



DEMYSTIFYING PARABLES & SACRIFICE

FEIKOAB PARIMAH

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DEDICATION

Spiritual and material gifts are blessings from God and not rewards in themselves. That is to say, they are a means to an end and not an end in themselves. It will therefore be out of place for us believers to view them as trophies from our Lord.

God gave some of us material blessings as a test to give us the chance to be catapulted into true spiritual riches. Unfortunately, many are spending them prodigally on their own lusts.

Conversely, those of us who are endowed with spiritual blessings are also abusing it by trying to always make gain out of them. We are, according to 1 Peter 4:10 supposed to use our gifts to serve one another as stewards; “As each has received a gift, employ it in serving one another, as good managers of the grace of God in its various forms.”

In this book, I will also attempt to show why in Isaiah 11:2 the prophet Isaiah combined the seven dimensional manifestations of the Spirit the way he did by evidencing how they are related to each other.

“Here, moreover, it is required of stewards, that they be found faithful.” 1 Corinthians 4:2

INTRODUCTION

Many have endeavored in diverse ways to decode the parables that Christ taught. Gaining an understanding of the parables Christ gave, and the indispensability of the Christian living a sacrificial life is very crucial in this last hour. When we compare and contrast the accounts of His parables from the gospels, we dispose our souls to grasping important truths with regard to the kingdom of God, the second coming of Christ and things we need to note in our generation. Christianity was built on the foundation of the sacrifice God made by sending His only begotten son to purchase our redemption. This book seeks to illuminate believers on the meaning of Christ's parables as we compare and contrast the various accounts. Further, light will be thrown on the importance of sacrifice in the life of the believer as well as the will of God for our lives in this hour.

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Chapter 1

JESUS' PARABLES

“But while people slept, his enemy came and sowed darnel also among the wheat, and went away. But when the blade sprang up and brought forth fruit, then the darnel appeared also. The servants of the householder came and said to him, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where did this darnel come from?' "He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' "The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and gather them up?' "But he said, 'No, lest perhaps while you gather up the darnel, you root up the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and in the harvest time I will tell the reapers, "First, gather up the darnel, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn."” Matt 13:25-30. From this parable of our Lord Jesus, you will realize that it was the wheat which was sown first after which the enemy came in and sowed the tares among them. This is a picture the Lord was showing us about the end-time. After the death of the apostles, a lot have really taken place

with regard to Satan trying to distort the true worship of our Christ by way of infiltrating into the church of God (through false doctrine). It's important we note that the infiltration started even in the days of the apostles. The only difference between their time and ours is, in our days false teaching has intruded into the church on a massive scale. It is in view of this high incidence of falsehood in the church that we need to distinguish between that which is wheat (from the Lord) and tares (from the devil).

The explanation for why the wheat springs first is, Satan cannot create anything of his own but only copies that which the Lord has already created. In this sense he (Satan) cannot invent his own Christianity. He only looks at the original of God, copies it and corrupts it in order to deceive many thereby causing them to live a Christianity which is like the original, but in actual sense is not so. We can only know the wheat from the tares if only we look at the original pattern of disciples as given by the Lord of the church. If anyone is not living the Christianity of the early disciples then that fellow is a tare and not wheat. There is first of all the original, before the counterfeit can be produced.

The reason why the enemy had the opportunity to sow the tares was simply because men slept. Whenever the children of God slumber or sleep by way of not standing out and boldly proclaiming the truth, the children of the devil get a field day to spread falsehood. In effect, if there are so many tares in the

'church' these days then it simply means those who are given the charge to watch have slept. There is therefore the urgent need for the true children of God to rise up and shine forth as light for the deeds of darkness to be automatically made manifest. In the parable, the servants (who are angels) were able to differentiate between the wheat and the tares. Anyone who is connected to heaven can clearly distinguish between the two, as the original pattern of what the church or a true believer is, is already revealed in the early chapters of the book of Acts.

Paul began the call for believers to arise and show the distinction between the wheat and the tares through his charge to Timothy; *“I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at his appearing and his Kingdom: preach the word; be urgent in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with all patience and teaching. For the time will come when they will not listen to the sound doctrine, but, having itching ears, will heap up for themselves teachers after their own lusts; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside to fables.”* 2 Tim 4:1-4. The charge Paul gave to Timothy, his son in the Lord was to preach the word in season and out of season, as in the end-time, men will not endure sound doctrine. Timothy was therefore expected to proclaim the whole counsel of God whether the times were favorable or not. In other words prevailing circumstances should not coerce him to change or compromise the word of God.

I strongly believe this charge to Timothy must be trumpeted in the ears of those who are really called to lead God's inheritance and not only they, but all who desire to make it to heaven.

The wheat in the parable can be likened unto the sheep of God. Scripture makes us know, the sheep of God hear his voice and another's voice they will not follow; *“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give eternal life to them. They will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all. No one is able to snatch them out of my Father's hand.”* John 10:27-29. From this scripture, we gather that if anyone is a child of the Lord, he or she will listen to the voice of God. This is the totality of the canonized scriptures given unto us by way of rightly dividing the word of truth. It's only by rightly dividing the word of truth that we will be/are approved before God.

Those who have ears listen to the voice of the spirit in obedience and do not hand pick a set of scriptures to live with, simply because they will make gain out of them. They obey all of God's word as revealed to them.

Another way of differentiating between the wheat and tares is the kind of fruit they bare. Wheat by its God's constituted nature cannot bear tares and vice versa. Christ made this clear in his teaching to his disciples, so they will be able to differentiate between those who are of the Lord and those who are not;

“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves. By their fruits you will know them. Do you gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree produces good fruit; but the corrupt tree produces evil fruit. A good tree can't produce evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree produce good fruit. Every tree that doesn't grow good fruit is cut down, and thrown into the fire. Therefore, by their fruits you will know them. Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.” Matt 7:15-21.

Interestingly He said by their fruit and not their gifts. These days most people's basis of discerning that which is of God is the 'gifts' they possess and not the fruit of the spirit which they bare as enshrined in (Galatians 5:22). Christ gives us very important characteristics of a lot of people who shall be disappointed in the end. Christ said; *“Many will tell me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, didn't we prophesy in your name, in your name cast out demons, and in your name do many mighty works?' Then I will tell them, 'I never knew you. Depart from me, you who work iniquity.’” Matt 7:22-23.* From this scripture, you realize, these disappointed folks thought, it was the manifestation of their seemingly spiritual gifts that should qualify them into the kingdom of heaven. The casting out of devils, working of wonders among others may just be the appropriation of one's faith but not justification of ones standing (right standing) with the Lord. A man can perform all these by the

gifts which he possesses, but not the fruits which he bears. I am not suggesting, the manifestation of spiritual gifts is not important in the ministry of the believer. We do need them in the preaching of the gospel as a prove of the resurrection power of God. However, they are meant for unbelievers as they are a sign to an evil and adulterous generation, whereas the fruit of the spirit gives us access into the kingdom of heaven. This is why Christ told them they should get away from Him, as he did not know them. Why? Because they were workers of iniquity.

One of the ways of distinguishing between the wheat and the tares in this end-time is, the unjust will continue to be unjust whereas the righteous will continue to be righteous; *“He who acts unjustly, let him act unjustly still. He who is filthy, let him be filthy still. He who is righteous, let him do righteousness still. He who is holy, let him be holy still.”* Rev 22:11. This is so because the wheat by their constitution will always seek to please the Lord whereas the children of the devil (tares) will continue in their unrighteous deeds. This is why the writer of 1John makes us to understand, those who have the hope of being with the resurrected Lord purify themselves simply because they are sons of God; *“Everyone who has this hope set on him purifies himself, even as he is pure.”* 1 John 3:3.

Another parable Christ put forth to his disciples was the one in which he likened the kingdom of God to be a grain of mustard

seed; *“He set another parable before them, saying, “The Kingdom of Heaven is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field; which indeed is smaller than all seeds. But when it is grown, it is greater than the herbs, and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in its branches.” Matt 13:31-32.* It's been said that, the mustard seed is the smallest of all seeds, but when it's sown and afterwards germinates, it later becomes one of the biggest plants, able to accommodate a lot of birds. The kingdom of God does not begin with a crowd, but starts with single individuals or few people. In Christ's entire ministry, he made quite a number of disciples out of which he named 12 as Apostles. He gave them the charge that they should take the gospel to the ends of the earth, starting from Jerusalem. With such a seemingly big task, does it not stand to reason that, a lot of people are needed to accomplish it? To the contrary, Christ chose only a few people to entrust them with it, in relation to the population of the world.

Many people normally think, to enable the gospel to thrive in this world one needs to gather a crowd and by so doing compromise the word. Christ never compromised his message and in the end about 120 disciples were prepared to receive the Holy Spirit. Time has however proven that, these 120 faithful disciples are now a multitude. No wonder Christ said, except a grain of corn falls to the ground it abides alone; *“Most assuredly I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains by*

itself alone. But if it dies, it bears much fruit. He who loves his life will lose it. He who hates his life in this world will keep it to eternal life.” John 12:24-25. Why didn't Jesus say except grains of corn, but rather used the singular? God does not start with multitudes, but ends with a multitude. He did not need to send sons, but sent his only son through whom we have all become sons. Of a truth the kingdom of God is indeed a grain of mustard seed.

Closely linked to this parable is the parable which likens the kingdom of God to leaven which a certain woman hid in a measure of flour; *“It is like yeast, which a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, until it was all leavened.” Luke 13:21.* Leaven or yeast, though it might be very small, carries the potential of corrupting the whole bread. In this parable, the lord was trying to make us understand, we his children are to affect the environment in which we live in, in a positive sense. We have been called to be the light and the salt of the earth. Just as the effect of yeast can be felt in the bread, so is the earth (world) expected to experience the effect of the church. It is worth remembering, in the prophecy of Daniel (concerning the kingdoms which were to come), he made us to know, a stone was cut without hands which crushed the other kingdoms and filled the whole earth; *“You saw until a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet that were of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the*

silver, and the gold, broken in pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, so that no place was found for them: and the stone that struck the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.” Dan 2:34-35. This scripture with regards to the stone is the kingdom of God. This is why before Jesus ascended into heaven in Acts 1:8, he told his disciples that they will receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come upon them, consequently leading to them being witnesses unto him from Jerusalem even unto the uttermost part of the earth. Also in the gospels, he made us recognize, the gospel must first be preached in the whole of the earth before the end comes; *“The Good News must first be preached to all the nations.” Mark 13:10*

Just as yeast affects the entire bread, so did the Apostles fill the whole of Jerusalem with the doctrine of Christ. It's therefore a call to all of us as believers to fill our localities and nation with the doctrine of Christ and not our own doctrine (preaching and projecting ourselves). We are to project Christ like the early disciples did by pondering over the following scripture; *“saying, “Didn't we strictly charge you not to teach in this name? Behold, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and intend to bring this man's blood on us.” Acts 5:28*

The next parable I would like us to look at is the parable of the sower as presented in two of the gospels (Matthew and Luke),

after which we will compare and contrast them. First of all, let's look at the account in Matthew as follows; *"He spoke to them many things in parables, saying, "Behold, a farmer went out to sow. As he sowed, some seeds fell by the roadside, and the birds came and devoured them. Others fell on rocky ground, where they didn't have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, because they had no depth of earth. When the sun had risen, they were scorched. Because they had no root, they withered away. Others fell among thorns. The thorns grew up and choked them: and others fell on good soil, and yielded fruit: some one hundred times as much, some sixty, and some thirty. He who has ears to hear, let him hear... "Hear, then, the parable of the farmer. When anyone hears the word of the Kingdom, and doesn't understand it, the evil one comes, and snatches away that which has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown by the roadside. What was sown on the rocky places, this is he who hears the word, and immediately with joy receives it; yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while. When oppression or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles. What was sown among the thorns, this is he who hears the word, but the cares of this age and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. What was sown on the good ground, this is he who hears the word, and understands it, who most assuredly bears fruit, and brings forth, some one hundred times as much, some sixty, and some thirty."* Matt 13:3-9, 18-23

According to Jesus' explanation of this parable, he makes us to understand that those who received seed by the way side are those who receive the message about the kingdom of God and do not understand what it's all about. Those who received the seed on stony places are those who are not able to endure persecution and tribulation simple because after receiving the word they lack depth (or are not properly grounded in the faith). Also, those who received seed among thorns are those who do not bear fruit after hearing the word of God. This is attributed to the fact that material riches get them deceived. Finally, it's the one who receives seed in the good soil who bear much fruit according to their abilities due to understanding.

Now let's look at the same parable of the sower as presented by Luke; *"The farmer went out to sow his seed. As he sowed, some fell along the road, and it was trampled underfoot, and the birds of the sky devoured it. Other seed fell on the rock, and as soon as it grew, it withered away, because it had no moisture. Other fell amid the thorns, and the thorns grew with it, and choked it. Other fell into the good ground, and grew, and brought forth fruit one hundred times."* As he said these things, he called out, *"He who has ears to hear, let him hear!... Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. Those along the road are those who hear, then the devil comes, and takes away the word from their heart, that they may not believe and be saved. Those on the rock are they who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; but these have no*

root, who believe for a while, then fall away in time of temptation. That which fell among the thorns, these are those who have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity. That in the good ground, these are such as in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, hold it tightly, and bring forth fruit with patience. Luke 8:5-8,11-15

From Luke's account, those who received seed by the way side are those who receive the word into their hearts, but the devil comes quickly to take it away from them. In effect they are not able to believe unto salvation. Those who receive seed on the rock are those who after receiving the word, believe but lack depth and thus, are not able to stand in times of temptation. Moreover those who receive seed among thorns are those who do not bear fruit due to the fact that they are choked with the cares, riches and pleasures of this life. Finally, those who receive seed onto the good ground are those who possess an honest and good heart (which helps them keep the word) thereby bringing forth fruit.

When we look at both accounts, you would realize, that of Luke is more detailed. In Matthew, the first groups are those who lack understanding about the kingdom even after they have heard about it. Whereas in Luke, the first group are those who receive the word of the kingdom into their hearts, but the devil comes quickly to snatch it away. We therefore understand from this first

group that, it's not enough to just receive the word of God into our hearts but that we should labor to get an understanding of the kingdom. Thus, it's only by understanding what the kingdom of God is about, which will prevent the devil from stealing the word from our hearts.

From the account in Matthew, the second group is not able to endure persecution and tribulation because they lack depth. In Luke, the second group though they believe the word, they however lack depth and subsequently leading to them, not being able to stand during temptations. This second group makes us realize, it's possible to believe the word of God and still fall from the faith. It's not just enough to believe the word of God, but to grow in depth so we will be unmovable.

In Matthew, the third group do not bear fruit, since the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, while in Luke, this particular group fail to bear fruit because they are being choked by the cares, riches and pleasures of this life. Apart from the deceitfulness of riches, which is common in both accounts, Luke however adds the cares and pleasures of this life, which all contribute to the barren state of the one who hears the word of the kingdom. Those who want to laugh now can certainly not please God.

To end with, we gather from the account in the book of Matthew that, the last group bears much fruit, due to the reason that, they have an appreciation of the kingdom of God. Whereas the group in Luke bear fruit because they possess an honest and good heart. This tells us, the first group constituted those who did not possess an honest and good heart and in effect, Satan was able to steal the word from their hearts. Thus, causing them not to believe unto salvation. On the other hand, it's those who possess an honest and good heart who are able to receive the word of the kingdom into their hearts, gain an understanding of it, thereby making them fruitful and useful in the hands of God. We can say from these that, the last group are those who do the will of God. The reason being, they possessed an understanding of the kingdom of God. In other words one can also say, because of their honest and good heart, they loved the Lord, given that it's only those who love the Lord who keep his commandments; *"If you love me, keep my commandments."* John 14:15

The next important parable I will like us to look at is that which likens the kingdom of God to a treasure hid in a field as well as a great pearl; *"Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a man who is a merchant seeking fine pearls, who having found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it."* Matt 13:45-46. From this scripture, we realize, in order for one to possess the kingdom of God, he or she must pay the price for it. It's often said that the salvation of God is free, but it's not cheap.

The cost of belonging to the kingdom of God is non-negotiable and as such must be paid. Notice from the parable that, the one who needs the treasure or great pearl (kingdom of God) must sell all that he or she has in order to buy it. This is in line with Jesus' teachings about who is really qualified to be his disciple; *"So therefore whoever of you who doesn't renounce all that he has, he can't be my disciple."* Luke 14:33

We are therefore expected to lay our treasure in the kingdom of God so, our hearts will be fully committed to it. For where our treasure is, there our hearts will be; *"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."* Luke 12:34

In the end, there will simply and surely be a sorting out of the true Disciples of Christ. That is, those who have fully paid the price of being disciples of Christ. As it's written, many are called, but few are chosen; *"For many are called, but few chosen."* Matt 22:14, so shall it be.

Chapter 2

SACRIFICE

The subject of sacrifice is a very important issue, necessitating that it be trashed out in the life of all believers. The whole of our Christian life should be built on the foundation of sacrifice. It was through the sacrifice of Christ that salvation was made available to us. And it's through sacrifice that we can appropriate the finished work of the Lord on the cross on mount Calvary.

Sacrifice is therefore only possible if a man will hate himself. This is why Christ's requirement for a disciple was, a man hates his own life; *"If anyone comes to me, and doesn't hate his own father, mother, wife, children, brothers, and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he can't be my disciple. Whoever doesn't bear his own cross, and come after me, can't be my disciple."* Luke 14:26-27. Christ wanted us to understand, discipleship entails

sacrifice, but this sacrifice is only possible if one hates his own life. It's only after we hate ourselves that we can fully embrace the will of God on this earth. It was said concerning Christ in prophecy that he was to do the will of God (the father) as enshrined in the following scripture; *"Then I said, 'Behold, I have come (In the scroll of the book it is written of me) To do your will, God.'" Heb 10:7*

I will endeavor to touch on the necessity of self-denial in order to sacrifice for others in this chapter. Scripture makes us know, in the last days men shall be lovers of themselves. In other words they will only seek to gratify their own desires; *"For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy," 2 Tim 3:2.* There is no way we can pray ourselves out of this group of people if we do not pay heed to the call to endure hardness as good soldiers of the Lord; *"You therefore must endure hardship, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus." 2 Tim 2:3*

One of the most important lessons to be learnt from the military life is, anyone who is enlisted as a soldier no longer lives for him or herself. Soldiers, by the definition of their work are not supposed to love their lives. Christ made it clear to his disciples, if anyone loved his life, he would lose it. However, if a person

hates his life, he will certainly gain it back; *“For whoever wants to save his life will lose it; and whoever will lose his life for my sake and the sake of the Good News will save it.” Mark 8:35.* This is why in Revelations we learn that the overcomers never loved their lives even unto death; *“They overcame him because of the Lamb's blood, and because of the word of their testimony. They didn't love their life, even to death.” Rev 12:11*

To be able to serve others as true disciples of the Lord, we must always seek the wealth or profit of others rather than ourselves. As a matter of fact we are free to do whatever pleases us with our will (thus, all things are lawful unto us). This freedom however needs to be forfeited if we want to live for the profit of others; *“Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of the weak, and not to please ourselves.” Rom 15:1*

In Paul's letter to the Corinthian church as touching on foods offered to idols, Paul made it clear, the one who has faith (strong faith) eats unto the Lord with thanksgiving. Nevertheless, he advises that if a weaker brother's faith will be destroyed by the exercise of the faith of the strong brother, the latter is to deny himself his freedom for the sake of the conscience of the weak

brother; *“However, that knowledge isn't in all men. But some, with consciousness of the idol until now, eat as of a thing sacrificed to an idol, and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. But food will not commend us to God. For neither, if we don't eat, are we the worse; nor, if we eat, are we the better. But be careful that by no means does this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to the weak. For if a man sees you who have knowledge sitting in an idol's temple, won't his conscience, if he is weak, be emboldened to eat things sacrificed to idols? And through your knowledge, he who is weak perishes, the brother for whose sake Christ died. Thus, sinning against the brothers, and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if food causes my brother to stumble, I will eat no meat forevermore, that I don't cause my brother to stumble.”*
1 Cor 8:7-13

To the church in Rome, he admonished that believers bear the infirmities of the weak. These days some 'Christians' especially ladies feel free to expose certain parts of their bodies designed by the Lord to be covered. When you draw their attention to the fact that they are serving as stumbling blocks to the faith of many weak brothers, they quickly defend themselves with the fact that they have the liberty to dress the way they want.

They are however oblivious of the truth that one's freedom ends immediately he or she decide to be a disciples of Christ. They are not to please themselves as Christ never pleased himself; *"Let each one of us please his neighbor for that which is good, to be building him up. For even Christ didn't please himself. But, as it is written, The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me."* Rom 15:2-3. Paul could not be preaching this important truth without practicing it himself. Though as an apostle he had the freedom and authority to do certain things, yet he did not insist on his freedom and privileges as an Apostle. This is the reason why he said he puts his body under subjection or else he is likely to abuse his power in the gospel. In effect it could also be said concerning him that, he did not please himself like Christ did. He also said we are in you both to live and to die; *"I say this not to condemn you, for I have said before, that you are in our hearts to die together and live together."* 2 Cor 7:3

Moses could have chosen to remain in the palace of Pharoah to enjoy himself. He rather chose to suffer affliction with the children of Israel. This man was so consumed with the deliverance of his brethren the Jews such that, he put his life on the line by killing the Egyptian who was fighting with his fellow Jew. This

forced him to go into exile. He thought his brethren will understand his actions but they did not. In the process of time he came back in the power and anointing of God to deliver them from bondage. Scriptures have it that he chose to suffer affliction than to please himself; *“choosing rather to share ill treatment with God's people, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a time; accounting the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he looked to the reward.”* Heb 11:25-26

Nehemiah in his days also chose to deny himself for the general good of his fellow Jews. Though as a governor he was entitled to certain benefits, yet he did not claim all those benefits but rather chose not to please himself (by gratifying the self); *“Moreover from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year even to the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that is, twelve years, I and my brothers have not eaten the bread of the governor. But the former governors who were before me were chargeable to the people, and took of them bread and wine, besides forty shekels of silver; yes, even their servants bore rule over the people: but I didn't do so, because of the fear of God. Yes, also I continued in the work of this wall, neither bought we any land: and all*

my servants were gathered there to the work. Moreover there were at my table, of the Jews and the rulers, one hundred fifty men, besides those who came to us from among the nations that were round about us. Now that which was prepared for one day was one ox and six choice sheep; also fowls were prepared for me, and once in ten days store of all sorts of wine: yet for all this I didn't demand the bread of the governor, because the bondage was heavy on this people.” Neh 5:14-18

In Paul's teachings regarding the manifestation of spiritual gifts, he taught that, they have been given to us for the profit of the whole church and not for pleasing ourselves. Hating self is therefore vital to ministering to others both materially and spiritually.

Chapter 3

LIVING IN THE WILL OF GOD

In the previous chapter we learnt that for one to be a disciple of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ, he or she must hate himself in order to seek the good of others. In the same way, there is no way we can know or walk in the will of God for our lives if we do not hate ourselves. In this chapter I will endeavor to throw light on the necessity for us to value and imbibe the word of God into our lives. This in effect will help us know the core will of God for our lives us believers.

The first step we take in our journey in walking according to the will of God is to delight in the word of God and make it our meditation wherever we go; *“This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth, but you shall meditate thereon day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you*

shall have good success.” *Josh 1:8*. It is not just enough for us to delight in it, but to be careful to observe all that is written therein. To underscore the importance of imbibing the word of God in our lives, Christ taught his disciples that anyone who eats the bread of life will live by the word forever; *“As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father; so he who feeds on me, he will also live because of me. This is the bread which came down out of heaven—not as our fathers ate the manna, and died. He who eats this bread will live forever.”* *John 6:57-58*. This is the same understanding Paul had when he was writing to the church in Colossae. In it he makes the point that Christ is our very life as revealed in the following scripture; *“When Christ, our life, is revealed, then you will also be revealed with him in glory.”* *Col 3:4*. Jesus himself declares that he is the way, the truth and the life (*John 14:6*).

If we indeed declare that we are in the word and the word is in us, then we are expected to live unto Christ and not unto ourselves. When Christ himself came, he declared, he was in the father and the father was in him. Thus, he came to do the will of the father, thereby doing always, that which pleased God. After he had accomplished the will of the father, He is now seated at the right hand of the father ever living to make

intercession for us. If we also follow in his footsteps we will also do the will of God. As he abides forever, so shall we as scripture reveals; *“The world is passing away with its lusts, but he who does God's will remains forever.” 1 John 2:17.*

Let us now move on to what the will of God for our lives as Christians is. It is important for us to note, the whole of scripture is inspired by God and thus we ought to obey the entire scriptures and not to hand pick the ones we are comfortable with. It's therefore impossible for an individual to reject the teachings, reprove, rebuke correction and the instructions in righteousness from the whole of scripture and still be in the will of God. Looking at what we have mentioned, it appears most of what will be the will of God is likely not to be pleasant to obey. This is why from the beginning I made the submission that, it is quiet impossible to please God if we do not hate our life. It is important for me to state that, we cannot exhaust the will of God (as a concept or truth), hence I will endeavor to touch on a few aspect of the will of God for us. Jeremiah in the following scripture gives us a clue as to what the will or intent of God was for the people of Israel (and by extension we believers); *“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says Yahweh, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to*

give you hope in your latter end.” Jer 29:11. From this scripture it's clear, all that God will allow us to pass through in this life as his children is the design of his will to bring all of us to a desired end. Paul had this understanding when he revealed in the following; *“We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, to those who are called according to his purpose.” Rom 8:28.* Remember, the point has already been made that, the will of God most often than not is likely to be unpleasant and I believe that is why Paul had to give us this encouragement.

The original intent or will of God for man was that he God will derive pleasure from us, as well as the workings of His entire creation; *“Worthy are you, our Lord and God, the Holy One, to receive the glory, the honor, and the power, for you created all things, and because of your desire they existed, and were created!” Rev 4:11,* but most unfortunately man disobeyed and as a result, sin entered into the world. This has necessitated that man be redeemed from this sin. The taking away of sin from our lives by the death of Christ is the will of God concerning us. Accordingly, the Lamb of God who was slain from the foundation of the earth was for the following purpose; *“The next day, he saw Jesus coming to him, and said, Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes*

away the sin of the world!” John 1:29

The subject of predestination is a very slippery ground for most theologians and believers alike. Many have taught that this subject does not encourage holy living and so on. This is why they shy away from this very important aspect of scripture. To the contrary, I believe it rather encourages us to live pure lives by aspiring to be like our Lord and savior Jesus Christ. According to Paul we were chosen in Christ before even the world began; *“even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and without blemish before him in love;” Eph 1:4*, and for this reason, were predestined to be conformed to the image of the son of God as the following scripture reveals; *“having predestined us for adoption as children through Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his desire,” Eph 1:5* , *“For whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.” Rom 8:29*. We those who call ourselves Christians are therefore supposed to live a holy life in conformity with the image of the son of God thereby making our calling and election sure. I have to mention this because we cannot wish it away from scripture, as we will be subtracting from it by doing so. We are therefore

supposed to teach it, as it is scriptural and not try to help God. He alone knows why he put that truth in scripture as a stamp of his sovereignty and it must be respected as such and taught faithfully. You grasp from the scripture which talks about predestination that, that which follows our predestination is our sanctification. Paul in his letter to the Thessalonians made the point that the will of God is our sanctification; *“For this is the will of God: your sanctification, that you abstain from sexual immorality,” 1 Thess 4:3*. Is it therefore possible for our sanctification to be the will of God and the scripture in Romans regarding predestination promote unholy living? Let's take note, predestination precedes our sanctification. God chose the sequence that after predestination comes our sanctification. We can therefore not be predestined and afterwards be given the license to sin, but rather we are to be sanctified. The believer is supposed to trust in God fully for his sanctification as if it's all the act of God and also work out their personal sanctification as if it all depends on them.

Immediately after the sanctifying work of God is our glorification. There is no way one will claim to be raised with the Lord and not live in newness of life. The resurrection power of God is supposed to be

resident in the life of the person who claims to be predestined, and sanctified. It's this power that will make us reign with the Lord.

Christ made it very clear to His disciples that it was because of them he sanctified Himself. So, by sanctifying Himself, the disciples were also sanctified; *“For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.” John 17:19.*

If our savior sanctified Himself for our sake and we as his disciples are to follow His steps, then we must also sanctify ourselves. We are called to be the light and salt of the earth to bring about an effect in man to cause them to live in obedience to God. There are people who may not be able to read the scriptures, but by merely observing our lives they will also live in obedience to God. In this way, we are expected to be living epistles. The walk in the spirit according to Galatians 5:22 will certainly guarantee our sanctification.

It is also the will of Christ our Lord that He will manifest Himself to us if only we are His disciples; *“One who has my commandments, and keeps them, that person is one who loves me. One who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him, and will reveal myself to*

him. ” John 14:21. If only we are ready and pay the price of discipleship, Christ is also ever ready to teach us deep things about who He is and His kingdom. No wonder Paul knew the Lord and still desired to know Him more, simply because He paid the price for Christ to manifest himself to Him (such that there were even certain things of the kingdom he was not supposed to disclose to us). These among others are the core of the will of God for us.

Chapter 4

WHAT GOD WANTS YOU TO KNOW IN THIS END-TIME

“But the end of all things is near. Therefore be of sound mind, self-controlled, and sober in prayer.” 1 Peter 4:7. This scripture gives us some important notes to be awake to, as we live in this end-time. He reveals that since the end is at hand, we should first of all be sober. That is to say, we must be very alert, not to give ourselves to 'drunkenness' and worldly amusements. The subject of 'drunkenness' has been dealt with in one of our books titled *'The cry of Apostles and Prophets'*. We are not only expected to be sober, but also to watch and pray. This tells us, one of the things which will be of great help to us as believers is prayer. Christ in His teachings told His disciples that men ought to always pray and not to faint or give up; *“He also spoke a parable to them that they must always pray, and not give up,” Luke 18:1.* Accordingly, we should not get to a

point and mock God by refusing to wait on Him. We learn a very important lesson from Christ's last hours in Gethsamane; *"They came to a place which was named Gethsemane. He said to his disciples, 'Sit here, while I pray.' He took with him Peter, James, and John, and began to be greatly troubled and distressed. He said to them, 'My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here, and watch.' He went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass away from him. He said, 'Abba, Father, all things are possible to you. Please remove this cup from me. However, not what I desire, but what you desire.' He came and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, 'Simon, are you sleeping? Couldn't you watch one hour? Watch and pray, that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.' Again he went away, and prayed, saying the same words. Again he returned, and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy, and they didn't know what to answer him. He came the third time, and said to them, 'Sleep on now, and take your rest. It is enough. The hour has come. Behold, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Arise, let us be going. Behold, he who betrays me is at hand.'"* Mark 14:32-42. From this scripture we infer, the last days of man is very important

just as the end of the world is. Getting to the close of His ministry, he had to cry to God, so He would be given the grace to drink the cup and to finish His ministry. There was a very important lesson Christ wanted His disciples to learn in Gethsamane. He made them know, the hour was at hand and that they should watch and pray or else they would fall into temptation. True to His word, as they did not watch with Him, He alone stood but all His disciples fled and left Him. It will take a lot of prayer for us believers to endure to the end and not to depart from the faith. That is why in Christ's teachings concerning the end-time He told us to watch and pray since we do not know when he is coming; *"Watch, keep alert, and pray; for you don't know when the time is."* Mark 13:33

Another important thing to note in this end-time is that we need to be fully persuaded about whatever we have being taught with the Apostles and early disciples as our yardstick of faith. If we are not fully persuaded of our believe, then we can be swayed by every wind of doctrine, thereby not being able to endure sound doctrine. Due to the faith Abraham had, he was fully persuaded about the promises of God and did not stagger at it. Therefore it was counted unto him as righteousness. We are also expected to look unto Jesus

in faith no matter the circumstances surrounding us in this end-time, hoping to the end of our salvation.

If we are not fully persuaded of what the Lord has already declared unto us in the scriptures, we wouldn't be able to stand in the face of persecution and afflictions. Since Paul was fully persuaded of his belief in Christ, he had an unwavering faith and so nothing could separate him from the love of God, and that Christ was able to keep that which he had committed unto him. What he meant was, he had surrendered his life (lost it) to Christ and was convinced he would gain it back; *“For this cause I suffer also these things. Yet I am not ashamed, for I know him whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to guard that which I have committed to him against that day.” 2 Tim 1:12*

Also in this end-time, let us take note of what happened to Samson in the later end of his ministry. Though he was anointed and could do all those great things and ravage the enemies' territory, yet he was caught in the web of harlotry. Harlotry which can also be likened to spiritual contamination with idols is one thing we must beware of in this end-time. This is just by the way, as that is not what I really want us to look at. The question we must ask ourselves is, why didn't the enemy cut off

Samson's hands or legs but rather their first target was to pull out his eyes? This tells us a lot about the importance of our sight. Satan's number one aim is to always cause people to be spiritually blind so, they wouldn't know the truth of the gospel of Christ. That is why Paul in his first letter to the church in Corinth makes us to understand, if the gospel is hid to anyone, is simply because the God of this world have blinded their eyes; *“in whom the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that the light of the Good News of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should not dawn on them.”* 2 Cor 4:4. Apart from the necessity of the eyes of unbelievers to be opened, that of the mind of believers also needs to be enlighten so they can fully enter into their inheritance as children of God; *“having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of his calling, and what are the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,”* Eph 1:18.

There is therefore an ongoing battle against believers to cause them to be blind by not obeying the following scripture; *“seeing that his divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and virtue; by which he has granted to us his precious and exceedingly great promises; that through these you may*

become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world by lust. Yes, and for this very cause adding on your part all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence; and in moral excellence, knowledge; and in knowledge, self-control; and in self-control patience; and in patience godliness; and in godliness brotherly affection; and in brotherly affection, love. For if these things are yours and abound, they make you to be not idle nor unfruitful to the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these things is blind, seeing only what is near, having forgotten the cleansing from his old sins.” 2 Peter 1:3-9.

Note from this scripture that, those who lack the named virtues in increasing measure eventually go blind. Subsequently, in his bid to cause men to be blind, he will always make sure these virtues are not taught in church. He rather causes many to concentrate on the non-essentials of life to the detriment of their souls. We in effect, need to be ware in this end-time.

Scripture makes us discern, if any one makes an alliance with the world, then that fellow automatically makes him or herself an enemy of God; *“You adulterers and adulteresses, don't you know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of*

God.” James 4:4. In order for us to be potent in our spiritual battles against the devil, we must break every alliance with the world. If we still keep any ties with the world, then we are one with the devil, and thus, are part of his team. We can therefore resist him only by submitting to God and hating the world; *“Likewise, you younger ones, be subject to the elder. Yes, all of you gird yourselves with humility, to subject yourselves to one another; for God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time; casting all your worries on him, because he cares for you. Be sober and self-controlled. Be watchful. Your adversary the devil, walks around like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Withstand him steadfast in your faith, knowing that your brothers who are in the world are undergoing the same sufferings.*” 1 Peter 5:5-9.

We as good soldiers of the Lord are supposed to please only the one who enlisted us into the army of His saints. This entails that we fight to the very end and not to withdraw our sword from blood. If we do so, then we are under the curse of God according to the prophecy of Jeremiah; *“Cursed be he who does the work of Yahweh negligently; and cursed be he who keeps back his sword from blood.”* Jer 48:10

One other important truth we must grasp is, our God himself is a destroyer. He did not spare the then corrupt world by destroying it with a flood. He also destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah with fire for their iniquities. Moreover, he is not going to spare this present corrupt world either. Let's therefore learn from Him and destroy the works of the devil, for that is the reason for which Christ came. Saul was charged by the Lord to destroy all the Amalekites and all that belonged to them. He rather had other plans and so chose to spare their king (Agag) which incurred the displeasure of God. In this end-time we are expected to deal ruthlessly with every form of sin and iniquity in our lives so that we will be at peace with him at his appearing.

In concluding this chapter, I will like us to look at a very important topic which I believe is very dear to the heart of God (and is only people who love God and are dear to him who attach more importance to it). Scripture makes us know, it's more blessed to give than to receive. What one gives differs from person to person. One significant thing we can however give to God is thanks. Most people ask from Him, but only few men give Him thanks.

The Psalmist knew the importance of thanks giving and

that accounts for the reason why some of the Psalms begins with thanksgiving. He even brings to light that we are supposed to give thanks to God at the remembrance of his holiness; *“Sing unto the LORD, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.” Ps 30:4 KJV*

Even before Jesus broke the bread to institute the New Covenant with his disciples, he gave thanks unto the father. Furthermore, before he called Lazarus to come forth out of the grave, He first and foremost gave thanks unto the father. I believe it's not just a coincidence that in these two symbolic and significant periods in Christ's life he gave thanks first before any other matter. That is, these periods in His life underscores the importance of thanks giving.

Paul in his letter to Timothy also instructs that we believers give thanks unto God on behalf of all men; *“I exhort therefore, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercessions, and givings of thanks, be made for all men:” 1 Tim 2:1.* Additionally, in his letter to the church in Thessalonica he makes us know, in all things we should give thanks; *“In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus toward you.” 1 Thess 5:18.*

ARE YOU PREPARED **FOR CHRIST'S** **SECOND COMING?**

Please note that...

The first Adam disobeyed God and because of his disobedience sin entered the human race, resulting in the spiritual death and separation of man from God; "Therefore, as sin entered into the world through one man, and death through sin; and so death passed to all men, because all sinned...So then as through one trespass, all men were condemned; even so through one act of righteousness, all men were justified to life." Romans 5:12-13, 18.

The last Adam (Jesus Christ) obeyed God in order to take away sin from the human race; "But God commends his own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:8.

Your part of the arrangement is to receive the grace or free gift of God's salvation by faith (Romans 4:16-17).

You must understand faith without works is dead, so God expects you to obey and receive this free gift (but costly) salvation with your free will; "But as many as received him,

to them he gave the right to become God's children, to those who believe in his name: who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." John 1:12-13.

The most important decision you have to make now is to be born again (John3:1-8). Being born again is to repent of your sins and to submit yourself to be baptized by immersion (and not by sprinkling) as well as receive the Holy Spirit; "Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Acts 2:38.

The grace of God is not a license for you to sin, but rather to receive strength to live in obedience to God's word (Titus 2:11-14).

You therefore have to (as a matter of necessity), live a holy life and walk as Christ did, and not to live in hypocrisy; "However God's firm foundation stands, having this seal, "The Lord knows those who are his, and, "Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness."2 Timothy 2:19. "Everyone who has this hope set on him purifies himself, even as he is pure." 1John 3:3.

If you walk in the light of the above scriptures and make 2 Peter 1:2-10 your guiding principle, you will never live a defeated Christian life, thereby ensuring you are found in Christ even at His glorious appearing.

I however caution that you beware of people who preach Another Gospel, Another Jesus and Another Spirit as in line with 2 Corinthians 11:1-4.

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GOLDEN DISTINCTIONS OF END-TIME SAINTS
IMPORTANT SIGN POSTS FOR BELIEVERS
THE PARADOX OF MATURITY
DEMYSTIFYING PARABLES AND SACRIFICE
THE REALM OF DIVINITY, CONTRADICTING THE WORLD

In this world, earth may cover mundane gold, but discoverers however possess them. A continuous gaze at the world carries with it the devastating effect of contracting spiritual cataract. The following should resonate in our ears that, one can only journey where mortals are ignorant of, if he walks with the Lord and takes a posture that views things from the perspective of the risen Christ. Spiritual gems are discovered by those who fish in the deep seas. God bless you as you read, as some truths are revealed hereafter.



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