' Her answer struck him like a bolt of lightning. The king was devastated.

Then a voice called out: 'I'll go with you. I'll follow you no matter where you go.' The king looked up and saw his first wife. She was very skinny as she suffered from malnutrition and neglect. Greatly grieved, he said, 'I should have taken much better care of you when I had the chance!' In truth, we all have the four wives in our lives:

Our fourth wife is our body. No matter how much time and effort we lavish in making it look good, it will leave us when we die.

Our third wife is our possessions, status, and wealth. When we die, these will go to others.

Our second wife is our family and friends. No matter how much they have been there for us, they can't go with us past the grave.

Our first wife is our soul. We often neglect it in pursuit of wealth, power, and pleasures of the world. However, our soul is the only thing that will follow us wherever we go. Cultivate, strengthen, and cherish it now, for it is the only part of us that will follow us to the throne of God and continue with us throughout eternity.

POST – 43: TECHNICAL ADVICE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE STARTING LIFE

1. Nothing is free in this life
2. It does not always look like you think
3. The man's shoulder should be strong before he invites the woman in.
4. Look inward first before looking outward.
5. How it is gotten and how it is spent are both required by God
6. The impression others make about you is vital
7. The Bible is the faith building tonic
8. The Lord is seeing you
9. It is in your own hands.

POST – 44: WHERE ARE YOU?

When God asked Adam this question in the Garden of Eden, he was not looking for him regarding his physical location which he already knew as God. He was asking him how he was standing spiritually. He was in the Garden quite well only in the physical. His spirit has since moved to dine with the devil. Today you could be in the church but your spirit is with the devil. You could be singing and others are excited and edified but deep inside you know you don't belong here.

Today you could preach a powerful sermon and the congregation gives you a standing ovation but you know deep inside you that you don't belong here.

Your heart is with the devil if you still live and practice sin. You are his right hand man.

You are to answer that question right now. Where are you?

No wonder Paul said each of our work will be tested and only that which endures will stand the test of time.

The answer is personal.

May this short message force you to think about your current standing with the creator.

After all, that is all that will be required when we drop this tabernacle.

Then all we have or have worked for will mean nothing to us.

Where are you?

POST – 45: THE POTTER AND THE CLAY

Isa 64:8 But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand.

Rom 9:20 Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus 21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?

Isa 45:9 Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherd of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands?

Jer 18:6 O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel.

Isa 29:16 Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter's clay: for shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no understanding?

5 basic truths from the forgoing

1. God is the potter and we are the clay. That truth is unshakeable. It is unchangeable and cannot be modified.
2. We are the works of God's hand.
3. The clay cannot advise the potter how it should be made. It does not have any right. Just like an unborn baby cannot determine which family it will be belong or who the mother will be.
4. The clay does not have any right to accuse the potter of being made bad.
5. The potter knows what is good to do with the clay. It is in his own hands.

Dear friends,

God is the one we should worship and only he deserves our praise. He is to determine how he is worshipped. Man does not have the ability to tell God how he will be worshipped. Any attempt to do that makes man the potter and God the clay.

It is the desire of God that we live only for him. He is our God and we are his children. We are to listen to him and take instructions from him in all things.

Look around you and you will realize that some men are now gods being worshipped by their followers. They tell God what they think is good for God. God is commanded in prayers as if he is their classmate. His son is forced to accept a date of birth as his birthday even when it apparent he “forgot” to mark the day while he was on earth.

The Bible is today reminding you of your humble position. The potter has a haven of rest for all obedient children. Any child who thinks he is a potter should prepare to go to his own heaven. After all if you are a potter, then you should be old enough to have your own heaven.

Heb 10: 31 *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

Once you recognize that Jesus is the Lord of your life and you are the clay, then forsake your evil ways and turn to God in baptism to start the race of life.

Eph 2:10 *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them*

Act 2: 37 ¶ *Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? 38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*

POST – 46: 4 WAY DOCTRINE TEST

1. Can you trace the doctrine to the pages of the Bible? Is there a Biblical approval for such practice? If your answer is yes, mark it good. If no, mark it bad.
2. Is the doctrine a component of the Jewish practice of the Old Testament and selectively drafted to the church today? If yes, find out why it was brought forward and others of the same ranking left behind in the Old Testament.
3. Did the first century church include that doctrine in their day to day operation of maybe they forgot and our churches today seems to have remembered.
4. Does the doctrine have the signature and approval of Christ and his apostles? Check very well.

Just carefully read through these passages

1. A church leader can lie and mislead his congregation.

Jer 5:31 *The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof*

Jer 14:14 *Then the LORD said unto me, The prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart.*

Eze 13:6 *They have seen vanity and lying divination, saying, The LORD saith: and the LORD hath not sent them: and they have made others to hope that they would confirm the word.*

2Pet 2:1 ¶ *But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.*

2. Members who accept without cross-checking are doing their souls harm.

1Tim 4:1 ¶ *Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;*

2Tim 4:3 *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;*

2John 1:9 *Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.*

Listen to Christ and then Paul

Matthew 15:8 *This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. 9 But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.*

Gal 1:8 *But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.*

May the good Lord open our eyes. Amen

A Christian is not the one who carries a Bible, but the one who practice what the Bible is saying.

A Christian is not the one who goes to church, but the one whom the church reforms to reflect Christ in his life.

A Christian does not need introduction as being a Christian. His life starts the introduction.

POST – 47: SETTING YOUR PRIORITY

A professor of philosophy stood before his class with some items in front of him. When the class began, wordlessly he picked up a large empty mayonnaise jar and proceeded to fill it with rocks about two inches in diameter. He then asked the students if the jar was full.

They agreed that it was full.

So the professor then picked up a box of pebbles and poured them into the jar. He shook the jar lightly and watched as the pebbles rolled into the open areas between the rocks. The professor then asked the students again if the jar was full.

They chuckled and agreed that it was indeed full this time.

The professor picked up a box of sand and poured it into the jar. The sand filled the remaining open areas of the jar. “Now,” said the professor, “I want you to recognize that this jar signifies your life. The rocks are the truly important things, such as your relationship with God, his Church, family, health and

relationships. If all else was lost and only the rocks remained, your life would still be meaningful. The pebbles are the other things that matter in your life, such as work or school. The sand signifies the remaining “small stuff” and material possessions.

If you put sand into the jar first, there is no room for the rocks or the pebbles. The same can be applied to your lives. If you spend all your time and energy on the small stuff, you will never have room for the things that are truly important.

Pay attention to the things in life that are critical to your happiness and well-being. Take time to study God’s word, spend time doing his work, get medical check-ups, play with your children, go for a run, write your grandmother a letter. There will always be time to go to work, clean the house, or fix the disposal. Take care of the rocks first – things that really matter. Set your priorities. The rest is just pebbles and sand.

POST – 48: DOES GOD BELIEVE IN YOU?

Job 1:6-13

God believed Job could withstand the pressure and not bow to the devil.

Does he believe in you?

The devil thought Job was serving God because of his wealth. Job 1:10 *Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.*

He is on duty to make sure you miss heaven. 1Pet 5:8 Rev 12:10

Job 16:19 God is seeing us.

Does God believe in you?

Job 2:4-5 the devil still moves further. The devil thought Job was serving God because of his good health. *4. And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. 5 But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face.*

It is a great thing for God to believe in us by sending his son to earth to free us from the hands of the devil and give us liberty.

God has motivated us in that while we were yet sinners he sent his son to die in our stead.

Rom 5:8 *But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

But does he believe in you?

Can he say the same thing he said of Job about you?

Are you with him or you are with the devil already?

Are you making God not to believe in you? Eph 4:30

Is your life making him not to believe in you?

He knows we can make mistake. He equally knows we will be living with bad people. **Phil 2:15** *That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world*

But for sure he is willing to forgive all who run to him with the hope of never falling there again.

Just make your effort and assure God that his belief in you is not in vain.

It will be a great disaster if after all he has invested in you to come to him, you reject it and land in hell.

It means the devil has won.

God believes you will make it to meet with him. **2Pet 3:9** ¶ *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*

He has a path we all should follow to get back to him.

Acts 2:38 *Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*

If you are already baptized, then live faithfully to the end.

Rev 2:10 *Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.*

POST – 49: THE CONSEQUENCES OF JUST ONE SIN

Sin is 99 percent good food and 1 percent rat poison. It is small and can do huge damage. Just imagine one silly word spoken to your family member and check out the damage. In this lesson we shall look at some consequences of just one sin.

1. **IT WILL HAVE A HARMFUL EFFECT** - By its nature, that single sin will have a harmful effect on your person and spirit. You may not die immediately like eating junk food, it will gradually harm and ultimately kill you. Num 32:23. Your sin will find you out. Mark it down and make it sink deep in your heart. Let us visit the Bible for one time sinners. Adam and Eve only eat one fruit to land them in trouble. David only looked once lustfully and a chain reaction was set up. Ananias and Sapphira only lied once and death was beaoning. So, how many times will I commit fornication before she will be pregnant? How many times will I commit adultery before it will be called adultery? No one can get away with the consequences of one sin Gal 6:7.
2. **IT CAN HURT YOUR INFLUENCE.** Just one single sin can destroy the entire lifetime reputation you have built. One single bad makes the entire village forget all the good that you have done. One reckless moment from one sinful act will make you lose your influence. Even if you may repent, it may take time before you can regain the confidence in the heart of those who hitherto held you in high esteem.

3. **IT CAN BREED OTHER SINS.** David is a good example. David did not know the chain effect of sin. From lusting at a woman, adultery sets in. This gave birth to murder and even a loss of the throne. If someone had told David that he will go down because of just one sin. From sin to sins. Maybe because you were not caught and disgraced, you continue in it. Eccl 8:11. In an attempt to cover up the first sin, you may commit another one and the chain reaction continues.
4. **IT CAN HARDEN YOUR HEART.** Sin can fool you into hardening of your heart Heb 5:13. One hard thing to do is stopping a sinful act after we have started. That is why it is not good to even start at all. First the conscience sees it as sin, that after several acts, it then looks normal. That same sin now makes me look at others who desire me to be corrected as evil. The one sin man gradually hardened his heart. Each time you yield to sin, it creates a big room for you to do well the next time.
5. **IT CAN CHANGE YOU ATTITUDE TOWARDS OTHERS.** First the one who is not guilty looks at the one sin brother with disrespect and sadness. In Nigeria we will say “bros, you don fall my hand”. This simply means, you have fallen below expectation. Secondly, the one who is guilty might begin to see others offering him help to come out of the mess as enemies and or those coming to mock him. It will gradually lead you from staying with the brethren and by extension withdraw fellowship from the saints. So many people leave the church just because of the exposure of their one sin.
6. **IT CAN COST YOU YOUR SOUL.** Sin can easily rob a man of his eternal bliss with God. One single sin committed by Simon in Act 8 led him to lose his eternal inheritance. It is as bad as that. The wages of sin is death. But the gift of God is eternal life.
7. **IT CARRIES THE GUILT OF ALL OF THEM.** James 2:8-11. Just one sin makes you fall into the category of sinners. Our classification of sins into small or big makes us to think that small sins have no guilt. No matter how small the sin is, you have missed the mark and God will keep you apart. Isa 59:1. God no longer hears your cry of help.

Let us not make any mistake to think that it just only one sin. It is like just one bottle of alcohol. It is loaded and has a huge effect on the eternal direction of the soul.

Before you plan to sin, please think of these consequences associated with just only one sin. May God help us to refrain from willful sins knowing we cannot get away with it.

POST - 50: WAS THERE A CHURCH DURING THE TIME OF CHRIST?

No sir

Christ lived under the law Gal 4:4

The marriage in Cana was not held in the church John 2

Christ promise to build the church Matt 16:18

He prophesied the coming of the church Mark 9:1

His blood was needed for the church to be purchased Acts 20:28

His testament can only come alive at the death of the testator Heb 9:16-17

Jesus and John were preparing people for the kingdom Matt 9:35

Christianity and the church began on the day of Pentecost Acts 2: 1-42

You are free to come and be a part of the church that Jesus established.

POST-51: CORRECTION IS A BIBLE PRINCIPLE

The last few days have caused me to have a rethink on this issue of “judge not” as it is used, abused and misapplied in biblically based discussion.

My write up today is to show bible passages that clearly teach that correction is approved and is not judging at all.

The bible is written to be used for correction

2Tim 3:16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, FOR CORRECTION, for instruction in righteousness:

God corrects us when we derail

Jer 30:11 For I am with thee, saith the LORD, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee: but I will CORRECT THEE in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished.

Parents are to correct their children

Prov 29:17 ¶ Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul.

Prov 22:15 ¶ Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.

Sometimes our wicked lives generate a correction for us in the process of life

Jer 2:19 Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the LORD thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord GOD of hosts.

Men don't like correction

Prov 15:10 ¶ Correction is grievous unto him that forsaketh the way: and he that hateth reproof shall die

Jer 5:3 O LORD, are not thine eyes upon the truth? thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction: they have made their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to return.

You cannot correct effectively without first pointing out the sin

Nathan pointed out the sins of David

2Sam 12:9 *Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon.*

Samuel pointed out the sins of Saul

1Sam 15:22 *And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. 23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king.*

The fundamental question to ask is, were Saul and David not anointed men of God in their time? Why were their sins pointed out? So Nathan that did the correction had no sin to be qualified to point out David sins?

It might interest you to note that Samuel who was correcting Saul had his children not walking upright.

We mix up issues today when we fail to analyze the context of first remove the log in your own eyes. I could be a fornicator yet unnoticed and the topic of late coming is in the front burner and I know I am not a late comer. I am free to correct the one coming late. At least in that area, I am clean. Woe unto me if because my sin of adultery is yet unnoticed, I preside over a meeting where an adultery case is discussed and I make bold to correct such a person. Rom 2:21 *Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? 22. Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?*

That is where that principle is applied.

Apostle Paul did not need to be sinless to correct Peter when he fumbled over the issue of circumcision. Gal 2:11 ¶ *But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.*

If we all wait to be sinless before effecting correction, then no one shall be corrected.

May the good lord open our eyes and hearts to correction and not hide under the umbrella of Judge not to continue evil.

POST-52: IT IS NOT CORRECT

It is not correct to put a girl under your roof and reap the dividends thereof when you have not paid for it at the appropriate quarters. Don't call yourself a Christian. Jesus did not teach that style.

It is not correct to bring children to this world and abandon them for others to take care for you when you are alive and strong. Don't call yourself a Christian. Jesus did not teach that style.

It is not correct to request a loan from a brother and after collecting it sleep and forget and pretend as if you were not given anything. Don't call yourself a Christian. Jesus did not teach that style.

It is not correct to create drain pipes in your financial handling and turn round to envy your friend who is prudently managing his own and making progress. Don't call yourself a Christian. Jesus did not teach that style.

It is not correct to dictate to someone what he must present to you and your group when he is bereaved as a condition for your coming to mourn with him. Don't call yourself a Christian. Jesus did not teach that style.

It is not correct to lead people to say "I do" and still be eating a similar thing outside the house. Don't call yourself a Christian. Jesus did not teach that style.

It is not correct to abuse and curse the man who did not drive well in front or behind you on the road. Don't call yourself a Christian. Jesus did not teach that style.

It is not correct to live in luxury and your parents are wallowing in abject poverty. Don't call yourself a Christian. Jesus did not teach that style.

It is not correct not to find time and relax with your family so that your kids will know you and you know them and their classes.

POST -53: THE KOMODO DRAGON

I was watching a documentary on NatGeoWild and the searchlight for that day was giant lizard known as the Komodo dragon. It looked like a crocodile but lives on land. Because of its giant size, its movement and reflexes are not sharp.

But it has one special feature that makes it deadly. The commentator remarked that, faced between a lion, a crocodile and a Komodo dragon, it is safer to run to the direction of the Lion or crocodile. I was shocked.

He explained that the crocodile and lion has very sharp teeth which can inflict heavy injury on its prey and if it escapes, it can go home and nurse its wounds to heal. But the Komodo dragon is "blessed" with a special killing poison located at the front part of its teeth.

Just a little scratch from the mouth of the Komodo dragon is all it needs to have you for dinner.

Once the Komodo dragon makes contact with any part of your body, it leaves a huge deposit of deadly poison that will certainly kill you in less than an hour. So all it does is to try and make a "simple contact".

Then it will gently follow you and supervise your death. It knows for sure you will die.

Brethren most sins are like poison deposited by the Komodo dragon. At the first instance one will

argue that nothing will happen, but in a time not too far, the poison will begin to have the undesired effect.

Promiscuity at the surface looks innocent but will gradually bring sexually transmitted diseases and ultimately untimely death.

Fornication at the surface looks innocent but will gradually bring cohabitation and pseudo marriage.

And there is the thinking that one day we will marry and that day may never come.

One glass of strong drink at the surface looks innocent but will gradually destroy homes, destroy others not even connected to the sin and bring great men to naught.

One false move in "looking outside" your marriage at the surface is projected as nothing, but the poison that act will inflict on your marriage is deadly.

I fear the Komodo dragon and Solomon agrees with me.

Prov 22:3 ¶ A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished.

Be careful brethren. It may not appear to you as a sin, but ultimately it has grave consequences.

PART 3

SPIRITUAL HEART DISEASES

Matt 15:18 *But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. 19. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: 20. These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man.*

CHAPTER 1

WATCH YOUR HEART

The heart is a human organ responsible for pumping blood. The heart is a hollow, muscular organ, which functions as a pump for the movement of blood through the body. Beyond this physical and medical function, the heart also spiritually is responsible for the storage, manipulation and management of our thoughts.

Jesus advised that we should be very careful with the heart.

Matt 15:18 But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. 19. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: 20. These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man.

The heart is the central processing unit of the human system. If you don't watch your heart carefully you will see yourself heading towards hell consciously.

Mark 7:21 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, 22 Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: 23 All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

So none of those sins listed above happen by mistake. They require some planning and the heart is the manufacturing room.

A godly heart will manufacture a godly product. A devilish heart will display a devilish product.

Jeremiah was inspired to alert us that, *"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"* Jer 17:9

So as true children of God, you may be deceived by your heart to think that you are in order.

Your heart may deceive you to think that having a sleeping mate is a good road to marriage. The Bible calls you a fornicator.

Your heart may deceive you to think that lying is a negligible sin and inconsequential, the Bible says ALL liars have their end in the lake of fire.

Rev 21:8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

Your heart may deceive you that God will understand and the grace of God will carry you through. Listen very carefully. The Bible knows the mathematics associated with willful sin and the abuse of grace.

Heb 10:26 For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,

Rom 6:1 ¶ *What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? 2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?*

Your heart may lead you to think that extra marital affairs is justified because you are unfairly treated at home by your spouse. Relax and think straight. The marriage bed should remain undefiled.

Heb 13:4 *Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.*

Your heart may deceive you to think that God is not seeing you. You are just joking with fire. Whereas the Lord is good and loving, he is also a consuming fire. The bible states clearly that everything is open and naked before him Heb 4:13.

Watch your heart brethren and friends. Watch what goes in and watch what comes out.

The world can see the gift but the Lord sees the motive and intention of the giver.

PRAYER

May the Lord help me clean up my heart of things that are capable of shipwrecking our plans to meet him in heaven.

CHAPTER 2

ENVY

WHAT IS ENVY?

Envy is a depraved affection or passion of the mind, disposing a man to hate or malign another for some good or achievement belonging to him, which the envious person judges him unworthy of, and which for the most part he wants himself. Or yet more briefly: envy is a certain grief of mind conceived upon the sight of another's felicity, whether real or supposed.

TYPES OF ENVY

FRIENDSHIP-TRIGGERED ENVY: Envy caused by simple overtaking of another in the pursuit of life. Cain and Abel in Gen 4.

BLIND ENVY: Here the one envying the other does not know any detail about the things he is envying the person about.

MANIFESTATION OF ENVY

The one envying someone first feels inferior and greatly desires that which the other has as what he or she ought to have.

It is a feeling that breeds covetousness.

CAUSES OF ENVY

Envy is **caused** by a dissatisfaction with self-image—your perception of your actual stature. This dissatisfaction is also called low self-esteem—a poor self-appraisal of your actual stature. Because you feel inferior to the person you **envy**, **envy** is related to shame.

- Lack of contentment.
- Lack of self-discipline and self-control.
- Misunderstanding of body language and moves.
- Pride on the part of the one being envied

The one who is being envied most often does not know he is being envied.

- Maybe he is promoted.
- Maybe he has achieved something good and that makes him popular.
- Maybe he is rich in material things
- Undue promoting by others as it was in the case of David and Saul

EFFECTS OF ENVY

- It kills you from inside. Prov 14:30
- It destroys relationships. Joseph was sold by his brothers as a result of envy. Acts 7:9
- It weakens trust and places us on the carnal lane. 1Cor 3:3.
- It breeds strife and opens doors for confusion. James 3:14, 16

- It does not create genuine room for “how did you go about it”. Instead of the Jews asking how Paul was able to pool a huge crowd to listen to him, they were rather envious of him. Acts 13:45 and Acts 17:5.
- It is counterproductive. Saul chased David instead of pursuing the Philistines and Amalekites. Instead of the Jews to partner with Jesus in his evangelism efforts, they rather envied his successes. Matt 27:18, Mark 15:10
- It leads to death. Cain ultimately killed his brother Abel. Jesus was killed as a result of envy. Matt 27:18, Mark 15:10

HOW TO CLEAN ONESELF FROM ENVY

1. Know that it is a sin and can take one into hell. Gal 5:21, James 4:5 , James 3:14
2. Know that it is the one who envies another that is sick at the sight of the other person or the mention of his name. David and Saul. 1Sam18:1-9
3. Focus on Jesus and your desire to go and reach him when you die.
4. Listen to the advice of Paul. Rom 13:13, Gal 5:26
5. Do not even envy sinners. Prov 23:17
6. Let the word of God dwell richly in me to use it to battle envy. Col 3:16

PRAYER

May the Lord give us the grace to completely do away with envy and live like Christ would have us live to his glory. Amen

CHAPTER 3

HATRED

Hatred is a state of mind expressed when a person dislikes a thing or a person or a situation. This expression is usually expressed in words and in action.

Hatred is traceable most often from envy. It helps to manifest the state of envy. It is envy in action.

The Bible describes it with fine poetry.

Prov 15:17 *Better is a dinner of herbs where love is than a fatted ox and hatred with it. (RSV)*

It was supposed to be a thing of the past. God knows it is one big human sickness and we have to deal with.

Tit 3:3 *For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.*

You can cause people to hate you.

1. If you are proud and full of yourself.
2. If you are successful and still stingy and crafty.
3. If you speak the truth when you ought to lie.

2 Chron 18:7 *And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, There is yet one man, by whom we may enquire of the LORD: but I hate him; for he never prophesied good unto me, but always evil: the same is Micaiah the son of Imla. And Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so.*

People can hate you for no just cause.

Saul hated David for no just cause. Psalms 69:4 *They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head: they that would destroy me*

The Jews hated Jesus for no just cause

THE IMPACT OF HATRED ON CHRISTIAN LIFE

The one who hates is still in darkness.

1John 2:11 *But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.* 1John 3:15 *Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.*

The one who hates is a liar.

1John 4:20 *If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? 21 And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.*

Rev 2:6 *But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.*

If the world hate you for doing what is right, don't worry, it is part of the bargain.

John 15:18 ¶ *If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. 19. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.*

Your duties to those that hate you

Mt 5:44 *But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you*

It even attracts blessing

Luke 6:22 *Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake*

One striking thought; once you die, you can't hate anybody anymore.

Eccl 9:6 *Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion forever in anything that is done under the sun.*

THE WAY FORWARD

Hatred is sin and can take one to hell fire.

Gal 5:19 *Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20 Idolatry, witchcraft, **hatred**, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies*

Flush it out of your mind.

Leave vengeance to God.

Rom 12:19 *Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.*

Pray that the Lord helps you clean your heart of hatred.

Learn to hate sin and evil.

Amos 5:15 *Hate the evil, and love the good*

Rom 12:9 *Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.*

God is happy if you hate sin.

Psalms 119:104 *Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way.*

Psalms 97:10 *Ye that love the LORD, hate evil: he preserveth the souls of his saints; he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked.*

PRAYER

May the good Lord help us to truly remove hatred from our lives. Amen.

CHAPTER 4

MALICE

Malice is a strong feeling of hatred that leads to hostility, bitterness or unfriendly attitude towards another person.

It generates bad blood in the heart of the one harbouring malice and breeds the spirit of vindictiveness and revenge.

Dictionary.com defines malice as a desire to inflict injury, harm, or suffering on another, either because of a hostile impulse or out of deep seated meanness.

It was a strong theme in the Pauline epistles and deserves our critical attention today.

1Cor 5:8 *Therefore, let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*

1Cor 14:20 *Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.*

Eph 4:31 *Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:*

Col 3:8 ¶ *But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.*

Titus 3:3 *For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.*

1Pet 2:1 ¶ *Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings,*

THINK DEEP

Malice is resident in your heart if you are quick to laugh at the fall of another especially somebody that has hurt you.

Malice is resident in your heart if you wish someone who does not agree with you should fail.

Malice is a tenant in your heart if you are quick to see the bad side of others and never see any good thing in their life.

Once you hate somebody, the tendency of malice setting in is the next line of action.

Once you envy somebody, the tendency to hate is born and malice is activated.

Let us clean up malice from our hearts. It is capable of taking someone to hell.

CHAPTER 5

UNFORGIVING SPIRIT

This is a very special spirit that has plagued Christianity and will carry so many to hell. It is a firm determination not to forgive anybody who crosses the line of our expectations.

1. Refusing to cancel the debt. Leaving it still outstanding.
2. It can be conscious and deliberate and sometimes unconscious.
3. It can be generational in nature. Some people drag forgiveness to so many generations.
4. It gives birth to revenge, hatred and malice.

WHY IS FORGIVENESS VERY HARD FOR MANKIND?

1. We feel the pain of the injury caused on us by the other person. Jesus and Stephen
2. We feel the shame and trauma caused by the other person. When someone lied against you.
3. We sometimes see the scar of the injury. It constantly reminds us of that event.

The Bible has spoken and will still speak even today.

Mt 6:14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: 15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Please forgive others for your own sake. It is a blank cheque for you to get God's forgiveness.

Mrk 11:25 And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. 26 But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses. Refusing to forgive hinders your progress in life. Satan takes advantage of us. It is satanic to refuse to forgive.

2Cor 2:10 To whom ye forgive anything, I forgive also: for if I forgave anything, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ; 11 Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.

Try and get over it.

When you forgive, you raise the bar far above and makes you resemble the Lord. When you don't forgive, you fall below the standard. Luke 6:32-35

THE WAY FORWARD

Open your heart and free yourself from the trap of an unforgiving heart.

Forgive to resemble God.

Col 3:13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

Eph 4:32 *And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.*

CHAPTER 6

PRIDE

Pride is one big sin that appears so small and negligible in the eyes of the one having it.

Pride is excessive belief in one's own abilities that interferes with the individual's recognition of the grace of God. It has been called the sin from which all others arise. Pride is also known as Vanity

MANIFESTATIONS OF PRIDE

1. Seeing oneself taller than one's height.
2. Thinking your position is always the best.
3. Looking down on others
4. Having an air of superiority
5. Taking credit for any achievement in life
6. Not seeing one's fault even after being persuaded to see it.

A peep into the holy writ reveals a lot of teaching on pride.

Psalms 10:2 The wicked in his pride doth persecute the poor: let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined

Psalms 10:4 The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts.

Psalms 31:20 Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.

Psalms 36:11 Let not the foot of pride come against me, and let not the hand of the wicked remove me.

Psalms 59:12 For the sin of their mouth and the words of their lips let them even be taken in their pride: and for cursing and lying which they speak.

Psalms 73:6 Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment.

Prov 8:13 The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.

Prov 11:2 ¶ When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom.

Prov 13:10 ¶ Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom.

Prov 14:3 ¶ In the mouth of the foolish is a rod of pride: but the lips of the wise shall preserve them.

Prov 16:18 ¶ Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.

Prov 29:23 ¶ A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit.

There is another form of pride which pushes the individual to take the glory reserved for God upon himself because of a feat he has achieved.

We will look at king Nebuchadnezzar in the Old Testament,

Dan 4:30 *The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty? 31 While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee.*

Herod in the New Testament

Acts 12:22 *And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man. 23 And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.*

EFFECT OF PRIDE ON THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

1. Pride blocks fellowship. (I can't come down to mix with him)
2. It breeds class mentality. (We are not on the same level)
3. Pride does not allow people to see their sin. (Who is he to talk to me)

CLOSING REMARKS

If you don't destroy pride, it will destroy you first.

It will take you straight to hell

God resists those with pride.

1Pet 5:5 *For God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble*

It is the thin line between righteousness and self-righteousness.

May the Lord help us.

CHAPTER 7

EVIL THOUGHTS

Evil thoughts: These are thoughts that run through the heart of man. There are classified as evil because there are harmful to the individual engaged in it. That is why in Matt. 15:19, Jesus included evil thoughts as one of those things that defiles a man.

Right from Gen. 6, one of the things that caused God to destroy the world was evil thoughts, (Gen. 6:5). The brothers of Joseph had evil thoughts against him but did not know that God has the powers to make things aright according to his power. Gen 50:20

An evil thought is generated, processed and delivered from the heart and God does not like it at all, (Prov. 15:26).

In Prov 23:7, it is clearly stated that as a man thinketh in his heart so is he.

God recognizes the power of the evil thoughts and its devastating effect when he guided Solomon to advice in Prov. 24:17.

Jesus was able to read the thoughts of the scribes and Pharisees and smelled hatred and envy in their hearts.

THE WAY FORWARD

Evil thoughts should be dismissed and brought under control.

2 Cor 10:5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

Think like God

Jer 29:11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected

Apostle Paul recommended that evil thoughts should be brought under control. In Philippians' 4:8, Paul even recommended the things the heart should be concentrated on.

PRAYER

Free my heart oh Lord from evil thoughts and make me resemble you. Amen

CHAPTER 8

DECEIT

This is the act or practice of deceiving; concealment or distortion of the truth for the purpose of misleading; - (Dictionary.com)

Yourdictionary.com defines deceit as the act of being dishonest using a trick or telling a lie.

It is first calculated in the heart and the actions falls along.

The problem with this act is that most of us take it very lightly and think it does not matter.

The devil is the father of deceit. Right from the Garden of Eden, the devil started his work. Eve was deceived. 1Tim 2:14 *And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.*

Jacob deceived his father and took the blessing meant for Esau.

Prov. 12:20 ¶ *Deceit is in the heart of them that imagine evil: but to the counsellors of peace is joy.*

Prov. 20:17 ¶ *Bread of deceit is sweet to a man; but afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel*

APPLICATION OF DECEIT

DECEIT IN THE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

Prov 11:1 ¶ *A false balance is abomination to the LORD: but a just weight is his delight.*

Prov 20:23 ¶ *Divers weights are an abomination unto the LORD; and a false balance is not good*

Amos 8:5 *Saying, When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and falsifying the balances by deceit?*

DECEIT EVEN IN THE HOUSE OF GOD

Prophet Jeremiah was the first to shout about deceit in the house of God amongst those who claim to be “men of God”

Jer 14:14 *Then the LORD said unto me, The prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart.*

Jer 23:26 *How long shall this be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies? yea, they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart;*

The old prophet deceived the young prophet in 1Kings 13:1-20 and the result was devastating.

Paul dissociated himself from those who practice deceit

1Thess 2:3 *For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile:*

2Cor 7:2 *Receive us; we have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man.*

Apostle Peter equally cleared himself of deceit.

2 Pet 1:16 ¶ *For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty*

WARNING

Col 2:8 *Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.*

GENERAL DECEIT IN BROAD DAY LIGHT

1. Manipulation of birth date and false declaration of age.
2. Collecting money from APC and voting PDP and vice versa.
3. Failure to declare that you have a child before marriage.
4. Deliberate poor accounting and hiding under miscellaneous.
5. Misleading the congregation on simple financial dealings.
6. Arriving 8am and signing 7.14am in your office.
7. Writing false report about your evangelical work to impress your sponsors.
8. Eye service in the workplace
9. Promising a miracle and healing when you cannot deliver.

EFFECT OF DECEIT ON THE CHURCH AND SOCIETY

- No one takes you serious again.
- People mock at you behind.
- You damage your self-esteem.
- The gospel is blasphemed.
- Your evangelism value drops.

GOING FORWARD

- Know that deceit can take you straight into hell.
- Know that it can damage your reputation.
- Beg God to help you overcome the spirit of deceit.
- It is a heart disease and as such can defile you.

Mark 7:21 *For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, 22. Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, **DECEIT**, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: 23. All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.*

CHAPTER 9

COVETOUSNESS

Covetous, greedy, acquisitive, grasping, avaricious mean having or showing a strong desire for especially material possessions. **Covetous** implies inordinate desire often for another's possessions

Covetous: inordinately or wrongly desirous of wealth or possessions; greedy. Eagerly desirous.

Covet: to desire wrongfully, inordinately, or without due regard for the rights of others: to **covet** another's property.

From the definitions above one will see that Jesus was correct when he listed covetousness as amongst those sins that proceed from the heart. Mark 7:21-22. It is easier to detect a pregnant woman than detect a man with covetousness. It is the root of so many sins. It has destroyed so many and will destroy so many silently.

God had warned the Israelite about being covetous.

Exo 20:17 *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.*

Deut 5:21 *Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbour's wife, neither shalt thou covet thy neighbour's house, his field, or his manservant, or his maidservant, his ox, or his ass, or anything that is thy neighbour's.*

Those to be chosen to lead Israel should not have a trace of covetousness.

Exo 18:21 *Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens:*

But they did not listen.

Achan messed himself, his family and 36 Israelites in his covetousness.

Jos 7:21 *When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it.*

David messed up from having a covetous eye upon his neighbor's wife. 2 Sam 11:2 – 27

Mic 2:2 *And they covet fields, and take them by violence; and houses, and take them away: so they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage*

Ahab desired to own Naboth's field. 1King 21:1-15

COMMON FORMS OR APPEARANCES OF COVETOUSNESS IN OUR LIVES

1. Ordering your plate of food in a restaurant and eying the one your friend is eating and desiring to take it.

2. Choosing to drink soft drink in a party and after being given, shining your eyes into the gallon of palm wine and requesting to take a cup.
3. Taking food from a function home in the disguise of giving to your children when in actual sense it was greed that motivated you.
4. Earning a fat salary but struggling peanuts with your subordinate.
5. Falsifying your date of birth to enable you stay longer in service.
6. Having your eyes fixed at working in a “lucrative” or “Juicy” department of committee.
7. Admiring the quality or qualities of your neighbour’s wife and never giving loving compliment to your wife at home.
8. Desiring to drive an SUV when your account balance cannot buy a bike.
9. Carrying a goat on your head and chasing a rat to add to it.
10. Short changing God in your giving to him and to humanity.
11. Killing and maiming just to occupy a particular office.

Jesus took his turn to warn us about covetousness.

Luke 12:13 ¶ *And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me.* 14 *And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?* 15 *And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.*

Paul warned that the sin of covetousness should not be even mentioned amongst us.

Eph 5:3 ¶ *But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints;*

1Cor 5:11 *But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat*

Col 3:5 ¶ *Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:*

1Thess 2:5 *For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God is witness:*

Heb 13:5 *Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*

Some men of God today will use covetousness to feed themselves.

Jer 6:13 *For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely.*

2Pet 2:3 ¶ *And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.*

GOING FORWARD

1. Know covetousness is sin. 1 Cor 5:11
2. Know that those who sin will go to hell if they don't repent. 1Cor 5:11
3. Don't underrate its effect on your spiritual life. Eph 5:3
4. Work on it now. Heb 10:26, Phil 2:12
5. Learn to be contented

1Tim 6:6 ¶ But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. 8 And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. 9 But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. 10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

PRAYER

Dear Lord, from the above it is obvious that I have a stain of covetousness in my life. Help me to overcome it and live a Christ centered life in Jesus name. Amen

CHAPTER 9

FALSE WITNESS

A false witness is someone who declares falsely about an event concerning an innocent person.

God expressly warned us against being false witnesses.

Ex 20:16 *Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour*

THE IMPACT OF FALSE WITNESSING

Deut 17:6 *At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death.*

Num 35:30 *Whoso killeth any person, the murderer shall be put to death by the mouth of witnesses: but one witness shall not testify against any person to cause him to die.*

Deut 19:15 *One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established.*

SO WHY DO PEOPLE BEAR FALSE WITNESS AGAINST OTHERS

- Past and unsettled scores – Unforgiving spirit
- Evil thoughts
- Envy
- Hatred
- Malice

BIBLE EXAMPLES OF FALSE WITNESSING

1. David suffered in the hands of false witnesses

Psalms 35:11 ¶ *False witnesses did rise up; they laid to my charge things that I knew not.*

Psalms 27:12 *Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies: for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty.*

2. Jesus was killed in the mouth of false witnesses

Matt 26:59 *Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death; 60 But found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none. At the last came two false witnesses, 61 And said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days. 62 And the high priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? What is it which these witness against thee?*

3. Stephen was killed in the mouth of false witnesses

Acts 6:13 *And set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law: 14 For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us*

TODAY EXAMPLES OF FALSE WITNESSING

1. Writing damaging articles about a person's personality.
2. Testifying in a matter you know little about as if you were an eye witness.
3. Raising false alarm about an incident that provoked mob action.
4. Spreading falsehood in whatever form.
5. Rumor mongering.

GETTING OVER FALSE WITNESSING

Cross check your facts before speaking

Jas 1:19 ¶ *Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: A lie is still a lie in whatever form.*

Eph 4:25 *Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.*

CLOSING REMARK

A true Christian heading towards heaven must do all at his disposal not to bear false witness against his neighbor even if they have a hidden disagreement.

CHAPTER 10

MURDER

Willful murder was distinguished from accidental homicide, and was invariably visited with capital punishment (Num 35:16, 18, 21, 31; Lev 24:17). This law in its principle is founded on the fact of man's having been made in the likeness of God (Gen 9:5, 6; John 8:44; 1John 3:12, 15). The Mosaic law prohibited any compensation for murder or the reprieve of the murderer (Exo 21:12, 14; Deut 19:11, 13; 2Sam 17:25; 20:10). Two witnesses were required in any capital case (Num 35:19-30; Deut 17:6-12). If the murderer could not be discovered, the city nearest the scene of the murder was required to make expiation for the crime committed (Deut 21:1-9). These offences also were to be punished with death, (1) striking a parent; (2) cursing a parent; (3) kidnapping (Exo 21:15-17; Deut 27:16). Easton Bible dictionary.

God condemned murder

- Gen 9:6 *Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man*
- Exo 20:13 *Thou shalt not kill.*
- Lev 24:17 *And he that killeth any man shall surely be put to death*
- 2 Kings 5:7 *And it came to pass, when the king of Israel had read the letter, that he rent his clothes, and said, Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy? Wherefore consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me.*

Christians are not to murder anyone

- Matt 5:21 ¶ *Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: 22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire*

There is a relationship between hatred and murder

- 1 John 3:15 *Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.*
- 1 John 4:20 *If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?*

Christians can be murdered for speaking the truth

- John 16:2 *They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.*

Let it not be that we are murdered for being sinners

- 1 Pet 4:15 *But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters.*

We have been banned from fighting back or planning a retaliatory attack.

Rom 12:19 *Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.*

All murderers are hell bound

Gal 5:21 *Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*

CHAPTER 11

FOUR SMALL SINS THAT GOD DOES NOT LIKE: ENVY, HATE, PRIDE, UNFORGIVING HEART

These sins have two very dangerous characteristics.

1. Can't be seen by the sinner but visible to God.
2. The church doesn't have a meter to measure their intensity.

These sins take place first in the heart, and a little of it is expressed in our action. It easily runs us down, Heb. 12:1. We usually easily refuse to accept that we have any one of them. We most often will be provoked when a charge about it is brought before us. Because of that, people generally speak about it behind us. "See the way Mike Udam is talking. I think he is very proud....." No one in my recent years as a Christian has been disfellowshipped for committing any of these sins. Yet it has the potential of landing one in hell and making all our stay here very useless.

ENVY

Envy is a disgust at the advantages and prosperity of others. Envy is the sin that caused the crucifixion of Jesus (Matt. 27:18; Mk. 15:10). The gentile world which would not even acknowledge the true concept of God were characteristically "full of envy" (Rom. 1:28, 29).

Maybe you may underrate envy, take a look at this list:

1. Cain envied Abel, and his envy brought forth intense feeling of brooding self-pity because God accepted Abel's sacrifice, but not his own. Abel prospered in righteousness, and his brother hated and killed him for it (Gen. 4). Sarah envied Hagar, because Hagar could do something Sarah could not, something Sarah wanted very much. Her envy led to her effort to kill Hagar (Gen. 16:5, 5; 12: 9, 10).
2. Rachel envied Leah because Rachel was a "Second wife" and because Leah could bear Jacob children, as her sister could not (Gen. 30:15).
3. Joseph's brothers envied the good fortune and love bestowed by their father upon Joseph. Their envy of his good fortune brought them to consider murder (Gen. 37).
4. Miriam and Aaron envied the power and favor of Moses before God. They sought to depose Moses that they might take what God had given him (Num. 12).
5. Saul envied David for the success he had in their common cause (1 Sam. 18:8, 9, 29).
6. The Jews were envious of the spiritual and numerical successes of Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:45; 17:5).
7. The Jews who controlled the political life of Judea envied the following of Jesus (Matt. 27:18).

We see the result of envy more than the envy itself.

HATRED

The first product of envy is hatred for the individual so envied.

1John 4:20 *If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness.*

1John 2:9 *But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eye* 1Jon 2:11

Hatred is expressed sometimes with a strong sentiment and sometimes with a mild managed sentiment. We all are quick to deny hating our brothers and sisters. But let us tell ourselves the truth.

PRIDE

Pride is an attitude that causes us to credit ourselves for our accomplishments and to blame others for our failures. On the other hand, humility is an attitude that views both our accomplishments and our failures from God's perspective.

Prov 16:5 *"every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the lord: though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished."*

Prov 16:18 *"pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall."*

Prov 21:4 *"an high look, and a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked, is sin."*

James 4:6 *"but he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble."*

Pride prevents us from crediting God with the good things in our lives. Instead, we reach the mistaken conclusion that whatever we value in our lives:

1. Our appearance
2. Our abilities
3. Our families
4. Our possessions are through our effort and we lift up our shoulders high.

But before we get too caught up in our own importance, we need again to consider the Apostle Paul's sobering question to bring us back to reality:

1 Cor 4:7 *"for who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?"*

Pride keeps one up there and others down here. How then can fellowship thrive?

Prov 6:17 clearly tells us that God hates a proud look.

UNFORGIVING SPIRIT

This single sin may likely lead so many to hell. The reason is that it breeds hypocrisy. At the church setting, "I have forgiven him" but right inside you, he is in your "watch list" haven been marked with an asterisks. Jesus and Stephen forgave people even when they never asked for it. That is the attitude that should be in us. Phil 2:1-4.

Whoever hates disguises himself with his lips and harbors deceit in his heart; when he speaks graciously, believe him not, for there are seven abominations in his heart; though his hatred be covered with deception, his wickedness will be exposed in the assembly. Prov. 26:24-26.

So many of us live daily with piled up sins because our forgiveness by God depends on our forgiving his friend who offended him. Since we are yet to truly forgive, God is waiting for you. You are the one holding yourself.

Matt 6:15 *But if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*

Eph 4:2 ¶ *With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;*
Eph 4:32 *And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.*

Col 3:13 *Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.*

Simple fellowship one with another will prove that hatred and envy are still resident within us. Once Christians can't fellowship beyond the church worship hall, that congregation is sick and members need to re-examinethemselves.

1. How can we bear one another's burden without fellowship?
2. How can say we are brethren and tactically avoid each other?
3. How can we say we are Christians and treat matters of opinion as if it is law?

Brethren, the church is a family. It must function as a family.

A bubbling congregation is one that loves each other so much that each member feels the impact of one another's grief and success.

Let us resolve today to shun these sins that are capable of making our journey here in vain.

PART 4

LOOK AT THE PARABLES OF JESUS

A

CHAPTER 1

THE PARABLE OF THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

Luke 16:19 ¶ *There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: 20 And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, 21 And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. 22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; 23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. 24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. 25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. 26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. 27 Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: 28 For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. 29 Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. 30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. 31 And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.*

This is the only parable of Jesus that people have deduced wrongly from and even used in the teaching of brethren.

1. The rich will go to hell.
2. The poor will go to heaven.
3. Those who enjoy life here on earth will suffer in hell fire for eternity.
4. Those who suffer here on earth will enjoy in heaven.

The points above look very attractive and could be passed as true but on critical scrutiny, the points are all hasty generalization.

From the parable we can conclude that

1. The arrival of any individual in heaven or hell is a direct result of how one lived his life here on earth. 2 Cor 5:10 supports that position. Jesus even gave the hint in another parable in Matt 25:40-45.
2. Those who are merciful with men are likely to receive mercy from God during judgment.

3. At eternity, it is possible to still remember each other but we cannot invoke the titles we had while on earth.
4. There a big gulf separating the place for the righteous from the place for the ungodly.
5. Nobody can cross from one place to another. No amount of prayers here can make God change his mind.
6. Nobody will be sent from the dead to come and preach to us the living.
7. The place of torment is so terrible that the rich man desired that none of his brothers should dare come there by their actions.
8. The Lord has given each generation its own preachers warning men of the danger of landing in hell fire.

May this lesson serve as that warning to remind us of the need to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. Phil 2:12.

CHAPTER 2

THE PARABLE OF THE TEN VIRGINS

Mt 25:1 ¶ *Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. 2 And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. 3 They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: 4 But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. 5 While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. 6 And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. 7 Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. 8 And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. 9 But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. 10 And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. 11 Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. 12 But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.*

1. This parable is a pointer to the events relating to the final judgment by the Lord and owner of the kingdom.
2. Christians today are the 10 virgins
3. The lamp is our Christian faith and work while here on earth.
4. Five virgins were called wise because they were able to do an analysis of the quantity of faith that will carry them till eternity. Thus we can say they were fully equipped for the return of the master.
5. Five virgins we called foolish for not properly analyzing the situation and this poor analysis led them to take insufficient faith while expecting the arrival of the master.
6. The time of realization is late for the five foolish virgins. Even though the foolish virgins realized their mistake along the line, it was too late a time to go get their acts together and meet up.
7. The five foolish refused to share their oil because each man is to work out his own salvation with fear and trembling. Faith and salvation cannot be shared. Each man has his own. Phil 2:12 easily becomes handy.

Eternity is a once and for all activity. Once you miss the main step, you have missed it all.

LESSON FROM THIS PARABLE

- Be alert always and live a life worthy of the gospel of Christ Phil 1:27
- Work out your salvation with fear and trembling Phil 2:12
- Faith without work is dead
- Two things you don't know. When you will die and when the Lord will come.

As Christians, our Jesus gave a powerful warning;

Mt 7:24 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: 25. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. 26 And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: 27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

CHAPTER 3

THE PARABLE OF THE PERSISTENT WIDOW

Luke 18:1 ¶ *And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; 2 Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: 3 And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. 4 And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; 5 Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. 6 And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. 7 And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? 8 I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?*

This parable is direct and is focused on teaching us the need to be persistent in our demands before God.

Although God knows all that you need before you even ask Psalms 139:1-5 and

Matt 6:8 *Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.*

He still expects you to ask, seek and knock for the doors to be opened for you.

Luke 21:36 *Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.*

Rom 12:12 *Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;*

Eph 6:18 *Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;*

Col 4:2 ¶ *Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;*

1Thess 5:17 *Pray without ceasing.*

The formula here is being persistent in your asking. We are permitted to ask the master of our needs.

It makes us place confidence on him because he is the only solution to our problem.

Ps 121:1 ¶ *I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.*

CHAPTER 4

THE PARABLE OF THE PHARISEE AND PUBLICAN

The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector in the Temple (Luke 18:9-14) is rich with spiritual truth. In fact, it contains the very essence of the gospel of Jesus Christ. As verse 9 tells us, Jesus spoke this parable to those who “trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others” (NKJV).

- The Pharisee is used in that story to show us the complete attitude of most of us who see ourselves as strong members of the church.
- The main objective of the parable is to show the danger of trusting in the standard of one's righteousness.
- The Pharisee consistently talked about himself with so many “I”s. He was self-centered and lacked humility in all ramifications.
- One can smell some boasting in the content of his prayers.
- He was also judgmental by measuring himself with the publican.
- While the parable does not approve the lifestyle of the publican, but his open confession and humility is commended.

These passages below with drive home the point of the parable.

- 1Cor 10:12 *Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.*
- Rom 10:1 ¶ *Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. 2 For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. 3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.*
- Eph 2:8 *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.*

The Pharisees thought their own goodness was so impressive that it could not fail to make them acceptable to God. They held rigorously to the ceremonies and traditions of the law, making a public show of their religiosity, all to be seen by other men, many of whom they despised as being beneath them.

The Pharisee in the story is the epitome of one who is self-justifying. Notice that his prayer has no elements of confession. He does not ask forgiveness for his sins, perhaps because he believes he has nothing to confess. Nor is there any word of praise or thanksgiving to God. His prayer is all about him. Even the thanks he does offer is designed to exalt himself and place himself above others whom he treats with disdain.

For Christians today

1. Don't rate yourself so high, you are nothing without God.

2. Acknowledge the hand of God in your life always and give him due credit.
3. Plead for pardon for sins committed knowingly or unknowingly.
4. Leave others out of your prayers. Don't tell God about their lives.
5. Pray knowing you too can fall tomorrow.
6. We are saved by faith through his grace that sustains us.

May the Lord help us to run the race to the end. Amen.

CHAPTER 5

PARABLE OF THE WORKERS IN THE VINEYARD

Matt 20:1 ¶ *For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. 2 And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. 3 And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the marketplace, 4 And said unto them; Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way. 5 Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise. 6 And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? 7 They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive. 8 So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first. 9 And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. 10 But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny. 11 And when they had received it, they murmured against the good man of the house, 12 Saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day. 13 But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? 14 Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. 15 Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good? 16 So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.*

Lesson from the parable

1. The owner of the farm is God and the reward is eternity.
2. The workers are me and you.
3. The work is our labour in the vineyard.
4. The time we were invited to come and work is not important.
5. It does not matter who started first.
6. What matters is that the work must be done and only those hired were paid.
7. Those started well and derail will land in eternal damnation.
8. Those who came in late and remain faithful will land in heaven.
9. No man can change the verdict of God.
10. Not all in the church will enter heaven.

May this lesson serve as a reminder to us all to watch the way we work in the vineyard.

Matt 7:21 ¶ *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*

CHAPTER 6

THE PARABLE OF THE TENANT

Mark 12:1 ¶ *And he began to speak unto them by parables. A certain man planted a vineyard, and set an hedge about it, and digged a place for the winefat, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country. 2 And at the season he sent to the husbandmen a servant, that he might receive from the husbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard. 3 And they caught him, and beat him, and sent him away empty. 4 And again he sent unto them another servant; and at him they cast stones, and wounded him in the head, and sent him away shamefully handled. 5 And again he sent another; and him they killed, and many others; beating some, and killing some. 6 Having yet therefore one son, his wellbeloved, he sent him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son. 7 But those husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours. 9 What shall therefore the lord of the vineyard do? he will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others.*

Jesus in this parable is generally picturing the relationship of the Jews to the messengers of God when the message is not comfortable to their hearts. The vineyard here is the nation of Israel. These are God's people, own wholly by the almighty. Jer 32:38. He desires them to yield fruits. John 15:2. And so periodically he sends his servant to get their fruits as the owner.

Instead of producing fruits, they gang up and maim, drive away or worst still kill all the messengers sent to collect the dividends accruable to the owner of the vineyard.

From Moses, to Elijah, Jeremiah and even Amos, none escaped one form of humiliation or the other. Elijah had to run into the forest for fear of the family of Ahab after messing them up in Mount Carmel. 1King 19:2 *Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time.*

Finally Jesus, the son of the Most High God, the owner of the vineyard arrives the scene and they gang up and kill him. Their thinking was that after killing the son of the owner, the vineyard will be theirs. They forgot that the owner of the vineyard has legs. He decided to come and take over the vineyard and lease it out to a new set of people who will render account as at when due. Matt 8:11. The Jews made light the opportunity God gave to them. They abused the privilege of being first and so lost the chance of leading God's people.

Today, no group is super special to God. We are all having direct access to God. Israel as a nation lost their monopoly to God since the time they rejected the savior.

If you reject Jesus, he will use someone else. Put that at the bottom of your heart.

Rev 3:20 *Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.*

CHAPTER 7

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

Matt 13:3 *And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow; 4. And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: 5. Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: 6. And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. 7. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: 8. But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. 9. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.*

This parable is one powerful parable that provoked the thoughts of the disciples and they demanded an immediate explanation. Jesus then unravel the parable thus

Matt 13:18 *Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. 19 When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side. 20. But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; 21. Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. 22. He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. 23. But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.*

POINTS TO NOTE

All the people in the world today fall into these categories of hearers.

If you don't put what you hear into practice, the devil will destroy the seed of information. He will start by weakening the grip of it by generating unbelief in your heart. Words like "are you sure" "do you want to tell me that" etc will start coming out of your mouth from a polluted heart.

Another device of the devil is to inflict persecution on the Christian. Anyone who does not know how to manage persecution and challenges will obviously not make headway in the kingdom of heaven. Know today that persecution is an integral part of the going to heaven business. Acts 14:22 and 2Tim 3:12.

The devil is heavily loaded. If you escape here, he sets another trap. So many are and will be led astray by trying to meet up with this world standard. Despite the warning of Jesus in Luke 12:14 and that of Paul in 1Tim 6:6-11, people are still neck deep into pursuit of material gain. Mark this down, you will miss the mark with this mentality.

Only those who listen and put the word into practice and bear fruits will be rewarded with eternal life in heaven. 2 Cor 5:10, John 15:3-7, James 1:20-22

What type of seed are you. You alone know yourself. May this message generate a positive revival in our hearts capable of transforming us into heaven focused Christians. Amen

CHAPTER 8

THE PARABLE OF THE RICH FOOL

Luke 12:16 *And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: 17. And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? 18. And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. 19. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. 20. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? 21. So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.*

In discussing this parable, it is important to peep into the mind of God why this man in this story is called a rich fool.

- The man forgot the source of his successes from the farm
- His planning did not accommodate God
- His objective of storage was not for doing good but to eat, drink and make merry.
- He behaved as if he is the owner of his life or he forgot that his life is not his own.

Jesus wanted his audience to learn a very great lesson about trusting in the riches and successes.

Most people honestly will forget God once they “arrive”

Prov 30:9 *Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the LORD?*

Eccl 11:9 *Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.*

Deut 8:12 *Lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein; 13 And when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied; 14 Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the LORD thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage;*

We also learn that your riches cannot save you.

Luke 12:15 *And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.*

Another outstanding lesson here is that God is interested in how we handle what he has blessed us with.

Luke 12:19 *And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry*

I am convinced that if he was to share it with the poor, God would not have taken his life away.

1Tim 6:17 Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; 18. That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; 19. Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

The rich farmer was self-centered and it is a very dangerous attitude to put today. A Christian should consider that the little God has blessed him with should also touch others. In doing so we lend to God and great reward awaits us.

Matt 25:40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

CHAPTER 9

THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON(Luke 15:11-32)

This is one of Jesus' foundation laying parable showing the need to get back what was lost.

This parable can be divided into five states or stages in the life of the main actor.

The first state deals with the time when the second son was living with his father who was very rich. It is likened to our first stay with God and guided by his word.

The second state is when the young man sought and got independence and the benefit thereof. The younger son asks his father for his share of his estate, which would have been half of what his older brother would receive; in other words, 1/3 for the younger, 2/3 for the older (Deuteronomy 21:17). Though it was perfectly within his rights to ask, it was not a loving thing to do, as it implied that he wished his father dead. Instead of rebuking his son, the father patiently grants him his request. This is a picture of God letting a sinner go his own way (Deuteronomy 30:19). We all possess this foolish ambition to be independent, which is at the root of the sinner persisting in his sin (Genesis 3:6; Romans 1:28).

The third state is when life turns sour and a peak of self-realization of the mess the independence has driven him to. Sin enslaves and destroys. The devil's job is to destroy man and make him loose eternity. Rom 3:23.

The fourth state is the period of summing up courage to return to the father. A lot of people allow shame to overwhelm them not to return to the father. So many people acknowledge they have offended God, but lack the courage to rise up and return to the father.

Luke 15:18 *I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,*

The last state is the welcome he received and the unhappy state of the first son.

1. God is the father in this parable
2. The first son are faithful brethren bubbling in the church today (but in the story, the scribes and Pharisees)
3. The second son represents erring brethren who have wondered from the faith because of the attractive decoration of sin by the devil.
4. The far country is the world of sin called enjoyment.

QUICK LESSONS FROM THE PARABLE

1. We can be genuine sons of the Father-who are spiritually "alive"--and be "lost" through sin. We can turn our backs on our heavenly Father and leave him of our own free will. 1Cor 10:12, 1Tim 6;10
2. Sin inevitably lands us in a far worse state than we were in originally.

3. We can, however, return to the Father and be accepted by him with great joy. In fact, he is ready and eager to accept us back and forgive us, no matter what we've done. But we must come to our senses first and make the move.
4. Christians who have never fallen should not resent those who come back. They should share in their Father's joy.
5. Their own place is secure and their heavenly reward is not threatened. God loves them just as much as he loves those who come back through a dramatic conversion.

CHAPTER 10

THE PARABLE OF THE NET

Matt 13:47 *Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: 48. Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. 49. So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, 50. And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.*

1. The world is the river in which the net is casted.
2. The net is the call of God through evangelism.
3. The constituents of the net are real people called to serve in the vineyard
4. The constituent shall follow the net out and last together before the sorting.
5. Some are fish, stones, sticks,leaves etc. sitting comfortable in the church

2 Tim 2:20 But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour.

6. God only desires those with the quality of fish.
7. Sticks and leaves will be rejected and casted into fire.
8. Our chance to improve our status is today.

Phil 2:12 ¶ Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

May the Lord qualify us as we live to please him only.

2Tim 2:19 ¶ Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

CHAPTER 11

THE PARABLE OF THE LEAVEN

Matt 13:33 *Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.*

To understand this parable, there is need to visit a bakery. There you will see the great work of yeast in changing a small mixed flour to a huge loaf of bread.

The change is basically attributed to the presence of yeast.

Jesus in this parable is explaining the kingdom from its growth and expansion focus.

As the property of leaven is to change, or assimilate to its own nature, the meal or dough with which it is mixed, so the property of the grace of Christ is to change the whole soul into its own likeness;

And God intends that this principle should continue in the soul till all is leavened-till the whole bear the image of the heavenly, as it before bore the image of the earthly.

Both these parables (Mustard seed vs 31-32) are prophetic, and were intended to show, principally, how, from very small beginnings, the Gospel of Christ would pervade all the nations of the world, and fill them with righteousness and true holiness.

So Christians today are to grow from the word of God.

1Pet 2:2 *As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:*

1Pet 1:23 *Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.*

Rom 10:17 *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

The leaven is his word deposited in us to cause us to grow to the nature he expects us to grow to.

Eph 4:13 *Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: 14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;*

May we grow as expected still connected to the tree bearing the right type of fruits. Amen

CHAPTER 11

THE PARABLE OF THE FAITHFUL SERVANT

(MARK 13:33-37, MATT. 24:42, LK. 12:35-48.)

Mark 13:33 *Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. 34. For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. 35. Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: 36. Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. 37. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.*

This parable is a silent bomb dropped by the master as he was rounding off his ministry here on earth. We can deduce the following lessons from it

1. All Christians are by this parable set on a red alert for the coming of their master.
2. The time of his coming is unknown and people are likely to underrate his coming Matt 24:42.
3. Some are likely to sleep off and be distracted by the evil one.
4. Some will count his delay as slackness on his part.

2 Pet 3:9 ¶ *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*

5. He will come like a thief, unannounced.

2 Pet 3:10 *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.*

6. We are to live each day as if it is our last.
7. Be rest assured. Jesus is coming back soon. Only God knows the time frame for the word soon.

2 Pet 3:8 ¶ *But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.*

May the lord teach us to learn how to number our days and apply wisdom.

Psalms 90:12 ¶ *So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto*