

THE VOICE BEHIND A MAN

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For further information or testimony or permission, contact:

Email: pauljere8@gmail.com

Telegram: t.me/decisionfamily

WhatsApp/call: +2348069027882, +2348077953412

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INTRODUCTION

The instrumentality of a voice had since been indispensable in various facets of life. Even from the time of creation, the Creator had to engage it in the business of creation. Without it, nothing was in any way created. The Bible says ***“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light”*** (Genesis 1:1-3 - KJV). Where there is no voice, everything is void. The Creator had to voice out His Word in order to cause the creation to take place. The place of a voice is so crucial to God to the point that whenever He does not engage it in any place or life, then something may be seriously wrong. He uses it for various purposes including instruction, direction, salvation, healing, deliverance, warfare, promotion, demotion, success and protection. He uses it for both positive and negative circumstances.

Just as God recognises the importance of His voice in performing His purposes both in heaven and on the earth, other forces also use it as a medium for realizing their agenda. The forces of darkness are aware of the importance of a voice and as such they are also involved in using it for their evil plans and purposes. It is also important for man to know the force behind the use of his voice in shaping his life and destiny.

The voice of a being is very crucial in its recognition. One can easily recognise a cow by its mowing voice. Even among human beings, individuals are easily identified by their voices. You cannot say that a particular animal around who creates any form of noise through its interaction with the environment is a beast while the sound of its voice is that of a bird. No matter how it appears to be as noisy as any other animal that may even be bigger than it, a bird's voice will normally help one to identify it without seeing it. So the voice of any being is paramount in its identification.

Apart from the voice of an individual, there are voices speaking around him. Some voices speak in respect to the individual and his well-being and some others speak against him. Yet other voices have no effect on an individual. There are voices speaking good things while others speak evil things. There are different dimensions at which voices affect the life of an individual and his destiny. Voices speak volumes into the life of a man. Any voice that speaks into the life of a man will go a long way into shaping that life and its destiny.

Every man is brought into the world to fulfil the volume that is spoken and written about him and hence, need to be conscious of the voices that speak into his life in order not to mar the original plan that was originally spoken by heaven concerning him. You are on an assignment, but that assignment cannot be properly accomplished without the instrumentality of certain voices in your life.

The voice that speaks for a man determines the personality that is behind him. When God's voice backs up a man, He will use all avenues at His disposal to cause what that voice says to come to pass. If on the way round, the voice of the devil dogs the way of a man, then you're sure that evil will not depart from that man. There are some voices that could come from several sources to speak behind a man, thus, causing series of happenings in that man's life. As we move further into this book. We shall be discussing some of these sources as the Holy Spirit will help us. It is therefore, my prayer that the Lord will help you to identify and handle the voice(s) that may be speaking over your life either for its successful accomplishment or for its failure and ultimate destruction.

CHAPTER 1 THE MAN BEHIND A VOICE

The sound of a voice gives a clue about the personality behind it. It is not necessary for a man that speaks through a voice to be seen before he can be identified. Once he's already known by those that hear his voice at a particular point in time, they can quickly identify his presence by his voice. His voice goes ahead of him to announce his presence. The authority and power behind the word that is voiced out by a man is determined by the man himself. In other words, the possessor of a voice determines the potency of the voice. Your voice is as powerful as your personality. The person behind a voice is what gives credence to the voice. Strong men have strong voices, while weak men have weak voices.

In this chapter, we'll consider the significance of the personality that is behind a voice in order for us to glean some understanding about the need to be conscious of our standing as we speak for the Almighty God. Let us in the first place consider what God says concerning Himself and His voice.

The Voice of God

The voice of the LORD is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth: the LORD is upon many waters. The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is full of majesty. The voice of the LORD breaketh the cedars; yea, the LORD breaketh the cedars of Lebanon. He maketh them also to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn. The voice of the LORD divideth the flames of fire. The voice of the LORD shaketh the wilderness; the LORD shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh. The voice of the LORD maketh the hinds to calve, and discovereth the forests: and in his temple doth every one speak of his glory. (Psalm 29:3-9) KJV

From these verses, the psalmist was talking about the powerful nature of the voice of God. He mentioned about the fact that the voice of God is upon the waters. It is upon both the waters above the firmament and the waters below the firmament. No wonder, when the Lord instructed Moses to stretch forth his rod upon River Nile and the other water bodies in the land of Egypt to usher in one of the plagues in the land of Egypt (Exodus 8:1-6); in obedience to that instruction, frogs were brought up in the land. The voice of the Lord brought in those frogs from the waters. When the Lord told Moses to stretch forth his rod upon the Red Sea, he did so and the sea parted for the Israelites to pass through on dry ground. As Moses stretched forth his rod in obedience to the voice of God after the Israelites finished crossing the Red Sea, the water came back and swallowed the Egyptians as they were trying to catch up with the Israelites (Exodus 14:15-31). The power of God was here manifested

through His voice. When He spoke, the waters, the wilderness, the trees and other creatures heard His voice and had no any other option than to obey. His power is seen to manifest in His voice. His voice is recognised as His person.

When He gave Moses the instruction to stretch forth that rod upon the waters, he spoke out what the waters were going to release. So when the waters saw the rod stretched forth in accordance to the Word that was voiced out from the mouth of God, it released what He pronounced earlier. His personality was so profound that what he pronounced was released. He is too mighty that His Word being voiced out does not meet with any circumstance that can render it powerless. There is no obstacle on the way of His Word that can remain as an obstacle; rather, it would be converted as a miracle. Thus, to the voice of His Word, obstacles are miracles in disguise.

Look at how the Lord Jesus displayed the power of the voice of God as they were crossing a sea:

And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships. And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. (Mark 4:36-39) KJV

As the storm arose, the waves beat the ship to the point that it was full. In the whole situation, Jesus was busy sleeping at the hinder part of the ship. He was so deep in that sleep that even the storm could not stop His sleep. The noise of His disciples could not stop His sleep. Even the water that filled the ship did not stop Him from that sleep. What level of peace could that have been? What kind of undisturbed peace could this have been? The peace inside Him was never intimidated by any form of pressure around Him. No wonder He is called the Prince of peace (Isaiah 9:6).

Let's consider His response to the situation in the sea. He rebuked the wind by the word of His mouth by saying "Peace, be still". His voice was so powerful on the storm to the point that the storm had no option than to be calm. The voice from Him was so recognised by even the storm that it had to obey. We're not in the first place too interested in the fact that He spoke to the storm and it obeyed Him; rather, our point of interest is the state of His mind in the situation. Although He was in the same ship with His disciples, He was in a different realm from them. His realm defined the state of His mind and it was this state of His mind that set the stage for

the effectiveness of His voice. The stage you set is determined by the state of your inside. What you transport into the realm of the physical is determined by your state in the realm of the spirit. You are as real as the realm you operate from.

Jesus was operating from His normal realm as the Prince of peace. Where He was operating as the Prince was where He was speaking from and the storm had to recognise Him in that capacity. He demonstrated His faith from that realm and He was obeyed. He came from the realm of peace and released peace in the realm of the physical. He woke up in peace to speak peace. The peace in Him was great and so He released great peace in the incident. He transmitted the peace He has in the spirit into the physical and there was found a great calm. To Him, there was no cause for alarm, but there was every cause to be calm. He forced the world around Him to assume the state of His inside and it obeyed. His voice was as forceful as the state of His heart, as it forced out a great calm.

The personality behind His voice showed in the environment where He found Himself. He was a man of peace and so the voice from Him was an instrument for the promotion of peace. He spoke the state of His heart and provided a new stage for the world around Him. The display of His faith by His voice was the transmission of the state of His heart. This is wonderful! When faith becomes the transmittance of the state of a man's heart, it becomes instrumental in setting a new stage. It was like when He pronounced peace in that situation, the environment saw that peace as it came out of His heart into it. When you speak what you carry, your effectiveness becomes apparent. You can never be more effective and efficient than the state of your inside. You are as great as your heart condition. You are never greater than the state of your heart. Your voice is as forceful as your heart condition.

When Jesus pronounced that peace, He was in a way announcing His content. When He pronounced what He contained, it was obtained. His content brought about the realisation of His intention. What a man contains grants him a voice to obtain his desire and to attain to his intended level and destiny. What do you want to obtain in life and purpose? Ask God for what needs to be contained in you in order to give credence to your voice and desire. There are things that will never respond to you until your personality which is a force behind your voice through your faith in God is properly in the rightful shape. Your faith is expected to gravitate from the reality and quality of your life in the realm of the spirit. There are things you may say which may not be honoured as another man's pronouncement of the same things. Quality life commands quality faith, which in turn, commands quality results.

Elijah's Pronouncement to King Ahab

Look at what Elijah said to King Ahab in the Book of 1 Kings 17:1-3:

And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word. (KJV)

There was no record of the history of the life of Elijah apart from the fact that he was a Tishbite who lived in Gilead. He was not a very prominent man before that time and hence, he was only identified by his locality. His residential address was the only identity he had before he came around to meet King Ahab. There was nothing from his identification that had any bearing with his prophetic ministry as at that time. However, he had a voice behind the scene. It was this voice behind the scene that gave credence and audacity to his voice at the scene. He had a quality personality behind the scene and even when he was just like one of those dwellers of the land of Gilead, he came with a voice that is backed up with a quality life and personality in the presence of God. He communed with God to the point that he was very confident of his word. The voice from him became very weighty because of his weight in the spirit realm. When he spoke, the rain knew that a man had spoken. The atmosphere had no option than to respond to his voice by doing his bidding.

He stated his secret by saying “*As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand...*” He stood before the presence of God and so knew his authority in Him. He did not meet Ahab after eating and drinking and enjoying his life in frivolities, but from the presence of God. His standing with God granted him the capacity to speak things that could stand. He was so intimate with the Lord that at least a measure of His (God's) nature and personality was transmitted into his (Elijah's) life.

Why do you want to make your voice to stand out without a place of standing with God? The standing of the word that proceeds through your voice answers to your standing with God. If you have a stand with God, even your stammering will become a hammer to your adversaries. You can normally withstand situations based on your standing with God. The report about how Elijah stood before the Lord is found in the Book of James Chapter 5 verse 17. It says:

Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. (KJV)

Before he appeared to Ahab, Elijah prayed earnestly that it might not rain. He stood in the presence of God in this prayer to the point that God gave him an assurance that he should go ahead and announce it to Ahab. His standing in the presence of God was really in this place of prayer. He gained that audacity from the place of prayer. His earnestness in that place of prayer earned him the response he received. Thus, your earnestness determines your earning. Great earning demands great earnestness. In other words, your earning answers to your earnestness. Your earnestness before the presence of God will command your earning before men.

Elijah's earnestness before the Lord granted him an undeniable voice in the presence of the king. The Revised Standard Version renders the above verse in the following way:

Elijah was a man of like nature with ourselves and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth.

(RSV)

Elijah prayed fervently. His fervency was so strong that nothing could stop his result. He had a fervent spirit and so he was not prepared to go for something less than what he was looking for. He was so fervent in the presence of God until God granted him that request. What he prayed for played out for him. He went and prayed and came out to display. His passion for the righteousness of God to be displayed in the land of Israel made him to undertake this task. He therefore, passed on that message to Ahab through his passion for God. God then backed him up through this fervency and passion.

An Instance in the Lives of Jesus' Disciples

And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him, and saying, Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatick, and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water. And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him. Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me. And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour. Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible

***unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.
(Matthew 17:14-21) KJV***

You can now observe the incident reported above concerning the inability of the disciples of the Lord Jesus to cast out the demon of epilepsy. They were with the Lord, but had no capacity of casting out that spirit from the boy in question. They were walking around with a powerful man, but did not at then access the capacity of authority that was inherent in Him. Jesus rebuked them by addressing them as faithless and perverse. When he received the information of their inability to cast out the demon from the boy, He identified them as men that had no faith and went ahead to reprimand them about how long He should be with them. He felt that it was an error and a deviation from the normal expectation for their lives to still be victims of such deficiency. When He looked at them He saw faithlessness and perversion. To Jesus it was perversion on the part of the disciples to be unable to cast out that demon. Their then disposition was in contrast to God's expectation for their lives and ministry. They were living below heaven's desire and expectation as at that time. Although they tried to cast out the demon, they could not do so, because they did not have the required faith and spiritual capacity necessary to do that. Although they decided to command the demon to come out of the boy, it didn't work because they didn't have what it takes to do that.

There are so many children of God living in perversion just like it happened in the lives of the disciples. They (the disciples) were not in perversion through the spreading of false doctrines and teachings. They were not among the Pharisees and Sadducees of those days. They were with the Master, but yet living in perversion. What an irony! They were living in the midst of that wonderful opportunity of having the Almighty God in bodily form, but yet living in perversion. They had all it takes to become what God wanted them to become, but yet, they fell below expectation. Their action of that day was a deviation from Jesus' expectation for them. Jesus saw the spirit of faithlessness and perversion in their lives and rebuked them to that effect.

Imagine a set of people that the father of that boy placed his hope in them in the absence of Jesus! The disciples only ended up disappointing him. What he thought that they've learnt from the Master was not found in their lives. What an irony! His hope was dashed to the ground because the men he met had no capacity of handling the issue; because the personalities behind their voices were faithless and perverse as far as the verdict of their Master was concerned. What can perversion and faithlessness do in the place of faith and truth? What is heaven saying about your personality as at now? Are you busy working for Him, but yet His address over your life is that you are a faithless man and a deviation from His

real plan? Are you not a contradiction of divine agenda for your life? Are you not a failure to heaven and humanity in general? What is heaven's verdict over your life?

After Jesus casted out the demon, the disciples went apart with Him and asked Him why they could not cast out the demon. He told them that such demons could not be cast out except by prayer and fasting. So the reason for which they didn't command such faith to cast out the demon was because they did not engage in prayer and fasting. Thus, it must have dawned on them that although they were not yet really engaged in the exercise of prayer and fasting, it would be an error for them not to do so after the Master leaves them (Matthew 9:15).

The Seven Sons of Sceva

And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them. Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. (Acts 19:11-16)
KJV

When God was using Apostle Paul to perform many special miracles, the Bible recorded about some Jews of his days that decided to imitate him in the act of performing similar miracles. The Bible says that they were **vagabond Jews**. Although they were Jews, whom were the covenant people of God, yet they were described as vagabond people. Their identity was that they were living vagabond lives. They were engaged in the act of exorcism and were therefore attracted to the special nature of Paul's method of casting out devils. They wanted to imitate Apostle Paul, but they were vagabonds. They were roaming about and wanted to act in the room (place) of Paul. What an error! You cannot be roaming about and take the room of a man of focus.

What is your state in this matter? What is your identity in the spirit realm? Are you not a vagabond that has no real stable place in the spirit? A vagabond has no permanent home address; but rather, moves from place to place. He is a wanderer moving aimlessly from place to place. He's a homeless man without proper and steady place of abode. Today there are spiritual vagabonds moving about with no real identity in the spirit. They have no steady life in the spirit. They

are so unpredictable on a daily basis. They are neither trustworthy nor dependable. They cannot be entrusted with any reasonable responsibility without bringing shame and disaster to the Name of God and the Church of Jesus Christ. They are prayerful in the atmosphere of prayer meetings, but are very carnal and careless after leaving the prayer meeting. They can appear holy among brethren, but very immoral in their interaction with unbelievers. They are like chameleons in the spirit, having no definite colour in terms of their lives and attitudes. They are so inconsistent and discontented in their lives. They are godless and discontented in the things of this world. Some of them have no permanent fellowship base, but they are busy floating up and down from one church or fellowship to the other in the name of not being satisfied in the places where they find themselves. If those that you meet in that your new fellowship were like you, will you meet them there? Even if there are such cases that you may need to leave your church or fellowship, why should you be moving all the time almost going round all the local churches in your area? Something is wrong with you. You may be a spiritual vagabond.

Although the sons of Sceva were vagabonds, they were still identified as Jews. That tribal and national name was still on them, but a contrary status was attached to it. They were Jews, but vagabonds. They were Jews, but could not be identified in the places of allotment given to the Jews. This is a critical issue. Where are you resident in the spirit realm? Are you really residing in your spiritual place of allocation? Are you not busy in another man's vineyard? If it is so, then you are a spiritual vagabond. You are so unsteady in your place of spiritual gifting and placement that your voice cannot cause any change in the place you find yourself. Are you sure that you are not where you are now just because of your mere ambition and carnal desire? Check yourself in the light of this. What are you really known for? How can people really identify your placement in God's vineyard? The answer is left for you.

What will therefore be the personality behind their use of the Name of Jesus as they tried to cast out the demons? They were doing it with the voice of vagabonds. Imagine a demon obeying a vagabond! It does not matter the fact that they were using the Name of Jesus, but they were using it as vagabonds. The effectiveness of that name was counteracted and neutralized by their identity as vagabonds and common practising exorcists.

Took upon Themselves...

...took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus...

Those vagabond Jews were doing what they were doing by taking it upon themselves. It was not a revelation granted unto them as a divine responsibility, but

it was something they just decided to take upon themselves. The simple, but critical question to you is that how did you get into doing what you are doing now? Did you not start doing it just because of the apparent benefit that you see in it? Are you not doing it in order to make a name and become popular just like some other persons? Check up in sincerity of heart and make amends if need be.

You will have to bear the whole burden of whatever you choose to take upon yourself. If you take it as a bidding from the Lord, He will take responsibility of handling it as He makes provision for you, both in human, material and financial resources. When the Lord bids you to engage in a project, He is prepared to pay the bills involved in it. His bidding attracts His billing. He promotes what He pronounces. The Lord will promote what He places in your hands to the glory of His Name.

...who are you?

This was the question that the sons of Sceva were asked. The demon spoke through the possessed man by asking them of who they were. They were speaking to the spirit, but their voices lacked the identity of the speakers. They used the authoritative Name of Jesus and also mentioned that powerful man they knew (by the name Paul) that was using it at that period of time; but they could not be recognised. The demon recognised Jesus and Paul, but could not recognise them. What an irony! Their voices were unidentified voices. They had no real recognition in the realm of the spirit to the point that the demon had to ask them to mention who they were. It didn't matter how loud their voices were raised in that instance, but the demon was looking for only the identity that was backing up their voices. It means that if Paul had been there in their midst jointly commanding the demon to come out of the man, the demon would be hearing many voices, but only identifying Paul's own. The demon might have said **“well, I'll go out of this man, but may it come to the full understanding of you all that I'm not leaving him because of all of you, but only because of one man among you by name Paul. Now let me teach you a lesson, I will come out, but I will deal with the seven of you who are just coming to me with no authority, but as strangers to me. I will leave the man, but you'll live the rest of your life to regret your action of today. It is only those that I know their voices of authority that I obey their commands....”** May your identity be substantial in the realm of the spirit!

CHAPTER 2 YOUR LIFE AS A VOICE (PART 1)

One critical and vital voice behind a man is his life. The way he lives his life is very crucial in determining the voice that speaks on his behalf. So your life is a voice that enforces certain issues into your life and destiny. It is imperative to know that a life that is lived anyhow will also end anyhow. What your life speaks concerning you will go a long way in determining your peak at the end of it all. So no one is expected to live his life anyhow as if everything goes without any mark and impact made into his life. One vital force in your life is your life. Of course, God is the Creator, Promoter, Deliverer, Saviour and all that you can think of as far as the life and destiny of every man is concerned; but there are several things that God could be handicapped to do for you based on what your life presents before Him. He works based on His principles and protocols. He is very conscious of His personality and integrity. He does not joke with His Word. Let us consider this in the light of few passages of the Scripture:

When Sacrifices and Songs are Rejected...

I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream. (Amos 5:21-24) KJV

Consider God's expression from the above verses of Scripture. He said that He hates the feast days of the Israelites. Although He was the one that ordained those feast days, He said that they were their (the Israelites') days. It appeared that whenever they came to observe those feasts, they were considered as observing them as their own days and so they were on their own. Heaven did not recognise their observances as being done unto Him; rather, as far as He was concerned, the Israelites were busy doing nothing for Him. Can you then imagine the futility and uselessness of their service in those days? They were busy on the earth, but heaven was saying that there was no work done. What is God saying about that your work that you claim to be doing for Him? May you not be busy for nothing in the sight of God!

Moreover, the Lord clearly stated that He despised those their feast days. That was a terrible disaster. They were observing feasts that were despised before the Lord. How can God despise what He had ordained? It became so ironical in those days as the children of Israel's worship of God became 'empty rituals' that

had no bearing with the Originator of the feasts. They could gather, but God was not involved in all that they were doing. Their burnt offerings were not accepted because they were not accepted.

He categorically described their songs and the melody of their instruments as noise before Him. Their voices became noises before Him. What they were hearing on the earth as being melodious was an undesirable noise before the Lord. Can you imagine a man singing audibly and people are applauding him, but yet God is saying that it is nothing, but a mere noise that should be taken away from His presence? They were busy but noisy. There was nothing that was distinctly voiced before the throne of the Almighty through their songs.

Why did the Lord say all these to the children of Israel? It was because there was something that was speaking against them. There was a voice of their sinful lifestyles speaking against them. When they were singing, their natural voices were interrupted by the spiritual voice being generated by their iniquities. As they were singing, the Lord was hearing the voices of men trying to ascend His throne, but mixed up with the voices of their iniquities. It became a total mess altogether.

God does not only listen to the natural voice of a man, but He also listens to the voice of his life. You don't have only one voice, but you have another voice emanating from the totality of your life. The interaction and mixing of these voices determines what ultimately reaches the throne of God on your behalf at the end of the day. Praise God for that your melodious voice as a praise singer for God; but the question to you is that what is your life voicing before the throne of God? It is an error for your natural voice to be singing melodiously while your life is countering your praise by a bad and unhealthy voice to God. The voice of your life is a voice behind your praise and other services to God. How can you be a backbiter and at the same time be a powerful praise singer before the Lord? Well, you may appear powerful before men, but as far as God is concerned, you are powerless. Your iniquity had rendered your power to appear powerless.

Their feasting and their sacrifices were marred by their sins and so they were rejected by the Lord. The voice of sin is a distraction against what a man does unto the Lord. It shields the authenticity and the authority behind the voice of a man's service before the Lord. May sin not shield your service and its reward from the throne of grace!

To be out of this situation, the Lord clearly recommended righteousness and judgement (justice-RSV). The voice of righteousness and justice would distinguish and amplify their services unto recognition and acceptance from the throne of grace. When they praise God and render some other services before Him, they will be recognised, distinguished and accepted before the throne of grace. Righteousness and justice create a voice of distinction and acceptability before the Lord. Your righteousness and integrity will speak for you and your ministry in Jesus' Name!

The Person of Cain

The Bible has this to say about Cain and Abel; but we shall be focusing on Cain at this point in time:

And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him. And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him. And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper? And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. (Genesis 4:3-10) KJV

We are made to understand that as time went on, Cain became a farmer while Abel became a shepherd. In that process of time, they had places in terms of the works of their hands and at the same time had places in terms of their lifestyles and disposition in the presence of God. So it was not expected of each of them to exhibit a one-sided growth and identity. As they were growing in their works or careers, they were also expected to grow in their relationship with God. This was where Cain missed it.

When he brought an offering from his farm produce, it was not accepted, but that of Abel was accepted. His (Cain's) offering was not the only thing that was rejected. The first thing that was rejected from him was his person. This is where the big question emanated from. A major reason for which his offering was rejected was because his person was in the first place, rejected. It was going to be erroneous for God to accept an offering from a rejected man. This implies that while Abel was growing in terms of his relationship with God, Cain failed in that capacity. He must have been busy in his farm, but neglecting his relationship and fellowship with the Lord.

Where is your growth located? What are your aspirations in life and purpose? Are you sure that there is a corresponding growth in your relationship with the Lord alongside your growth in career and greatness in the society? Are you only growing in terms of your recognition in church among brethren, while you are diminishing

in your fellowship with God in terms of communion, meditation and other spiritual virtues? It is an error!

When he brought his offering before the Lord, the voice of his personality in terms of relationship with God showed up. God saw him as a man that his offering could not speak well of him before His throne. There was wickedness speaking behind him and as such, the Lord saw his offering as wickedness in disguise. Look at the way his wickedness quickly showed up at that time. He talked to his brother (Abel) in such a way that he could convince him to go to the field with him. He (Cain) wouldn't have sounded harshly to him (Abel). His talk to his brother did not reflect the fire of jealousy that was burning on his inside. His tongue did not portray his personality.

This is how so many people appear today even in the Church of Jesus. They speak as if they are true children of God with the spirit of God inside them; but right on their inside is strong bitterness and jealousy that could not be quenched by any means. They say one thing, but mean something else. They have sweet tongues, but bitter hearts. They are so deceptive in their words and actions. So when they speak, heaven hears their voice as the voice of deception. When they approach the throne of God, the voice of deception signals to God about their real nature and personality. The voice that men hear in the physical is mixed up with the voice of deception in the spirit realm. May you not have different conflicting voices!

When Abel was listening to Cain's suggestion, it appeared alright and innocent, but there was mischief and deception from behind. He only heard what was spoken to him from the mouth of Cain, but did not know the other voice behind him (Cain). He was speaking innocence at the outside, while he was speaking violence on the inside. He was speaking calmly on the outside, but on the inside he was speaking rashly. People like Cain could even appear to be appreciating another man, but right on their inside, they are highly offended and envious of him. However, the Lord knows them, no matter how they try to hide their identities.

When they got to the field, Cain murdered his brother, Abel. So while he was speaking to him at the initial time, he (Abel) was already a dead man before him. The other voice that was speaking behind Cain in the realm of the spirit was the voice of murder. If Abel's ears were to be opened in the spirit, he would have heard a voice telling him that he was dealing with a murderer. No wonder his offering was not accepted. He was a deceiver and a murderer only awaiting his time of manifestation. What a man needs is only a condition and an opportunity to manifest. What God really saw in Cain before He rejected his offering showed up at this point in time. God decided to let him manifest, probably in order to partly justify His rejection of him.

After Cain killed Abel, the Lord asked him about his whereabouts. But after Cain decided to arrogantly exonerate himself from his crime, God clearly told him

that the voice of Abel's blood was crying to Him from the ground. Cain then had the problem of the voice of the blood of Abel speaking directly from the ground to God in heaven. What he thought that he did in secret generated a voice right away from the ground to the throne of God. What was the resultant effect of this to Cain? The Bible says:

A Cursed Man...

And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand; When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth. (Genesis 4:11, 12) KJV

The Lord cursed Cain by saying that the earth had opened its mouth to receive the blood of his brother. So the earth was commanded to receive the blood of Abel from the hands of Cain and keep it as a memorial against him. Therefore, any moment the earth recognises the activities of Cain, it will just quickly present the matter of the blood of Abel as a memorial against him. It will release thorns and thistles because of the outstanding issue of the blood of Abel.

Now, the blood of Abel did two things against Cain: Firstly, it cried to God against him to provoke God's vengeance. No matter what Cain was going to do from that time on, the voice of that blood would never allow God to do for him what His perfect will was for his life. He was no longer permitted to have an acceptable voice before the throne of his Creator. The crying voice of the blood was superseding his own voice in the presence of God. What an unfortunate situation! What the blood was saying to God was shielding him from accessing the original desire and intention of the Almighty Creator of his life. This is a serious disaster! When he cried to God the cry from the blood would just come and stand on his way to frustrate his efforts. Even if he decided to engage on a forty day dry fasting and prayer, the voice of the crying blood would not allow all that effort to be fruitful in any way. This was a serious and devastating condition.

What is the situation of your life in this matter? Have you not shed innocent blood? What about the blood that you shed as an armed robber as you went and killed a man and his entire family in the process of robbery? What about the blood of that unborn child that you murdered in the course of abortion? How about the blood of your wife or child that you shed for the purpose of money rituals? Now you are going about from one prayer house to the other looking for solution over your barrenness and infertility, while you forget that there is a lot of blood crying against you. Go and make amends. We shall be dealing with the solution to this in another chapter. For more on this, I recommend a tract with the title "**The Voice of Blood**" written by Pastor Stephen Haruna.

You may feel innocent in the light of the above; but remember that it is possible to become a murderer without physically killing a brother. This is what Apostle John says about this:

Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. (1 John 3:15) KJV

So it is not necessary for one to act like Cain before he's labelled as a murderer. As far as God is concerned, hatred is equivalent to murder. There is no real line of demarcation between the two. So when you exhibit the act of hatred in your life, you are not better than an armed robber that is holding a gun in order to rob people on the highway. As such, when you try to cry unto the Lord, the voice of murder (generated through your hatred) will be crying before the Lord. What the Lord will be hearing about you will be similar to what He's hearing concerning an armed robber. You may even be on the pulpit preaching against murder and some other vices, but as long as there is hatred in your life concerning someone who may even be a brother, you are not better than those that commit such sins. May God deliver His people from hatred to the glory of His Name!

The second issue that was standing against Cain was the issue of the earth opening its mouth to receive the blood of Abel from his hand. The blood that he shed suddenly became too powerful for him to handle. The earth had to receive it from his hands. The cry of that blood became too strong that the earth heard it and responded. In fact, God had to cause the earth to take it away from Cain's hands in order to find a way of handling his livelihood. I hope you remember that it was this ground that he was using to grow his farm produce. When he decided to plant anything into the ground, it first of all, had to identify him. Since the matter of the blood was found in him, the earth would release to him only thorns and thistles. The effect of the blood to the earth was to produce thorns and thistles for him. While others would be seeing powerful and tangible results in their cultivation of the ground, Cain will be receiving thorns and thistles.

Thorns and thistles are never fruits from any plant. Thorns are sharp, woody projections found on the stem or other parts of a plant. They cause a lot of irritation and annoyance to whosoever comes in contact with them. They are never fruits and so they are not the interest of any farmer. Instead of causing joy to the farmer, they end up irritating not only the farmer, but those other people that come around them. It therefore, implies that the more Cain laboured, the more he was annoyed in the work. His labour was not going to yield any joyful thing for him. People may be seeing Him labouring, but at the end they'd only see him being annoyed and irritated at the time of his harvest. He was the problem of his work and the work was also his problem. The work was never going to be friendly with him. What is

the nature of your ministry and the results you are receiving? Why does it look as if you are not enjoying your work, but you are only enduring it since the results always come along with so much troubles and sorrow? Beware of Cain!

Thistles are also undesirable to farmers. They are weedy, and wild with prickly leaves. How would Cain plant crops and probably tubers and end up receiving weeds and wild plants as his results? There was a voice speaking against him from the earth. There was always that voice behind his life speaking against his results and joy. What is your condition in all these? How can a plant that one sows on the ground now suddenly get converted to a weed in his farm? Instead of what he sowed to be of help to him, Cain's seeds stood against him. What was meant to keep his life going and to progress then became his enemies.

It is just like someone whose job and business begins to cause him more debts instead of gain and progress. It is also like a man who is demoted from time to time in his place of work while others are moving ahead of him in the same job. It is like a man in whom his ministry now becomes his problem instead of a solution to the problems around him. Have you lost joy in that thing that you are doing; either in the secular or sacred? Check up for thorns and thistles and finally trace it back to the voice speaking behind you.

What are the thorns of your life? What is that thorn that would not allow you to have a turnaround in life and ministry? The Lord will deliver you from such thorns to the glory of His Name. What is the thistle that wants to cripple your life and purpose? The Lord will destroy it on your behalf if you trace your way back and look for an appropriate and permanent solution. Don't go for all those temporary solutions that have no bearing with the Lord and His Word. Don't go for those prayer contractors who will only ask you to come with some money and some other funny materials in the name of prayer and deliverance. They are nothing, but only wolves in sheepskin. The Lord will grant you wisdom.

A similar thing happened to King David when he plotted for the killing of Uriah by the hands of the enemies. The Lord told him that the sword will not depart from his house because of that act (2 Samuel 12:10; 13:8; 18:4). The blood of Uriah was speaking against his family and caused a lot of regrettable things against him. The Lord will grant you help in this regard, in Jesus' Name.

What stood against Cain was what made him to become a fugitive and a vagabond. He was made a stranger to wherever he'd find himself. So whatever he'd be doing, the earth would be seeing him as a strange man with no identity. He was to become a nobody even though he was the third person in creation after his parents. His appearance became strange and his actions became strange on the face of the earth. How could he then be honoured in the world and what is found in it? His principles and applications in life were to become strange and would not be

honoured. May you not become a stranger in the place where you need to be in dominion!

Show Thyself...

with the pure thou dost show thyself pure, and with the crooked thou dost show thyself perverse. (2 Samuel 22:27; Psalm 18:26) RSV

From the above statement of Scripture, the Lord is seen as a personality that shows Himself based on the condition of a man in question. If purity speaks for a man, the Lord will manifest Himself as a pure God. However, although He is holy and pure, He'd manifest Himself to a crooked man as crooked. When Cain killed his brother, the Lord responded to him through the ground as not only the God of increase, fruitfulness and series of blessings, but also as a God that can cause the production of undesirable things like thorns and thistles.

What is your condition in matters of crookedness? How do you expect a straightforward God to trail along your path of crookedness? The view that God will bring on your way often depends on the view he sees about you. What is your view that speaks before His throne? Beware and take note of the fact that it will determine the view that He will display back to you. The voice you hand over to Him determines the voice that He will send back to you. It is an error and an evil for you to be wicked and expect God to make you His favourite. He's neither a fool nor can He be manipulated. You can't cook crookedness and expect to eat straightforwardness. What you send into your spiritual account will determine what you receive on the long run (Galatians 6:7).

You can't be a crook and expect to have a root. Crookedness is an enemy to rootedness. It dismantles rootedness and establishes rottenness. It is a cankerworm that uproots a man's establishment. No matter how a crooked man could appear to be progressive, you need not to envy him because he has no root. One day, the same means of crookedness by which he went up will pull him down.

God's Pronouncement over Sodom and Gomorrah

And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar. Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other. Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom. But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly. (Genesis 13:10-13) KJV

Can you imagine the admirable situation of Sodom and Gomorrah? It was well-watered everywhere. It looked very fertile and productive. It was very promising and rich in nutrients. However, the people in the land were exceedingly wicked and sinful before the Lord. They were well environmentally, but very terrible spiritually. The land was so attractive that it took the attention of Lot. This is the situation of so many people in the world today. They appear highly favoured and very promising on the outside, but inwardly wicked and very corrupt. They appear wealthy and healthy on the outside, but very poor and sickly on the inside. The physical situation of their lives is very contradictory to their spiritual condition. They are known by an outward title that is totally at variance with their status in the spirit realm. What the spirit world is saying about them is different from what the physical world is saying.

The admirable situation of Sodom and Gomorrah did not in any way change God's verdict over the land. What men were saying about it could not stop its destruction. The Bible says:

And the LORD said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know. (Genesis 18:20, 21)
KJV

The Lord Himself announced that the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah was great and that the sin of the land was very grievous. Who was crying in Sodom and Gomorrah? Who was so offended in the land to the point of crying over it? Sin in itself has a way of raising a cry over the life of the man that commits it. If the sin is committed in an entire land it will in one way or the other raise a cry over the same land. Sin cannot remain silent in wherever it finds itself. Wherever it is found, sin has capacity of causing discomfort and cry over that place. Sin is a spiritual pollutant that causes the pollution of the spiritual atmosphere of a land or life to the point that the discomfort caused by it can bring about a cry over that place or life. The voice of the cry of the sin and wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah was so strong that it ascended the throne of the Almighty God. As such, no matter how admirable and promising the land was, the cry that was made against it could not be ignored by the Lord. He ultimately decided to destroy the whole land.

What is crying before the Lord on your behalf? Who is crying against you in the place of prayer before the Lord? What is that matter in your life that is raising a cry that is contrary to the cry of your heart and ambition? Is there any contrary cry concerning your life and destiny? May the Lord have mercy upon you in the Name of Jesus! I pray that you won't allow that cry to reach a climax with God to the

point that He'd have no any other option than to bring about His judgement upon your life.

In the same Book of Genesis Chapter 18 verses 23 to 33 the Bible narrates how Abraham prayed for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah, but the result of which could not stop its destruction. It must have been a very terrible condition before the merciful God. Abraham's nephew, Lot, and his two daughters were the only people that finally made it successfully out of the land. However, before the deliverance of Lot from the land, there was a divine visitation to Lot, which showed the homosexual state of the men of that land. They wanted to commit homosexuality with the divine beings that came to Lot's house (Genesis 19:4, 5). We'll consider the effect of Abraham's prayer in another chapter. Meanwhile, my prayer for you is that the Lord will not receive a negative cry concerning your life. Heaven will not be so uncomfortable through the cry that is raised towards the throne of God to the point that you become a curse in your generation. The blessing ordained of you will not be replaced by a curse through a negative cry made over your life, in Jesus' Name.

CHAPTER 3 YOUR LIFE AS A VOICE (PART 2)

In the last chapter, we dwelt majorly on the voice of one's life in terms of sin and iniquity. It was deliberately considered in that way so that some emphasis could be clearly made and not mixed up with issues that have to do with righteousness and other positive and divinely approved virtues. In this chapter we shall be dwelling on the effect of righteousness as a voice behind the life of a man and his destiny. The positive effect(s) of righteousness in the life of a man can never be overemphasized. It paid well for so many people in the Scripture and it is still paying to as many as embrace and exhibit it today. Let us consider what some parts of Scripture have to say about this matter:

Righteousness Establishes

One of the great things that righteousness does in the life of a man and an entire community is to establish the man or the community in question. This is what the Lord says in this regard as found in the Book of Isaiah 54:14 and 15:

In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression; for thou shalt not fear: and from terror; for it shall not come near thee. Behold, they shall surely gather together, but not by me: whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall for thy sake. (KJV)

Prophet Isaiah was prophesying concerning the future state of Israel. The Lord spoke through him from these verses concerning the establishment of the Israelites. He clearly stated that the Israelites' establishment will depend on their display of righteousness. Although their faith in God could grant them establishment, according to 2 Chronicles 20:20; but it is clear from here that the Israelites didn't only need to believe in the Lord, but they also needed to believe in Him with the lifestyle of righteousness. They were not expected to believe in the power of their God, while they go about doing evil. They were to obtain real and permanent establishment by believing in the Lord in an atmosphere of righteousness. If they believed in the Lord, the ground in which the establishment will stand was nothing, but the ground of righteousness.

There is normally a ground provided by a man upon which God's work will thrive upon. When man provides the ground, the Lord will provide the seed to be planted. He is the Sower, but we have to provide Him with the ground to sow.

Matthew Henry has this to say about this matter:

“When holiness reigns, for that above anything is the beauty of the church.... The reformation of manners, the restoration of purity, the due administration of public

justice, and the prevailing honesty and fair dealing among men, are the strength and stability of any church or state”.

Take note of the word “**in**” in verse 14. The establishment would need a medium to stand and thrive and that medium is the medium of righteousness. You are never eligible for any form of establishment, both in life and ministry where the voice of righteousness is not behind you. You may labour and labour, but you won’t be established in what you labour, until righteousness is brought into place. You could even be doing a legitimate work for God, but lack establishment in it, until the power of righteousness is introduced in it. If you lack establishment, you’ll be tempted to be jumping from one thing and the other trying to see whether it will work or not. Even when you are trying to establish yourself in any work, as long as righteousness is not in place, it will surely scatter on the long run. So the matter of the backing of righteousness can never be overemphasised as far as the establishment of a child of God is concerned. Are you desirous of establishment in any facet of life? Are you desirous of the establishment of your ministry? Then where is your ground upon which it could stand? May your righteousness speak for your establishment to the glory of God!

This establishment was going to be enhanced in their lives and nation by the fact that they were to be far away from oppression. Fear and terror was going to be taken away from them. Can you see the resultant effect of their righteousness? When righteousness becomes the order of the day in a church or the society in general, oppression will have no place to stay. The enemies of Israel could not have the ability to oppress them as long as righteousness was in place in the nation. In a similar manner, no child of God is permitted to fall under the oppression of the forces of darkness. If that happens, then it is an error that might have resulted from the ignorance of the one concerned. No matter how men and the powers of darkness try to oppress any true believer in Christ Jesus, it cannot stand the test of time because his righteousness will speak for him. The oppressor will end up oppressing himself as the reward of his labour. This is because righteousness bounces back the power of oppression.

Terror and fear are not supposed to be found in the life of a righteous man, because anywhere he goes, there is a voice going ahead and behind him to rebuke the wicked and the oppressor for his sake. The Lord will rebuke the oppressor for your sake in the Name of Jesus Christ. There is no need for a righteous man to be terrified for any reason. The Lord would normally hear the voice of his righteousness and step into his matter to the glory of His Name and to the shame of the devil.

The Lord quickly added an interesting statement in verse 15 which says ***“Behold, they shall surely gather together, but not by me: whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall for thy sake”***. This is a word of assurance for the

true believers in the Lord Jesus. He said “**behold**” they shall **surely** gather.... There was a clear declaration of the fact that the enemies of the righteous people of God will definitely gather against him. He made the Israelites to look very well and see to the fact that the enemies will not stop to gather against them. There was an assurance given to them that those enemies will definitely gather. They will see the need to join hands together and gather. They see the power in your righteousness and will gather to join forces in order to defeat you; but He also said that you should understand that He’s not involved in their plans and gatherings. No matter how strong and powerful they may look, you should bear in mind that He’s not a party to their plans and purposes. So you should not be afraid about how fearful and ferocious that attack could be; He is not there in it. It therefore, implies that He’s with you. Then what shall you say about that? “... *If God be for us, who can be against us?*” (Romans 8:31). He also says this in the Book of Isaiah 59:19 “*So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him*”. The enemies will be put to flight for your sake in Jesus’ Name!

The enemies of the righteous will also fall for their sakes. Glory be to God! They have no capacity to stand in the face of righteousness and so the voice of righteousness will cause them to fall for the sake of the righteous. The Lord will rebuke them unto their fall so that their fall will become the rising of the righteous. To God be the glory!

Deliverance through Righteousness

The Bible said something striking about Noah, Job and Daniel. This is found in the Book of Ezekiel Chapter 14. It says:

The word of the LORD came again to me, saying, Son of man, when the land sinneth against me by trespassing grievously, then will I stretch out mine hand upon it, and will break the staff of the bread thereof, and will send famine upon it, and will cut off man and beast from it: Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord GOD. If I cause noisome beasts to pass through the land, and they spoil it, so that it be desolate, that no man may pass through because of the beasts: Though these three men were in it, as I live, saith the Lord GOD, they shall deliver neither sons nor daughters; they only shall be delivered, but the land shall be desolate. Or if I bring a sword upon that land, and say, Sword, go through the land; so that I cut off man and beast from it: Though these three men were

in it, as I live, saith the Lord GOD, they shall deliver neither sons nor daughters, but they only shall be delivered themselves. Or if I send a pestilence into that land, and pour out my fury upon it in blood, to cut off from it man and beast: Though Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, as I live, saith the Lord GOD, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness. (Ezekiel 14:12-20) KJV

There is a consistent pronouncement from the Lord through Prophet Ezekiel concerning His mind over the condition of Israel. He consistently stated that Noah, Daniel and Job would only be able to deliver themselves in the time of His wrathful judgement over the land. He said that they won't be able to deliver even their children from that situation. Take note of the fact that He consistently stated that these three men would only be able to deliver themselves by their righteousness. He didn't say that He will deliver them because of their righteousness, but that they will deliver themselves by their righteousness. It therefore, implies that righteousness is a credential for deliverance. When the Lord sees it, He'll have no option than to exonerate the one that displays it. The Lord honours righteousness to the point that when He sees it in a man, he can be exempted from a form of disaster and destruction.

It is an error to be crying for deliverance without the backing of the voice of righteousness. When the Lord begins to bring judgement upon a land, the identification of righteousness would normally cause Him to exonerate the man or place where it is found. It is therefore, erroneous for a man to be busy praying and fasting and doing all manner of things for the purpose of deliverance in the absence of righteousness. Your righteousness is your right unto your deliverance. It is your licence towards your exoneration from the destruction that may affect every other person around.

Being related to a man of righteousness is not a guarantee to misbehave. His righteousness is only bestowed upon him. When he dies, he cannot keep it as an inheritance for any of his children. He's only known by his righteousness and every other person around him is known by his.

We are not in any way relegating the matter of prayer and other spiritual exercises, but that all of them should have a base in the place of righteousness. May your base of righteousness speak for you!

Attraction of God's Favour and Understanding

And whiles I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God; Yea, whiles I

was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision. (Daniel 9:20-23) KJV

And he said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright: for unto thee am I now sent. And when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling.

And said, O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong. And when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened, and said, Let my lord speak; for thou hast strengthened me. (Daniel 10:11, 19) KJV

When Daniel was in the place of prayer seeking the face of God, Angel Gabriel came to him and gave him an understanding over the matter that he was praying for. Actually this happened in the process of his prayer, but it did not only happen because Daniel prayed, but because of the state of his life in righteousness which attracted him to God to the point that he was described as a man that was greatly beloved of the Lord. No man can ever be described as a beloved of the Lord without the identification of righteousness in his life. The voice of a righteous man is as sweet as the voice of a beloved. You need to understand the gravity of being called a beloved of the Lord. It is so serious that it grants one the privilege of unusual visions and revelations from God. People that were called by that title (such as Apostle John and others) were favoured with unusual revelations. The Lord Jesus was also called the beloved Son by the Father. There is no partiality or something too strange about it apart from the fact that they all walked in righteousness and faithfulness to God.

The Angel Gabriel told Daniel about the state of his relationship with God as a man that was greatly beloved. This was not really because he prayed, but because of his righteousness in the sight of God. So when his prayer was ascending to the throne of God his voice was identified by his righteousness and as a beloved of the Lord. His labour in the place of prayer was backed up by his life of righteousness and as such, the Lord could not hold it, but to send an angel that could assure him of his state in the presence of God and to give him skill and understanding. He then began to walk in the realm of understanding beyond others. Can you see what his

voice of righteousness in the place of prayer earned him? The encounter he received in that place of prayer was not majorly because he prayed for twenty one days, but because he was walking in righteousness and as such, as a beloved of the Lord. No man who truly walk in righteousness walk in ignorance or foolishness. Righteousness promotes wisdom and understanding to the righteous man. This is because he's a comfortable zone for God's presence. You can't be righteous and be a dummy. When you are dominated by righteousness you will be domicile in the presence of God. Thus, His wisdom and understanding will find their abode in you. However, when a man works without righteousness, he will be deficient of God's hand and results. Hard work without righteousness will be handicapped of divine approval and results.

God's intervention for a Righteous and Faithful man

And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman. And they said, Hath the LORD indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us? And the LORD heard it. (Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.)

And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the LORD shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses? And the anger of the LORD was kindled against them; and he departed. And the cloud departed from off the tabernacle; and, behold, Miriam became leprous, white as snow: and Aaron looked upon Miriam, and, behold, she was leprous. (Numbers 12:1-3, 6-10) KJV

When Aaron and Miriam saw that Moses married an Ethiopian woman, they began to speak against him and his action. To worsen the whole thing, they began to speak against him based on his office. They claimed that Moses was going too far and that they also had what Moses had, since God could also speak to them like He did to Moses. They became unnecessarily arrogant against their leader to the point that God became angry with them. They were not there to help him over the matter that was his problem as they saw it, but they began to use it as a weapon against him and his authority. They began to capitalize on this error of Moses and so they began to underrate him. What a dangerous path they were treading on! This is how

many people had attracted the judgement of God over their lives. They ignorantly joined hands with some others to blackmail and castigate a servant of God, probably because of a 'sincere' observation they made concerning his life, family and ministry. Instead of praying and helping him out they decided to form groups and clicks just for the purpose of gossiping and backbiting him. They created a voice against their lives and destinies. It is a dangerous involvement that goes with serious consequences. We're not advocating for the misbehaviour of servants of God, but that children of God should learn how to handle such issues with wisdom and carefulness.

Despite their accusation, Moses was still known as the meekest man at that time on the surface of the earth. He was also identified by God as a faithful man in the whole of His house. Can you imagine the irony in the whole issue? It appears that what they were capitalizing on over the life of Moses was not capitalized as such by God. When the Lord came to visit them over the issue, He did not in any way mention about that matter that stood as a rock of offence before them. We don't have a biblical record concerning how Moses handled that situation with God. However, the truth of the matter is that Moses was still commended by God despite their condemnation. It was an error for them to be talking so offensively against a man that was normally found in the presence of God in communion.

Aaron and Miriam were pronouncing faults and negativity against Moses, but God was making a different pronouncement. They didn't know that there was a voice speaking faithfulness in favour of Moses. So while they were speaking sin, error and all manner of evil against him, they didn't know that there was a position and a title that he'd activated in the sight of God over his life and ministry. Little did they know in reality the status of the man that they were dealing with.

The Lord appeared suddenly to them and pronounced judgement on them as Miriam became leprous. Can you imagine that kind of divine intervention? She was driven out of the camp of Israel for seven days. There are several people that are presently secluded from the camp of God's people because of this kind of act and some other vices. Spiritual leprosy had caught up with them, but they are still handling spiritual things in error as if all is well with them. May that not be your portion in Jesus' Name!

When God was pronouncing His judgement, He made them to understand that they were never in any way equal to Moses. They were made to understand that although God speaks to them, He was doing so to Moses in a higher dimension. The Lord decided to open their eyes of understanding to the fact that Moses was operating on a higher class and platform compared to them. Their arrogance about Moses was therefore, dealt with by God Himself. How can you begin to rob shoulders with a man who God used in several areas to help you out of one problem or the other, just because of an error you discover in his life along the line? You are

not wise. Your thinking or mentality about him does not change God's disposition and purpose concerning him. You are only a foolish man that is damaging his life and future.

The Righteousness of Lot

From the narration of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, it seems that Lot was able to escape from that destruction only as a result of the prayer of Abraham. Really, the prayer of Abraham added a voice to his deliverance. However, there was a lifestyle that he lived that also spoke for him in that situation. Apostle Peter reveals this to us in the following way:

And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;) (2 Peter 2:6-8) KJV

This is the account of Apostle Peter over the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. He warned the people of this generation by making reference to how God carried out the destruction of those cities. The Lord did all that so that among other things, He would make them examples to future generations.

Our major focus at this point is on the escape of Lot from that destruction. Peter described Lot as a just man, who was vexed with the filthy conversation (filthy lifestyle and licentiousness) of the inhabitants of these nations. Those inhabitants were so unclean, lacking moral discipline. They also lacked sexual restraint. They practised homosexuality as their normal way of living. Lot was highly vexed against all these. They became a real problem and a thorn in his flesh. He observed their depravity with total abhorrence. It was a serious discomfort to his life and desire. No wonder, he was described in that way (as a just man). This silent sorrow in his heart over the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah spoke for him on the day of judgement. No wonder the supernatural beings that went to destroy those nations made their abode in his house over the night.

He was not only described as a just man, but he was also known as a righteous man. It appears that after he left his uncle Abraham, he remembered certain teachings and the lifestyle that he saw in him. Remember that when Abraham prayed, he did not make categorical appeal for Lot, although he must have felt his (Lot's) presence in that land. You will also agree with me that Abraham stopped his appeal to God after he pleaded for ten righteous people in the land of Sodom (Genesis 18:32, 33). How many people did God find to deliver on the long

run? It was only Lot and his two daughters that finally escaped. His wife had become a pillar of salt on the way out of the city.

You need to also note that the city of Sodom was still destroyed despite Abraham's prayer. That is by implication that God could not find even the ten righteous people that he pleaded for. Despite that, Lot still escaped. Why? The fact remains as earlier stated that even if he was delivered in God's answer to Abraham's prayer (Genesis 19:29), he (Lot) was found to be righteous before God and his righteousness spoke for him. Your righteousness will also speak on your behalf in the Name of Jesus.

I know you by Name...

Before we close this chapter let's briefly consider what the Lord said to Moses in response to his plea for His presence to go with them.

And he said unto him, If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence. For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? is it not in that thou goest with us? so shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth. And the LORD said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name. (Exodus 33:15-17) KJV

In response to his plea over the matter of God's presence, Moses received the response stated in verse 17 above. The Lord categorically told him that He would do what he asked him for because he had found favour with Him and that he knew him by name. The life of Moses was acceptable before God to the point that He promised him clear answer to his prayer. The favour of God was so much on him to the point that God could not in any way ignore him whatsoever. His uprightness was speaking for him in the presence of the Lord. The prayer of Moses was of utmost importance in the response of God. There is no controversy about that. He was so focused and tenacious in his prayer and the answer came. But from God's response, there was something else about Moses that was speaking for him. The Lord said that he was going to do what he asked for, not only because he prayed, but because He knew him by name in addition to the fact that he was favoured of Him. It implies that whenever he prayed, the voice of Moses was clearly identified as the voice of a known and favoured man. His voice was so distinct in the presence of God that it put heaven into motion for something to be done on his behalf.

Whenever heaven heard his prayer, ordinary awareness of the fact that he was the one talking brought angels on errand. Heaven became uncomfortable because of the prayer of this man Moses, because he was known by name on the

throne of the Almighty God. His name became a voice behind his prayers. He made strong impact before the throne of grace to the point that his name had a weighty identification. His name was not light and so his matters were not taken lightly. It was like when he began to raise his voice to heaven, the Lord will immediately begin to say **“this is no any other man, but Moses my servant. I can understand why he is making this plea at this time of the day. Angel X and Angel Y, I want you to go and attend to him with immediate effect. Don’t waste any time about this matter because I know who I am dealing with. If his need is not met, the entire nation will suffer its consequences. I know him and his passion and heart cry...”** When his name appeared before the throne of grace, it was not taken for granted because he was known by name. His name was an embodiment of the will and purpose of God. His name was not associated with selfishness and self-centeredness. He was not a promoter of rancour and unnecessary discord among his people and so his name was clearly distinguished before the throne of God.

There are names among names in the presence of the Almighty God. Just like there are greater names among other names in the world, it is also similar in the spirit realm. There are weightier names that heaven recognises as such; the highest of which is the Name of Jesus. There are names that create more impact because of the way they are known before God than others. The voices of those men with such names are a challenge even to the kingdom of darkness. There are names that God can be so proud of and present them to the devil like he did in the case of Job. In fact, when God mentioned his name, Satan did not go too far into describing who that job was. He needed no much description concerning him because his righteousness was too clear even in the kingdom of darkness. He was so outstanding in righteousness that God presented him before Satan. Satan in his response did not have anything to dispute about concerning this man, Job. There was no secret evil that could be identified in his life.

What is reported in the spirit realm when your name is mentioned? Can your righteousness and standing with God stand outright concerning your life and ministry? Can God be so proud of you to the point that he can present you as a role model? The Lord will help you as you work for Him such that your righteousness will be evident to the glory of His Name and to the shame of the devil. May your righteousness speak volumes before the throne of grace!

CHAPTER 4 GOD'S PRONOUNCEMENT (PART 1)

The pronouncement of God over a man is very crucial in his life and ministry as a servant of God. Even unbelievers cannot ignore the voice of God's pronouncement over their lives. In this chapter we will consider to some extent, the effect of God's pronouncement and the limitations it brought to those concerned.

I will do as I've heard you say...

After the Israelites' complain that resulted from the report of the ten spies, the Lord said this to them:

Say unto them, As truly as I live, saith the LORD, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you: Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me, Doubtless ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I sware to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun. But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised. But as for you, your carcasses, they shall fall in this wilderness. And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness. After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise I the LORD have said, I will surely do it unto all this evil congregation, that are gathered together against me: in this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die.
(Numbers 14:28-35) KJV

As a result of the evil report of the spies, the more elderly Israelites felt that they would not be able to make it into the land of Canaan. They forgot their miraculous deliverance wrought by God all the way from the land of Egypt into that wilderness. They even forgot the miraculous provisions of God for their lives in the wilderness. When they began to complain and to pronounce self defeat, the Lord told them that He would do to them according to what He heard them saying. God's pronouncement concerning them was based on their own pronouncement over their lives. Their pronouncement over their lives became the platform for God's pronouncement over their lives. It was what heaven recorded for them that the Lord backed up on their behalf. God accorded to them what they sent into the records of

heaven. The voice of God concerning them depended on what they voiced out over their lives. Their voices became the base for God's voice over their lives. What God announced concerning them depended on the stage they created for themselves by their voices. They limited themselves by their voices and God decided to confirm it on their behalf. The pronouncement from God's big voice was the resultant effect of theirs. Their pronouncement triggered God's pronouncement.

What you voice out on the earth determines what God will grant you on the long run after He had spoken in accordance to your word. Heaven will normally enforce what you say about yourself after confirming it. You will conform to what you voice out. This conformation will be based on God's confirmation of what you say. Your voice is a force that determines your course. Once heaven hears it and confirms it on your behalf, it will bring your matter on course. God's voice in confirmation to your voice is a force that commands your placement in life and ministry.

The Lord said *“as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you...”* Take note of the phrase **“to you”**. He was not going to do what He intended to do to another nation, but **to** them. They initiated it and God pronounced its confirmation. So what a man says goes a long way to determine what God would pronounce for him. Those their children that they tried to involve in their ignorant pronouncements were divinely exonerated after all. They said that their children would become prey, but the Lord said that they were going to become conquerors and possessors. They were to limit those innocent children in their limitation and premature death, but the Lord intervened on behalf of those children. Your children will not fall victim of your error and limitation, in Jesus' Name.

However, those children were going to suffer delay in the wilderness because of the unbelief of their fathers. Their progress was retarded because of what God pronounced in response to the pronouncement of their fathers. They were marked out for victory, but it was to be delayed until the death of all that unbelieving generation. Even if some of them reached the age of going into battle against the Canaanites, such ones would need to wait until the fathers had finished dying. This was going to cover a period of forty years. So any male child that was about ten years old at that time would only be permitted to enter into the Promise Land at the age of fifty years. He would start fighting with the Canaanites from age fifty. What he'd have possibly achieved at the age of twenty years would have to be pending for another thirty years. What a delay! God pronounced that delay because of what the fathers did. Their speed in life achievement was retarded for some time until the death of all their fathers. The existence of their fathers therefore, became a hindrance to their accomplishment in life and purpose. Instead of becoming agents of divine speed, those fathers became retarders of their children's speed and early accomplishment and arrival in terms of destiny. They were only existing marking

time and at the same time wasting their children's time. Can you see what God's pronouncement brought to the Israelites? May you not be an agent of retardation, delay and frustration to your generation and subsequent ones! May your children not suffer the consequences of your sin, ignorance and unbelief! I pray for you that your children will be faster than you in accomplishment both in life and ministry, such that what took you ten years to achieve will take them ten days to achieve. May their personalities become an improvement from your personality. This is true success in life and in ministry.

What were those children to be doing in the wilderness for forty years? They were to be **wandering**. They were to become wanderers roaming about in the wilderness because of what God had pronounced to their fathers. They were to be moving about aimlessly as if they had no direction and purpose of existence. This is frustrating to a normal person. How can one be going about roaming about aimlessly even at age thirty or forty without actually thinking about where his destiny resides? How can a man at age forty five be thinking like a child at age ten or five? It is an error. What God pronounced to those men caused their children a lot of time. Can you pause at this point and think about your age as at now? What are you thinking about your life and ministry? Why are you doing things as if you will live forever on earth? Something should be wrong with you. The psalmist says ***“So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.”*** (Psalm 92:12). As such, one who does not sit down to consider his age will never act in wisdom. He could be behaving like an under twenty even at age sixty. He will become a dream waster and vision killer. That shall not be your portion in Jesus' Name.

How can a man at age sixty still be wandering in life trying one thing or the other in life? A man that is supposed to have settled down in the place of his calling and ministry still struggling to fix himself in one job or the other is really an error and may hardly end up as a star in his generation. How can you waste the flower of your day and still flow maximally in your calling?

Why were those children going to be wandering in the wilderness? It was meant for them to bear the whoredom of their fathers. God saw their unfaithfulness and unbelief as nothing less than whoredom in His sight. What triggered His pronouncement to them was because He saw whoredom. What are you laying for your future generation? Don't place what can cause them ill luck and disappointment on their way. Don't cause them to bear your burdens; rather, you should be the one to bear theirs and clear their way unto accomplishment. Don't become their problem; you should rather be their problem solver and vision provoker.

The attitude of the Israelites is re-echoed in the Book of Hebrews 3:11. The Lord stated that those unbelieving Israelites will never enter into His rest. They did

not really even enter into the Promise Land talk more about the final and ultimate rest in heaven.

God's Pronouncement to Moses

As powerful and useful as Moses was in the hands of God, there was a pronouncement made over his life and ministry when he missed it. This pronouncement caused a serious limitation in his life and ministry. Let us briefly look into what the Scripture says about this.

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? 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. 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. (Numbers 20:10-12) KJV

This was how Moses missed it. He struck the rock twice and water came out for the people to drink. We'll not engage in discussing that for now. For more on this, contact my book entitled "**Divine Platform for Exaltation**". Moses' action was described as an act of unbelief. The Lord then made a pronouncement concerning him and Aaron (however, we'll be concentrating on Moses' case) that they would not lead the children of Israel into the Promise Land.

Can you imagine the calibre of person that was limited through this divine pronouncement? He even pleaded with God at some other time for him to be able to enter that land, but the pronouncement of God withstood him. Whenever he mentioned about that matter, the voice of God's pronouncement over him stood before the Lord to resist him. May you not be moving about with a divine voice of resistance over your life and ministry! He was existing, but resisted in terms of entering the land of promise. He was even still doing certain wonderful things for God, but yet under God's voice of resistance. God's pronouncement did not assist him; it rather, resisted and stopped him from entering into Canaan.

In the same Book of Numbers 22:12-20, the Bible says:

And the LORD said unto Moses, Get thee up into this mount Abarim, and see the land which I have given unto the children of Israel. And when thou hast seen it, thou also shalt be gathered unto thy people, as Aaron thy brother was gathered. For ye rebelled against my commandment in the desert of Zin, in the strife of the

congregation, to sanctify me at the water before their eyes: that is the water of Meribah in Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin. And Moses spake unto the LORD, saying, Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, Which may go out before them, and which may go in before them, and which may lead them out, and which may bring them in; that the congregation of the LORD be not as sheep which have no shepherd. And the LORD said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him; And set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and give him a charge in their sight. And thou shalt put some of thine honour upon him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient. KJV

After the initial pronouncement of God concerning Moses and Aaron, Aaron, Moses and Eleazar had to go up to Mount Hor where he (Aaron) died. After his death, the Lord tried to consider Moses in a way, by asking him to ascend the mountain of Abarim to have a look at the land of Canaan. The finality of this was done when Moses went up to the top of Pisgah unto Mount Nebo (Deuteronomy 34:1-6). From the passage above, the Lord reminded him that he was not going to make it except that he was going to see the land from the top of that mountain. But let's consider a few things from this passage.

Moses was so concerned about the future state of the Israelites and so began to ask God about who should be the man to lead the Israelites into the land of Canaan. The pronouncement did not remove his passion and desire concerning the people of God. The passion was still strong even in the midst of a pronounced limitation. May God help us! In spite of the word that was standing as a barrier on his way, his passion and desire still continued. He was desirous and passionate, but under a divine limitation. His passion and desire did not in any way erase God's pronouncement of limitation over his life. He was passionate, but limited. He was passionate, but passing away.

In all your work in the house of the Lord, how passionate are you? Is your desire so strong like that of Moses? If 'yes' is your answer to these questions, then the next question is that what is God saying concerning you in spite of all the passion and work? Is there any line of limitation drawn as pronounced by the Lord? The pronouncement on the life and ministry of Moses was clear before him and so he was able to plead for himself; but in your case, is there no hidden and undiscovered pronouncement from the throne of God speaking against your life and ministry? The Lord will help you in this regard.

Moses still had a hand to lay upon Joshua and a charge to release upon him. God's pronouncement did not in any way reduce the authority and authenticity of

his hand. He can still place it upon someone's head and release some divine deposits upon his life. He was still a wonderful carrier of divine grace. God still recognised him in that capacity, but that did not erase the voice of God's pronouncement against his life and ministry. This is a matter of serious heart searching. It is a matter that needs divine help and guidance so that one would not be in God's vineyard in a high capacity and recognition, but with a voice of limitation over his life and ministry. How far have you gone with the Lord? Remember Moses. Do you have a very big congregation that counts in thousands, hundreds of thousands and in millions? Remember Moses. He was to place Joshua in charge by giving him a charge. God's authority to disseminate His charge was still upon Moses, though he was already phasing out. His face was still encouraging the Israelites though he was phasing out. He was disqualified for the next phase of his ministry because he was a giant that heaven could no longer keep in the ministry. May all these not be your portion in Jesus' Name!

Some of your Honour...

Consider God's expression to Moses concerning his laying on of hand upon Joshua. He said:

And thou shalt put some of thine honour upon him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient.

Even in that state Moses was not going to release the whole of his honour upon Joshua. In other words, Joshua was not going to be bestowed with the totality of the honour that was upon Moses. He was going to be very powerful and very successful, but his honour was not going to be the total duplication of that of Moses. It is clear from here that there are certain aspects that Moses was permitted to handle in the house of God, but of which Joshua would never be honoured in doing it. He was not permitted to dabble into all the responsibilities that were carried out by Moses, since his honour did not extend to those areas. This is clear due to the fact that Joshua was an Ephraimite and not a Levite. As such, there are some responsibilities in the tabernacle of the congregation that he wouldn't be able to handle. He was to strongly depend on the services of Eleazar the priest in that aspect. But in the case of Moses, he was a Levite and he was even the one that received the revelation about the pattern of the tabernacle, handed over that pattern to Bezaleel and Aholiab to carry out the work on its building. He was the one that reared it up after the construction of all its components. He was able to finish the work on the tabernacle and the glory of the Lord came upon it. All these are recorded in the Book of Exodus Chapter 36 to 40.

While Joshua was to be honoured as a leader in warfare and some other administrative issues, Moses was honoured in both these and some other aspects. His honour in all these aspects was still present and authentic, but he was already a

limited man that was on his way out of the stage. He was not too limited in honour and service, but that did not erase God's pronouncement of limitation over his life and ministry. When Saul, the king of Israel went into making sacrifice in place of Samuel the priest, he was rejected because his honour did not cover that aspect (1 Samuel 13:1-14). When King Uzziah went into the temple of God to make sacrifice, he was rejected as leprosy came upon his forehead (2 Chronicles 26:16-21). This is because his honour did not reach up to that place. May you discover where your honour lies and pursue it to the core!

This honour was to be bestowed upon Joshua so that the Israelites will be obedient to him. They would see what God had released upon his life through Moses and obey him as they obeyed Moses. So Moses was not lacking as far as the obedience of the Israelites was concerned. The pronouncement and silent voice of limitation that was behind him did not in any way reduce the obedience of the Israelites over his life. He was given the required obedience by the Israelites as far as his position as their leader was concerned. He was limited to the wilderness ministry at that time, but was still obeyed. Although he was not qualified to completely fulfil the promise of God over his life and ministry, he was still enjoying the obedience of the Israelites. No Israelite was permitted to misbehave against him, or else, such a one will end up as a scapegoat. He'd not be the one to react or punish such a one; instead, it was God Himself that would react on his behalf. But despite all that, he was going to still end in the wilderness.

What is your situation in this matter? Are you not enjoying the obedience of your church members and fellow ministers, especially those that are under you in your ministry? Actually, God would not allow any of them to become disobedient and rude towards you; but the question is that what is God's pronouncement over your life and ministry? May He help you in His mercy to make amends where necessary! There is the advantage of the finished work of the Cross of Calvary that you have to properly utilise in order to be restored to your normal place in God.

From the Book of Deuteronomy 3:23-27, we are made to understand that Moses had to plead with God until it came to a point that God became offended in him and told him not to mention that matter anymore. The voice of pronouncement from God was too clear that Moses had to forget about the matter. I pray that you will not reach a point with God that He'll consider your negative case as a concluded case!

It is Just the Beginning...

And I besought the LORD at that time, saying, O Lord GOD, thou hast begun to shew thy servant thy greatness, and thy mighty hand: for what God is there in heaven or in earth, that can do according to thy works, and according to thy might? I pray thee, let me go over, and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain,

and Lebanon. But the LORD was wroth with me for your sakes, and would not hear me: and the LORD said unto me, Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto me of this matter. Get thee up into the top of Pisgah, and lift up thine eyes westward, and northward, and southward, and eastward, and behold it with thine eyes: for thou shalt not go over this Jordan. (Deuteronomy 3:23-27)

Moses was narrating the past events in the history of Israel as he was giving them his final charge before his departure from the face of the earth. He told them how he besought God in order to permit him to enter into the Land of Canaan. He reminded Him of the miraculous things that He had done by saying **“O Lord GOD, thou hast begun to shew thy servant thy greatness, and thy mighty hand...”** Take note of the phrase **“thou hast begun”** He clearly identified the marvellous things that the Lord had done through his ministry as the beginning. All the miraculous things were considered in his sight as just the beginning. Although Moses was already about one hundred and twenty years old and had been in full time ministry for a period of forty years, he saw all that God had done from the land of Egypt to the wilderness as the beginning. He was so visionary and overwhelmed with the desire for the Promise Land and so considered all that he had seen in his life and ministry as the beginning. Praise God for such a man. He found fulfilment only in his ability to enter the Promise Land. He was never satisfied with what he saw in the nation of Israel through the mighty hand of the Almighty God if he'd not be able to cross over to the Promise Land. To him, it was devastating to enjoy all the goodness of the Lord in the wilderness and miss the Promise Land. May the Lord help us in Jesus' Name!

I wish to announce to you that whatever you've seen God doing in your life before now is just the beginning. You will see more of His hand and glory in the mighty Name of Jesus. This is just your beginning. Have you been in the ministry with series of testimonies of success and accomplishment? It is just the beginning. Have you done a lot of exploits in terms of miracles and winning of souls into His Kingdom? It is just the beginning. Have you written so many books that have impacted so many lives all over the world? It is just the beginning. Have you gone so high as the Lord had decided to exalt you above your peers both in life and ministry? It is just the beginning. Have you discovered the purpose of God for your life and obeyed it to the point that you've been seeing tremendous results in your life and ministry? It is just the beginning. If Moses was to be in your place, he would not have celebrated what you are celebrating today.

Where is our Promise Land? It is a higher and better one compared to the one that Moses was longing for. So seeing this, what are you rejoicing about regarding your ministry? Are you busy celebrating the miracles and other 'big things' that are

going on in your ministry? They are the beginning of something greater over there. They cannot be compared with the glory beyond this side of eternity. It will be a colossal waste and disaster for you to enjoy all those things and miss the glory of all glories over there. It is foolishness to be labouring for the glory that accompanies the miracles of God in one's ministry without having the glory of eternity in view. Do you imagine that this man, Moses, so enjoyed the glory of the Lord that even his eyes did not go dim and his natural force or strength was not abated? All these did not count so much to him compared to the glory of entering the Promise Land.

I was disappointed when a close relative of a minister told me about what that minister said. This minister is someone that seems to make waves in the town where his ministry resides. He was reported to me to have said that he knows that he'd not make heaven; however, he is pursuing the growth of his ministry with very serious efforts. What is the backbone and substance of his pursuit? It is for him to be able to perform miracles, have a large congregation and possess cars and other material things. Once he's able to meet up with all that the ministry has to offer on this part of eternity, he is satisfied. What a disappointment to heaven! If Moses who was with the passion to make it into the Promise Land of Canaan could not make it into Canaan, what happens to such a one who had lost the view of eternity despite his 'stay and work in ministry?'

...see with your eyes...

...behold it with thine eyes: for thou shalt not go over this Jordan. The Lord promised Moses that he'd be able to see the land of Canaan with his eyes, but will not enter there. He was to have the view of it from the top of a mountain that was situated in one part of the wilderness. Remember that no matter how high and lofty that mountain could be with the advantage of granting one with the view of the Promise Land it was not in itself in the Promise Land. The mountain could be great, high and wonderful. But it was not in the land that was promised. It could grant one with the view of so many things, but it is not the Promise Land. May God grant us insight!

There is the spiritual mountain to ascend in order to access the presence of God. It is the mountain of communion, fellowship, meditation, study of the Word of God.... Every serious and spiritually minded child of God would not want to miss out in his relationship with God from this mountain. If one's relationship, fellowship... is in order from this mountain, the Lord may decide to reveal certain things to such a worshipper in mercy. These could include issues that have to do with his destiny on the planet earth and also his destiny after this life. There are some servants of God that have been shown some things concerning their place in heaven (though it may be highly limited). However these are just like Moses seeing Canaan from the top of Pisgah. Let not the 'Pisgah' experiences cause you to be satisfied; rather, it should spur you into more service for the Lord. The disaster

before Moses was that he would only see the land, but won't be permitted to enter. May you not have some fantastic visions for your destiny on earth and your ultimate destiny in heaven and yet miss out. May you not miss out in divine plan and purpose both on the earth and over there in heaven! May you not end at the 'Pisgah' of vision and revelation without the ability to work and taste what God has in stock for you, both here and beyond! The Lord will help you.

Moses was able to see beyond, but lacked the capacity to move beyond. This was because there was a voice of limitation raised over his life and ministry. The voice of the pronouncement did not stop him from seeing the land with his eyes, but it took from him the capacity to step into it. You will not be full of visions of your powerful and glorious future and yet lack the capacity of getting into it. May you not have the vision of eternity and lack what it takes to get in there! You will not only end as a great man at your 'Pisgah' of fellowship with God and yet miss it in the place of entering heaven. The Lord will grant you grace in Jesus' Name.

CHAPTER 5 GOD'S PRONOUNCEMENT (PART 2)

In this chapter we shall be dealing with the issue of God's positive pronouncement over a man. We shall be discussing it on the basis of what happened before those pronouncements were made and the results they brought to the one(s) concerned.

God's Pronouncement about Jesus

And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. (Matthew 3:16, 17) KJV

This is part of the report about the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist. The Bible says that after He was baptized and was coming out of the water, the Holy Spirit descended from heaven like a dove and sat upon Him. But just before that the Bible says that the heavens were opened unto Him. The heavens were not just opened anyhow, but unto Him. This was a sign to show that wherever He was going to and whatever He was doing was carried under open heavens. It is important to note that right away from that day the heavens kept on being opened unto Him. Even when He was moving in the midst of people that were operating under closed heavens He was not affected by their condition. He was in a steady connection with heaven. The doors and windows of heaven were opened unto Him every second. Heaven was so interested in His case and operation on the surface of the earth such that her gates were always wide open for Him. No wonder, this happened at that time because He was just about taking off in full capacity into His earthly ministry.

This is a major requirement for any successful and approved ministry. The heavens must be opened unto the set man of the ministry. The voice did not speak concerning Jesus before the heavens were opened; it rather happened immediately after the heavens were opened. An open heaven upon a man is a necessary requirement for him to hear the voice of God speaking to him, for him, for his ministry and for others. A perpetual and too long period of silence from heaven is a sign of closed heavens upon a man; which is a dangerous and disastrous condition. There is no real and reasonable ministry for a man living and operating under closed heavens. Open heavens is also a necessary requirement for the voice of approval and positive results for a man and his ministry.

Now let's consider what the voice from heaven said. The voice said ***"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"***. The voice announced the state of His relationship with the Father. He was not just a son, but He was a beloved Son. He

occupied the heart of the Father because He was His beloved. Anything that involved Him would strongly involve the Father....He was so cherished by the Father that He was not described as an ordinary son, but as the beloved of the Father. Can you imagine the example that Jesus laid for us? Let's not spend too much time in that aspect for the purpose of the matter we are dealing with at this point.

However I want you to take note of the word **“in”** in that verse. He said *“This is my beloved Son, **in** whom I am well pleased”*. He didn't say *“This is my beloved Son, **with** whom I am well pleased”* or *“This is my beloved Son, **for** whom I am well pleased”*; but *“... **in** whom I am well pleased”*. This is very critical and crucial. The most important dimension of pleasure to be derived from a man towards God should be in the man. The inside of the man should be the first place where God derives His pleasure as far as the man is concerned. The totality of the man should be what God derives His pleasure in. It is not in the first place a matter of what the man does for the Lord that is His major point of interest here, but what is found and goes on in his life. Jesus had not actually done any serious ministry as at then, but heaven was already commending and announcing Him as the one that pleases the Father very well. You'll now agree with me that the first point of pleasing God is not on what a man does for Him, but is really resident on what is found inside him. It is what is found inside a man that attracts God's pronouncement of approval and at the same time His announcement concerning him.

I want you to also take note of the fact that the voice of announcement and commendation of Jesus by the Father did not say anything about His ministry on that day. It only announced His life and relationship with the Father. This announcement was the real root of the announcement of His ministry. Genuine ministry does not start from the work of the minister; it rather starts from his life and relationship with God. If God does not see anything to announce to the world concerning your life, then He has nothing to announce concerning your ministry. Don't be too cumbered and overwhelmed with the announcement of God over your ministry if He cannot announce your life. He will be handicapped in putting your ministry to the limelight if your life is a disgrace to His Kingdom. How can He bring your work into the limelight while you, who is the worker is in darkness? It is an error. Are you saying that you will be appearing from darkness and show off your service and then go back to your darkness? It is another error.

What is therefore that matter in you that would repel His commendation over your life? What is the thing that He can beat His chest and be proud before the enemy concerning you? The Lord is looking to see at least something little that is worthy of the commendation of heaven over your life. Can you make heaven proud through your life? God will help you in Jesus' Name!

Another Pronouncement from Heaven

Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. 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.(Matthew 17:4, 5) KJV

This is part of the report of Matthew about the transfiguration of Jesus. When Peter saw Moses and Elijah speaking with Jesus, he said that it was good for them to build three tabernacles (one for Jesus, one for Moses and one for Elijah). That implies that they would have three points of worshipping God. They would visit the presence of God in Jesus' tabernacle at a time and at another time they could engage another one as they may deem it necessary. What a divided attention that might have resulted in this matter! Does it mean that they'd have three different masters in the cause of their fellowship with God?

Immediately after Peter made that statement the voice of the Lord spoke from heaven saying ***“This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him”***. From this account, the pronouncement of God for Him was similar to the one made at the time of His baptism, except that God added a statement of instruction that says ***“hear ye him”***. The disciples were therefore, urged to focus their attention to the word and hence, the ministry of Jesus. The disciples were not expected to divide their attention whatsoever, to any other person apart from Jesus. His ministry was approved by the Father in such a way that no other man was expected to outshine him. After He had done some work on the planet earth, the Father also watched at Him to the point that He announced Him as the one that men should listen to. He saw Him as a man that was not going to bring disappointment to Him on the long run. No wonder, He lavished His grace and anointing upon Him without measure. Every other man receives grace and anointing in a certain measure, but not in the case of Jesus. His own was without measure.

Jesus was very consistent in His relationship with the Father and so this next announcement of the Father concerning Him, which involved both His life and ministry, was to bring about the establishment of people's attention to His words and hence, His ministry. So there was a voice of announcement of both His life and His ministry. However, you will agree with me that even when the Father was to talk about the need for men to listen to Him He still included the matter of His life by saying ***“this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased”***. There was no controversy whatsoever, among the disciples at that time with regards to His life, but yet the Father had to mention about it along with the matter of His word/ministry. He did not rush into talking about His ministry, no matter the urgency that was

involved without talking about the matter of His life. His ministry was never at any time separated from His life. His ministry did not receive God's approval without a corresponding approval of his life.

The approval of His life was still the first thing that was mentioned before that of His ministry. No wonder, His ministry was that outstanding. It was a balanced one that the life of the Minister was the beginning and base for the ministry. Why was it not the other way round? Why didn't the Father say "**listen to Him; you should know that He is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased?**" No matter the need of the moment, the matter of life can never be passed over as far as the ministry of any man is concerned. If the voice of heaven's announcement would be made available to any man, he needs these criteria-the approval of his life and the approval of his ministry (in that order). Without this, then the man will have to find his own way of announcing himself. Whichever source he chooses to do it will at the end of it all result in an unrewarding service that would culminate in futility. May that not be your portion!

What Balaam said about Israel

When Balaam was called by Balak to place a curse against the Israelites, he was able to know what had been on ground as God's pronouncement over Israel. Thus, after all manner of enticement and persuasion by Balak, at a point he opened his mouth and said:

God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? Behold, I have received commandment to bless: and he hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it. He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel: the LORD his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them. God brought them out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn. Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel: according to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought! Behold, the people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift up himself as a young lion: he shall not lie down until he eat of the prey, and drink the blood of the slain. (Numbers 23:19-23)
KJV

Balak did not know what God had said concerning the Israelites, but this came to the knowledge of Balaam. The way Balaam saw them was based on what God said concerning them. There was a voice of blessing behind them that would

not allow any curse to prosper over them. They were a group of people that were pronounced as 'blessed' by heaven. Balak then wanted to bring another label against God's label over the nation; but it couldn't work out for him. He wanted an inferior and natural being to reverse the pronouncement of a superior and supernatural being. He was about to bring Balaam at loggerheads with God.

When Balaam heard God's warning to him concerning Israel he had no option than to bless her instead of cursing her. When the Lord pronounces a blessing over a man it will reflect on the earth as men will be mandated to bless him. If nobody had in any way seen the need to pronounce a blessing over your life, then check up, because God's pronouncement of blessing over the life of a man attracts men's pronouncement of blessing for him. Heaven's voice of blessing over a man attracts the earth's voice of blessing to him. When Balaam came to the place where he was expected to pronounce a curse upon the people of God, he said that he had received commandment to bless and that the Lord had blessed Israel in such a way that he cannot reverse it. The blessing he released upon Israel was based on the commandment of God. When God pronounces a blessing over a man, men will not only bless him based on their wish, but as a commandment from Him. Even those that do not like you and your success will be brought under obligation to bless you. God's voice of blessing upon a man is a commander of men's blessing upon him. Men will come to realise that their curses against your life cannot stand the test of time and that it is useless and baseless to do it. Thus, they will be brought under pressure supernaturally to bless you to the glory of God and to the shame of the devil. Even if they try to curse you, it will turn around for your good. It may even backfire against them and they'll begin to suffer the consequences thereafter.

It is surprising to note that Balaam said that God did not behold iniquity in Jacob and that He had not seen perverseness in Israel. Upon all the sins and wickedness they displayed, Balaam still stated that God did not see it. The pronouncement of God over their lives was in such a way that the nation in general was not seen as sinful. Although there might be some deficiencies in the lives of some individuals among them, there was a pronouncement of national righteousness over them. This national righteousness enhanced their blessing and discouraged their being brought under a curse. The covenant of their fathers conferred righteousness and blessedness upon them as a nation. The fathers that sinned in the wilderness had died and a new generation was then on ground to move over to the land of Canaan. The Lord then saw them based on the covenant He made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Balaam saw Israel rising up as a great man and as a lion. He saw the nation rising up as a lion until she eats her prey and drink the blood of the slain. Israel was having a divine pronouncement over her life such that no nation would be able to consume her; rather she was to consume other nations.

He said that there was no enchantment against Jacob and there was no divination against Israel. It clearly indicates that no force from the kingdom of darkness was going to work against the children of Israel. Balaam saw in the spirit realm that no matter the force employed against Israel, it was not recognised to be powerful enough to touch and stop Israel's victory. There were divinations going on among the nations of the heathen anyway, but as far as Balaam was concerned he couldn't recognise them in the realm of the spirit as any force to be regarded in terms of battle against Israel. They were in existence, but their existence and power was too infinitesimal that Balaam did not recognise them in the realm of the spirit. Although he had degenerated to become a sorcerer who was so intimate in relationship with the forces of darkness, but at that time, he saw them as too infinitesimal and being mesmerised by the presence and power of God in Israel. The blessing of God was there to stop every form of curse from having any impact over their lives. Although they were there, but the powers of darkness were not strong enough to withstand Israel.

This is the position of everyone who is born into the Kingdom of God. The Bible says:

Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. (Galatians 3:13, 14) KJV

Can you see what great thing had been accomplished by the finished work of Calvary? Do you think that the death of Jesus was only meant for the forgiveness of sins? No, it goes beyond that. It brought about the total redemption of man-spirit, soul and body. Why you may still be suffering under certain dimensions of bondage is because of the fact that you don't understand the full package of the redemption brought about by the suffering and death of the Lord Jesus on the Cross of Calvary. What is that long lasting curse standing against your life? You need to acknowledge the full redemption package brought about by the finished work of Calvary for your full deliverance to be realised. No matter how many places and prayer houses or deliverance programmes you attend, you need to recognise and have a real revelation of this finished work of Calvary to enjoy full redemption package over your life. As a result of the curse laid on Him on the Cross of Calvary, your full redemption which places you on a realm that is above the curses of the enemy was paid for. So even after you've prayed against any form of curse standing over your life, you need to behold and have a clear revelation and acknowledgement of the finished work of the Cross of Jesus.

Why are you walking in fear and with more consciousness of a curse over your life, neglecting the finished work of Jesus on the Cross of Calvary? It is nothing, but ignorance. You are living in error! The blood of Jesus speaks better things than the blood of Abel (Hebrews 12:24). Even if there was blood shed somewhere against your life and destiny, there is the blood of Jesus speaking better things and which is higher than that blood. The voice of the blood of Jesus pronounces better and more authoritative words above the blood shed by any enemy over your life.

God' Pronouncement Supersedes Man's Pronouncement

Who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass, when the Lord commandeth it not? (Lamentation 3:37) KJV

Can you see the importance and efficacy of the pronouncement of God over your life? Why are you too conscious of what someone has said against your life while you're innocent and forget to look into the Scripture to know what God had said about you? You might even be so overwhelmed of what one witchdoctor had said against you, just because you don't bother to check the Scripture to know what God had said concerning you. Look into the Scripture and see your picture from there. It is the mirror of your life and not what the devil or any human being may say. If you stand by what God says, your future will become the fulfilment of God's divine plan. It is an error for you to be deviated from your course in life and destiny as a result of a curse standing against your life. There is the blessing of Abraham that is being activated for your life even if you are not an Israelite by nationality.

It is clear that in the real sense what a man will say will only come to pass if the Lord had commanded it to. Take note of the two key words from that verse- '**saith**' and **commandeth**'. Man has capacity to say, but God is the sole Commander. Man is permitted to say, but to convert what is being said to become a standing order or command that could bring the matter into reality is the exclusive reserve of the Almighty God. No matter how any man could come around and place any curse over your life, it must first of all pass through the realm of the spirit and be converted to a commandment from God before it could be brought into manifestation. So man speaks, but God must authenticate it before it becomes a commandment. Now, as a child of God you need to understand that God will never authenticate a word spoken to you as a curse (especially if you are innocent). It will be a breach of covenant from Him. He does not just hear anything and then make it a standing order over the life of anybody (especially His children).

As a child of God, you need to realise this fact that God who had now become your Father is a speaker who normally speaks commandments. His words

are law over your life and so you need to always take Him serious. When He says a thing, He had issued a command. When He speaks well of you, it is a command that no man should speak on the contrary. If He had said that it is well with you, no witchdoctor or any man born of a woman or any demon from the pit of hell has the capacity to speak in contrast to that command. His commands are over every other command from every other source. He is the Commander over every other commander and His commands are over every other command. What the enemies say about you will never see the light of the day until He permits it to happen. What a wonderful privilege you have to be in the Lord! How can you be on the side of the Chief Commander and still be afraid of smaller commanders? There are many children of God who are living in the fear of the powers of darkness as if they've come into a condition of helplessness and powerlessness; while the Commander-in-chief had said that He is with us till the close of the age (Matthew 28:20). He also declared in the Book of Isaiah 43:1-6 that:

But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life. Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth; (KJV)

Let us pick few things from these verses of scripture:

Fear not...

The Lord commanded the Israelites that they should not fear for any reason. He mentioned about the fact that He's their Creator and Redeemer. Although they were going to go into the land of captivity, the Redeemer would bring them out of the captivity by His redemptive power. He said that when they pass through the water and fire they will come out safely and delivered. This is God's pronouncement for your life. It is a pronouncement of encouragement and confidence.

Take note of the word **“when”** from that passage. It is a pronouncement from God Himself. It says **when** you pass through the water.... It does not say **“if....”** The implication is that even as children of God there are waters and fires to pass through in this life. As long as you are on this side of eternity, there are waters and fires to pass through. But the truth of the matter is that, the Lord had promised to be with us and to handle those waters and fires unto our advantage. In fact, He will not allow anything to come our way if He had not made a way out of it for any of His children. He had said it and He will bring it to pass if only you believe and trust in Him.

So there is no need to fear. It is only those that do not fear God that has the reason to fear other things. The fear of the Lord is the antidote to the fear of other things. As a human being you're created with that vacuum of fear. That is why even a very brave man can still go for protection over his life through some means, either godly or evil. Why is he looking for protection if not because he is afraid of death? But a man that has the fear of God has this backing pronouncement from Him instructing him not to fear any other thing. Just as God commands us to fear Him, so also He commands us not to fear any other thing. Anyone therefore, who has the fear of God and yet fears other things is cheating himself through ignorance. The fear of the Lord is a command given by God and not fearing any other thing is also a command from Him. Your obedience to the former is a cause for the later. In other words, the fear of the Lord is a course that causes man to exhibit boldness against any cause of fear.

Are you a true child of God? The Lord says that you have no reason to fear anything. No matter the situation around you, He still says that there is a way out of it. This is not a mere word of encouragement, but it is a commandment from Him that puts Him into action for those who believe in Him. He had put His integrity on the line that He'd do all the needful to make sure that His word comes to pass in your life.

A Ransom...

The Lord so cherished the children of Israel that He promised to use nations as their ransom. Can you imagine that level of love and recognition for His children of covenant? It came to a point that He concluded with them that instead of them to be destroyed He'd use people from other nations to die in their place. He executed this in several occasions in the Scripture. He killed the firstborn of all the families of the Egyptians for the sake of the Israelites (Exodus 12:29). When the Egyptians pursued the Israelites to take them back into their captivity, they were all drowned in the Red Sea while the Lord saved the Israelites through the same sea (Exodus 14:15-31). Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were delivered from the burning fiery furnace, while the soldiers that threw them into the fire were consumed by the same fire (Daniel 3:20-27). The people that plotted against Daniel to cast him into the den

of lions were devoured by the same lions after Daniel was delivered from the same lions (Daniel 6:7-24). Haman who planned for the destruction of Mordecai and the entire Jewish tribe in the kingdom of Persia was destroyed along with those who stood against the Jews. (Esther 5:14; 7:9, 10; 8:1-17; 9:1-28).

Who is that that is planning evil against your life, family and ministry? You don't need to struggle with the person; just hand over the matter to God and you'll see Him making him as a ransom for your sake. Whoever wants to hold you to ransom through any evil way will end up as your ransom, to the glory of the Lord. You are too handsome before God and so He wouldn't want you to be wasted; but would rather, use a ransom in your place.

If you don't want to become a ransom, then stop fighting a child of God. It is foolishness to fight a servant of God, because He sees him as too precious to be wasted. Fighting such a man implies writing application to become a ransom for his life. If you are troublesome against him you'll end up in trouble. You can't cause trouble to a child of God and not go in for it. Don't introduce any evil that will end you up as a ransom.

No child of God is permitted to become a ransom for anybody, because his Ransom had paid on his behalf all that is required for him to pay by His death on the Cross. But every wicked man could become a ransom since he had neglected the ransom work of the Saviour and Redeemer of mankind in the person of Jesus Christ. As a child of God, you need to recognise your placement in Christ Jesus.

When God Commanded a Fish

Let us consider two instances in which God commanded the fish in the sea unto fulfilling divine purpose:

And the LORD appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah; and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. (Jonah 1:17) RSV

This was an instance in which the Lord used the instrumentality of a fish to cause Jonah to fulfil his mission in Nineveh. It is so miraculous that this great fish had to swallow up Jonah. It was not just a coincidence on the part of the fish; it was rather, an appointment. The Lord appointed that fish to undertake that task of keeping Jonah from the water around him to preserve his life in order for him to get to Nineveh at the end of it all. The fish was acting on God's instruction for the good of Jonah and the people of Nineveh. It appears that when the struggle was going on in the sea over what should be done to Jonah, God was speaking to the fish to move towards where Jonah would be thrown to and get set to swallow him. Whenever God is into a business with any man, He could cause anything to work and walk towards

the direction of his favour. The movement of the fish at that time did not in any way have to do with just looking for a means of survival, but for the fulfilment of purpose. Even this fish which was not a human being had no option than to move in the direction of God's pronouncement.

When God's pronouncement is over the life of a man, nature will be caused to stand and act in the direction of His purpose. I don't know the distance from where that fish came to swallow Jonah, but the truth of the matter is that it had no option because there was a pronouncement that it had to fulfil either ignorantly or not. It cannot be stubborn beyond the voice of God which is over the waters. It was an emergency on the part of the fish that could cause it to look constipated by accommodating an insoluble and indigestible material (in this case a human being in the person of Jonah) in its belly. But since it was a pronouncement from God, it had no option than to obey. The fish had to be in that state of uneasiness pending the time of another word of instruction from the Lord. Can you see how far God can handle the matter of a man of destiny and divine mission? It is so crucial in His sight that He could make every avenue available to make His pronouncement over his life to come to pass. Just like He arranged that emergency for Jonah, He will also handle certain emergencies for your fulfilment in life and purpose. The Lord will honour His voice even if it will cause Him to make some emergency arrangement to accomplish his purpose for your life and ministry. You might have erred like Jonah; but the prophetic word for you is that just like God had to arrest his error by making an emergency appointment with a fish, He will do a similar thing for your sake to the glory of His Name.

Are you almost being drowned in an ocean of sin or disappointment? The Lord will prepare 'a great fish' to help you out. Has your life been submerged by confusion and frustration? A 'great fish' to keep you through that situation will be prepared for you. It is not only your final victory and deliverance over a situation that is important. The provision of an avenue to scale through the situation is also a great thing. There are so many situations that the Lord may not release an immediate deliverance for one reason or the other. He may only provide a 'great fish' that could serve as an avenue for your deliverance and repentance. If the pronouncement of God is upon your life, even when your deliverance over a particular situation is not yet all that clear, He will help you by granting you a 'great fish' level of deliverance. What are you passing through now? The Lord would decide to grant you a 'great fish' and at the end release your final deliverance.

In the belly of the great fish, Jonah saw the need to pray and repent. When the Lord causes you to be in a particular situation of tightness and uneasiness it could not be for your destruction, but it could be for your good as you learn how to turn to God through that condition. If not for the provision of that great fish, Jonah's repentance unto the fulfilment of his mission would not have taken place. There are

some of His children that the Lord has to send into the belly of a ‘great fish’ of straitness and uneasiness for them to realise the need to serve Him properly. There are some that the pursuit of riches and other mundane things have taken over their lives and ambitions such that God has to send a ‘great fish’ in the form of failure and losses in business before they would sit up unto their responsibilities.

I don’t know the state of your life and ministry at this point in time. It may look strait and strange; but it may be the Lord’s avenue for bringing His purpose to an accomplishment in your life. Whatever the pronouncement of God could be concerning you will not be frustrated. Through His mercy and grace, He’ll provide an avenue for your deliverance and restoration. The ‘great fish’ situation was a situation orchestrated by God for the deliverance, repentance and restoration of Jonah, rather than his destruction. The period of his stay inside the belly of the fish was determined by the accomplishment of his repentance and restoration. The Lord will grant you speedy repentance and restoration over whatever kind of situation that you may be now through your mistake or fault, to the glory of His Name.

One beautiful thing about the great fish was that it did not keep Jonah permanently inside its belly. Immediately the Lord was through with Jonah, He knew that he was now ready for the accomplishment of his mission. He then commanded the fish again to vomit Jonah at a shore from where it would be easy for him to take off in his mission.

And the LORD spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land. (Jonah 2:19) KJV

Immediately after the Lord was done with Jonah in terms of repentance and restoration He did not allow him to remain in the belly of the fish continuously. The belly of the fish could no longer continue to keep him, but it had to be discharged to release him to deliver his charge. The belly of the fish immediately lost capacity to hold the repented and restored man. The Lord will grant you understanding in this matter. There are situations that you are now in that are just waiting for your repentance and restoration, after which they will lose capacity to keep you. The word of command from the Lord will force them to release you if they won’t do so spontaneously. Not every situation has the capacity to keep a repented and restored man. The Lord will help you in Jesus’ Name.

The fish vomited Jonah on the dry land. It had to go to the dry land which was not its natural habitat in order to accomplish the purpose of God for Jonah. It was free to go back to where it came from after dropping Jonah; while he begins to face his next level of fulfilment. That situation will not vomit you in its realm, but in the realm of your God-ordained destiny and calling. The fish made sure that Jonah was vomited in his natural habitat where he could be active and express

freedom of movement. Just like the fish transported Jonah from the water into the dry land, your condition will transport you from where you are now to your place of fulfilment, in Jesus' Name.

It was after the fish vomited Jonah that the Word of the Lord came unto him a second time to move over to Nineveh.

And the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the second time, saying, Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee. (Jonah 3:1, 2) KJV

It was on the dry land that God found another occasion to speak to Jonah a second time. He did not speak to him about this mission in the belly of the fish. In that belly, he was to battle with matters of repentance and restoration. At that point God was not prepared to jump over issues and begin to talk to him about his calling. He was expected to meet up with his reconciliation issue with God before the issue of his mission would resurface. Sin and lack of repentance shields a man away from God's voice concerning his ministry and fulfilment in life. However, repentance, reconciliation and restoration reactivate God's voice unto one's ministry and accomplishment. Why are you too conscious of your ministry while you needed to settle matters at the 'belly of the great fish'? In fact, this fish is great because it causes one to face the great matters of repentance, reconciliation and restoration. May you accomplish these on time so that the next level matters of your ministry and fulfilment will be made clear and achievable!

Jesus' command to a fish

When the Lord Jesus was asked about the issue of tax, He told Peter to go and get their (Jesus' and Peter's) tax money in the following way:

However, not to give offense to them, go to the sea and cast a hook, and take the first fish that comes up, and when you open its mouth you will find a shekel; take that and give it to them for me and for yourself. (Matthew 17:27) RSV

Peter was to take his hook and go to the sea at the instruction of Jesus. On casting the hook into the water, he was to catch the first fish and on opening its mouth he would get the money needed to pay for their tax. So there was a word from the Lord that was backing up his going to the sea. Immediately Jesus gave the instruction, a shekel was released into the mouth of a fish awaiting Peter's hook. The fish had to take in the shekel into its mouth just because the Lord had spoken. How the shekel came into the water was nothing short of a miracle. It had to enter

into the mouth of a fish that does not even need it. It was needless for the fish to swallow it because the body of the fish did not need it for any metabolic purpose. The fish had to keep the money in obedience to the voice of the Master's pronouncement and come to Peter's hook and hand it over to him.

There are some material things that are located in certain strategic places and hands awaiting the commandment of the Master on your behalf. They will release such 'shekels' as He makes pronouncement for your sake. There are some of these things that are located in hands that would not channel them appropriately and for the benefit of the Master and the work of His Kingdom. May the Lord give you an instruction that would cause you to access such to the glory of His Name!

It was the first fish that was to convey this money for Jesus and Peter. What the sea was going to hand over to Peter's hook for the benefit of the Master and himself was the first fish. It was the beginning of his effort. It was the beginning of his strength. May you not waste the beginning of your strength and the flower of your day! God is looking for your early efforts in the promotion of His Kingdom, don't waste it. It will pay for your future and destiny. Just like the firstborn children of the Israelites were dedicated unto the Lord, so is it still His desire to use the early part of your strength to serve Him. It was from this first fish that Peter got the money for His Master and for himself. The Master did not benefit while he (Peter) was abandoned. When the Lord benefits from the effort of a man (especially in obedience to His word) that man will not go empty handed.

God expects that in all your efforts you should put Him first in your order of priorities. Whatever you get in life and ministry should first of all be dedicated to Him. Moreover, once you dedicate it to Him, you'll not loose your share. In fact, He will command your own share to be made available and to be judiciously utilized, such that it will not be wasted.

Peter was the only next beneficiary of that miracle apart from the Master. When he was given the instruction, the benefit was not only meant for the Master, but it had to also go to him for his obedience, trust and faith in the word of the Master. When the Master benefits from your obedience to His instructions, he will make you a co-beneficiary of that obedience. The Lord will grant you mercy for obeying and having faith in His word of instruction to the glory of His Name. I pray for you that the 'sea' of this world and what is in it will go on errand for you through the Lord's pronouncement concerning you and your ministry. The Lord will make pronouncement concerning your life knowing well that He will benefit from your success, prosperity and progress.

CHAPTER 6 THE VOICE OF COVENANT

A covenant is a signed (or sealed) written agreement between two or more parties (nations) to perform some action. In the Bible, it is an agreement between God and His people in which God makes certain promises and require certain behaviours from them in return (Offline Advance English Dictionary). From the second dictionary meaning which has to do with the biblical implication of it, it is understood that God who is the Covenantor requires an adherence of certain terms from man who is the covenantee. It is as the covenantee abides by the terms of the covenant that he can benefit from the promises of the covenant.

The Covenantor has no problem in fulfilling His promises. He is ever faithful and ready to perform His Word as long as His terms are being met by the covenantee. So the fulfilment of every promise made in a covenant depends on the ability of the covenantee to understand and abide by the principles guiding it. There are principles guiding the promise of victory, success, prosperity, dominion and so many other promises in the Scripture. It is a sheer waste of time and resources to engage an activity that has no real bearing with the terms of the covenant that activate that promise unto manifestation. We will discuss more on this later in this chapter.

Now let us look at biblical illustrations of covenant as we consider few instances and injunctions.

God's Covenant with Abraham

We are aware of the call of Abraham into the land of Canaan. After that call he began to walk in the direction of it to a point that the Lord made a covenant with him in the following way:

And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying, As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after

thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. (Genesis 17:1-8) KJV

This was how God made a covenant with Abram, who was then renamed as Abraham. God's major condition for the fulfilment of the promises inherent in the covenant was for Abraham to walk before Him blamelessly (with a perfect life). So the first and major criterion for the sustenance of a covenant and the activation of its benefits for the covenantee is in his ability to walk with God and to live a blameless life in His sight. God did not mention about the covenant before he mentioned about this; rather, it was the other way round. After God told him about the covenant, Abraham fell on his face to the ground and He confirmed it to him that the covenant was there between them.

The Lord told him that He had made him the father of many nations. Even when the condition around Abraham was contrary to what God was saying, it was still going to manifest because of the covenant between them. The Lord said "*As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations*". God clearly reiterated His faithfulness and said that as for Him, there is no problem as far as the covenant was concerned. If it would be broken, then it should be traced back to Abraham and not Him. His faithfulness was just there waiting for Abraham's own fulfilment of faithfulness to activate the promises inherent in the covenant. If Abraham would see clearly and walk in the light and consciousness of that covenant, it would yield its benefits to him. There are people that have entered into covenant with God through the redemptive work of the Cross of Calvary, as briefly highlighted in the last chapter. They are into covenant, but they do not **behold** it. They are not conscious of the fact that their salvation is the point of the activation of this covenant. They are still moving about like slaves in the hands of the devil through ignorance. May the Lord grant you grace to behold this strong covenant that is inherent in the blood that was shed on the Cross of Calvary. Why the devil may have the opportunity to hold you back is because you could not behold this New Covenant in Christ Jesus. No wonder, you are still going about being tossed to and fro by ridiculous requirements from several deceivers who are even using the Name of God to take you back into such bondage. Such ones may even use the name of the Holy Spirit to dupe you through your ignorance of your position in Christ Jesus. Your ability to access these precious promises of the covenant will be held back if you do not behold this covenant.

The issue of Abraham becoming the father of many nations was just one of the benefits of the covenant. He didn't enter into that covenant just because he needed a child, but because he was to walk with God permanently. His ability to sustain the covenant did not depend on how many children he'd give birth to, but on

his relationship with Him. You will not follow God just because of the promises and benefits, but because of a solid relationship with Him.

In the process of talking about the benefits to be derived from that covenant, the Lord told him that it will be established for him and his generations. It therefore, implies that there are covenants and there are established covenants. When a covenant is not established, it can come to an end at a point without having fully accomplished the promises inherent in it. When a man enters into covenant with God, it is the commitment of the man that would attract how that covenant would survive. It is established covenants that have the capacity of affecting generations of a covenantee. It was the establishment of God's covenant with Abraham that was going to become the springing point for the extension and establishment of the covenant to his future generations. This covenant was to become an everlasting one. So it means that there are some covenants that have no capacity to remain eternally.

Imagine how Abraham's descendants were to be spontaneously stepping into that covenant. They were just going to be given birth to and become partakers of the covenant without stress. They needed not to pay the price that he paid before stepping into the covenant. The only thing they needed to do was to abide by the terms of the covenant and obey God's progressive instructions for them in their generations. Their ancestor Abraham would have paved way for them to become what they were to become with ease. They were to stand on the 'shoulders' of Abraham and become prominent in their generations. Certain things would be happening in their favour as if they merited it, but it was really as a result of their connection with that great and faithful man, Abraham. There was a voice of covenant following them along their way and thus, causing certain things to happen in their favour just because of their connection with the man, Abraham. Others would be struggling a lot, but with little results, but in their own case, a little work would yield unfathomable results just because of their origin from Abraham. What worked for Abraham will be found out to be working for them, at times, not necessarily because they laboured like him. It was the voice of the covenant speaking for them.

As a parent and as a leader what is the condition of your relationship with God? How is your relationship with the Lord through your covenant with God at redemption? How consistent and authentic is your walk with God through the saving grace of Jesus? Can God consider you as a point at which sons and daughters (both spiritual and biological) can emanate and benefit from your covenant relationship with God? How is your commitment and devotion to God? Can younger people and future generations that identify and submit to you be partakers of a certain covenant blessing with ease through their connection with you? There are men that are strategic covenant carriers that one's connection and identification with them would cause such ones to become 'express' beneficiaries of their

covenant promises. The covenant promise that any man becomes a bearer of it depends on the voice of instruction which he receives and obeys. May you identify your covenant carrier and follow him accordingly! However, to sustain and grow in those covenant promises depends on the individual's ability to remain faithful to the terms of the covenant.

Look at another word from God to Abraham:

And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice. (Genesis 22:15-18) KJV

When the Lord tested Abraham to go and sacrifice Isaac his beloved son, he obeyed and that obedience brought about God's response to him as stated in the passage above.

...because thou hast done this...

This is worthy of note. Remember that the covenant had been pronounced to Abraham before this time. However, the Lord said to him that because of what he had done on that day by displaying that obedience, He had decided to swear to him in terms of blessing and multiplication. The obedience of Abraham moved God to enter into an oath with him in terms of blessing and multiplication. It implies that even God Himself would curse Himself for not blessing and multiplying him. His obedience strengthened the covenant to the point of an oath on the part of God for Abraham. Abraham could at any time hold God by that oath and 'force' Him into blessing and multiplying his seed as the stars of heaven and as the sand on the sea shore.

So anyone that was not Abraham's seed was not permitted to be part of this oath. If you happened to be working in the same place and organisation with any of his seed, you wouldn't understand how things were working for him. His secret which stemmed from the covenant is not your secret and so you cannot access what he accesses. It is therefore important to be very careful in competing with someone you don't know his origin. There are people that the commitment and devotion of their parents and ancestors are speaking on their behalf. They may not necessarily be as committed and sacrificial as those parents and ancestors, but their (the parents/ancestors) prayers, commitment and devotion would still speak for them (the children). Their ability to get to their peak takes bearing from the voice speaking on

their behalf. They may not be as intelligent and diligent as you are, but because there is a voice of covenant blessing speaking on their behalf, you'd see their progress and success being fast forwarded than yours. So it is wisdom for you not to be competing for progress success...., with any man, because you don't know the covenant he's operating from. You don't know the voice(s) speaking on his behalf. That does not mean that they have the guarantee to mess up and misbehave anyhow as this would attract punishment to them.

The Lord responded by pointing categorically to Abraham that the oath that He took was not only because of the initial covenant, but because of what he had done. This is a very serious matter. The Lord told him that because he did not keep his son away from Him through his obedience his descendants shall be multiplied and possess the gates of their enemies. The strength of his descendants did not really emanate from themselves, but from this oath that was made through Abraham. Can you see how that single act of Abraham activated a voice that stood in for the strength of his future generations? No matter how powerful any other nation would be, it would not in any way be able to withstand Abraham's descendants because the voice of the covenant of multiplication and victory was speaking behind them. Any nation that was fighting them was fighting against the oath of the Lord and he'd have no option than to fight on their behalf.

God's Covenant with David

Look at what God said about David:

Ought ye not to know that the LORD God of Israel gave the kingdom over Israel to David for ever, even to him and to his sons by a covenant of salt? ((2 Chronicles 13:5) KJV

Jehoram was thirty and two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem. And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, like as did the house of Ahab: for he had the daughter of Ahab to wife: and he wrought that which was evil in the eyes of the LORD. Howbeit the LORD would not destroy the house of David, because of the covenant that he had made with David, and as he promised to give a light to him and to his sons for ever. (2 Chronicles 21:5-7) KJV

Abraham's covenant did not become the climax for David. He walked in Abraham's covenant and also attracted the establishment of another covenant with God. This one had to do with the establishment of the kingdom of Israel in his hands as his lineage became the lineage of princes in the royal family. Even when

some of his descendants were not following the Lord like him, the Lord decided to keep the kingship of Israel in the family of David. He was a beneficiary of the general Abrahamic covenant; but he did not end up in the level of that general covenant. He however, became instrumental to the establishment of his own specific covenant also known as the Davidic covenant. So the Abrahamic covenant was for all the Israelites while the Davidic one was peculiar to his family. In a similar manner, the covenant of the priesthood of Israel was peculiar to the tribe of Levi (Deuteronomy 33:8; Numbers 25:11-13).

There are general covenants and there are special and peculiar covenants. There are also general and specific blessings. There are certain dimensions of obedience and commitments that a man would exhibit in the sight of the Lord that would qualify him to operate on the level of certain specific and peculiar covenants. This is where the difference between him and others would emerge. Levi, David, Phinehas and some other notable servants of God did not just sit in their comfort zone only depending on the fatherly covenant blessing of Abraham; rather, they worked to activate some specific and peculiar covenants for themselves and their generations.

It therefore, implies that God is still making and establishing covenants today to as many as are ready to follow, obey and serve Him with the whole of their hearts. Your commitment and obedience to the voice of the Lord today could become a point of special and peculiar covenant for you and your generations.

The covenant of God unto David was so established that even when some of his descendants were doing certain evil things that would have attracted God's total rejection of his family as the royal family, He could not do so. He was brought under obligation to keep that family as the royal family in Israel. Even when Solomon misbehaved, which finally brought about the division of the kingdom from the hand of Rehoboam his son, the Lord had to keep the tribe of Judah for Rehoboam to rule because of His covenant with David (1 Kings 12:1-17). The Lord said that His covenant with David was a covenant of salt, indicating its perpetuity. May you follow and serve God to the point that some concrete and perpetual promises would emanate for yourself and future generations! You'll be remembered for something.

Let's also consider what the Bible says about David from the Book of 1 Kings 8:65 and 66:

And at that time Solomon held a feast, and all Israel with him, a great congregation, from the entering in of Hamath unto the river of Egypt, before the LORD our God, seven days and seven days, even fourteen days. On the eighth day he sent the people away: and they blessed the king, and went unto their tents joyful and glad of heart

for all the goodness that the LORD had done for David his servant, and for Israel his people. (KJV)

And in the eighth day they made a solemn assembly: for they kept the dedication of the altar seven days, and the feast seven days. And on the three and twentieth day of the seventh month he sent the people away into their tents, glad and merry in heart for the goodness that the LORD had shewed unto David, and to Solomon, and to Israel his people. (2 Chronicles 7:9, 10) KJV

After the dedication of the Solomon's temple, the Bible says that he held a feast with all of Israel for fourteen days. He then sent the people away after the feast had ended. However, the matter of interest here is about what those verses say about David. The people were said to have been glad and rejoiced because of the goodness of God shown to David His servant and for Israel His people (according to the account of 1 Kings above). The name of Solomon was mentioned after the name of David in the account of the Book of 2 Chronicles above. Therefore, all that took place at that time was purposely because God decided to show His goodness first, to David His servant, then to Solomon and lastly, to Israel His people. From this verse, they did not attribute it first to Solomon who finally built that temple, but to David. Can you see how the honour upon David remained after he had died? Although he was dead, there was something about him that could keep his memory alive in Israel. He was so prominent and accomplishing to the point that the joy of the people over his leadership did not die with him. What will you do that will keep your remembrance to even be fresher than some of those who are still alive? David's name was written in gold such that what the Israelites were seeing made them to be glad as if he was still alive. What will generations to come see from your hands and use it to call you as a man of blessed memory? Not all memories are blessed memories. Even in the Church of God today, there are some so-called blessed memories that are actually painful memories because of how they (the people remembered) could not leave any reasonable mark or impact in their generations.

When the Israelites were rejoicing, they would have been singing praises using the name of David despite his death. To leave the world without a mark is to have lived in the dark. When you leave with a mark, the world will permanently owe you some remarks.

Can you observe the order of which the matter of that joy and gladness of the Israelites was written? Their joy and gladness was first of all attributed to God's goodness upon David. So, no matter the number of people that were found in Israel,

David was the first reason for the goodness of God before the entire nation of Israel. What a strong challenge! He was first of all, recognised before the entire nation was recognised. His passion and heart's desire for Israel was very strong that he ended up as a single voice above many voices. His commitment to the Lord was so strong to the point that his name appeared to be ringing louder than the entire nation. He was the voice behind the joy of that period and as such, though he was already dead, he was still speaking. What voice are you leaving for the next generation? How will your current existence affect future generations? In a nutshell, what will you be remembered for?

There are different voices of covenant speaking over individuals, communities, lands, nations..., but the question is that what kind of voice are those voices? There are communities that the blood of missionaries being killed long ago is speaking against them. There are other lands that the covenants of their forefathers with demonic spirits are speaking against them. There are individuals that the covenants of their parents and forefathers would not allow them to either marry or progress in life. The major solution to this is to enter into the superior covenant in the blood of Jesus.

Covenant Principles

Let us briefly consider some covenant principles upon which certain promises of scripture lie. We will not be exhaustive and detailed here, since we are only looking at the issue of the voice of covenant in the life of a child of God. Just as we earlier stated, every covenant promise is accessible through some terms and conditions. These terms and conditions are the principles upon which these promises can be activated and accessed. There are conditions to be met to access and benefit divine promises such as blessing, prosperity, long life, deliverance, healing and success. There are many more benefits that can be derived through meeting these conditions, but we'll briefly highlight issues that have to do with the above mentioned ones.

1. Blessing: It is the will of God for all His children to be blessed in one way or the other. The Bible says in the Book of Deuteronomy 28:1 and 2 that:

And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God. (KJV)

Luke 6:38 Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again. (Luke 6:38) KJV

This is what it takes to access the blessings of God in one's life. It simply has to do with obedience to the voice of God in one's life. No matter how one tries to receive the blessings of God, the surest way is the way of obedience to God's word of instruction. There are a lot of injunctions embedded in His Word all of which can take one from the junction of frustration to the home of blessings. An ability to hear, understand and obey His word is the sure way unto His blessings. You cannot be wicked and full of disobedience and be talking about God's blessings. It is an evil and an error for God to grant you that your desired blessing. Your obedience to the voice of God is in turn your voice unto His blessing. Obedience is therefore, the voice of man that emanates from the voice of God unto blessing.

Apart from obedience, giving is also very crucial in accessing God's blessings. You can't be looking for financial and material blessings without sowing for it in the field of giving. Financial and material blessings do not really answer to prayer, but they answer to the act of giving. So the act of giving is a motivating factor for the material and financial blessings of man. It is a futile effort for one to be fasting for forty days and nights for blessing and prosperity without playing his part through giving and other sacrifices.

2. Prosperity: This is another thing that God is willing to grant to every one of His children. He says in the Book of 3 John verse 3 that ***“Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth”*** (KJV). In the Book of Psalm 35:11 the Bible says ***“Let them shout for joy, and be glad, that favour my righteous cause: yea, let them say continually, Let the LORD be magnified, which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant. (KJV)***

Look at some things the Bible says about one's access to prosperity:

If they obey and serve him, they shall spend their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasures. (Job 36:11) KJV

And they rose early in the morning, and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa: and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; Believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper. (2 Chronicles 20:20) KJV

This instruction is similar to the one made for the case of blessing through the mouth of Elihu as he decided to speak to Job. The two conditions for prosperity are obedience and service. You cannot serve God and not prosper. Prosperity is not only limited to financial breakthrough or material acquisition; rather it involves one's state of the mind and satisfaction in life and ministry. The obedience of a child of God should be displayed on the words of God's prophets. God establishes people through His word and prospers them through the words of His prophets. There are several blessings locked up in the place of obedience to the voices of God's servants that are placed over a man. Ignoring their voices implies ignoring his prosperity. If you ignore God's voice through the voice of His servant, you'll end up being ignored in the place of prosperity. If you want to reason over every word of instruction through God's servant you'll be delaying the season of your prosperity. May you not delay your season of prosperity!

3. Success: The Lord told Joshua that he was going to be prosperous through his observance and obedience to the word of the law. He 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.(Joshua 1:8)
KJV

It is the wish of the Lord for His children to prosper and have good success, but the realisation of this depends on the man. It is one's observance of the word of God that grants him good success in addition to prosperity. If you don't obey the law you will remain low and success will not be 'loyal' to you. You will remain low and local if you take the word of God for granted. If you don't want to be grounded in life, then you need to keep and do what the word of God say!

4. Healing: This is another covenant privilege which a child of God is expected to enjoy:

And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee. (Exodus 15:26) KJV
(KJV)

But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. (Isaiah 53:5) KJV

Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. (1 Peter 2:24) KJV

And ye shall serve the LORD your God, and he shall bless thy bread, and thy water; and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee. (Exodus 23:25) KJV

The conditions for the healing of God's people are clearly stated in the above scriptural verses. Here again, obedience to God's instructions and keeping of His word are instrumental to this benefit of healing. In addition to obedience there is also the need for one who needs healing of any form to have faith in the finished work of Jesus on the Cross of Calvary. Sicknesses and diseases are crushed on the Cross of Calvary. So in the process of praying for healing, one should engage the voice of the finished work of Jesus on the Cross of Calvary.

Service to God is also another avenue to access the promise of God's healing. The Lord would take delight in healing a man especially if the consciousness and desire for service is in his life. You are not expected to remain where you are after being healed; rather you need to serve the Lord with your healthy body.

5: Deliverance: From the Scripture, we are also made to understand that God does not want His children to remain in bondage. He says:

And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call. (Joel 2:32) KJV

But upon mount Zion shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions. (Obadiah 1:17) KJV

And it shall come to pass in that day, that his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing. (Isaiah 10:27) KJV

The Word of God is also categorical over the issue of deliverance. It happens by calling on the Name of the Lord. So the Name of Jesus is God's instrument of deliverance. There is therefore, no true deliverance without the instrumentality of the Name of Jesus.

Mount Zion from where holiness is the order of the day is also instrumental to the deliverance of a child of God. It is therefore clear that holiness is very crucial in the deliverance of a man. One cannot be filthy and wicked and expect deliverance. That sin and wickedness are the points of attachment for the forces of darkness. They are the avenues for the accommodation of the powers of darkness against any life.

The anointing is a crucial aspect in deliverance. It is the anointing that breaks the yoke. So in the process of going for deliverance, the one involved needs the services of an anointed man. The New International Version replaces the issue of the anointing with 'when a man had become fat'. As such, there is another way to be delivered apart from the involvement of an anointed servant of God; that is the increase in the spiritual fatness of a man. It is like one who outgrows a particular size of wears. The Lord will grant you deliverance by your personal increase in spiritual fatness, to the glory of his Name.

6. Long Life: This is another promise of God for those who believe in Him.

Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. (Ephesians 6:2, 3) KJV

The Lord gave this promise to those that honour their parents. It will be well with them and they will also live long on the earth. Any man that has no regard for his parents does not deserve to live. Even if he continues to live, he'll be living a shortened life. The pains and dishonour he causes and gives to his parents will speak against his life by reducing its span. Apart from your biological parents, you owe elders your honour and respect. The grey hairs they grow are not bought from the market. Age had made them to command honour and respect from you. It is their legitimate right from you. If you dishonour them, you're heaping curses upon your life and destiny. That shall not be your portion in Jesus' Name.

From all the aforementioned you will agree with me that one basic requirement for accessing these covenant promises is obedience to the voice of God's instructions. No wonder, it is the most outstanding duty of man in addition to the fear of the Lord. The Lord will grant you grace for obedience in all ramifications in Jesus' Name.

CHAPTER 7 THE VOICE OF SACRIFICE

The place of sacrifice in the life and ministry of a servant of God cannot be overemphasised. It is a voice that could not be ignored as far as the success, progress, victory, prosperity... of a child of God is concerned. Christianity itself is born on the platform of sacrifice. The Book of John 3:16 says ***“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”*** (KJV). It was a sacrifice on the part of God to release His only begotten Son to come into the world and die for the sins of the people of the world. It was also a sacrifice on the part of His Son, Jesus, to humble Himself and accept that horrible death on the Cross of Calvary. As powerful as His Word is, God did not only engage it in the process of the redemption of mankind. He knew that for that redemption to be fully accomplished there is a law He had to abide by—the law of sacrifice. As such, there are things that can never respond to a man unless a sacrifice is involved. The voice of sacrifice is an added voice that backs up the voice of a man. There are issues in life and ministry that will never answer to prayer, fasting, declaration of faith..., but will respond positively to the voice of a man’s sacrifice. When a man’s sacrifice reaches the throne of grace, it becomes an activator of certain divine purposes over his life and ministry. No man and ministry can ever grow beyond the sacrificial level of the minister(s).

What kind of growth do you believe God for in your life and ministry? Have you prayed, fasted, made positive confessions and declarations and many other necessary things in the bid to bringing increase to it? Is the result too little compared to your efforts? You need to seek the face of God to know what sacrifice may be needed to bring increase into that ministry. You cannot have a ministry and be running away from sacrifice. If it is so for you, then you are an error in that ministry. Your sacrifice is an arrowhead unto your accomplishment. If you are not sacrificial, then you need to be sacked from the ministry.

Solomon’s Sacrifice

And the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there; for that was the great high place: a thousand burnt offerings did Solomon offer upon that altar. In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee. (1 Kings 3:4, 5) KJV

After the great sacrifice of King Solomon, the Lord appeared to him in the same city where he made the sacrifice. Can you see how that sacrifice provoked that dream? It is true that the Lord had already purposed that Solomon would become a great man of wisdom as he rules the nation of Israel as king. The Lord was also

moved into granting him an opportunity to make a free choice of whatever he wanted Him to do for him. The sacrifice was so strong in the sight of God that He could not just sit up there in heaven without being moved to do something spectacular for Solomon in response to his request that he'd be granted the opportunity to make. God was not even doubtful of Solomon over what he would ask Him for. God was just moved to do anything for Solomon at that time. His sacrifice stood before the throne of God in such a way that He could not neglect its voice and sit down without arising in his favour.

There are certain dimensions of sacrifice that God would be moved to either speak, appear or take action. On the other way round, there are certain revelations that one may not be granted without sacrifice. As such, there are dimensions of wisdom, knowledge and understanding that could not be accessed without sacrifice. This is because there are certain dimensions of these that are purely made available on the platform of revelation. There are certain spiritual doors that you won't be able to open until you engage the instrumentality of sacrifice. Remember that even before this dream David the father of Solomon had already known that Solomon was a man of wisdom. In fact, Solomon was already walking on a certain level and dimension of wisdom, but there was going to be an explosion of that wisdom through this medium of sacrifice. David said to Solomon:

Do therefore according to thy wisdom, and let not his hoar head go down to the grave in peace.

Now therefore hold him not guiltless: for thou art a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him; but his hoar head bring thou down to the grave with blood. (1 Kings 2:6, 9) KJV

There are really, certain levels and dimensions of your ministry that you wouldn't be able to step into without the instrumentality of sacrifice. Your sacrifice will speak for your explosion in life and ministry in the Name of Jesus. So the sacrifice of a man is his voice into the place of development and increase. It is the added voice to his voice. If you are not sacrificial in your ministry, you are deceiving yourself by thinking that you can move forward in it. Without being sacrificial most of your dreams concerning your life and ministry are nothing but a mere delusion. It is your sacrifice that will speak for your permission into certain realms in your life and ministry.

Let us consider the response of Solomon to God's provision of opportunity of choice:

Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to

judge this thy so great a people? And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing. And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment; Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee. And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches, and honour: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days. 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. (1 Kings 3:9-14) KJV

In response to God's word to Solomon, he requested for a wise and understanding heart that could enable him to rule the nation of Israel very effectively. When the Lord considered his selfless response, He decided to grant him even what he never bargained for. After his response, the Lord granted him his request and also granted him both riches and honour. All these were granted unto him through his sacrifice. As such, through sacrifice you will receive your heart's desire and some extra packages that you'd not have ordinarily planned for. So the main plan of a man and his ministry should be sacrifice-based. When you plan your sacrifice and carry it out, the sacrifice will provoke what you've not ordinarily planned for on your behalf. Don't be a very good and economically oriented planner without having a plan for the virtue of sacrifice. When you lose the place of sacrifice, you will be lost in the place of divine plan. You'll lack a voice that would cause heaven to plan for you what you've not ordinarily planned for yourself. When the act of sacrifice is your natural lifestyle, you'll not lack supernatural surprises. The nature of sacrifice is the nature of God. So when you engage in it, you'll begin to access things in His realm. You'll begin to access things which only He could access. You'll begin to operate in His class. May He grant you this understanding so that you'll begin to walk in a new realm and dimension to the glory of His Name!

The Sacrifice of the King of Moab

When the kings of Israel, Judah and Edom came against the land of Moab to fight against it this is what the Bible says:

But now bring me a minstrel. And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the LORD came upon him. And he said,

Thus saith the LORD, Make this valley full of ditches. For thus saith the LORD, Ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain; yet that valley shall be filled with water, that ye may drink, both ye, and your cattle, and your beasts. And this is but a light thing in the sight of the LORD: he will deliver the Moabites also into your hand. And it came to pass in the morning, when the meat offering was offered, that, behold, there came water by the way of Edom, and the country was filled with water. (2 Kings 3:15-18, 20) KJV

When these three kings came to a point where there was no water, they went and met Prophet Elisha who prophesied about abundance of water in the land in the absence of rain. It happened as he prophesied and they were able to enter into battle with the Moabites. However, before the water came in fulfilment of that prophecy, it was in the morning when the meat offering was offered. There was already a prophetic declaration, but the fulfilment of that prophecy was pending waiting for the time of the meat sacrifice for it to be fulfilled. It could not happen at any other time anyhow, but at the time of the offering of the meat sacrifice. The prophecy was on ground anyway, but it was waiting for the time of the sacrifice to gather the momentum needed for it to be fulfilled.

Has anything been revealed to you concerning your life and ministry? Some tangible aspects of those things will not be fulfilled until an appropriate sacrifice that is needed to activate it is offered. You need to therefore ask God for the knowledge and understanding of certain strategic and necessary sacrifices that could trigger the fulfilment of certain prophecies and visions concerning your life. When He orchestrates the sacrifice, He will demonstrate the results. You also need to ask Him for the grace to offer that sacrifice.

We are considering this part of this story in order to appreciate the fact that the battle of the Israelites with the Moabites was divinely supported. However, let's consider what happened at the end of that battle:

And when the king of Moab saw that the battle was too sore for him, he took with him seven hundred men that drew swords, to break through even unto the king of Edom: but they could not. Then he took his eldest son that should have reigned in his stead, and offered him for a burnt offering upon the wall. And there was great indignation against Israel: and they departed from him, and returned to their own land. (1 Kings 3:26, 27) KJV

When the king of Moab was trying to fight against Israel by breaking through unto the king of Edom, he failed. He then decided to take his eldest son who would

have sat on the throne in his stead and offered him as a sacrifice. This brought a terrible indignation against Israel who then drew away from the land. They saw that God was no longer working on their side and so they had to withdraw from the land and go home. Can you imagine that sacrifice of that heathen king? Although God supported the battle of the Israelites against the Moabites, He did not allow them to continue with the battle because of the sacrifice of the king. So there are battles that need the services of sacrifice to be won. The Moabites did not get their deliverance by the use of their military weapons, but through that sacrifice. If God could honour the sacrifice of this king that was outside God's covenant, how much more will He honour you? The king sacrificed a life that was very dear to him and God honoured him.

Jesus our Pattern

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:5-11) KJV

It was a sacrifice for Jesus to make Himself of no reputation. This is a personality of high reputation in the presence of God, as His only begotten Son. He is nothing less than God and He is the second personality in the Godhead. However He decided to relinquish His position to assume a lower one for the purpose of the redemption of mankind. He laid His life in a shameful death in order to redeem lives unto glory. His sacrifice on the cross of Calvary is still speaking today unto the redemption of mankind.

It was because of that sacrifice that God had highly exalted Him and gave Him a Name that is above every other Name. He sacrificed that Name unto shame and reproach and ended up receiving it in an exalted and glorifying manner. What is being sacrificed is a seed that has the potency of rising up in a bigger, higher and greater way. You can never satisfy God without sacrifice. There are dimensions and levels that God will never trust you to the point of ushering you into, without your sacrifice. No matter your holiness, righteousness, prayer and other spiritual activities, you are not permitted to enter into certain realms with God until you prove your love, commitment and obedience to Him by your sacrifice.

In His sacrifice for the redemption of mankind, the Lord Jesus took a form that was far lower than His real form. There was another greater form ahead of Him, but He had to take a lower form to gain that form. Your sacrifice for the sake of the Kingdom of God may look ridiculous and foolish to the natural and carnal man. It does not appear as something needful in the sight of a carnal man. It is a waste in the sight of a natural man. It has a humble and ‘ridiculous’ form, but it is a form that produces another form. The money you sacrifice for the work of God may have been budgeted for something very fantastic and highly commendable; but as you decide to take the action of sacrificing it for the work of God, it would cause the world to look at you in another way. Men would look at you as a foolish man who doesn’t know what to do with his money. They don’t know that you have converted the money into a form that will produce a greater and higher form for you. It could be that you’ve decided to use the money that was initially meant for a building project to finance a crusade. In that process it would look as if you have just decided to waste it. It is not a waste, but it is a way into another form and another realm of higher and greater glory. May the Lord open your eyes of understanding unto this matter of sacrifice that would become a forceful voice unto your accomplishment!

Cornelius’ Sacrificial Devotion

The record about the conversion of Cornelius and his household is found in the Book of Acts Chapter 10. For the purpose of the topic under discussion, we’ll pick some few verses in that chapter.

There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway. He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter: He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do. (Acts 10:1-6) KJV

Cornelius in addition to being a devoted almsgiver was also a prayerful man. His sacrificial devotion and almsgiving coupled with his prayer life spoke for him to the point that he became one of the first set of Gentile people to receive salvation. He became an illustration of the demonstration of the gift of salvation unto the Gentiles. When he became that committed and sacrificial, God marked him out for

an illustration of the redemption of the Gentile nations. Your sacrificial life will make you an illustration of great and remarkable things in your generation, to the glory of God.

Just like it happened in the case of Solomon as we studied earlier, Cornelius was also granted the privilege of seeing a vision of an angel coming to him and speaking with him concerning the steps he should take in order for him to be saved. He saw a vision of instruction and direction which granted him salvation. The platform of sacrifice is a major platform for receiving instruction and direction in several areas of one's life and ministry. There are instructions and divine directions that may not be accessed without prayer that is coupled with sacrifice. A lack of sacrifice generates a lack of some strategic instructions and directions. The voice that emanates from sacrifice is crucial to both divine instruction and direction.

Through this vision the angel of the Lord made him to know his condition before the Lord. He was told about the state of his sacrifice in the presence of God. It was this state of his prayers and sacrificial almsgiving that granted him a stage in the divine plan of God. The state of his sacrifice also moved him into another stage of God's plan for his life, family and other Gentiles.

The angel told him that his prayers and almsgiving had gone up before God as a memorial. So apart from his prayers, his sacrificial almsgiving became a memorial for him in the presence of the Lord. Both his prayers and almsgiving became a voice of memorial for him before the Lord. As his prayers were being heard by the ascension of his voice to the throne of God, his sacrifices in the place of almsgiving also ascended as another voice of reminder to the Lord. There is no force on earth that can stop the ascension of a man's sacrifice unto the throne of God, except if the man is not in right relationship with God and is not walking in obedience to Him. Forces of darkness may try to frustrate the voice of a man's sacrifice, but if he is in right relationship with God, it will bring about his memorial on the Mercy Seat.

Now, let's consider how Peter came and ministered salvation to Cornelius and to the other people that were in that house:

On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour: And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat.

Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made enquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate, And called, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there. While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee. Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them. Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius; and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what is the cause wherefore ye are come? And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee. (Acts 10:9-13, 17-22) KJV

When Cornelius sent people to Peter's house according to the instruction of the angel, Peter was also being visited through a vision. The Lord orchestrated a divine incident for His purpose to be accomplished in the life of Cornelius. Peter became hungry and slept up while Cornelius' men were around the corner. It was then he also had a vision asking him to kill some animals that were labelled as unclean according to the Jewish custom. In order to soften Peter's heart and pave way for him to believe on the message that the messengers brought and to accept going to Cornelius' house, the Lord had to cause him to have that vision in the form of a trance. The same God that orchestrated the vision of Cornelius did not stop there, but He went further to orchestrate that of Peter. It became a form of divine coincidence sponsored on the instance of Cornelius through his prayers and sacrifice.

No matter how dogmatic and unyielding Peter was on the issue of interacting with a Gentile like Cornelius, the Lord dissolved it in a divine manner. He decided to orchestrate a divine coincidence to frustrate Peter's dogmatism. There are people that your success and accomplishment in life and ministry hinges in certain actions from them. The Lord will arrange a divine incident that would cause them to attend to you in the Name of Jesus. When your prayers and sacrifices stand before the Lord, your matter will stand before men. It will not only stand before men, but it will become a matter of concern to them. When you engage in sacrificial commitments you don't ordinarily raise matters before men, but you raise matters of concern. Men who don't know you will be compelled by your sacrificial life to discern something about you that will usher them into the place of concern for you.

Whatever needs to come to you through the platform of coincidence will become your portion as you engage the platform of sacrifice. Men who are sitting

down in ignorance not knowing the role they need to play in your life and ministry will be divinely motivated either through coincidence or through an eruption of concern.

In your exercise of sacrifice before the Lord, you need to be mindful of your condition in the process of making it. It is not expected to be done outside the laid down rules in the Word of God. We've earlier studied about Cain's sacrifice which was not accepted as his person was not accepted in the sight of God. King Saul was reprimanded for making a sacrifice in disobedience to the laid down rule in Israel. He was not a priest like Samuel and so when he dabbled into doing something (a sacrifice) that he was not anointed to do, his rule over the land of Israel was not established(1 Samuel 13); it was rather, limited to his lifetime. May your sacrifice earn you something that will outlive you!

Remember that everything you do even in the form of sacrifice must be backed up by righteousness and obedience. A sacrifice done without obedience has negative effect. May you not raise a negative voice over your life and ministry through a sacrifice that lacks righteousness, obedience and the fear of the Lord! Don't offer the sacrifice of fools. The Book of Ecclesiastes 5:1 says "***Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil***". May your sacrifice not be regarded as evil thereby raising an evil voice of limitation and frustration over your life and ministry!

CHAPTER 8 THE THOUGHT OF YOUR HEART

The thought of a man is the voice within him. This voice of his thought goes a long way to determine his scope in terms of success in life and ministry. The thought of a man is his state. No man can be greater than his thought life. His voice in the realm of the physical is a manifestation of his voice in the thought realm. The actions and attitudes of a man are the products of what is being conceived in his thought realm. Thus, what a man brings forth into reality is what he accommodates in his thought realm. The heart of a man is the engine room through where all issues of life flow. No wonder, in the Book of Proverbs 4:23 the Bible says ***“Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life”***. It is the issue that you accommodate in your heart that can dominate your life. Some other versions render the above verse as follows:

Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it is the wellspring of life. (WEB)

Keep your heart with all vigilance; for from it flow the springs of life. (RSV)

Above every charge keep thy heart, For out of it are the outgoings of life. (YLT)

No issue can usher one into the reality of his life and destiny if it has no place in his heart. In other words, a man's heart is the carrier of issues that usher him into his God-ordained purpose in life. You have no effective issue unless that issue had gotten its seat in your heart. What you receive is determined by what your heart can perceive. You are as great as the perception of your heart.

The heart is the wellspring of a man's life and purpose. The heart of man does not only accommodate issues, but it causes it to flow out. The voice of a man's heart has an outlet through which life springs out. The nature and quality of life that springs out of any man depends on what his heart had brought into itself and incubated to the point that it could no longer remain in there, but to flow out into the realm of the physical.

So what goes out of a man is nothing, but his accumulated thoughts. From the heart proceeds all manner of things that could either build or destroy the life and plan of God for a man. So the heart is the engine room from where matters that determine the manner of a man's life are incubated and released. Your voice in the realm of the physical is only a reflection of the voice within your heart. The

condition of your heart determines your condition on the earth. Your link to destiny takes bearing from what you think.

What you speak is a Reflection of Your heart Condition

It is very important to note that what a man thinks in his heart gives rise to what happens to him and for him in the realm of the physical. So the heart is a world that conceives what goes on in the world around a man. What you receive into your world is a product of what is conceived in your inner world, which is your heart. What happens in the world around you is of no consequence to you if your inner world has no space to accommodate it. Thus, what you don't permit to take over your heart will not have the capacity to permeate into your physical realm and characterize it.

Eat thou not the bread of him that hath an evil eye, neither desire thou his dainty meats: For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee. The morsel which thou hast eaten shalt thou vomit up, and lose thy -sweet words. (Proverbs 23:6-8) KJV

Here we are being advised about how to handle a man that has an evil eye. Since his eye is evil, then his whole body is also evil. The Book of Luke 11:34 says:

The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness. (KJV)

Can you see the importance being attached to the eye? Now we won't at this point focus much on the issue of the eye, but we only decided to highlight it because of the kind of man that the Book of Proverbs 23:6-8 is talking about. The meal of a man with an evil eye is something that any wise-hearted man needs to avoid eating. It is not all about how the meat looks like or how it is being prepared, but it is all about the heart of its owner. So the acceptability of the meat by even another man is determined by the heart condition of the owner. The meat or bread is as acceptable as the heart of its owner. If man is advised not to partake in such a meal, imagine what the Almighty and wise God would do with such.

The Bible says that the man could call you to eat with him, but his heart is not in any way with you. He claims to welcome you with his mouth, but in the real sense, he does not welcome you in his heart. His rejection of you in the heart outweighs his welcome with his mouth. What his mouth says to you can only be

accepted if his heart carries it altogether. It is an error for a man to be saying one thing with his mouth while he is saying something else with his heart.

It is very unfortunate that even in the Church today, such individuals can be found. They speak well of a man when they see him around. They could even introduce him very wonderfully in church meetings as a wonderful minister (as the case may be), but right inwardly, those who introduce him do not in any way have reasonable regard for him. This is very pathetic. The eyes of such people are evil, no matter who they may be. The picture you have about a man in your heart supersedes whatever you say about him, as far as God is concerned.

Once the heart of a man is not with you, there is nothing you can do to please him. No matter how you try to please him, he will interpret it to be something else. As a servant of God, no man will work under you if his heart is not with you; he'll rather end up messing up the work for you. As he thinks in his heart, so is he. His perception about you determines his attention to your matters and those things that have to do with the ministry.

It is metaphorically stated that what you eat in the hands of an evil eyed man will soon be vomited. It will not end up performing its metabolic purpose in your body. You will vomit regret and disappointment. You will also vomit ill feelings and dissatisfaction. What you eat from such a one will end up becoming troublesome to your life instead of becoming your help and contributing to your good health. What are we talking about? We mean that when you engage in anything with a man whose heart is evil and is not with you, contrary to what he says, you will end up in regret and disappointment. You will end up in dissatisfaction and ill feelings. He'll end up betraying you and all your efforts in his life and destiny. When you think that you've put heads together with him over a particular thing, he may seemingly agree with you with his mouth, but right inside his heart, he's not with you. At the end he'll leave everything to you. He'll even blame you for not doing it properly as if he was not part of the original plan. Such a man's contribution to your life ends up in unfruitfulness and ill luck. May you not be such an agent in Jesus' Name! May you not also suffer from such hands!

What your heart speaks determines your peak on the surface of the earth. Even if you are shouting "victory" at the top of your voice, if your heart is speaking "failure and victimization", you'll end up as a victim. Not until your voicing out is able to outweigh and banish the voice on your inside, you may never see what you say. Don't say what is not inside you. When you say something and you discover that your heart is saying something different, you need to silence the voice of your heart in order to bring to pass what you voice out.

God Honours a Good Thought

And it was in the heart of David my father to build an house for the name of the LORD God of Israel. And the LORD said unto David my father, Whereas it was in thine heart to build an house unto my name, thou didst well that it was in thine heart. Nevertheless thou shalt not build the house; but thy son that shall come forth out of thy loins, he shall build the house unto my name. (Kings 8:17-19) KJV

Here Solomon was talking about how David his father had in mind to build the temple of the Lord; in which case the Lord did not allow him to do so because of the fact that he had shed much blood. Although he did not end up being the one to build the temple, God commended that thought. God told him that he did well in thinking that way. That thought alone was a job well done. It was a deed done well. So the view of God over that thought was the view of a work that was done well. So the business of thinking is a great work in the sight of God. Great works result from great thoughts, while little works result from little thoughts. Thus, great men are great minds while mediocre minds result in negligible works. David's thought was a work to be rewarded and so it was. Even Solomon that built the temple was not commended more than David who nurtured the thought of it.

How the thought of building that temple came into the heart of David is not known to us, but the truth of the matter is that he loved the house of God. His desire and passion for the house of God was so serious that he wanted to build it for Him. That passionate desire to build a house for the Lord granted David a strong commendation from Him in such a way that his son's future execution of it was revealed to him. So that thought was a work that left a legacy for his son to fulfil it. This is very crucial. That thought of David was standing before the presence of God as a memorial for his son. His thought was the beginning of a strong work that Solomon had to complete. David did the thinking while Solomon did the building. Although he was not permitted to do the work, he was permitted to do the thinking. Where and how is your thought life? What are the things that you engage your thoughts in? To think is work and not to think is to be unworthy of living. Your thinking is your link unto your possession in life and ministry. You have no real link if you cannot really think. When you stop thinking you start sinking.

This is a notable issue in life. You have not done well if you've not thought well. You cannot be a good thinker and end up as a bad doer. You can't think well of what concerns God and God will not consider you as His matter of concern. When your heart is on God's project, you'll become His project in return. When you are sincerely zealous for God, He will help even your inadequacies and excesses, if you are sensitive to His voice. Although David's thought was not perfect, God commended it since it was in line with His divine agenda. God

honours our sincerity and helps us in our imperfections to bring His perfect plan into accomplishment. Thus, God could use a man's sincere thoughts and acts which may be imperfect to bring to pass His perfect plan. May the Lord graciously help you to think well in line with His divine purpose!

What is the state of your thought life? What are those things that dominate your thought life? There are some thoughts that could end up ruining your life and that of your future generations. May you think well! The voice of your thought can never take a negligible place in your destiny. What you speak within today goes a long way in determining what you pick up tomorrow. What you speak inwardly also, could determine where your generations will pick up. If you drop a bad voice, they will see it and pick it unto their disaster and calamity. Don't speak both inwardly and outwardly what you don't want to pick in the future.

So it is not only what a man speaks from his mouth that is very crucial in his life and destiny. What one thinks from within is also too crucial that he should be selective in it. What one accepts in his heart determines where he will be accepted in life. You cannot accept mediocrity in your heart and end up as a star in life. If you want to become a star then start thinking well. Star actors are star thinkers. The quality of your life is determined by the quality of your thinking. Your thinking is the voice behind your lifting. What your heart has space for is a picture of the space you'll occupy in the future. So the picture in your heart could be an indication of the future of your life. Thoughts are very crucial to the point that the psalmist says:

Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.
(Psalm 19:14) KJV

You can now see that both the words of your mouth and the thoughts of your heart are very crucial in determining your acceptability before God. You cannot have a big mouth and have a small heart and think that it will work out perfectly for you. Your big mouth must be complemented by your big heart. The two voice carriers are complimentary. The word of your mouth should be the fruit of the thoughts of your heart. The thoughts of your heart are the root of the words of your mouth. You are in error to be speaking what you don't have in your heart. The voice of your mouth is expected to be the report of the voice of your heart; it is then you're real. If you speak what is not inside you, then you are unreal and there is no way you can bring those issues you speak about into reality.

What you accommodate in your heart today would become your future accommodation in life. Whatever you cannot accommodate on your inside, you cannot also accommodate on the outside. What you cannot accommodate inwardly cannot accommodate you. Remember that your heart is an accommodation for your

future accommodation. If your heart is not capable of accommodating a reasonable accommodation for you at present, then you'll not be accommodated by such an accommodation in the future. The Lord will grant you understanding of these issues in Jesus' Name.

...in the midst of your heart...

My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings. Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart. For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.

(Proverbs 18:20, 21) KJV

This is an admonition to every child of God in regards to the place of the Word of God in his heart. The Lord is saying that the word should not depart from the eyes of His child. His gaze should be on the word beyond every other thing. However, our point of focus from the above scriptural verses is in verse 21b, which says ***“keep them in the midst of thine heart”***. The Word must be kept in the **midst** of the heart. The word ‘midst’ conveys an idea of centrality. It has to do with the middle position of a thing. What the Lord is saying is that the word should be kept in the middle or centre of the heart. It must occupy the centre of a man's heart. Even the heart itself has a middle or centre from where other issues take bearing. It means that the heart has a peripheral position and a central position. There are matters that could enter the heart, but may not occupy its centre. However, there are matters that need to occupy its centre. These issues form the bedrock of a man's life and destiny. They are issues from where the matters of his life gravitate. They are thoughts that give birth to other thoughts. They are the ‘mother thoughts’ in the life of a man. Every thought is actually done in the heart of a man, but there are some thoughts that are just offshoots of other thoughts. Those ones may not be central to a man's heart, but peripheral and may with time expire and have to end. But there are certain thoughts that are never expected to stop in the life of man. They are thoughts that give life to a man's purpose and destiny.

You will agree with me that whatever occupies a central position is of paramount importance in any accommodation. In this sense the Word of God says that we must keep it (the Word of God) at the centre or middle of our hearts. It is so important that it must not occupy any other position in the heart of a child of God apart from its centre. It is supposed to be the ‘mother thought’ that occupies the centre of a man's heart. It is therefore, the duty of every child of God to give the Word of God its appropriate place in his heart. That place is nothing but the centre of his heart. Every issue concerning the life of every child of God is expected to take bearing from what occupies this central position of his heart.

If the Word of God then takes the central position of a man's life, whatever will be voiced out from that heart will become the voice of God. So a man's heart can become the domain of God's voice from where His divine issues flow. As the Word of God dominates the centre of a man's heart, his life pursuit will become dominated by God's desire and purpose.

What is the issue that occupies the centre of your heart? What is that thing that can never be forgotten as it is always straight before you in your heart? What is that thing that takes the greatest part of your thought life? The voice of your heart can become the voice of God if you keep His Word at its centre. May the centre of your heart be occupied by the voice of God's Word!

Life and health are provided by this Word. The impact and effectiveness of the voice of God's Word from the centre of a man's heart is so strong that it affects the outermost part of man-his body. It manifests in life and good health. What a wonderful thing to have the centre of one's heart as an accommodation for God's Word! This voice of the written Word attracts the voice of a spoken Word. God finds it difficult to communicate with a man that does not know His Word. The more a man has His Word, the more He'd find it easier to speak to him. The more one also has the Word of God in his heart, the more he will find it easy to hear Him.

Ravenous Wolves...

Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? (Matthew 7:15, 16) KJV

Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit. (Mt 12:33) KJV

Jesus was warning the people that came to Him to beware of false prophets. He said that these false prophets normally come to people in sheep's clothing. They outwardly look like sheep, but inwardly, they are something different. What they profess is different from their true state on the inside. They are so hypocritical that one may not easily identify them. They have a show of godliness and spirituality on the outside, but are very carnal and devilish on the inside. Their outward voice is very different from their inward and real voice. They are an embodiment of conflicting appearances based on the contradiction going on between their outside and their inside. This kind of people can only be identified basically by their fruits and also by discernment. They can preach very well, but their lives are different from what they preach. Their voices on the pulpit as they preach are like the voices of saints, but inside them are the voices of carnality and demonic spirits.

Jesus described those false prophets as ravening (KJV) or ravenous (RSV) wolves. That is to say that they appear as sheep, but they are really wolves in their hearts. This shows that they are full of cruelty and rapacity on their inside. While they look humble and innocent in outward appearance, they are really full of aggression and voracity. They are extremely carnal and full of selfishness in their dealings. They are wolves who would like to convince one into doing several things only with the intention of satisfying their inward cravings and appetites. They ‘prophesy’ to a man with the aim of filling their pockets. They are inhuman in the spirit and so they don’t really care what happens to you after you’ve done their bidding. They are ravenous! That is to say that they can seize certain things from you by force in the name of “thus saith the Lord”. The voice behind them is the voice of a wolf, but the voice they present to you is the voice of a prophet.

What voice do you present to people? Is it the voice of a wonderful servant of God? Thank God for that. However, the question here is that “which voice is really behind the one you present to the people sitting before you?” There are many people that have wonderful voices to speak for God before men. Some have even gone to study in various Bible schools and seminaries and so they are very conversant with the methods of presenting the Gospel to their audience. However, it is very unfortunate that many of these people have bitter voices speaking from their inside contrary to what they speak to the outside. Some can even go as far as to speak against those things they are victims of, but are not even ready to repent from those things. Who are you deceiving if not yourself? One day you will stand before the judgment sit of God and give an account of all you’ve done in this life, whether it is good or evil.

One thing is sure that you can never hide your identity for too long. You will be known by your fruit. Whether you hide it from men or not, the truth of the matter is that you cannot separate yourself from your real person. You can only be hypocritical professing and confessing what you are not; but that can never help you. No matter how you paint your outward appearance before men to convince them into ascribing to you what you are not, it is just a matter of time; because what you conceive will normally cancel men’s conviction about you. On the other way round, you should also note that no matter how you try to tarnish the image of a righteous man, you’re just wasting your time because you cannot in any way take away the fruit of his nature by doing that. With time, those that listen and believe in you will find you out to be a liar. So it is dangerous for an individual to be involved in the adventure of tarnishing people’s images since it would backfire on him. It is an adventure in futility.

The Accumulation of the Heart

What a man accumulates in his heart is what grants him effectiveness before men. It grants him effectiveness even as he speaks for God before men. There is something that Elihu said to Job when he was confronting him after his more elderly three friends could not speak adequately to convince him over his then condition. This is what he said that we'll consider here:

Behold, my belly is as wine which hath no vent; it is ready to burst like new bottles. I will speak, that I may be refreshed: I will open my lips and answer. (KJV) (Job 32:19, 20) KJV

Elihu said that he waited patiently to see how the discourse that was going on between Job and his three friends, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar was going to end. After these three friends could not speak very perfectly for God to Job, then Elihu came up and one of his early statements is what is written above.

He said that his belly was like new wine. It was the wine of God's counsel. It was not the ordinary physical wine that every other person could take, but it was the new wine of God's wisdom. So when the three friends of Job were speaking with him, Elihu was busy nurturing and accumulating godly wisdom and counsel awaiting an opportunity to burst out. The belly he was talking about is his heart from where that wisdom and counsel was accommodated. When he was to release it to Job, it was to become a bursting out of what he conceived from his heart. It was going to become a relief from his inside and a release of real impact to Job. He described what was going to come out of him as a bursting that was like new bottles. It was going to be a fresh release of concentrated wine from him to Job. This is very crucial in the process of speaking for God in the form of public ministration, counselling and other forms of dealings with others as one speaks for the Lord. When what you speak for the Lord is a bursting out of new wine, it cannot be resisted. It will not lack the necessary penetrating power for impact. It will go forth with the capacity to affect the one concerned with the necessary force of impact. It will be so forceful that the one it is released to will not easily forget how that word came and how he encountered God through it. This is because it came with the voice of force from the heart.

Elihu said that his belly was like wine that has no vent. It means that it has no space for what was being accumulated to pass away before that period of his discourse with Job. His heart was so sealed up that there was no space for the passage of any accumulated thought. His meditation was going on in a belly that had no vent of unnecessary dissipation. His heart was never perforated through carelessness and iniquity. His heart was not perforated against his spiritual performance and effectiveness. He was not ready to waste the divine virtue that was

inside him through a vent. His effectiveness was never resisted or prevented by a vent.

What is the condition of your heart? Is it free from a spiritual vent? Just like a physical vent allows the escape of fluids such as air, gas, fumes, steam and liquids, in a similar manner, a heart can be perforated and have a 'hole' of escape of spiritual accumulations. Those things that you've been studying in the presence of God need a heart that is devoid of a vent in order to become effective. Any man that has a perforated heart will be lacking in real spiritual performance. How can you be so busy at a point with God, but your heart is so cumbered with sin and the affairs of this life? It is an indication of the presence of a vent in your life. There are many believers that are very good in attending so many programmes and Christian meetings to hear from God, but because their hearts are full of perforations through which much leakage of spiritual things pass, they remain the same, year in and year out.

What is the vent of your life? What is that thing that has perforated your heart such that spiritual matters cannot stay there unto fruitfulness and productivity? Why is it that the voice of God's instruction over your life cannot be sustained as you quickly forget even simple and basic counsels that could grant you success and improvement in life? Why are you so eager of going to minister to others with a hole in your heart that could not allow devotion, communion, meditation and other spiritual virtues to stay and prosper there and in your entire life? Is it carelessness and carnality that constitute your vent? Why has your life been occupied by so many frivolities? Your inconsistency in growth and relationship with God is indicative of the presence of a spiritual vent in your life.

Elihu said that he will speak so that he will be refreshed. What he had been accumulating in his heart will become refreshment. He was going to also be a beneficiary of that refreshment. When that word goes out of his mouth which is the only spiritually approved route for such releases, it will not only refresh his hearer, but it will also refresh him. Your word in the form of counselling cannot be refreshing if you have a perforation that would not allow it to stay and become part and parcel of your life. If you have a leaking belly you'll lose your link with God's plan and purpose for your life. When your heart does not have a vent, it will grant you a more concentrated voice in the presence of God and unto your accomplishment in life and ministry. Beware of a vent for it can prevent you from getting to your desired goal in life.

CHAPTER 9 YOUR VOICE ON THE STAGE

A little part of this has been discussed in the last chapter. However, in this chapter we shall be dealing with the effectiveness of the voice of a man as he stands on the stage before men to deliver unto them the divine oracles. It is one thing to speak and it is another thing is to speak with effectiveness. We've discussed about the importance of the heart of a man in the delivery of divine counsel to an individual and to a congregation. God is not only interested in seeing us doing things and delivering His divine counsel through preaching, teaching and other means, but He is interested in seeing us doing it with effectiveness. This effectiveness will be determined to a great extent, by the gravity or intensity of our voice in the process of discharging the divine counsel. It is one thing to speak and it is another thing to speak with the voice of intensity and impact. There are certain factors that are responsible for the dimension and level of impact that would be made by a servant of God. We will not be able to exhaust all of them, since this book is not majorly intended to deal solely on the issue of the delivery of the Word of God by His servant. We are solely concerned with the place of the voice behind a man that is on the stage as he stands to speak for the Lord.

The Need to be sent

After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come. Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest. Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves. And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. (Luke 10:1-3, 9, 17)

When the Lord sent the seventy disciples, He sent them to places where He was to go at a later time. He sent them to go before Him to places where He was to go. They went with His instruction as they were to do that evangelistic work. They were not going without the backing up of His voice of instruction. It was that His voice that was going to give credence to their mission. So they were not going on individual capacities, but in the capacity of the Master. Any situation they were to deal with would be dealt with under the backing voice of the Master that sent them. They were only permitted to be effective in the places that they were sent to minister and in the kind of ministration they were to do. They were sent to preach

the gospel of the Kingdom of God and heal the sick. So their effectiveness was based on their ability to abide by this instruction. They were going to become true representatives of the Master if only they abide by this instruction. Whatever obeys the voice of the Master was to obey their voices because their voices were just the conveyors of the voice of the Master. This is where true effectiveness in the discharge of divine charge and counsel lies. It does not even depend on the fluency and accuracy of the minister in the process of discharging it, but it depends on the ability of the minister to convey the voice of the Master. It is the backing of the voice of the Master that determines the effectiveness of a mission.

No one honours the one who is being sent except he honours the one that sent him. Also, no one will honour a messenger who could not really trace his message to the one that sent him. So wherever the disciples entered and began to preach the gospel of the Kingdom of God, the next thing that would be expected of them from their listeners was the source of their mission. They were only going to listen and repent if their message was known to come from the Lord. His voice was the voice that would cause them to become successful. Even the healings that they were to perform depended upon the authority and the voice of the Master that sent them.

You have no voice without the voice of the Master backing you up. You are devoid of real spiritual honour without your ability to trace your ministry to the voice of the Master. So a ministry is not really God's ministry until the presence or involvement of His can be identified. So what did the Lord say about that your ministry before you took off? What is He still saying about it today? Did you just start it because every other colleague of yours is also engaged in such work? Where is the voice of God's authentication over that your work? Your effectiveness before God and then before men solidly relies on this. Where God's voice of instruction is located is where He intends to face. If you go without His voice, you'll go without His face. Imagine you facing several issues with your empty face. Is it not a serious disaster for the Kingdom of God? If you go without His face you'll soon phase out. The success of a man in every phase of life in God's vineyard is determined by the dimension and level of the appearance of His face upon him. The more He shows you His face, the more you move into a higher phase. When His voice backs up your voice then His face will automatically back up your face. You have no new phase until He reveals to you His face in a new and fresh way. Go for His face and you can neither become fake nor phase out.

The seventy **returned** unto the Master to give Him the report of their exploits in that mission. They did not continue to move on and on without looking back to the Master that sent them. They saw the need to return to the Master. If you want to remain effective and maintain the voice of the Master, you need to imbibe the attitude of returning to the Sender. Your ability to return to His presence is what will keep you in tune with His next voice of instruction. Can you imagine yourself

brushing over certain previous messages that you preached in order to go and minister in another meeting? How are you sure that that is what the Master is saying at that time? Well, you can go and preach your message with your voice of expertise and experience, but He won't be there once His voice is not involved. It is where His voice is located that will attract His involvement.

If you don't have a moment of return, you will never be refreshed. Failure to return is failure indeed. If you fail to return, be ready to live in regret. If you don't retreat you will fall under the traps and tricks of the enemy. You will lack capacity to treat the issues of your life and ministry well if you fail to retreat. Real failure in ministry may not be in the inability of the minister to go out; but it could also be in his inability to return. If you don't return you'll be missing in the mission. You may keep on going and going, but further away from the voice and the face of the Sender. There are moments you need to be turned around and turned over for more effectiveness; but it could only happen at the time of your return. The joy of ministry can be so fantastic that if you are not careful you'll be lost in the honour of it and miss the face of the Source of the honour. Beware of the need to return. If you don't return, situations may no longer turn around through your voice as it would lack the backing of the bigger voice of the Master.

...I never sent them...

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. Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the prophets that prophesy in my name, and I sent them not, yet they say, Sword and famine shall not be in this land; By sword and famine shall those prophets be consumed. (Jeremiah :14, 15) KJV

Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the LORD, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the LORD. (Jeremiah 23:32) KJV

The Lord told Prophet Jeremiah from the above verses and some others that there were some of those prophets in his days that were prophesying about things that they were not sent to prophesy. They were saying things that they were never sent to say. Their prophecies were never sourced from God, but they claimed that God was speaking through them. The Lord told him that the prophets were busy

prophesying lies in His Name, while He had not sent them. He neither sent them nor commanded them. They were prophesying outside the two basic standpoints of a true prophet-being sent and being commanded. These are two basic things to be secured by every genuine servant of God as He stands to speak for Him before an audience. It is this sending that conveys the voice and presence of the Sender. Going by the command of the Sender guarantees His authority and power.

When a man is sent, he speaks as the Sender and commands in the capacity of the Sender. He'll be recognised by the one he's being sent to as a true and authentic messenger. But if he is not sent by the one he claims is his sender, then even his pronouncement of his claim of the source of his message is nothing, but a lie. There are so many people that say things in the Name of the Lord, while they don't even know Him. They don't even have any encounter with Him, but yet they go about with His Name. No matter how what they claim to be speaking for God may be genuine, they are liars and have no capacity of delivering the truth that sets one free. They can speak vibrantly for God, but since they do not secure these two conditions of being sent and being commanded, they are still operating in the category of these false prophets. Heaven does not back up their claim about God.

Those false prophets were prophesying things of nought and deceit. I hope you understand the implication of this. It means that whatever they were prophesying was going to yield nothing. If at all it will result to anything, that result is nothing but deceit. All their efforts in speaking for God were equal to zero. Every effort they were making to cause the people to believe in them was not going to cause any change over their condition. What they were saying could not change anything because the voice and authority of God was not there.

What is your condition in this matter? Are you not a minister of things of nought or nothingness? How about the efforts you are putting in the work of God? Are they really done based on what the Sender is saying or had approved? Beware of working in the realm of the nought. There are so many things that people are doing in the presence of God, but God is saying that He is not there and so they are things of nought. Is it not a disastrous condition? How can a man be busy standing in the place of the Almighty as His mouthpiece and He's saying that all that he is doing are things of nought? That is to say that whatever he says or does is nothing and is not bigger than zero. It is not until you are sent and commanded that your works and efforts can be something bigger than zero in the sight of God. So there are many workers who are doing a work that heaven is seeing as zero work. Some of them even seem to be making waves, but since they're either not sent or have lost contact with their Sender, they're going about doing zero work. The world may recognise them and their works, but heaven sees them as men of zero productivity. May the Lord deliver you from the realm of the nought!

If you've not received anything from God, you'll end up operating in deceit. What are you discharging before men? If you've received nothing from the Lord you'll only be discharging deceit. It is what you receive that you can conceive for your audience and generation. Why are you speaking what you have not in any way conceived after having received it from the Lord? The voice you become is based on what you've received and conceived. You don't have an authentic voice for the Lord; neither can His voice go with you without having received anything from Him.

It is the word you are commanded to speak that puts you in command. Your domain of operation is based on the command of God that is over your life. In short, your domain hinges in your command. You will be in demand if you abide by your command. It will pay you if you stay in your place of divine command. The dimension of your demand and command depends on your ability to remain in that domain of your command as a sent man. This is what will make you to be set and settled in the assignment you are sent for.

Lightness, no Profit...

The Lord also told Jeremiah that those false prophets were prophesying lightness and things that could not profit their hearers. Their voices and pronouncements were voices that minister lightness, but not light. They were making the people to look at the Word of God with lightness. Instead of bringing light and dispel darkness from the people, they were bringing lightness and darkness. They were compromising the weightiness of the Word of God to replace it with lightness and worthlessness. They lost the gravity and impactful nature of God's word and replaced it with lightness. Can you see the disaster that these prophets were ministering in their days? This is similar to the situation of the Church in our days. Many so-called servants of God have gone ahead to preach diluted and weightless messages to their congregations. They've gone ahead to remove the ancient landmarks to replace them with modernization and what they call 'new move of God'. There is nothing like 'a new move of God'. There could be revival, revolution, reformation and restoration. All these are obtained in moments when God decides to make another move. No matter how He decides to move afresh, the pattern of the move is normally the same with any other move He had taken before. The conditions for the so-called new move are expected to be applicable to any other similar move that had taken place before. No matter how He decides to move again in any generation, His emphasis and conditions never change. The steps He'll take in any next move are normally comparable with those of previous moves. He can decide to do a new thing, but not to make a move that is out of His ancient pattern.

You can observe that the words ‘revival, revolution, reformation and restoration’ all begin with the prefix ‘re’; which has to do with a reoccurrence or repetition of something in one way or the other. It is not totally a new thing, but a repetition or reactivation of something that had been lost. So any move of God that comes with a new way of doing things contrary to what it used to be in the days of the apostles and in Church history, has something wrong somewhere. No matter the intensity and dimension of that move, God cannot abandon the old paths of His move and actions. Don’t be deceived by any man that brings to you certain strange ideas and methods of handling the things of God contrary to what had been handed over to us by the men of old. He’d be one of those prophets of lightness prophesying deceit and things of nought. Beware of those that say **‘it doesn’t matter anymore’**. They are ministers of lightness and weightless messages. They won’t tell you things that will make you weep and sit back to reconsider your spiritual condition in the sight of God. They won’t bother to tell you about the terror of God; but they are only interested in telling you about His goodness even when you are in danger as a candidate of hell. They are only interested in speaking more often to you about how you will make it and prosper on the earth without telling you the futility and nothingness involved in amassing so much wealth on the earth and end up in Hell fire. They speak lightness instead of enlightening you in the place of spiritual insight. They enjoy only causing excitement, laughter... to their congregations, but lack the seed of repentance unto holiness and righteousness. They may have ‘big’ ministries in the sight of men, but they are ministering lightness and things of nought. They minister weightlessness and worthlessness and so they can only produce weightless and worthless followers. They are weightless and worthless so they cannot produce weighty and worthy disciples. Are you such a labourer? Then you need to seek the face of God to become something reasonable before Him.

There is no profit in the ministry of a man that is not sent and commanded. He is a loss to the Kingdom of God. Any deposit of divine virtue upon his life is nothing, but a loss. Those false prophets were prophesying things that were helping them to survive and make gain on the earth; but they were prophesying loss to the people. The Israelites were being deceived into loss in the nation, but they thought that things were going on well with them through the prophecies of these false prophets. What the false prophets were prophesying were those things that the people liked to hear. They liked to hear about ‘losses’ and to be encouraged to live loose lives. You can’t live loosely and not be in loss spiritually. You are a loss if you are loose. Preachers that permit and shy away from discouraging loose living are promoters of loss in the Kingdom of God. There is no profit in church, either numerically, financially or otherwise where there is loose living. While the church may think it’s gaining, heaven counts it as a loss. What is real profit in the vineyard

of God, if not the promotion of righteousness, holiness, spirituality, faithfulness to God in terms of devotion and other such virtues? It is to promote the love of God among brethren. What would have profited the Israelites was for them to repent and turn back to God so as to escape the impending judgement that was to be carried out by the hands of foreign nations. However, they decided to run after false prophecies that ended them up in that punishment. Can you now imagine how our generation is also pushing towards such a loss? Many people want to go to places where they will prophesy fake prophecies to them even when they needed to be told about the impending danger of divine judgement in Hell fire. Beware of prophets that can lead you to no profit. May God deliver our generation in the mighty Name of Jesus!

...your Prophets...

For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Let not your prophets and your diviners, that be in the midst of you, deceive you, neither hearken to your dreams which ye cause to be dreamed. For they prophesy falsely unto you in my name: I have not sent them, saith the LORD. (Jeremiah 29:8, 9) KJV

O Israel, thy prophets are like the foxes in the deserts. Ye have not gone up into the gaps, neither made up the hedge for the house of Israel to stand in the battle in the day of the LORD. 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.(Ezekiel 13:4-6) KJV

The Lord addressed those false prophets as “**their prophets**”. They were reduced to become the prophets of the people. Their hope and pride was only on the presence of people. They lost the presence of God and so they became ‘prophets’ only in the presence of the people. To the Lord, they were ordinary noisemakers, but to the people they were regarded as prophets. So since the people regarded them as prophets then they were their prophets, but not God’s prophets. They lost their place and voice with God, but still had a place and voice with men. For more on this, read my book entitled “**Divine Platform for Exaltation**”.

...Your Dreams...

One critical issue of concern from here is the issue of the dreams of the prophets. They were majorly dreamers and diviners. Since they had no place in God, they resorted to dreams and divination. They became dreamers and diviners. In a similar manner today, there are so many diviners that are on suits in the name of being pastors and prophets. They are so neatly dressed, but inwardly and in practice,

they are diviners. Some even go as far as to source their powers from the occult world and then come out to stand and minister in the name of the Lord. Some could go to witch-doctors to receive certain charms in order to increase their fame and church numerical size. They are on suit, but are not really suited for genuine kingdom work.

The dreams of these false prophets were said to be the dreams of the people. They were not sourced from God, but they were sourced from the minds and cravings of the people. No wonder, they were the prophets of the people and not the prophets of God. They were not prophesying the mind of God, but they were prophesying the minds of the people. Look at the rendering of that portion of scripture from some other translations of the Bible:

'For thus said Jehovah of Hosts, God of Israel, Let not your prophets who are in your midst, and your diviners, lift you up, nor hearken ye unto their dreams, that ye are causing them to dream; For with falsehood they are prophesying to you in My name; I have not sent them, an affirmation of Jehovah. (Jeremiah 29:8, 9) YLT

For thus says Yahweh of hosts, the God of Israel: Don't let your prophets who are in the midst of you, and your diviners, deceive you; neither listen you to your dreams which you cause to be dreamed. For they prophesy falsely to you in my name: I have not sent them, says Yahweh. (WEB)

From these two translations it is clear that the dreams of the prophets were caused by the people. So the false prophets were prophesying dreams that they had but which were orchestrated by the minds of the people. Thus, when the people were thinking about certain things, a prophet will dream about the same thing. The prophets were busy dreaming the minds of the people and not the mind of God. They could even tell the people what was in their minds and so the people could regard them as genuine prophets. What a devastating condition the nation of Israel fell into!

Can you see the futility in some so-called prophetic ministries of our generation? They could see visions and dream dreams regarding the minds of men, such that they could tell them what is going on right in their minds and what they are even planning to do in the near future. The ones being ministered to would then begin to scream and do some ridiculous things just because what the man standing before them is saying is correct. He had forgotten that even in Israel some false prophets were able to dream about the minds of the people. The nation was so

reduced to the point that the minds of the people became the platform for the prophecies of the prophets.

Have you gone to a place where many people are going in the name of deliverance and other such things; only waiting and watching to hear when the man will talk about what is going on around them and then probably point at them? At this, they'll be highly excited because as far as they are concerned they only know a man as a man of God if he can tell them their secrets. Don't you know that your mind can cause a dream, vision or revelation as it happened in the days of Jeremiah? Your desire for a man to locate you and your situation may be good, but at the same time promote the work of a false prophet.

There are genuine prophets of course, that have the grace to receive messages and revelations for people in a divinely sourced manner. We are not denying that fact. But what we are emphasizing from here is that the voice of a minister that has lost his place in the presence of God can be caused by what goes on in the minds of the people and what they want to hear; just like it happened in the nation of Israel before their captivity.

So the false prophets' prophecies were controlled by the minds of the people, instead of the mind of God. Therefore the voice behind their dreams and prophecies was the voice of the minds of men. What is the voice behind your pulpit as you minister? May you not become a minister of the minds of men instead of being a minister of the mind of God! When you minister by discharging the mind of God, your voice becomes the conveyor of the voice of God and its accompanying force and authority; but if you minister the minds of men, your voice conveys nothing, but man's limited authority and what he can access.

Prophets like Foxes...

Prophet Ezekiel identified the false prophets to be like foxes according to the revelation that God granted him. This was a figurative sense of describing these prophets. It has to do with crafty, sly and clever nature of these prophets. They could trick or fool someone by ingenuity or cunning outwit. They could baffle and confuse someone through their cunning nature. So when such ministers are standing before you, they are standing with the voice of a fox and not the voice of God. They have the force of the fox, but not the force from the voice of God. They are there to fool and confuse you in order to get something out of you. They are neither there for God nor for your good, but for their bellies. Beware of them. It is not all about the voice you hear from their mouth, but it is about the voice they convey from behind. The Lord will help you in Jesus' Name.

The Lord challenged the false prophets through Prophet Ezekiel by saying ***“Ye have not gone up into the gaps, neither made up the hedge for the house of Israel to stand in the battle in the day of the LORD...”*** The false prophets were

only prophesying without going to stand in the gap for the people. They were not also able to make the hedge for the people to be able to stand in the day of battle. These false prophets therefore lost two major responsibilities in the calling of a prophet-intercession and facilitation of the protection of his people.

They were only appearing great in talking to the people, but lost their place in intercession before the Lord. They were seeing things that had no capacity of driving them into the place of intercession. Their voices before the people were therefore ordinary voices that had no effect, due to their loss in the place of intercession. They were great men in speaking, but weighed zero on the balance of intercession. They were therefore, like ordinary fortune-tellers that could only say what they see, but has no solution to it, since they don't have any place with God. A minister that had lost his place in intercession can never become an agent of divine intervention. It is intercessors that are interveners. Why God may grant you an understanding of another man's situation is not at times even majorly for you to tell the person, but for you to go into the place of intercession in order to bring about divine intervention. Jesus prayed for Peter before He told him about his temptation and subsequent restoration (Luke 22:31, 32). As you are speaking for God to the people, which voice are you using? Are you speaking from the platform of intercession or from the ordinary platform of knowledge? Great men with God are great intercessors.

The false prophets were also appearing to the people without having any place in the building up of hedge for them. This gives the idea of building or raising a barrier for the people against the intrusion of the enemies. It also gives an idea of protection, restriction,,, against the attacks of the enemies. They were to stand in the gap and pray for the protection and safety of the people, but they failed. That was not all in that direction. They were also to cause the people to stand in the hedge and fight against the enemies. They were not only to be prayed for in terms of protection, but they also needed to be taught about the principles and the lifestyle needed of them to become effective in their battle against the enemies.

What are you doing in this aspect of ministry? Are you just there raising people that could not stand against the enemy over the conditions of their lives and others? Are you busy gathering people that cannot withstand even little temptations by the Word of God? Where is therefore your standing in that your ministry? Your real ministry is in your ability to raise men that can withstand the devil and his temptations. How can you be the only one standing in your ministry and think that you are succeeding? Your real success is for you to be able to raise a successful successor. You need to be a builder of hedges. If you build no hedge, you won't have an edge against the enemy. So you need to build a hedge in order to have an edge!

Be Faithful to God's Word

The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces? (Jeremiah 23:28, 29)
KJV

That's wonderful! The Lord said to Prophet Jeremiah that those who speak what they see in the dream are permitted to do so. They may neither be restricted nor prevented from saying what they see in the dream. However, there are those who speak what they hear from Him. They were also permitted to say it. But there is a clear difference between the two. The voice that comes through dream will weigh far less than the voice that comes as a declaration of the voice of God. So as a servant of God, you need to just preach the Word of God faithfully and trust God for its fruitfulness and fulfilment. The Lord that speaks it of whom you are just His mouthpiece knows how to bring it to pass. There are times you feel like you've not discharged it adequately; but if that is what He wanted you to discharge for that day, you are done and need not to worry as far as you've discharged His divine counsel. There are even certain days you think that your ministration is 'powerful' but in the real sense, God may be saying that the message is your message and not His own. May the Lord grant you sensitivity in this matter!

There was a fellowship I was invited to preach many years ago. After the ministration, I did not feel that I have really preached adequately. But some years later as I was discussing with a brother who was there in that meeting, he reminded me about how that message affected his life. He was even able to remind me the topic that I preached on. It was an amazing experience to me. A similar thing happened when I met with another brother who happened to be in another meeting in which I ministered the Word of God. In the case of this brother, he told me how he was desirous of having me again in their fellowship to minister. He went ahead to remind me about a statement that I made which actually affected him. It became so strong and impactful to him that he could even remind me about it when he saw me. But do you imagine that I have forgotten that I made such a statement in that meeting? It is all about the counsel of God and not my counsel.

The Lord made a comparison between His Word and the words of the prophets. He said *"What is the chaff to the wheat?"* The words of the prophets were said to be like chaff, while the Word of God was said to be like wheat. Chaff is not useful to the farmer, but the wheat is his desire. Chaff is easily driven off by the wind, but it is not so in the case of wheat. There is fulfilment in harvesting wheat, but there is no fulfilment at all in gathering chaff. In gathering chaff, there is no hope for the future, but there is hope for the future in gathering wheat. So there

are ‘chaff’ ministries and there are ‘wheat’ ministries. Any ministry that is based on discharging the undiluted Word of God is ‘wheat’ based; but any one that is based on ordinary prophecies and other things, of which there is no place for the undiluted Word of God is ‘chaff’ based. If your ministry is ‘chaff’ based, you will produce ‘chaff’ followers; but if it is ‘wheat’ based, then you will produce ‘wheat’ followers. The members of a ‘chaff’ based ministry will become rough and disorderly in their lives and actions; but a ‘wheat’ based ministry will produce orderly and decent members that are conscious of righteousness, holiness, devotion to God, faithfulness to His Word and other such virtues. The quality of products in a ‘wheat’ based ministry is better than the quality of products in a ‘chaff’ based ministry. The Lord will help you in Jesus’ Name.

The Lord then went ahead to say that His Word is like hammer that breaks the rocks. There are rocky situations and stony hearts that only the Word that proceeds from God can handle. The Word comes through the voice of the Rock of ages and so other rocks have to obey. There are oppressions and oppressors that can only be handled by the hammer of God’s Word. The voice behind the word is what makes it a hammer and a rock breaker. It is not a matter of how loud it is spoken, but is all about the mandate and voice behind the voice of the minister. May your ministry be a rock breaking ministry instead of a rock creating ministry. One of the disadvantages of ministering chaff to people is that it ends up hardening their hearts against the Word and purpose of God. The Lord will make His Word through your mouth to work like a hammer to the glory of the Lord.

An Example from Prophet Micaiah

The record of the death of king Ahab of Israel is found in the Book of 1 Kings Chapter 22. It took place when there was an uninterrupted peace in the land of Israel for a space of three years. The king of Judah, by name Jehoshaphat decided to visit King Ahab. During this visit, the king of Israel suggested of the need for the two of them to go to battle and repossess Ramothgilead from the dominion of the Syrians. At the consent of the king of Judah, they then called on the prophets in the land to tell them the mind of God over the battle. Now we will use few verses of that chapter to discuss about how Micaiah’s faithful prophecy prevailed over the prophecies of the four hundred prophets that prophesied before him. We will therefore, show the importance of faithfulness to the Word of God, no matter the prevailing situation.

Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men, and said unto them, Shall I go against Ramothgilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And they said, Go up; for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king. And Jehoshaphat said, Is there

not here a prophet of the LORD besides, that we might enquire of him? And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, There is yet one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may enquire of the LORD: but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil. And Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so. Then the king of Israel called an officer, and said, Hasten hither Micaiah the son of Imlah. And the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah sat each on his throne, having put on their robes, in a void place in the entrance of the gate of Samaria; and all the prophets prophesied before them. And Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah made him horns of iron: and he said, Thus saith the LORD, With these shalt thou push the Syrians, until thou have consumed them.

And the messenger that was gone to call Micaiah spake unto him, saying, Behold now, the words of the prophets declare good unto the king with one mouth: let thy word, I pray thee, be like the word of one of them, and speak that which is good. And Micaiah said, As the LORD liveth, what the LORD saith unto me, that will I speak.

And he said, I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd: and the LORD said, These have no master: let them return every man to his house in peace. And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, Did I not tell thee that he would prophesy no good concerning me, but evil?

And the king of Israel said, Take Micaiah, and carry him back unto Amon the governor of the city, and to Joash the king's son; And say, Thus saith the king, Put this fellow in the prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and with water of affliction, until I come in peace. And Micaiah said, If thou return at all in peace, the LORD hath not spoken by me. And he said, Hearken, O people, every one of you. (1 Kings 22:6-11, 13, 14, 17, 18, 26-28) KJV

All the prophets in their large number were called together and when they gathered they began to prophesy victory to the kings. God knew what the kings wanted to hear and so He allowed the prophets to prophesy in that way. However, at the request of the king of Judah, Micaiah was contacted and brought before the kings. He was also informed by the officer who was sent to fetch him that all the other prophets have unanimously prophesied victory for the king of Israel. He therefore, advised him to speak in agreement with those prophets. In response to the advice of the officer, he clearly stated that he'll only declare what the Lord tells him to say. It was a test of his faithfulness to the voice of God and divine revelation.

Compromise is the enemy of fulfilment of divine mandate and accomplishment. The difference between Micaiah and the other prophets was in the faithfulness he exhibited. While the other prophets were merely prophesying the wish and desire of the king of Israel, Micaiah decided to be faithful to the voice of God's intention. He decided to face the contention that would result from his faithfulness than to compromise God's Word. He was prepared to face about four hundred men just in order to cause the counsel of God to prevail.

When he was sent for, the kings of Israel and Judah were sitting on their kingly seats with their kingly robes of honour. Can you imagine that the prophets were prophesying what could not move them into making any effort for the victory to be achieved? They were enjoying the prophesying of those prophets to the point that they were not moved to see the wickedness that was going on through the king of Israel. Can you see what compromise and loss of faithfulness to the Word of God could cause? Even when they needed to have cried unto God for their condition, they were busy enjoying themselves. The prophecies of the prophets turned out to be an occasion for enjoyment and no longer an occasion for seeking the face of God in order to gain wisdom and understanding over the situation on ground. They were prophecies unto relaxation and carelessness over their spiritual condition as they felt very comfortable.

What is your state in this matter? Are you not a minister that could no longer move men to the place of righteousness and restoration in terms of their relationship with God? I hope you are not an agent of mere enjoyment and ease among even wicked people who come to church. Where is the indication of the fact that what you are carrying about is a sword, a hammer and fire? Is any one of these things always friendly to man especially if it is being used on him? Why the penetrating nature of the Word could be lost in your ministry could be because it may no longer be sharply directed on your congregation. Where is the pricking power of the Word through your mouth against sinners as it happened in the days of Peter and the other apostles (Acts 2:37, 38)? Why is it that your messages no longer leave a vacuum of question mark that could drive your audience to the place of serious prayer and personal search before the Lord? Are you not a preacher of enjoyment and easiness in the Church of Jesus? Remember the prophets in the day of Micaiah.

One of those prophets, by name Zedekiah made for himself horns of iron saying that by them the king of Israel would drive away the Syrians until total victory is achieved. The construction of those horns was figurative of the power of dominion and victory over the Syrians; but the horns could not bring any victory because the prophecies were prophecies of emptiness and of things of nought. The result of the prophecies was zero and no change. No matter their number, they were only prophesying nothingness and chaff. Their number notwithstanding, Micaiah's word far outweighed their words put together. No matter how nothingness is carried

about by so many people, the resultant effect of it on the divine scale is nothingness. The result of zero added to thousands of zeros is nothing but zero. So there are zero ministries as far as heaven is concerned.

After Micaiah prophesied the mind of God, which was supposed to serve as a warning to Ahab, he (Ahab) and Zedekiah took it too personal and decided to confront Micaiah. Zedekiah struck him with the iron horn, while Ahab accused him of always prophesying evil against him. Ahab was reacting as if Micaiah was just speaking concerning him without hearing from God. He was listening to him relating the mind of God to the people as if he was only facing him. Have you gone to a programme where the man of God speaking the mind of God speaks as if you're the only one he's speaking to, even though he's not physically aware of your state? That is the Word of God. It is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart (Hebrews 4:12). When a man speaks the mind of God, his voice is backed up with the discerning voice of the Omniscient God.

No matter what you are passing through in terms of hardship, rejection, persecution and rejection as a result of your faithfulness to the Word of God, don't give up because you will definitely prevail if you do not derail. Let Micaiah be an encouragement for you. Don't ignore or disappoint the powerful voice behind your voice.

Although the king gave an instruction for Micaiah to be fed with the bread and water of affliction and that Micaiah should be kept in custody until he returned in peace, it could not stop God's Word through him (Micaiah) from coming to pass. Although the king decided to put the man of God under affliction, the Word that he spoke was never under affliction; instead it came to pass.

Stealing the word...

Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, saith the LORD, that steal my words every one from his neighbour. (Jeremiah 23:30) KJV

For this cause I am against the prophets, says the Lord, who take my words, every one from his neighbour. (BBE)

The Lord also spoke through Jeremiah to warn those prophets that were going about stealing the Word of God. They were going about speaking things from their hearts and then attributing it to God. They may even read it from the divine oracles and then carry it about as if He had spoken those things that they've read. Some of them were going about saying what they heard from others as if they heard it directly from the Lord. They were speaking with authority and audacity, but without authenticity. They were fake dischargers of divine counsel going about with

ordinary empty voices. They were thieves that were not stealing properties, but the Word of God. They were speaking here and there and some of them were imitating others, but with empty voices that lacked effectiveness. They were engaged in stolen words and so they were spiritual criminals.

What is the state of your ministry in this perspective? Is it not a stolen ministry from one servant of God or colleague in ministry? Are you not engaged in stolen prophecies and teachings which you got from someone somewhere because you see how it is working well for him? You are a thief. You are a spiritual criminal that is going about with something that lacks authority and originality. When you're speaking it is the voice of a thief you're using to speak. Although the voice of your mouth may appear genuine and innocent, the truth of the matter is that your voice in the spirit is the voice of a thief. People may be listening to you, while heaven is saying that you don't deserve to be listened to because you lack originality. Can you settle down and go for originality with God? This one that you are going about only looking for people's secrets, when will someone else be looking for yours? You are a secret thief if you have no secret that directly originates from God. Even if a man tells you his secret with God, it cannot become yours until you work it out with Him. To him what he's doing may be in order and approved by God, but to you, you may be operating as a spiritual thief. May the Lord grant you a secret with Him so that your voice will not become the voice of a thief!

CHAPTER 10 VOICE VERSUS VOICE

In this chapter, we will be observing the issues surrounding the release of two conflicting voices. There are voices that have capacity of nullifying the effect of other voices. This depends on the sources from where these voices happen to come. The capacity of a voice depends on the capacity of its source. When a man in authority speaks, his voice is more effective and authoritative than that of a man speaking without authority. So the authority of a voice can normally be traced back to its source. It is not a matter of the loudness of the voice, but it is a matter of the capacity of the source. So if voices happen to be in conflict, the one coming from a higher authority will suppress and subdue the effect of the one coming from a lower authority. Let us consider certain instances from the Scripture to buttress this fact.

David and Goliath at the Battlefield

The report about the victory of David over Goliath in one of the wars of the Israelites with the Philistines is found in the Book of 1 Samuel Chapter 17. We will consider few verses for the purpose of our discussion. You can read the entire chapter to have the full details of this familiar scriptural incident.

And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span. And he stood and cried unto the armies of Israel, and said unto them, Why are ye come out to set your battle in array? am not I a Philistine, and ye servants to Saul? choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me. If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants: but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us. And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together. When Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid.
(1 Samuel 17:4, 8-11) KJV

This giant champion of the Philistines, by name Goliath, was a native of Gath. Gath was one of the major cities of the Philistines. It was also one of the places where one of the principal gods of the Philistines was located. So he was not only coming up as a giant champion as a result of his natural experience in warfare, but he also came with the support or backing of the principal deity of Gath. That was why he was cursing David (as we shall soon consider) by his gods.

Goliath made a mistake of thinking that the Israelites were just the servants of Saul. It was partially correct; but in the real sense Saul was there to represent

God and His interest. God was the real Master of those soldiers and so whatever was going on against them was indirectly pointing to Him. Saul was there, but he was not a voice for the Almighty God. God wanted to bring victory, but He needed a voice that would counteract that of Goliath.

The challenge was so clear and intimidating to the Israelites that they were running away to hide themselves from Goliath. The Israelites were thrown into dismay, while their God was still on the throne. No matter the gravity of what throws a man off balance, it cannot throw God out of His throne. No man was bold enough to fight with this giant for a period of forty days. Why did the battle linger for that long? It was because there was no voice to speak for God and in His Name. However, hope came at last for the Israelites.

And David was the youngest: and the three eldest followed Saul. (1Sa 17:14) KJV

The state of David in terms of his age is very clear that he was the youngest among his brothers. He was the youngest, but he was going with the Ancient of days. His age did not reduce God's intention through his life. He was young in the physical, but there was something inside him that did not respect his age. He was going to do what age could not achieve because there was an ageless God with him. When the people and the king himself were considering his age, he was considering his stand with the ageless God. There was a heavier voice on his inside and so the effect of his natural voice was just to convey the heavier one from behind the scene. He was just there to cause the unseen God to bring the unseen victory into the physical realm. So it is not a matter of your age. You can be the youngest and still do what age cannot do.

And the Philistine drew near morning and evening, and presented himself forty days. (1 Samuel 17:16) KJV

As long as there was no challenger, Goliath was coming near to the Israelites for forty days. Oppression and reproach will continue to draw near to a man as long as he's not prepared to challenge it. Challenges will continue to stand and challenge a man until he begins to rise up as a challenger to that challenge.

Goliath was coming nearer to the Israelites to present himself to them both in the morning and in the evening. You can imagine how the people would wake up in the morning which is the beginning and apex of their strength; all on a sudden to see a man frustrating their strength and hope for that day. After they've passed through the issues of the night, the next thing was for the joy of their morning to be frustrated. The Book of Psalm 30:5 says ***“For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning”***. So after having passed through the night, another dawn would become a

dawn of being downcast and frustrated for them. Your weeping will end in the night, in the Name of Jesus. Your night of dejection and frustration will not be unnecessarily extended, to the glory of the Lord and to the shame of the devil. You will not be mourning in your morning!

He was also coming nearer in the evening. He was coming at the time when the Israelites were preparing for their rest. Even when they were to forget the hurdles of the day and to rest, Goliath will come and leave them with a painful memory all through the night. So the Israelites were robbed of the good opportunities of these two strategic periods of the day. Goliath was coming to intimidate both at the beginning and the ending of the day. The devil is not the beginning and the ending of your days on the surface of the earth. Arise to his challenge and he will flee.

And as he talked with them, behold, there came up the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, out of the armies of the Philistines, and spake according to the same words: and David heard them. And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him, and were sore afraid. And the men of Israel said, Have ye seen this man that is come up? surely to defy Israel is he come up: and it shall be, that the man who killeth him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father's house free in Israel. (1 Samuel 17:22-25) KJV

When David came to the camp he began to talk to the people around and they were relating to him what would be done to the man that would eventually kill Goliath. While the other Israelite soldiers were speaking of what Goliath was coming to do, David was busy talking about what God was about to do. His mentality was in line with God's purpose and mentality and so he became a voice for Him.

Goliath came up several days in the same way and with the same words. No matter the intensity of his voice on each of the days, he was not speaking any other thing in each of the days; rather, he was repeating the same things he was saying. This is the truth about the devil. No matter what he's doing and saying to you, he's nothing apart from the same Old Serpent. No matter how he'd try to manipulate your life by words or actions, his words and actions are nothing, but a repetition of his old methods and words. He may be saying so many things, but the summary and conclusion of everything he says is the same thing that he had been ever saying. Where he wants you to end up is the same thing with what he started in the Garden of Eden. The way he handled the temptation of Jesus is the summary and bedrock

of all the many things he may be saying to you. You are only expected to be sensitive in order to discern his voice and intentions.

Thank God that David heard Goliath on that day. David was not an ordinary hearer, but he was a challenging hearer. While others were hearing Goliath and running away and even propagating what he was out to do, David heard him and decided to take the challenge. He was not ready to hear and begin to cry the cry of defeat; rather, he heard it to take the battle to the enemies' camp. To God be the glory!

David's hearing of Goliath's challenging voice became the platform for God's voice to show forth through him. That is to say that David's hearing of the matter became God's time of action. What kind of hearer are you? Are you a common and unchallenging hearer or you are a challenging and different hearer? There are ears that hear things and leave them as they are, while there are ears that cause heaven to be provoked into action. When David was provoked, God became provoked into action. The authority and power of God was invoked when David was provoked. There are those whose provocations terminate in divine invocation and provocation. When heaven is silent, it is because there is no one on earth that is adequately provoked to provoke God's ability and capacity. May you become a heaven invoking and provoking entity!

Now, Facing the Challenge Headlong...

And the Philistine came on and drew near unto David; and the man that bare the shield went before him. And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him: for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance. And the Philistine said unto David, Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. And the Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field. Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the LORD'S, and he will give you into our hands. And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hasted, and ran

toward the army to meet the Philistine. And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth. So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but there was no sword in the hand of David. (1 Samuel 17:41-50) KJV

When David decided to challenge Goliath, he decided to get closer to him (David). When he saw the boldness of David among the Israelites, he decided to face him personally. His attention was no longer on the entire Israelites, but on only that small boy, David. So he saw in David what he could not see in the other Israelite soldiers. When the devil sees something different about you, he will face you specially and specifically. I don't know the challenge over your life as at now. I don't know that special and peculiar issue against your life. The good news to you is that it may be because there is a challenge that the enemy sees in you. Look inward, face him headlong, and the matter will have no option than to bow.

At the appearance of David Goliath decided to disdain him because he saw him as a youth. He looked down upon him because of his youthful age. He did not know that the boy he disdained was ordained to gain victory in that battle. No matter the disdain of the enemy his place of ordination with God was never affected in any way. Although he was disdained what was contained in him was able to curtail all that Goliath came to unleash against him. What David contained drew the curtain to that battle on the side of God and His covenant people, Israel. Goliath was too conscious of David's countenance, but was unaware of his content. Content supersedes countenance. Your countenance is not the real indicator of your content. The enemy is not afraid of your countenance, but he is afraid of your content. Don't be contented with your countenance and appearance, but work on your content. Work done on your content is work indeed. It is a higher content that can curtail the effect of the lower one. The battle of light and darkness is not a battle of countenance, but a battle of content. There is no voice in your countenance, but there is a voice in your content. The devil may not fight against your countenance, but he would fight against your content. He's not afraid of your countenance, but he's afraid of your content. Countenance does not end contention, but contents end it. You can borrow or steal countenance, but you cannot do the same with content; you can only fake it. May your content draw the curtain over a contention around you and your generation!

As stated earlier, Goliath cursed David by his gods. It is clear from here that Goliath must have been a diabolic fighter that had become a champion in so many battles through diabolic means as he was empowered by his gods. Little did he

know that the boy he was cursing had a bigger voice behind him that nullifies curses! He did not know that David was so blessed that even men like Balaam could identify him as one who cannot be cursed. He was so serious about David that he had to engage his gods, not knowing that he was carrying the God of gods and Lord of lords.

The war which brought about the end of that battle was the war of words. When Goliath was talking, David was also talking in response. When men were hearing the voice of Goliath, they were also hearing the voice of David. It was a time of voice against voice and as said earlier the lesser voice will definitely bow. David was talking with the tiny voice of a small boy to counter the big voice of Goliath; but that his so-called small or tiny voice was an embodiment of God's biggest voice. When the gods of the Philistines were invoked by Goliath's provocation, the great God of heaven who is the Creator of the universe was invoked through David's provocation. So it was also a moment of invocation versus invocation. Now, when the two voices of challenge collided, the physical result of the defeat of Goliath was a proof for the kind of God and voice that David went with. When David ended speaking, he ran towards Goliath who was also coming towards him. He faced him headlong and got him and cut off his head. If you don't face your challenge you'll be phased out. Face it before it phases you out! For more on this, read my book entitled "**Arise for a Change**".

Elijah and the Prophets of Baal

The account of the contest of Prophet Elijah against the prophets of Baal is recorded in the Book of 1 Kings Chapter 18. We will also consider some verses from that account.

Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table. So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together unto mount Carmel. And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word. Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under: and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under: And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD:

and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken. (1 Kings 18:19-24) KJV

Before the end of the three year drought that was prophesied by Prophet Elijah, he decided to show himself to King Ahab. When he saw him, Ahab began to accuse him as the troubler of Israel. His voice was so distinct that Ahab knew him as the problem of the land. But in the real sense Elijah was not the problem of the land; but he was the problem of the problem of the land. It is one thing to cause problem and it is another thing to become the problem of the negative issues on ground. Elijah was not out to dethrone Ahab, but he was out to cause righteousness to reign in the land. He was only the problem of the wickedness of the land. You cannot be a solution carrier if you are not the problem of the existing problem. May you not exist as if you do not exist!

Elijah was bold enough to confront King Ahab. He told him to bring together the prophets of Baal. He was not afraid of their number, but was ready to face them with the reality of the Almighty God. If you are not bold over your situation, you will remain in the cold; but with boldness you'll dispel the cold and come out as gold. You have no real thing to hold when you are in the cold; but with boldness and faith in God heaven will see you as a man to uphold.

When he gave them the instruction, he made them to be the first people to call on their God. Since majority of them believed in Baal, they were allowed to take the first place in the contest. God does not care whether the devil had gone ahead of Him or not. The truth of the matter is that when He takes off, no speed can stand His speed. The matter was about who was the real God of the land. Elijah was going to prove that with God, majority does not really carry the vote; but that one with God is the majority.

And Elijah said unto the prophets of Baal, Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress it first; for ye are many; and call on the name of your gods, but put no fire under. And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped upon the altar which was made. And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked. And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them. And it came to pass, when midday was past, and they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening

sacrifice, that there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded. (1 Kings 18:25-39) KJV

The prophets of Baal then chose their bullock and sacrificed it to their gods, but they put no fire on it as instructed by Elijah. They shouted and called on the name of Baal for a very long time as they were leaping and cutting themselves with various implements. They forgot that their contest with Elijah was the contest of the Almighty God and the gods of the land. How could Baal raise any voice in the presence of the Almighty God? Even if Baal had a way of speaking, on that day, there was a greater God that would never permit him to speak. The Almighty God can decide to render all the gods of the land as deaf and dumb.... No matter how the prophets of Baal raised their voices to cry to the gods, their voices had no tangible and weighty voice behind their voices. They were just wasting their time and energy shouting with empty voices.

Elijah then began to mock at them in the process of their cry unto Baal. I don't know whether you imagine the implication of what Elijah was doing. Elijah was so confident in his God that even before he got into his sacrifice he was able to mock the prophets of Baal. He was not mocking them after he had seen the fire of God coming from heaven to consume his sacrifice, but he was so confident in Him that He won't fail him. One would have thought that Elijah would have been busy pleading with God and doing so many spiritual activities to that effect in order to gain victory by receiving an answer to his prayer; but it was not so. It was rather, the moment of displaying his spiritual authority that he had acquired in the secret place before the Lord. It is possible that before he came out to speak to Ahab in this way, he had prayed and received permission from the Lord.... He was going to convey God's approval to the people.

The Bible says that no voice was heard and no one responded to the cry of the prophets of Baal. Baal became voiceless and forceless. If it could not speak, how could it send fire? After all these had been done, Elijah decided to take over from them at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice.

Altar versus Altar

The prophets of Baal did their sacrifice on the altar of Baal before they started shouting to call on the name of their gods. In a similar manner, Elijah also built an altar before he prayed unto the Lord.

And Elijah said unto all the people, Come near unto me. And all the people came near unto him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD that was broken down. And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word

of the LORD came, saying, Israel shall be thy name: And with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD: and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed. And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid him on the wood, and said, Fill four barrels with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice, and on the wood. And he said, Do it the second time. And they did it the second time. And he said, Do it the third time. And they did it the third time. And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water. And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again. Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. (1 Kings 18:30-38) KJV

In his sacrifice, Elijah told the people to get nearer to him. When they went nearer, he repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken. Can you see what the leadership of Ahab had caused in the land? Elijah did not engage himself in that sacrifice anyhow; but he decided to follow divine protocols. He did not decide to build a new altar, thereby providing a new platform for sacrifice to the Lord; but he only had to repair what was broken and abandoned. Since this altar was broken, the relationship of the people with God was also broken. He decided to stand in for God as a reformer, revivalist, restorer and revolutionist.

He did not build the altar outside the laid down principles of the covenant. His commitment to divine pattern and procedure is worthy of emulation. He was not prepared to bring in new methods and ideologies in sacrificing to God, but he went back to the basics of relating with God. After he fulfilled this part, the Lord decided to honour him.

Do you observe the time that he did his sacrifice? It was at the time of the evening sacrifice. He was very meticulous and strategic about divine timing and instructions. The Israelite priests had strategic times that they used to engage in sacrifice as ordained by God. So Elijah was not going to exempt himself from that rule and compel God to honour him. This is very crucial. You cannot map out your own human strategies and timing and compel God to endorse it and follow you. His voice will only accompany those that follow His divine pattern.

After he had done all that needed to be done, he offered a brief, but powerful prayer. Based on the record of the Bible as shown above, the prayer was not offered for more than two or three minutes. He didn't have to scream and cry for too long before fire came. He had a secret and that secret is his place in the secret place of the Most High. He was a fervent man in the place of prayer. So after screaming in the place of prayer, nothing could screen him away from the presence and glory of God. When he left his place of prayer, he was leaving with the voice of the Almighty being conveyed by his voice.

The contest was actually an altar versus altar affair. The prophets of Baal were calling on their gods from their altar. In a similar manner, Prophet Elijah was also calling on the Lord from his altar. So it was left for the deity that was involved in the altar to prove his personality and authenticity. You cannot convey the voice of the supernatural without an altar. Then where is your altar? Where is your altar of prayer, devotion and sacrifice? Are you not there thinking that the enemy will honour you without an unbroken and viable altar? If the worshippers of the devil could go a long way to do a lot of sacrifice and commitment to their gods, how then do you think that you can counter what is coming from their altars without having a functional consistent altar? Where is your altar of worship and unalloyed fellowship with the Almighty God? It is from this altar that you can convey the voice of the Lord through your voice. The Lord that answered Elijah by fire will answer you, provided you don't joke with your altar.

If I be a man of God...

Before we move away from Elijah, let's consider his encounter with the three captains of fifty that the king of Israel sent to him.

Then the king sent unto him a captain of fifty with his fifty. And he went up to him: and, behold, he sat on the top of an hill. And he spake unto him, Thou man of God, the king hath said, Come down. And Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty. Again also he sent unto him another captain of fifty with his fifty. And he answered and said unto him, O man of God, thus hath the king said, Come down quickly. And Elijah answered and said unto them, If I be a man of God, let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And the fire of God came down from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty. And he sent again a captain of the third fifty with his fifty. And the third captain of fifty went up, and came and fell on his knees before Elijah, and

besought him, and said unto him, O man of God, I pray thee, let my life, and the life of these fifty thy servants, be precious in thy sight. Behold, there came fire down from heaven, and burnt up the two captains of the former fifties with their fifties: therefore let my life now be precious in thy sight. And the angel of the LORD said unto Elijah, Go down with him: be not afraid of him. And he arose, and went down with him unto the king. (2 Kings 1:9-15) KJV

The captain of fifty asked him to come down from the hill where he was sitting. Who knows what Elijah was doing at that time when the king sent to bring him down? However, my prayer is that whatever is sent from the kingdom of darkness to bring you down from your mountain of communion and consecration will not succeed in the Name of Jesus. The captain of fifty came to Elijah with the word and authority of the king to bring down a carrier and conveyor of the voice of God. When he was acknowledged as a man of God, he responded by saying that if he's a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume the captain and his fifty followers. It happened as he said. To counter the voice of the king brought about by the captain of the fifty, he called for a sign and it came to pass. It was a matter of the carrier of the message of a king and a carrier of divine presence and voice. When God decides to silence a voice by His voice, He brings a sign into manifestation.

All the three captains of fifty saw the sign of a man of God in the life of Elijah. The first two captains died along with their companies. When the third captain came to him, he had no option than to bow and plead with him. No man going with the voice of God lives without a sign. To be without a sign is to be incapacitated in your assignment. The Lord will grant you a sign such that when you speak the Lord will back it up for people to believe and honour you.

Jesus and the Demon-possessed man at Gadara

***And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit,
But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him, And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not. For he said unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit. And he asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion: for we are many. And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country. Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding. And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us***

into the swine, that we may enter into them. And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand;) and were choked in the sea. And they that fed the swine fled, and told it in the city, and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that was done. (Mark 5:2, 6-14) KJV

On seeing Jesus from afar, the demoniac ran and worshipped Him. The demon seeing the personality and authority in Jesus ran and worshipped Him. In the process of that worship he pleaded with Him (although it was the demon speaking through the man) so that He would not send them away out of the country. Jesus then asked the demon about its name. In response, it said that its name is legion. This was because many demons were located in that man. The demons though in their thousands could not withstand the person and voice of Jesus. When Jesus commanded them to go out of that man, their number notwithstanding, they had to obey the higher voice from the higher man. When Jesus spoke, they heard Him as the man with the ultimate voice and ultimate power that they could not withstand. As he spoke to the demons, His voice was too authoritative that they could not even wait for a while, but to leave that man and enter into pigs.

This was a man that could not be tamed and as such, made his residence among tombs. The violence of his voice was so much that people were avoiding wherever he was; but when the Lord Jesus came, His appearance and voice subdued the violence and terrible voice of the demons, may the Lord grant you a voice like that of the Master!

Jesus and the Woman Caught in the act of Adultery

And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?

So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man

condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more. (John 8:3-5, 7-11)
KJV

When the scribes and Pharisees brought a woman that was caught in the act of adultery, they brought her to Jesus to tempt Him by using the Law of Moses. On being asked about His opinion over the woman's condition, He asked them to stone her if they were without any sin in their lives. Knowing that none of them was free from sin, each of them began to go, being accused by their individual consciences. They were accusers that were under the accusation of their consciences.

How do you handle other people's matters? It is very important to handle them with the standard of the Word of God, but you need to also handle them with love and carefulness; otherwise you will become guilty yourself. It is easy to accuse others and forget the voice of accusation that your conscience is trying to raise against you. Are you not an accuser that is under accusation? Why have you suddenly become 'righteous' over another man's faults and ignore the heavier issue that is around your life? You are nothing better than a hypocrite. You are busy voicing out condemnation against another man while there is an accusation going on within you, but you only decide to ignore it. You are not serious with yourself.

On hearing what Jesus said, each of the people left, beginning from the eldest to the last of them. Can you see the order of departure of those scribes and Pharisees? It was not from the youngest to the oldest. It looked as if the offenses of the eldest among them appeared to be more conspicuous and quickly noticed than the youngest. The eldest that were to give more concrete and final judgement over the woman were the ones that saw the need to leave the presence of Jesus earlier before the younger ones. Those of them that were to give directives to the younger ones over the judgement of the woman were the ones that were highly wanting as far as sin was concerned. Those that would have taken the highest seats in the judgement of this woman were the ones that were mostly lacking in matters of righteousness and holiness. Can you pause here and check yourself in the light of this? It is an error for you to be an accuser that is under the accusation of your conscience.

In reality, when the Master comes into your life, He will cause you to know more about your deficiencies than those of others. He will make you to be more concerned about your imperfections and inadequacies more than the way you see others. He will also make you to see yourself as deficient and inadequate in judging others. When He comes, He will make you to see yourself more than ever before. Why you are too busy and too mindful about other people's matters is because the Master had not voiced out the matters that have to do with your righteousness and holiness. If you begin to see more of others' sins and faults, it is an indication that

you are far away from the Master. You can't be very close to Him and not be more conscious of your spiritual condition than that of others. The Lord will help you in Jesus' Name.

After the scribes and Pharisees left, Jesus looked up and asked the woman about her accusers. No voice of accusation can stand the presence of Jesus. When you get to the presence of Jesus, one of the first things He will do for you is to silence the voice of accusation over your life. Just like He silenced the voices of accusation that stood against this woman, He will also stand up for your sake. After all the accusers have gone, the woman was delivered from condemnation. He told her that He did not also condemn her. There and then she was forgiven and was instructed to sin no more. His voice of forgiveness cancelled the effect of the voices of accusation of the scribes and Pharisees. It was a time of the voice of forgiveness nullifying the voice of accusation in the favour of this woman.

The woman left the presence of Jesus forgiven and justified. Imagine those who would have seen her immediately after she was forgiven. They would make the mistake of still seeing her in the light of her past. May you not be such a one! You may be harming yourself since you may not know how God had helped the person before that time. There are people that never change their opinions concerning others, no matter what happens. They always see them based on what they knew about them in the past or at a point. If you are such a one, you should know that you may be making a mistake since you may not know the dealings of God over such ones over time. You may be speaking against the voice that is currently speaking on their behalf and thus, be found in enmity with God. Thank God for the voice of Jesus that subdued the voices of all of the woman's accusers. May the Lord help you to have a right perspective concerning others! May you not be found as a victim of speaking what God is not speaking over others!

CHAPTER 11 WHEN A VOICE COMES

As already noted, there are things that do accompany the release of a voice. From whichever source it comes, there are normally blessings or consequences that they may attract. We will look into few passages in the Scripture to consider how certain voices brought about certain things, either positively or negatively on the part of the targets.

Jesus Curses a Fig Tree

The account of how Jesus cursed a fig tree is found in the Book of Mark Chapter 11. Let us consider the story according to that record.

And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry: And seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, he came, if haply he might find any thing thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet. And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And his disciples heard it. (Mark 11:12-14) KJV

On that fateful day, the Lord became hungry and saw a fig tree from afar having leaves. However, as He drew nearer to the tree He saw that it had no fruits. The tree appeared to be promising for Him to satisfy His hunger, but there was no fruit to show. That is the state of many people in the Church today. They look promising in the house of God, as they try to attend programmes and some other meetings; but there is no real fruit to show. They are full of leaves of commitment and series of activities, but no fruit to show. They are full of leaves of outward show, but no real fruit of righteousness and spiritual productivity. They have a show of life, but there is nothing to show that they are rooted in the Lord. They are very shallow and full of hypocrisy.

When Jesus found out that there was no fruit on the tree, He cursed it by saying ***“No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever”***. Why did Jesus curse it? It was because it could not meet His need at that moment. Although He did that to also display the power of faith to His disciples, it is also for us to learn some lessons. When the fig tree failed to satisfy the Master at that moment, it became accursed. It shows that that moment was a moment of destiny and definition of the future for that tree. Jesus might have pronounced blessing on it if it yielded fruits for Him to eat; but the opposite was the case. May you not be found wanting at a strategic moment that your destiny could be determined. May you not be found unfruitful and unworthy at the time of divine visitation!

It is clear from this account that why the fig tree did not bear fruit was because the season for bearing fruits had not yet come. So it is naturally right for the tree not to bear fruits. There was something in it that gave it the capacity to bear fruits, but it was waiting for its season. That's okay for the fig tree. However, as children of God, we are expected to be instant both in season and out of season (2 Timothy 4:2). As long as we are alive in the world we should not be looking for seasons of special programmes that may be announced may be nationally or locally. We are rather, expected to be spiritually at alert and seasoned. We are to become agents and activators of certain seasons. We are expected to be ever ready for action and productivity for the Lord.

The major issue I want us to consider here based on the matter we are dealing with is at the beginning of verse 14, which says "*And Jesus answered and said unto it...*" The rendering of the King James Version as shown above says that **Jesus answered....** It looks as if the tree brought about a question before Jesus that He then decided to answer by pronouncing a curse. Let us show this more clearly by using the rendering of the New King James Version.

In response Jesus said to it, "Let no one eat fruit from you ever again." And His disciples heard it. (Mark 11:14) NKJV

From this version, it is clear that what the Old King James Version renders as an answer from Jesus was actually His response to the condition of the fig tree. So we can decide to replace the answer of Jesus as His response to the condition of the tree. The condition of the fig tree attracted that response from the Lord. So the curse that was pronounced upon the tree was nothing, but a response to its condition. Its condition caused it to be cursed. The curse pronounced against it was caused by its condition. It looked innocent, but its condition at the time of the Master's visitation attracted a curse. The question for you to answer by yourself is that "what is the spiritual condition of your life? Can the Lord see a reason to bless and promote you in life and in whatever you find yourself doing?"

After the Master pronounced that curse on the tree, the Bible says:

***And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots.
And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away. (Mark 11:20, 21)
KJV***

Imagine a tree that was very lively and vibrant on a previous day having withered to the very root on the following morning. It was a powerful act of faith.

However, we are concerned here about the fact that the curse of the Master became another voice against its longevity and future fruitfulness. The visitation of Jesus became detrimental to it, instead of becoming an advantage. Right away from the time the curse was pronounced the whole tree began to respond in the direction of the curse. May you not attract a negative voice from the Master, as it happened to this tree! The solution to this is for you to remain fruitful as you abide in the Vine.

A Voice in the Dark...

What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops. (Matthew 10:27)

KJV

The Lord Jesus instructed His disciples to publicize what He spoke to them in darkness and in the secret. So His true disciples were the only ones that had the opportunity of hearing from Him in the secret and in dark places. The rest of the people that were coming around were coming to hear what was to be spoken in the light. So we have two categories of hearers of the word of the Master—those that hear it in the dark and in the secret place and those that only hear it in the open and in the light. This is very critical! While the disciples were to be ministers of the dark and secret sayings that were made available to them from the secret and dark places, the other hearers only had the opportunity of hearing it in the light and in the open places. The disciples were to convey it to the light and to the open. They were the real secret carriers while others were to be benefitting from their secret and hidden labours. The only way the other hearers were to become like them was to pick the challenge and also go to the secret and dark place.

Real carriers and conveyors of the Word of God with the demonstration of His voice are those that hear it in the dark and secret places. When you hear a man in the dark, you may not necessarily see him as he's talking, but your recognition of his voice will determine how serious you handle what he says. So people that hear the Master in the dark are sensitive people. They are not moved by ordinary feelings, but by spiritual perception. People who hear the voice of the Master in the dark and secret place labour in the place of prayer and other forms of commitment unto its manifestation. When they hear it, they labour for it to be shown to them.

Dark sayings of the Master in the secret place could come in the form of parables and in coded forms and so they need to be laboured upon for proper interpretation and decoding. This is where there is real labour on the part of carriers and conveyors of divine oracles.

A hearer who only depends on what he hears in the open and in the light will remain light and will not have any secret with God. Not until you begin to go into the dark and secret place of the Lord, you'll remain in the dark and also remain light

in the spiritual weighing balance. When a word is proclaimed in the open and in the light, it is expected to give light to the hearers as it opens their eyes to certain spiritual issues. However, the hearers are also expected to receive the challenge that will take them to the secret place in order to also convey it to their successive audience.

So we have two categories of hearers in the Church as stated earlier. Firstly, there are hearers who go to where others would not want to go because of the 'darkness' around there; as they don't see the importance of going to such places. In this place, one may not quickly understand why the Master is emphasizing on certain things to him. Things may appear initially dark and difficult to understand in this realm. People around him may not easily understand him, because he is coming from a seemingly dark place. But that is the secret place of the Most High.

The second category is those that hear the word in the open when it is being proclaimed by preaching and explained by teaching. The challenge over this category is that if they only remain in this condition without picking challenge to also get to the secret place, they will end up as shallow rooted Christians.

The voice of God that is behind a man is the one he hears from the preacher beyond the pulpit. It is the word that a minister speaks from the dark and secret place that can dispel darkness from the lives of his listeners. No matter how simple and calm it is spoken it is that word that really conveys the voice of the Master through the voice of the minister. From where do you speak as you stand before your congregation? Have you gone to the dark, secret and lonely place with the Lord? Have you heard Him in the dark and secret place? May the Lord help you!

Solomon and Adonijah

Both Solomon and adonijah were sons of King David. When David became old and stricken in years, Adonijah decided to usurp the kingdom of Israel even while he was still alive. Let us consider this story in the light of the issue we are dealing with in this book. We will pick some verses to highlight certain issues. You are therefore, advised to read the entire account for more clarification.

Then Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, I will be king: and he prepared him chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him. And his father had not displeased him at any time in saying, Why hast thou done so? and he also was a very goodly man; and his mother bare him after Absalom. And he conferred with Joab the son of Zeruiah, and with Abiathar the priest: and they following Adonijah helped him. (1 Kings 1:5-7) KJV

This is a brief account of how Adonijah decided to usurp the place of leadership as king in the land of Israel. He just conceived and decided to carry it out without any approval of the king. However, his father did not speak to counter his action. The fact that his father did not say anything to counter him did not in any way give him his backing. However, some prominent men like Joab, the commander of the entire Israelite army and Abiathar, the high priest of the moment were supportive of his action. They lent their voices to him, but something went wrong. There are voices and there are voices. The voice of a man in authority is a higher voice compared to the voices of those under him, provided he maintains his place in the Lord. Although that strong man, Joab, and that highly placed priest, Abiathar, were with Adonijah, the absence of David's voice in that matter was a great error in his action. Although David was old and had no more strength as in his youthful days, his voice was a strong voice that could not be ignored. Missing his voice was a great loss for Adonijah.

Bathsheba the mother of Solomon then reported the action of Adonijah according to the advice of Prophet Nathan.

And Bathsheba went in unto the king into the chamber: and the king was very old; and Abishag the Shunammite ministered unto the king. And Bathsheba bowed, and did obeisance unto the king. And the king said, What wouldest thou? And she said unto him, My lord, thou swarest by the LORD thy God unto thine handmaid, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne. And now, behold, Adonijah reigneth; and now, my lord the king, thou knowest it not: And he hath slain oxen and fat cattle and sheep in abundance, and hath called all the sons of the king, and Abiathar the priest, and Joab the captain of the host: but Solomon thy servant hath he not called. And thou, my lord, O king, the eyes of all Israel are upon thee, that thou shouldest tell them who shall sit on the throne of my lord the king after him. Otherwise it shall come to pass, when my lord the king shall sleep with his fathers, that I and my son Solomon shall be counted offenders. (1 Kings 1:15-21) KJV

Can you imagine the sacrifice of Adonijah on that day? It was huge and awesome. However, he was sacrificing without a voice of approval from his father. A voice of rejection was going behind him, while he was busy doing a lot of sacrifice. He was able to go with many people into the place of sacrifice and ordination as king, but without his father's voice of approval.

David had already pronounced Solomon as the next king of Israel based on God's instruction. He had already concluded about the nature of Solomon's reign as revealed to him, but Adonijah decided to push himself into it without even consulting his father. This is how God spoke to him about this reign of Solomon:

And David said to Solomon, My son, as for me, it was in my mind to build an house unto the name of the LORD my God: But the word of the LORD came to me, saying, Thou hast shed blood abundantly, and hast made great wars: thou shalt not build an house unto my name, because thou hast shed much blood upon the earth in my sight. Behold, a son shall be born to thee, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about: for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days. (1 Chronicles 22:7-9)

So the name of Solomon was even mentioned to David in that revelation. Although Solomon was younger than Adonijah there was a voice of promise over his life concerning his leadership of Israel as king. The fact that the promise had not been activated did not rule out the fact that he'd one day become the king of Israel. It looked like Adonijah ignored that voice of promise and thought that his fastness could work it out for him; but lo and behold, he fell into a deep pit with a bitter and painful experience which he could never recover from. Although he rushed into the office, he did not have what it takes to keep him there. Although he rushed ahead of Solomon, he could not be the head over him. The voice behind Solomon took him from behind to overtake him (Adonijah). So the voice that is behind a man takes him from behind to move ahead of his contemporaries. In other words, the voice behind a man will cause him to overtake others from behind. May the right voice go before you! Look at how it finally went on that day:

And all the guests that were with Adonijah were afraid, and rose up, and went every man his way. And Adonijah feared because of Solomon, and arose, and went, and caught hold on the horns of the altar. (1 Kings 1:49, 50) KJV

All the guests of Adonijah left him. All those that were hailing him automatically left him when they discovered that he could not keep and protect himself. No matter how he relied on them, they had no capacity of keeping him on that seat. Their many voices put together could not withstand the voice of God that spoke for Solomon through David. So don't take any action that has to do with the matters of the Kingdom of God because many people, including prominent ones are

with you. When God arises against you, none of them will be able to stand and help you out. They will leave without permission and apology from you, when they discover your failure and inadequacy.

There are even some people that can leave you during your trial periods, even when God is involved in what you do. When they don't see what they expect on their own timing, they will leave with accusation and without permission. The Lord will help you and your ministry as He grants and activates His voice on your behalf.

Adonijah had no option than to surrender to Solomon. He went in through the back door and so he had to go in for it. Solomon went through the main door and was properly ordained in the right way. While Adonijah had to provide everything for himself, Solomon's provision came from his father as directed by God. Where God's voice is will not lack His provision. His voice is straight before Him as His vision and so it will not lack His provision. For more on this, read my book entitled "**Awake unto Responsibility**".

Don't Cover Sin

He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy. (Proverbs 28:13) KJV

There is a clear voice behind a man that has the problem of a hidden sin. The pronouncement of God over this is indisputable. No measure of anointing can deliver him from this problem. The Lord says that such a one shall not prosper. No matter his efforts in life and ministry, there is a voice standing against his prosperity in life and ministry. Others will be coming and overtaking him even with less labour, because there is a voice speaking against his life and ministry. Prayer and fasting without the necessary confession and repentance cannot solve this problem. It is a divine order that no man can reverse.

Any sin that is covered or concealed will end up wasting or messing up what had been divinely conceived in the life of a man. God's seal over a man would be unsealed where sin is concealed. The secret of sin is in secrecy. If you don't treat sin properly, it will take you to an improper place in life and destiny. The only remedy is to confess it and expose it appropriately, for the Lord to show mercy. When sin is covered it gains strength because it likes and thrives in darkness. As long as it is covered it will be comfortable to remain along with its consequences. On the long run, it will rise up to shield a man out of God's purpose for his life. That shall not be your portion in Jesus' Name.

FINAL WORD

There is a voice speaking over your life. There is something going on in the realm of the spirit concerning you. You may or may not be aware. However, the truth of the matter is that something is going on either for your good or for evil against your life. This saying concerning you is waiting for its time of manifestation. There are several good things that are ahead of you, but my prayer for you is that you won't be ignorant about it. There are issues that could not manifest at their ordained divine timing if the one(s) concerned is/are either not aware of or does/do not take action over them. The Israelites were expected to be in the land of Egypt for four hundred years, based on what God promised to Abraham (Genesis 15:13), but it was extended for another thirty years, making it a total of four hundred and thirty years (Exodus 12:40). The fulfilment of the word that was voiced out to him had to delay because the instrument to carry out that assignment needed to be adequately prepared. The difference between where you are now and where you are supposed to get to in life is in your preparedness towards the accomplishment of what had been written and said about you. It is the realisation of this that is a journey to real divinely ordained destiny. The real divinely expected realm for every child of God is not the realm of the physical world, but the realm of the spirit, which is accessed by the word that heaven had spoken concerning him. May you not fail God's voice over your life!

The voice behind a man determines the kind of voice he becomes. To be devoid of a voice is to remain void. The kind of voice you become is determined by what the voice behind you is saying about you. You are created by a voice and you are expected to live by the power of the word that you voice out or had been voiced out concerning you. To be voiceless is to be valueless. When you know what had been said about you, you will know what to do and what to avoid. You are not created to do everything that comes your way. There is a specific voice over your life that makes you different, special and specific. Go for that voice and you will not be a maker of ordinary noise. It is ignorance of the word voiced out over a man that would make him to live aimlessly. You can't move forward until your word is activated by being conveyed through a voice. You have no reward in labour beyond the word you realise to work out.

Remember that the voice of God concerning your life is not too far away from you. Your Bible is the conveyor of His voice for you. When you become so close to this wonderful Book, you are automatically close to God's voice for your life and destiny. There are things He had said about you, but you've not been able to access it because the voice behind the particular verse where the matter is located had not been brought to light and activated in your spirit man. There could be wonderful things being said concerning you, but if your spiritual ears and eyes are not open to hear and see, you will end up as if nothing had been said concerning

you. There could be other voices speaking against your life, but if you are able to access and handle the voice of the Master very appropriately, it will paralyse and render every negative voice powerless.

The Lord says in the Book of Proverbs:

My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding;

Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path. When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul; Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee: (Proverbs

2:1, 2, 9-11) KJV

What is the condition of your spiritual ears? Are you a hearing man or you are just there to do things as they occur in your mind, not minding the source from where it is coming? There is wisdom, understanding, knowledge and discretion in the voice of the Almighty. It impacts life and grace to move unto God's desired direction. There is preservation and safety as the voice of His Word comes to a man. Do you want to get to your divinely-ordained destiny in life? Get closer to His written Word. The more conversant and closer you are to that written word, the more closer you are to His voice of revelation. What you hear determines what you dare. Therefore, you need to position yourself such that you can easily hear from Him.

Whatever the Lord has for you in life will be activated in the mighty Name of Jesus. He can use any means to do it for you. He can even cause angels to be on errand for your sake. Look at what He says in the Book of Psalm 103:20:

Bless the LORD, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. (KJV)

He wouldn't mind to engage the marvellous strength of His angels on your behalf. The angels are there to attend to His word. They both hearken and do what He says to them. When He voices out a matter, they listen attentively to it and also engage in the business of performing it. Whatever He had spoken about you that need angelic intervention will receive such intervention, to the glory of God accordingly. That word that is spoken for your good and destiny will not only be hearkened by the angels; but they will go ahead to execute it. That word from His voice will become a commandment for the angels to obey and to be put in motion. You will not miss the voice that is over your life; neither will you miss out in divine purpose and agenda.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Paul Jere is a teacher of the word of God. He teaches in churches, fellowships, conferences, revival programmes and other Christian gatherings. He had authored other books which include: Making Excellent Divine Impact, Available for the Master's Use, Awake Unto Responsibility and Divine Platform For Exaltation. He lives in Idah, Kogi State, where he coordinates a revival programme tagged 'The Hour of Decision'. He is married with children.

OTHER BOOKS WRITTEN BY PAUL JERE

- 1. Pride, a Messenger Of Destruction**
- 2. In His Presence**
- 3. Who Is A Servant Of God**
- 4. Arise For A Change**
- 5. Understanding Divine Strategies**
- 6. Making Excellent Divine Impact**
- 7. Available For The Master's Use**
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