

SPECIAL SUNDAY SERVICE WITH PASTOR (DR) MENSA OTABIL (GENERAL OVERSEER, INTERNATIONAL CENTRAL GOSPEL CHURCH (ICGC) CHRIST TEMPLE, ACCRA GHANA)

TOPIC: MARY'S FAITH

DATE: 17TH DECEMBER 2023

BIBLE TEXT: LUKE 1: 44-45; LUKE 1: 30-37

Let us rise up together as we make our "DECLARATION OF GATHERING" in this "YEAR OF GATHERING".

Are you ready? Say with me:

I Proclaim Jesus Christ as my Lord and Saviour. The Lord is the Shepherd of my Soul, my Shelter by Day, my Light by Night.

In His Name, we Plough our fields, by His Spirit we gather the Harvest, in His Light we seek and find.

In this Year of Gathering, the Lord of the Harvest has commanded: Launch Out into the Deep. At His Words, we cast our Nets, we gather in Souls and Substance for God's Kingdom.

The Lord is our Reward; in this Season I received God's Portion set aside for me: Full Measure, Pressed down, Shaking together and running over.

Nothing is Lost and Nothing is wasted in Jesus Name - Amen!

You know that Christmas is all about Jesus Christ - We say that Jesus Christ is the reason for the Season!

It is about His Birth, His Advent, His Coming into our lives, His Incarnation and everything we Celebrate about Christmas is about Jesus Christ!

And of course, some People will say: Was Jesus Christ born on the 25th of December?

That Question comes up every Christmas from when I was a kid till now.

I don't know why People bothered about this Question because I know that Ghana's first President - Dr. Kwame Nkrumah (DMC NOTES: Dr. Kwame Nkrumah who was originally born Francis Nwia-Kofi Ngonloma (September 21 1909 to April 27 1972) was Ghana first

President and African Political Leader).

He was a Man all Ghanaians really loved and respected; didn't know his Birthday because People didn't keep Calendars then as we do nowadays.

So, as he grows up, he has to choose a Birthday - So, he just decided that 21st September is his Birthday.

And since he choose it, we accepted that was the day he was born and now 21st September is a Public Holiday in Ghana.

Whether it was the day that he was born or not, he choose it.

The thing about 25th December - Whether Jesus Christ was born that day or not is not important - The most important thing is that He was born!

And we just choose one day in the Year and mostly to coincide it with end of the Year to Celebrate the Birth of Jesus Christ!

He was born sometimes in History and we Celebrated it - So, don't get fixated whether it is 25th December or whatever.

But it is also important to recognize the woman that God used to bring Jesus Christ into the world!

If that woman had not cooperated, I don't know - Will Jesus would have been born by Somebody else? I cannot tell.

But God choose a Particular woman - And I believed that she was a devoid and devoted woman who loved the Lord. And through her, Christ came into the world!

And so, I'm going to talk about her - I tried to do that once a year.

You know that in the Catholic Church, there is a lot of Stock Placed on Mary and you know there is a "Veneration of Mary".

DMC NOTES: The Veneration of Mary in the Catholic Church encompasses various devotions which include Prayer, Pious Acts, Visual Arts, Poetry, and Music devoted to her. It is the act of Honouring a Saint, a Person who has been identified as having a high degree of Sanctity or Holiness. Popes have encouraged it, while also taking steps to reform some manifestations of it.

And because most People identified with the "Veneration of Mary"; there is no mention of Mary at all - I mean you don't hear anybody talking about Mary.

But if Mary had not been there, I wondered how the history of the Human Race will be.

So today, I'm talking about Mary's Faith!

The mother of Jesus Christ was a woman of "Tremendous Faith" and "Immense Faith" - She has "Great Faith".

And we see this in her Story which we will be looking at very soon.

First of all, let us look at Luke's Gospel Chapter 1, Verse 44-45 (Luke 1: 44-45)

This is after Mary had gone to see Elizabeth in the Hill Country of Judah and both of them had received the same Message from the same Angel. And both of them were going to give birth to Special Individuals.

And this Elizabeth said to Mary and this is what she said:

Luke 1: 44-45 NKJV

44. For indeed, as soon as the voice of your Greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for Joy.

45. Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord.

She did not simply heard the Word of Promise, she didn't just hear from God; she believed what she heard.

If she had not believed - If the Angel brought the Message to Mary and Mary doubted and said I don't believe; go where you came from Mr Angel, what will be the Story of the Human Race?

But Elizabeth said that: "Blessed is she who believed".

That's why I'm talking about her Faith because she believed what was told her!

And this Morning, I trust that you will also believe and that there will be a Fulfilment of those things that the Lord has spoken to you about - Amen!

So, the Big Question is: What did Mary believed?

Well, the same Luke 1: 30-37 will give us a Clue as to what she believed:

Luke 1: 30-37 NKJV

30. Then the Angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God.

31. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His Name Jesus.

32. He will be Great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the Throne of His father David.

33. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His Kingdom there will be no end."

34. Then Mary said to the Angel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?"

35. And the Angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the Power of the Highest will Overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.

36. Now indeed, Elizabeth your Relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth Month for her who was called barren.

37. For with God Nothing will be Impossible.

WHAT DID MARY BELIEVED?

There are six (6) things that she believed - And all the six (6) things were very Outstanding Things for her at that time!

1. MARY BELIEVED WHAT THE LORD HAD TOLD HER

- She believed that she has found Favour with God.

- She believed that although she was a very "Simple Woman"; she had found Favour with God.

Mary's names means different things by various Opinions.

However, the two (2) Possibilities of her name are:

I. The first is that the Name of Mary is derived from Marah - And Marah means Bitterness.

So, her name means Bitter.

For all of you who believed that when you have a bad name, then your Life will be bad - I just want to let you know that Mary name means Bitter.

II. The other Opinion is that her name (Mary) means Rebellion.

Well, whether Bitter or Rebellion, both are not really Great names.

And she was not the only one called Mary at that time - A lot of Hebrews Girls in the time of Mary were called Mary because the Name Mary whether it is Bitter or Rebellion, or Stubbornness, reflected the Story of Israel.

The Story of Israel was a Story of Bitterness, of Slavery, of all kind of Subjugation and Rebellion against God.

And so, People called their daughters Mary to Signify the Story of the Nation.

And God choose a woman with the wrong name to visit.

I don't know what name that your Parents gave you - Maybe they gave you a name that talks about Sufferings and Pains; and you think that you should Change your name!

Well, God doesn't deal with you according to the names your Parents gave to you - He deals with you according to how He knows you, by Purpose, by Destiny and by Assignment.

And so she believed that she was Highly Favoured!

A woman that is called Bitter or Rebellion believed that God had Favoured her.

Can you believed that you are Favoured by God?

Can you believed that although your Experience may be Bitter, God has still Favoured you.

That maybe Nobody in your family is Great, but God has Favoured you.

Because many atimes, we look at our Experiences in Life and we think that I'm Cursed or there is Bad Luck in my Life.

But Mary believed that my name may be wrong but I'm Highly Favoured!

... She believed what God had told her.

Today, I just want you to know that no matter the Experience of your Life; you are Highly Favoured because God's Eyes are upon you.

You may not have the right Experiences but you have the right God.

And He says that you are Good and you are Highly Favoured!

2. SHE BELIEVED THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT COULD USED HER.

The Angel told her that the Holy Spirit will Overshadow her.

To Overshadow means "To cast a Shadow Upon" or "To Cover Something Under a Presence".

When you are Overshadowed, you are hidden.

And Mary believed that no matter her Limitations, the Holy Spirit can cover her and cover her with her Limitations.

You know that we go through Life with a sense of our own Limitations - Each one of us knows our Limitations (I know mine and you know yours).

You know areas in your Life that qualifies you either in your Parent Age or something you don't know how to do.

The Holy Spirit can Overshadow you so that your Weaknesses, your Inabilities, your Inadequacies will come under the Shadow of the Almighty.

May the Holy Spirit Overshadow you in your Limitations - Amen!

May you Experience the Holy Spirit like never before - Amen!

And Mary believed that my Limitations will not limit me and my Story will end up well because the Holy Spirit can Overshadow me.

I don't know where you have been through in Life:

Each one of us Journey through Life with our own bruises, with our own Stories, with our own Secrets, with our own Fears, with our own Anxieties; but the Holy Spirit is "The Overshadowing One".

And if you can believed Him, He will Overshadow you - And your Limitations will no longer show because all that People will see is the Presence of the Holy Spirit all over your Life.

May the Lord Overshadow you with your Weaknesses, with your Fears, with your Anxieties - Amen!

May you Experience His Presence and His Power - Amen!

Mary believed that the Holy Spirit could use her inspite of her Age, inspite of her name and inspite of everything about her.

3. MARY BELIEVED THAT GOD COULD WORK IN HER LIFE WITHOUT ANY HUMAN AGENT.

She believed that when the Holy Spirit rests upon her, God's Purpose will be achieved.

When the Angel told her what is going to happen, she says that how can these things be since I know not a Man?

And that Statement in a Direct sense means: I am not in any Physical Relationship with a Man. She understands how Pregnancy takes Place - it needs a Man.

Although she was betrothed (DMC NOTES: "Betrothed" means "Engaged") to Joseph, but they were not having any Intimacy.

And she says that, I cannot do that and so how do I get Pregnant?

We can't violate the Word of God and so how can I get Pregnant?

I don't know a Man, and I don't know any Human Being who can make this Possible.

But she still believed that even though you don't know a Man, God can make it Possible.

When you don't know anybody - You know in Ghana, we Specialises on who you know,

Because we believed that we always have to know Somebody and when we don't know anybody, we feel that Nothing can be done.

Mary says that even if you don't know anybody, God will make it Possible!

This Young Girl from Nazareth believed that even if you don't have Human Help, no Human Agent; God can still make it Possible!

Now, that is very difficult for you to believe because you believed that it is who you know - If you don't know anybody in this Country, then you are finished.

... Mary said that I don't know anybody but I still believed that it can be done.

I don't know anybody Important, of Consequence, I don't have Contacts, I don't have Connection, Nobody knows me but God knows me.

And she believes that when God gives you a Promise, although He uses People; but even when there is Nobody to use, God will still bring it to Past.

The same Jesus Christ, you remembered that when he was going to Jerusalem in that "Triumphant Entry" and the Pharisees and those guys said: Hey, shut Your Disciples up. Tell them to stop Praising You.

And Jesus Christ said that I can tell them to stop. But if I tell them to stop, the stones will start Praising me.

What He is saying is that - If Man will not do it, God will raise Help somewhere else for you.

So, if you don't know a Man or a Woman; you have no Connections, and no Contacts; you can believe like Mary that God will still make it work - God will bring it to Past.

If all Men failed you, God will still bring it to Past!

When People Promise and failed you and disappointed you; God will bring it to Past!

And that is something that you can take to the Bank because God's Word is Bankable and it Produces Results!

4. SHE BELIEVED THAT SHE COULD GIVE BIRTH TO GOD'S PROMISED MESSIAH.

This is a Big One - It is the Major leap of Faith for her

Mary is an Hebrew Girl - And as an Hebrew Girl, she had known from all the times that she goes into the Synagogue or things they have told her; she knew that a Messiah is going to come.

But a Messiah is thought to be a King - He is going to be a Prominent and a very Powerful Person.

She never thought of herself giving birth to the Messiah - How can she believed that? She was from Nazareth.

According to Historical Account at the time of Mary and Joseph, there were only fourteen (14) houses in Nazareth - Nazareth wasn't a City but a small Village of fourteen (14) houses.

Can you imagine Someone who lives in a Village with fourteen (14) houses believing that she will give birth to the Saviour of the world?

She was just about sixteen (16) years old - At those days, they marry very early.

And still, she believed that she could carry the Vision of the Messiah.

You have no idea of what God can put inside of you, you have no idea of what God will cause you to give birth to.

Because you know sometimes, God made you to give birth to something maybe on a Table Top, maybe on the Ground, maybe on your Head - It is a Small Thing.

Mary's baby was born in a Manger but that child was destined to be the Saviour of the world.

It is like telling Somebody that this business you have thought of in your Village to sell Charcoal in front of your house; is going to be the Greatest Business in the whole world.

Do you see the Leap of Faith?

You are going to start a Charcoal Business in your Village of fourteen (14) houses and this Business is going to be the most Prosperous Business in the whole world and you said that I believed it.

People are going to say: Mary, are you crazy?

- Does anyone know us in Ghana?

- And do you know that even when you are Known in Accra, you are not Known in London?

- And you may be Known in London but you are not Known in New York?

... Your Village is very far!

But she believed that she can carry this Big Idea of the Saviour of the world coming out through her.

What has God told you will come out of you?

Has God told you of the Great Things that He has put in you and that is going to come out of you?

Have you conceived the idea that something Great can emerge from your Life?

Mary believed that she could give birth to God's Promised Messiah.

5. MARY BELIEVED THAT THE OLD AND BARREN COULD STILL CONCEIVED AND GIVE BIRTH.

As an affirmation to the Word Spoken to her - The Angel said to her: By the way Miss Mary, your Older Cousin/Relative, Miss Elizabeth who has been known as the Family Barren Woman.

Because the Angel said: This is the one who is called Barren.

It means that she has acquired a Reputation - She is known by that name; People referred to her as Elizabeth that is Barren.

He says that she is conceived six (6) Months - And Mary believed that Elizabeth who has been cast aside can still conceive and give birth.

Mary believed that even when things are Old and discarded and Unproductive; God can reassemble them and use them.

Is there an Elizabeth in your Life?

It may not be a Human Being:

- Maybe a Project, maybe your own Life is an Elizabeth.

- Maybe you look at yourself or you looked at your children and realised that you have given birth to too many Elizabeth.

Your Life is an Elizabeth, your Husband is an Elizabeth, your Children is an Elizabeth, your Business is an Elizabeth - It is known as a Failure!

Even well Documented Failures can be used by God - And God can turn it all around in their lives.

Maybe your Failure is Documented - It is Known, People have actually written Books about your Failure, Probably there is a T-shirt with your name on it.

Maybe your Business is being studied in Business School as a Classic Case of Failure.

But Mary believed, even that God can take it and rewired it and rework it and do something Great with it.

I don't know what your Story is but God says that it is not over!

Are you Old? - It is not over!

Are you Barren? - It is not over!

Are you Old and Barren? - It is not over!

Mary believed that God can take Old Things, Past Failures and tell you a different Story with them

6. MARY BELIEVED THAT WITH GOD, NOTHING SHALL BE IMPOSSIBLE!

What could cause a Young Girl of about sixteen (16) years Old - A Village Girl, who doesn't know City Life, never being to Rome - The Center of the world at that time and still believed that God could do Great Things with her Life?

She has never had any Marvelous Experience, her Parents were not Extraordinary, she is just ready to live a Normal Life as a Carpenter's wife, just live a Life of a Jew.

In those days, People just live in their Villages, travel only for Miles from their Village (20 Miles). The farthest Place they can Dream of going to is Jerusalem.

She won't even imagined that she will go to Rome, she won't ever imagined going far to Greece or some other Places of repute.

Her world was very small, yet she believed Big Things could happen to her.

This Morning, I just came to encourage you that the Christmas Story has a Place for you and that with God, all things are Possible!

- That with God, Old Things that are Barren can be brought back to Life.
- That with God, even when you don't have any Human Help, or any Human Agent; God can still bring it to Past
- That with God, you can carry Great Things like the Redeemer of the world.
- That with God, when you are called Bitter, you can be Highly Favoured.
- And that the Holy Spirit can Overshadow you and do Great Things with your Life.

It's just about two (2) weeks to the end of the Year - Can God do in two (2) weeks what you have been waiting for from January.

Is it Possible for God to do it in the next two (2) weeks things that you have been waiting for from January and has never happened?

Can God do it in one week what you have waited all your Life for?

Do you believed it?

Because I believe that the next one (1) week can be the Greatest fourteen (14) days in your Life!

- I believed that tomorrow can be the Greatest Day of your Life.

- I believed that tonight can be the Greatest moment of your Life.

... Because with God, all Things are Possible!

I don't know what Man has told you, but God says that I can work without a Man - Maybe Somebody looked at you and say: You will never make it.

But God says that is Man but I will Overshadow you with my Presence!

Let's get up on our feet this Morning because we want to believed God for the impossible:

- We want to believe God for Big Things and not Little Things.

- We want to take a "Leap of Faith" with Mary.

- We want to believe something Great will come out of us.

- We want to believe that the Holy Spirit will Overshadow us.

- We want to believe that everything that has been Spoken to us by God will be done.

Lift Up your hands to Heaven - And like Mary, believe God for something Great.

It has been denied you from January till now, but God says I can make it happen.

I said it that it will happen in 2023 - I told you at the beginning of the Year that I will make it happen this Year and the Year has not ended and I will still make it.

Talk to the Lord this Morning - Let the Heavens break loose over your Life.

I want you to Pray and ask God to bring you Help beyond all Human Help - Help that is Supernatural.

Ask the Lord to Overshadow you by His Holy Spirit to bring Life to those things that are beyond Help.

It may be a Health issue in your body (Sickness) - But with God, all things are Possible.

It may be a Business Thing - With God all things are Possible.

It may be your Marriages - With God all things are Possible.

It may be with a Relationship; you thought that you are going to marry the Person and then it all crashed - With God all things are Possible.

He can restore Broken Relationships, He can restore Broken Dreams - Oh Yes, He will.

He can lift you up again, He can repair that which was Broken.

Talk to Him like Mary - That you believed that something is about to break forth over your Life in the Name of Jesus.

Ask God to bring you Help by His Spirit - Not Human Help as Heman Being will fail you.

Say Lord: Overshadow me, do this Lord. Let this be your work, not the work of a Man but the work of God.

Let this be a Divine Encounter with You Lord - I want to see You, I want to see Your Glory in my Life, in my Body, in my Marriage, in my Business, in my Children.

I want to see You Lord!

I want to come into Agreement with you as we Pray:

CLOSING PRAYER

Father, You are the Changeless God, the Endless God - You don't Change, you have no End, from Everlasting to Everlasting You are God.

There is Nothing beyond You.

So today, we come and assemble ourselves around Your Word - Because Your Word is a Source of Life.

And we believed Lord this Morning with Mary; Lord that with You, Nothing shall be Impossible.

So Lord, Overshadow Your Children by Your Holy Spirit.

Those who have no Help, be their Help.

For those who are believing that Great Things will come out of them, that You have told them about; let it happen in their lives.

Those who are believing You Lord, that Hopeless situation will turn around. Let it happen in their lives.

Those who are believing what You told them in January, that will happen in 2023; Lord let it happen before the Year ends.

So Lord, we are open to receive from you, Harvest of Miracles from now on till the End of the Year,

Every Minute, every Hour, every Day, every Week - Signs and Wonders.

Let this be our Testimony Lord - That we will gather what you Promised us.

In Jesus Name - Amen and Amen!

Celebrate the Lord - Hallelujah!

Tell yourself that: It is done in Jesus Name - Amen!

Shout to the Lord this Morning!!!

SPECIAL 2023/2024 CROSS OVER SERVICE WITH PASTOR (DR) MENSA OTABIL
(GENERAL OVERSEER, INTERNATIONAL CENTRAL GOSPEL CHURCH (ICGC)
CHRIST TEMPLE, ACCRA GHANA)

TOPIC: REFLECTION ON WHERE GOD HAS BROUGHT US AND FAITH FOR WHERE
HE IS TAKING US

DATE: 31ST DECEMBER 2023

BIBLE TEXT: PSALMS 136: 1-9

Tonight is a very Special Night for each one of us because in few Minutes from now, we will be entering a Brand New Year 2024,

And tonight, we have the Honour and the Privilege to be Part of the People who saw the beginning of the Year and are also seeing the end of the Year.

Some People think that it is ordinary but it is extraordinary to see the beginning of a Year and also to see the end of the Year because that Privilege does not come easily to everybody,

But Thank God that we saw the beginning of this Year (2023) and we are seeing the beginning of Next Year (2024) as well.

And He who will cause you to see the beginning of 2024 will also cause you to see Next Year - By this time to see the end of 2024 (Amen).

God will give you Victory and God will watch over you and Protect you - Amen.

We are Confident in the Goodness of the Lord that His Faithfulness never ends

So, as we close the Page on one Year and open the Page for a Brand New Year; we will take time to reflect on where God has brought us and to have Faith for where He is taking us.

God has brought us far and He will take us very far - Amen.

And so today, as I begin my Exaltation before we entered into the New Year, I want you to turn to Psalms 136: - And appropriately, I should be reading the whole of the Psalms but that is a little bit long and we don't have too much time. So, I'm going to read Verses 1 to 9.

And there is a Pattern of Praise and Worship I want you to observe there because we are also going to Praise God in similar manner as we read in the Psalms.

Psalms 136: 1-9 NKJV

1. Oh, give Thanks to the Lord, for He is Good! For His Mercy endures forever.
2. Oh, give Thanks to the God of gods! For His Mercy endures forever.
3. Oh, give Thanks to the Lord of lords! For His Mercy endures forever:
4. To Him who alone does Great Wonders, For His Mercy endures forever;
5. To Him who by Wisdom made the Heavens, For His Mercy endures forever;
6. To Him who laid out the Earth above the waters, For His Mercy endures forever;
7. To Him who made Great Lights, For His Mercy endures forever.
8. The Sun to rule by Day, For His Mercy endures forever;
9. The Moon and Stars to rule by Night, For His Mercy endures forever.

And you hear that Phrase - "Your Mercy endures Forever" after every Sentence.

When we read the Psalms, we just read them as a Message coming to us but the Psalms normally are Songs in Processions.

And they are sang most of the time when Israel or the People of God are going to the Temple and they will sing the Psalms and that will take them to the Temple.

And usually, the Psalms will be made up of two (2) Parts:

- I. A Leader who will sing one Part.
- II. And the People who will sing another Part.

So, the Leader will say something and the People will respond.

So, this is how the Psalms was Structured!

And so the Leader will say: Oh, give Thanks to the Lord for He is Good.

And then the People respond: For His Mercy endures Forever.

So, as we get ready to go into 2024; we want to give Thanks to God for 2023 because His Mercy endures Forever!

So I'm going to lead us to a similar Call and Response - And when I make the Call, you will respond: "For His Mercy endures Forever".

Are you ready to Praise God? To Thank Him for Year 2023?

Oh give Thanks to the Lord for the Year 2023 - For His Mercy endures Forever

Give Thanks to the Lord who cause us to gather in 2023 - For His Mercy endures Forever

To the Lord our God who delivers us from Destruction - For His Mercy endures Forever.

To our Lord who cause us to rejoice and fill our mouths with Laughter - For His Mercy endures Forever

To our Lord who Comforted us in our Times of Pains and Sorrows - For His Mercy endures Forever

To the Lord who is with us in the Mountain and in the Valley - For His Mercy endures Forever

To the Lord who is taking us into a Brand New Year - For His Mercy endures Forever

Give Thanks to the Lord who is the King of the Universe, the Alpha and the Omega; whose Faithfulness from Generation to Generation - For His Mercy endures Forever

Give the Lord a Mighty Hand!

And it is through the Lord's Mercy that we are not Consumed.

It is through the Mercy of the Lord that we have lived and to see this Day.

And it is by His Mercy that we Cross Over into the New Year - We Cross Over into 366 "Unknown Days".

Days that we have no idea of how they will look like.

But those "Unknown Days" are Known to God because Known unto the Lord are the ends of the matter.

He knows everything before it begins:

I. There is Nothing coming to you in 2024 that will be a Surprise to God.

II. There is Nothing the Enemies had Planned for you that God has not already outsmarted him concerning.

Because the Mercy of the Lord will take you from this Year into Next Year and the Faithful God who is Eternal will keep you into a Brand New Year.

To guide our Journey as Church, we will focus our attention, and our Resources on a Theme - And it has been something we have been doing over a very long.

I have had the Privilege of leading People to a Brand New Year - I have been conducting these Services for over 40 years. Probably about 45 years now; I have done it over and over and over.

And one of the important tasks that I cherished is being able to lead People into a Brand New Year.

It is almost like a Midwife delivering a baby into the world.

It is almost like God using me to help us to bring something New into our lives.

And we believed that God is going to guide us.

Each Year, we set out a Theme that I believed Captures the ideas of what I hear God saying in my Spirit for His People.

In 2022, our Theme was "Increase".

In 2023, our Theme has been "Gathering".

And in 2024, our Theme is "GOD".

- He is the Alpha and Omega.

- He is the One who begins with us from the 1st of January 2024 to the 31st of December 2024.

We believe that God will make out a way for each of us and God will Prepare a Table before us in the Presence of our Enemies.

Our Key Bible Text as a Church throughout International Central Gospel Church (ICGC) for 2024 is the first Verse of the Bible - Very simple enough Verse but it Captures who God is!

And it reads - In the Beginning, God created the Heavens and Earth (Genesis 1:1).

And you can be sure that I'm going to do a lot of work with that Verse!

- God is the Source of all things.

- God is the Creator of all things.

And He has made Himself known to us - And He wants us to know Him.

And when you read the Bible, you see many People that God made Himself Known to.

But one remarkable Person that God made Himself known to was a Gentleman called Moses.

Moses was a Child of Peculiar Circumstances:

- He was born in a very severe time when Life was threatened by the Pharaoh of Egypt against every Male born Child. And he was a Male Child.

- And his Parents thought of giving him a Future and so they gave him the Opportunity.

- And God worked it out so that Moses will be Delivered.

And guess where God took him? He took him to the very Camp of the Person who wants to destroy him.

God has a Good sense of humour.

When People had Planned your Destruction and thinks you are hiding from them; He sneaks you into their Presence and they don't even know that you are there, until you come to Subject and overrun the Kingdom of the enemy.

God will bring you into Places where People had Planned Wickedness for you but He will use you to overturn every Plans of Wickedness.

Don't be surprised where God will put you Next Year (2024) - You will stand before those People that wanted to stab you but God will seat you at their Table because He was about to Prepare a Table before you in the Presence of your Enemies.

So, Moses was in the Camp of his Destroyer supposedly and God eventually took Moses out!

But he really encountered God on Mount Horeb when he was an Old Man in Exodus 3: 13-15.

God appeared to Moses and gave Moses a Change. But Moses was not really ready for the Change because the People he was about to give the Change to are a very Stiff-Necked People,

So, this is what Moses said in Verse 13-15 of Exodus Chapter 3:

13. Then Moses said to God, "Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What is His Name?' what shall I say to them?"

14. And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.' "

15. Moreover God said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: 'The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is My Name forever, and this is My Memorial to all Generations.'

I want you to know the Progression - Moses drew near to God and God drew near to him!

And that is what we want to focus on - That our Hearts will be drawn to the Lord and the Lord will draw Close to us!

And in that environment, God revealed Himself to Moses in the Most Simplest of names - "I AM".

What is your Name? "I AM".

In the Hebrew Language, it is called "Ehyeh".

"I AM" or "Ehyeh" is from a root word that means: "To Be" - And it is God's Proper Name.

It doesn't just described Him but that is how He calls Himself - "I AM" .

God is who He is - He is the One who is.

God doesn't become, He doesn't Improve, He doesn't Learn, He doesn't become Better, He doesn't become "More Holy"; He doesn't become "More Righteous".

Because for Human Beings, we have three (3) Times Zones - The Past, The Present and The Future.

And because of this Line of Progression, we become better, we improve, we Age, we become Old but God has no Past and God has no Future.

In the Hebrew, it is a Perfect Tense - God is.

He is "Is" - Not "Was", not "Will Be".

So, He says to Moses - "I Am".

Who are You?

I am your Life, I am your Health, I am your Strength, I am your Wisdom, I am your Ability, I am Past, I am your Present, I am your Future, I am 2024, I am 2025, I am 2026.

You are not there but I am; you are not getting there but I am - Because whatever we will want to be, God is already there.

There is Nothing about your Future that is secret to God that God has to go and learn about - He knows the End from the Beginning.

And in 2024, we want to encounter "I Am" - That is our Mission as a Church!

- To know God.
- To know "The Great I Am".
- To know the One who is Present at all times.
- Who has always been at all times.
- Who calls all things to be as not being called by anything.
- Who moves all things but He is not moved.
- Who is at all times.

There will never be a time God is not - God is always!

And we want to know Him, we want to know His Person, we want to know His Presence and we want to know His Power!

- When you know Him, you will know His Glory.
- When you know Him, you will experience His works.

Don't go for His works, go for Him because His works comes from Him!

- When we know Him, we know His works, Power, Glory and Beauty.

Many times we are chasing for the things that He does but He said to Moses - He didn't say "I will do"; He didn't say "I will be"; He said, Moses simply tell them "I Am".

So they asked Moses:

- Who is going to deliver us? - "I Am".
- Who is going to destroy Pharaoh? - "I Am".
- Who is going to take us through the Wilderness? - "I Am".
- Who will feed us through the Wilderness? - "I Am".
- When we come through the Red Sea and we didn't know how to Cross; who will help us? - "I Am".
- When Enemies confront us in the Wilderness and we have no Army or Weapons; how do we defeat them? - "I Am".
- All that you Expected - "I Am".

And today, I want to announce to you that this is the God you serve:

- The God you know.
- The God you Pray to.
- The God you read about in the Bible.

This is the God that we have known from Generation to Generation - "The Great I Am".

In the Year 2024, live in His Presence and let God be God!

When I announced the Theme to the Pastors - I said: Pastors, stop Playing God! Let God be God!

And when we allow God to be God, even what we cannot do, He will do it.

Once we understand that this is God's work, we don't have to put in efforts to try to impress People about how much Power we have because the Power, Glory, Beauty and Anointing is His.

Because I get the impression that many times, Pastors want to be God:

- We feel that if we don't lay hands on People, they won't be Healed.

- We feel that if we don't bless People, they will not be Blessed.

There is a Place to lay our hands on People - It is in the Bible; there is a Place for us to bless People - It is in the Bible.

But God will bless People whether we bless them or not.

There was a time Moses was talking to God and say: God I'm tired.

God says, okay I am going to help you - I want you to gather the People that you think are "Potential Leaders" and I'm going to take Part of what I put in you and put it on them too.

God was saying that: Whatever I did with you Moses, I can do with seventy (70) other People.

And so, People gathered and the Spirit of God came down upon them.

And there were other People who didn't come for the Meeting but the fact that they didn't come for the Meeting does not mean that God cannot touch them - God still touch them.

DMC NOTES: The Account of this Story of God putting some of the Spirit on Moses on the 70 Chosen Elders can be found I Numbers 11: 11-26.

I just want you to know that God is who He is wherever you are at everytime.

That also means that:

- When you are also doing bad, He is.

- When you are lying, He is.

- When you are Stealing, He is.

- When you are deceiving People, He is.

- Couples, when you are unfaithful, He is.

Where Nobody can be, God is - He is "The Great I Am" and He is there all the time.

And it is this God that we trust to take us through the Year 2024.

Can I Predict what Year 2024 will be? Can I Prophesy?

And if this Prophecy does not come to Past, take this Church and burn it - Laughters!

God will still be God - That is a Prophecy that can never Change!

Can I Prophecy further?

He will be God in 2025, in 2026, in 2100, in 3000 and for a thousand Generation, a Billion Generation, a Trillion Generation.

Heaven and Earth will Past away but He will still be God!

And because God is God and He will be God every Year and God at all times, I can rest in Him!

So, the best way to enter a New Year is just be in God - Rest in Him, and Trust Him.

- Will Prices of foodstuffs Increase? I don't know but God will still be God.

- Will there be Money? I don't know but God is God.

- When the Oceans move, when the Mountains move, when the Heavens move, when Economy stumbles; God is God.

The Psalmist in Psalms 46: 1-3 tells us: God is our refuge and Strength, a very Present Help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, even though the Earth be removed, and though the Mountains be carried into the midst of the sea. Though its waters roar and be troubled, though the Mountains shake with its swelling - God is still God.

- If we hear that Russia has Launched a Nuclear Weapon; God is still God.

- If we hear that something else has happened; God is still God.

We didn't know the Future but one thing that we know without any Shadow of doubt - God is and He is always God!

And when your Trust is in Him, then through all the Changing Things of Life, your rest is in who He is.

So, I encourage you as we enter into the New Year:

- Trust in Him.

- He is our Refuge from the Storms of Life.

- He is your Refuge from Arms and Attacks.

- In Him we are, in Him we have Life.

I cannot Promise you that there won't be Problems in 2024.

I cannot Promise you that you won't go through Valleys.

I cannot Promise you that there won't be difficulties ahead of you.

All that I can Promise you is - "I Am"; "God is".

- He is there with you.

- He will Guide you.

- He will Lead you.

- He will give you Victory.

- He will fight your Battles for you.

- He will destroy the Weapons that has been formed against you.

And no Weapon formed against you shall Prosper.

People can conspire behind you but "God is" and He is there at all times.

You don't need to know your Enemies - You just need to know your Defender!

And when God is your Defender, you may not know who is against you - You just know who is for you.

Because the Scriptures says: If God be for us, who can be against us? (DMC NOTES: Romans 8:31).

You don't need to know who is against you - All you need to know is that God is for me!

- Will there be Witches? I don't know, maybe but God is.

- Will People try to gang up against you? Yes they will, but God is.

- Will there be times you are broke? Yes, God is. He is not broke, He is your Supplier, Provider,

Healer and Deliverer.

Whatever you desires, He is.

So, as we enter into the Brand New Year 2024 - It is a Year of God!

It simply means:

- Just rest in Him.
- Be Secured in Him
- Settle yourself in God.
- Have your Presence in Him.

And Nothing that the Enemies does will be able to overthrow you.

I believed that you are about to experience the Most Fulfilling the Most Significant, the Most Consequential and the Most Expressive Year that you have ever been in.

If you think that Year 2023 was Good, then wait for the next Year that is coming (2024).

If you look back in your Life and say: Oh, 2010 is my Best Year, look forward for what is coming in 2024.

There is no Year in your Life in your Past that will be Greater than the one you are about to enter in 2024 because God is with you.

And if we trust Him and if you look up to Him, and if you follow Him, and if you follow His Guide, and if you follow His Wisdom and just Honour, Love, Worship Him and be in Church/House of God and put ourselves in His Hands - He will, do for you what no Man can ever Dream of doing for you!

ALTAR CALL

And before we start Praying for the New Year, it is important for us to have a Relationship with this God.

God is our Creator but the fact that He created us doesn't mean that we won't have a Relationship with Him.

For us to have a Relationship with Him, we have to choose to know this God, to have an Encounter with Him and the way to do that is through Jesus Christ and receive Him to be your Lord and Saviour.

In the Bible, you find many People who do not know God before but later come to know Him:

I. Peter was a Fisherman.

But he didn't know God until he encountered Jesus at the Lake of Galilee.

II. The woman at the Well had married five (5) Men - She thought that her case was the worst case in the world.

But she met Jesus and she met God.

III. Saul of Tarsus melted Punishments on Christians but had an Encounter with Jesus.

Because meeting Jesus made all the difference.

So, tonight before you enter the New Year, I want you to enter knowing this God - Not as a God that People talk about but the God you know for yourself.

The God who lives in you, the God who talks to you, the God whose Voice you can hear and the God whose Hands you can see.

So, before we start Praying - If you are here this Night and you say: Pastor, I want to know God.

And People say that everybody knows about God but not everybody knows Him.

And tonight, God can be close to you.

So, whilst we are sitting down with every heads bowed and every eyes closed - If you are here this Evening; just before we enter the New Year, you say Pastor, I want to know God closely, to have a Relationship with Him and be Born Again.

If that is your Prayer and desire, just lift up your hands wherever

SPECIAL SUNDAY SERVICE WITH PASTOR (DR) MENSA OTABIL (GENERAL OVERSEER, INTERNATIONAL CENTRAL GOSPEL CHURCH (ICGC) CHRIST TEMPLE, ACCRA GHANA)

TOPIC: LET'S DO BETTER THIS YEAR

DATE: 7TH JANUARY 2024

BIBLE TEXT: ECCLESIASTES 7:10

Today, I just want to encourage each one of us to aim at doing better for ourselves this Year (2024)!

My Message today is simply Titled: "Let's do Better this Year (2024)"

And what I will share with you today is Premised on the writings from the Book of Ecclesiastes 7:10 - I will read that because that is the Premise on which I am Preaching my Message today:

Ecclesiastes 7:10 (NKJV) - Do not say, Why were the former days better than these? For you do not inquire wisely concerning this.

It is the Message of Rebuke!

And the Passages in the Book of Ecclesiastes and Proverbs, are Wisdom Books in the Bible. And it tells us the Commonsensical Wise ways we can live our lives so as to Please God,

This is one of those Wise Things that we learnt from the Book of Ecclesiastes.

That you don't say: Why was it better Last Year? Why was it better 10 years ago? Why was it better 20 years ago?

And it says that if you make that enquiries, if you ask that Question; then you are not being Wise - It is a nice way of saying that you are being Foolish in the Bible.

So it says that don't make that the Question that you ask - Particularly my very self, I have never being fond of the Phrase: "The Good Old Days".

And of course, we can look at the Past and call it "The Good Old Days" when there was Coloured TV, No Coloured TV (White and Black TV). When we used to go and stand behind People's windows to watch TV.

We can talk all about these, in terms of how far God has brought us.

So, if you say "Good Old Days" to see the Progress you have made, then that is fine!

But if you are going to say the "Good Old Days" to say that the Past is better than your Present and your Future; then you are saying that your Life is not improving!

So, I don't want to look early in the 60's and 70's and say that in the "Good Old Days"; it was better - All of your living is better.

If you say that the 90's is the Greatest of your Life; if you are trying to say that your Life has been Stagnated; then you haven't made Progress.

But God designed our lives to make Progress - So that our "Best Years" are always ahead of us!

You may have had some Great Years in the Past but what you are in now is better than your Past and what you are going to go to in the future is better than what you are going in.

Somebody said that: "My Best is yet to come!"

Don't stop your Life on Yesterday, don't freeze your Life on the Past, don't look especially those of you who are a bit older (In the 60's, 70's and 80's) - And it is so easy when you are in those Ages to freeze your Life.

When your Best Days is in the Past.

Well, the Bible Passage that we read that it is not how we are supposed to look at Life.

So, I just feel that as we begin the Year, I need to bring a "Word of Encouragement" to you that will move you from Nostalgia to Reality; that will move you from the Past to the Present.

So, I'm going to focus on three (3) Main things to do if we want to make our lives better in Year 2024:

1. The 1st thing is that if we want to make Year 2024 better, then: We must know God better.

Knowing God better is the Foundation for us as Christians!

If you are an Unbeliever, may be that will not be a Priority - To know God better.

And knowing God better involves so many things - But I will focus on three (3) Actions you must take if you want to know God better:

I. To know God better, we must gain better Knowledge of the Scriptures.

This is so much at the Heart of our Christian Life - We must know the Scriptures better.

I am not simply talking about Memorising Scriptures or Memorising Passages of the Bible or being able to quote the Bible.

And it is Great to memorise the Bible and to be able to quote the Bible but that does not mean that you know the Scriptures - It simply means that you know the Phrases.

And knowing the Scriptures goes beyond just doing your Quiet Time in the Morning or even reading through the Bible - Knowing the Scriptures is Understanding what the Scriptures are saying.

What is God Communicating when I read the Bible? - When I read the Books of Leviticus, Genesis, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes; what is God telling me?

How do I manage all the Passages in the Bible - The things I understand, the things I don't understand that seems to contradict each other, things that seems to say things that for now does not make sense to me. How do I understand them?

So, Understanding the Scriptures is very, very critical and we must endeavour to do it.

This Year, I'm hoping that in addition to all the things that we do, that I will really be able to do a Series during the week on how to Study the Bible!

I know that you all Study the Bible and I appreciate your efforts at Studying the Bible but sometimes, it is just like me taking a Book of Physics or Chemistry, I can read the Book because I know my Alphabets and I know how to Pronounce words and so I can read a whole Book and I know what the words are saying but I may have no clue what it is saying,

Just because I can read something doesn't mean that I can understand it because every Documents has rule for Interpreting it.

So, if a lazy Person read these Books, they will gain some Knowledge and Understanding. But if Somebody guides you to Understand Particularly how to Technically handle the stuffs there, you will get a better Appreciation of it.

II. In addition to that, we have to Understand what God is doing in our lives.

Ask yourself:

- What is God doing in my Life at this time?
- Where am I now in my Relationship with God?

- What is God saying to me through my Experiences and my Encounters?
- Where does God want me to be? Or where is He taking me to?
- What kind of Season am I in my Life? Is it a Season of Preparation or a Season of Manifestation?
- Who is God bringing into my Life and who is God taking out of my Life?

These are important things that you need to know because at every Point in time; you have to figure out: What is God doing in your Life?

- Am I in a Season when God wants me to be Quiet or a Season when He wants me to shout from the Mountain Top?
- Am I in a Season where God is Preparing me for something Great or He has brought me to something Great?

Because God is always dealing with us at one Point or the other:

- One time, you are on the Mountain Top because He is Preparing you for the Valley.
- And the next time, you are in the Valley because He is Preparing you for the Mountain Top.

Because:

- Life is not Mountain Top all the time and Life is not Valley all the time.
- Life is not Sorrow all the time and it is not Laughter all the time.

At every Point in time, you have to know what Times and what Seasons am I in on God's Calendar - What exactly is God doing with me?

What does Year 2024 mean for me? - What is my Journey and where is God taking me.

... You have to understand what God is doing in your Life.

And I hope that some of the things that I will Preach this Year 2024, will help you to discover what God is doing in your Life and you can tell it yourself.

III. We have to Experience the Holy Spirit at work in us.

Each one of us must have a Personal Encounter with the Holy Spirit.

Beyond coming to Church and receiving my Ministry or any Pastor's Ministry; you must have a Relationship with the Holy Spirit because that is what Jesus Christ said - He said that I am going away but I'm going to give you the Holy Spirit and He is going to lead you into all Truths.

Everything that we do as Christian is directed by the Holy Spirit - He is our Guide, He is the One who does the works as it were, He is the Miracle Worker in us, He is the One who hears our Prayers because He is the One who resides in us.

The Good Thing is that the Holy Spirit wants to have an Encounter with you too.

So, it is not like the Person you want to know and the Person doesn't want to know you - You want to know Him and He wants to know you too.

... That is the Good Thing about the Holy Spirit.

Because you know that it can be very tough if you want to know Somebody and the Person doesn't want to know you.

He wants to get you to the Point whereby you minimise your mistakes in Life.

All of us makes mistake in Life but the Closer you get to the Holy Spirit, the Smarter your Decision Making Process becomes and so your mistakes are minimised.

You will make mistakes as Human Beings but you won't make "Senseless Mistakes" because the Holy Spirit is our Guide - And He is going to Guide you and lead you.

So Please, you need to experience God's Power in us through the Holy Spirit.

2. The 2nd Thing that we want to focus on if we want Year 2024 to be a "Better Year" is: Build Better Relationships!

Relationship links us to the Experiences of our Life

Almost every Experiences you have in Life is based on a certain kind of Relationships - Good Relationship is going to give you Good Experiences while Bad Relationship is going to give you Bad Experiences.

Relationships are the links that we build in our lives to connect us to everything that is available to us.

So the Quality of my Relationship will determine the things that I have access to and the things

that are denied me - So, we have to invest in building "Better Relationships".

There are three (3) ways that we can build "Better Relationships":

I. Wisely Manage your Circles or Influence.

Your Circles of Influence are determined by the People who occupy different Places in your Life.

Now, if you look at the Old Testament's Temple - When God gave Moses and later David the Pattern to build the Tabernacle and Temple; the construction was on the same Premise.

And the Temple the Tabernacle have three (3) Circles:

- There is what they called the Outer Court; where anybody comes to.
- There is the Inner Court; where the Priest goes to make Sacrifices.
- There is the Innermost Court; where the High Priest goes.

In dealing with the Temple, God created three (3) Circles of Influences:

- The Holy of Holies or The Innermost.
- The Inner.
- The Outer.

The same way with your Life - Think of your Life as a Temple: You yourself as a Temple and you have to determine three (3) Levels of Relationships!

- Who is in your Outer Court?
- Who is in your Inner Court?
- Who is in the Innermost Court (Your Holy of Holies)?

Because if you have the wrong People in the wrong Place, you are going to mess up big time.

So For Example:

- Your Innermost Court (Your Holy of Holies) is going to be for your Spouse and children. That's it.

If you are married, your husband, your wife and your children.

If you are going to add anybody to that Place, then you need to be very careful because whoever is in your Holy of Holies can hurt you.

Jesus Christ too has His Holy of Holies - Peter, James and John.

Then He (That is Jesus Christ) has the rest of the Club, then He has the Masses - His Outer Court.

So, you are going to have few People in your Holy of Holies - If you are married, then that should be your Spouses. If you marry someone who cannot be in your Holy of Holies, then don't marry them.

- Then in your Inner Court are your very Good friends, Confidants, Mentors. They are People whose Advise are important to you.

- Your Outer Court includes your work mates, school mates. Your "Hi Five" People.

Now the danger is when we bring Outer Court People to the Holy of Holies - Especially, if you tell an Outer Court Person that I'm going to tell you something that I haven't told anybody. Then you are crazy because it will be Broadcasted to the whole world.

And don't be impressed by the People who wants to Push into Circles they don't belong to - It is like someone who just sees you and say: I want to be your Best Friend.

Best Friend is not by application - We know that Naturally you determine who is your Best Friend and who can be in your Inner or Innermost Court.

But if Somebody is Pushing and forcing to be your Best Friend; remember that Friendship is not by Force but by Choice.

So, sometimes you look at who is in my Innermost Court by Accident - Maybe at a time I was Vulnerable: Going through Difficulties and Life was hard for me.

And you know that this Person started by Paying attention to me and you pour out all your hearts to the Person before you realised that the Person has become tight.

People that you bring close to you who are not supposed to be; you are going to regret it - You are going to bring Pain and Sorrow to yourself that is Self Inflicted and you can't blame God for it.

Why? Because I have told you and because it is Plain in the Bible.

... So, manage your Circles of Influence!

II. Invest in Significant People that God has given to you.

God brings People our way and we have to Note that this Person has been brought into my Life.

Some People come into our Life for a Season and then move on.

And in the Season when they are in our Life, they can make Significant Deposits into our lives - So, Pay attention to those People.

And this Year 2024, Pay attention to "Special People" that God makes them cross your Path.

And maybe all you will meet them is to meet them for just a week, or two (2) weeks or a Month - But within that Period, they can Significantly make Great Inputs into your Life

And God has given you Somebody who must be your "Lifter Up" - Pay attention to them and nurture that Relationship carefully.

III. Repair Beneficial but Broken Relationships!

... This is very important.

Sometimes, we destroy the Relationships that God gave us in order to benefit us.

And sometimes, we don't destroy them but it is just that we don't use the Communication well and now there is breakdown in Communication.

And there is Somebody that you know that is Beneficial in your Life but has become distant - Either something happened and you are distant or you just left it and the Relationship just fell apart.

If you believed that Person is still Beneficial to your Journey in Life, I Counsel you to rebuild that Relationship because there are certain things such People can do in your Life that no other Person can do it in your Life.

And if you say: "You Go"; God will give me another one!

God doesn't do things like that - He doesn't waste Resources. If He gives you Somebody and you waste that Person, He is not going to give you another one.

He gives you a Destiny Helper; nurture that Relationship!

Maybe you lied and you are dishonest and you broke the Relationship - Go and tell the Truth, apologise and try to rebuild the Trust!

3. Live a Better Life.

... That is what all of us want in Year 2024!

And how do we do that? - Three (3) Active Steps:

I. Improve on your Financial Stewardship.

Money is one of the critical factors that determines the Quality of Life.

It is rightly sang about that Money is Blood.

Money is not everything but it is a lot of things and it influences so much what goes around in our Life and we must improve on how we manage Money - What goes Out and what comes In.

Financial Stewardship basically is managing well what God gives you and what you give to God - What comes In and what goes Out.

And each one of us must be Masters of that.

Sometimes, a year becomes better not because you have Financial Breakthrough or you receive more Money but simply because you managed what you had better.

And you realised that the Money you thought was not a lot was actually Significant if you managed it well.

So, let us Pray to God to give us Guidance to Financial Stewardship so that we will manage what He has given to us very well.

We managed the Wealth received and don't take for granted where you work and what they Pay you.

If you are Privileged to work in a Place where you are Paid at the end of the Month; every Morning Pray for that Place that gives you a Salary at the end of the Month.

Because to hussle in Life without any "Guaranteed Income" is one of the most Painful Thing.

Show Appreciations if you are Paid - It may not be all you need but at least you get something

from it.

II. We must Explore New Areas of Career Interest.

Is there something more that you can do in addition to what you are already doing?

- Can you take Extra Course?
- Can you learn a New Skill?
- Can you Expand your Operations?
- Can you take a New Assignment?

Because sometimes, what you need to do in Life to just make your Life better; is not much.

One more thing that I have come to realised is that Improvement is always in Small Quantities!

I mean there might come a time when "Boom" your Life Changes and we all hear the Testimonies whose Life Change "Boom"!

But has "Boom" happened to you?

Once in a while, People have this radical dramatic something that Changes your Life in a Mind Blowing Way once in a while.

But a Regular Human Being like you and I - It is here a little, Precept upon Precepts, Line upon Lines - It just comes!

And it is Aggregation - The adding together of "The Little" that make things "Big".

So, take Note of the "Little Improvements" that you have to make - And sometimes, it is not a "Big Thing" but taking an "Extra Course", Learning an "Extra Skill", adding something Small to what you do, Expanding to "New Area".

It may not be Exponential but it is Increamental but if you add it together; it will be Exponential!

And we have to learn to value "Little Things".

In some of my sayings in Life, I say: "Small, Small" as we will get there.

Because that is how we will go - If you are walking Small, Small; you will cover Miles.

So, don't despise "Small Things" - Appreciate "Little Things" because if you appreciate "Little Things"; you will not take anything for granted!

III. Follow more Healthier Routines.

I won't say run 10 Miles everyday, or walk Long Distance; I'm just saying, do "Little Things" - Eat better, Exercise better, Rest better, do regular Health Check Up's, and take your Medications if you are on Medication consistently.

The God of Signs and Wonders is the same God of Science as well.

Let's improve our lives and do things that will make our Life better Quality so that at the end of the Year 2024, you can say: I think that I managed my Health better and my Finances are better.

All I am saying is that the "Big Thing" you want to see happening in Life may not be happening in a Big Way - They may just happen because you did some things consistently and over a long Period of time.

And let us all have the Discipline of doing it over and over and over.

And I believed that at the end of the Year 2024, we should all be able to say: This Year 2024 is better than Year 2023 - That should be our Testimony!

At the end of Year 2024, I should be able to say: Wao, what a Year? It was better than Year 2023 because I take these Steps and I can see Improvements in my Life!

God Bless You all - Amen!!!

SPECIAL SUNDAY SERVICE WITH PASTOR (DR) MENSA OTABIL (GENERAL OVERSEER, INTERNATIONAL CENTRAL GOSPEL CHURCH (ICGC) CHRIST TEMPLE, ACCRA GHANA)

TOPIC: GOD - PART 1 (THE ETERNAL)

DATE: 14TH JANUARY, 2024

BIBLE TEXT: GENESIS 1:1

Today, I start my First Series for the Year (2024). This Year, our Theme is GOD. And I intend to teach a lot in that direction. And our main Theme Verse for the Year is Genesis 1:1.

So today, I start my "GOD" Series, and this is GOD - PART 1. And next week of course, I will do Part 2.

My Subtitle is "The Eternal" - That means I am going to talk about God and His Eternal Nature.

We will spend time to understand what it means when we say God is Eternal. And what it means for us as Christians to know God as Eternal.

One observation about us (Christians) is that, we want God to do things for us. We expect things from Him, we talk to Him, we Pray but we know very little about the Nature of God.

And so, Pretty soon, we get disappointed about things and we get confused about things. Because we don't truly understand this God that we Worship; this God that we talk to; and this God that we Pray to.

So, I hope that this Series will help us to understand God and to know how He deals with us, so that our Prayer, our Study, our Expectation would be right.

GOD - PART 1 (THE ETERNAL)

Our Key Verse for this Year is Genesis 1:1 (NKJV)

In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth.

I believe this is the most important Verse in the Bible.

It is the most important because, everything else in the Bible stands on this Verse - Without this Verse, nothing else in the Bible stands. Everything is Premised on God.

The Verse tells us everything about what Life is all about.

Genesis 1:1 is God's Self Introduction to us as He helps us to know who He is.

And so today, from this Passage, the most important thing we want to look at is that, God is Eternal.

That is one of the important things we see in Genesis 1:1 - That God is Eternal.

There are other words that can be used as synonyms to Eternal - Words like: Everlasting, Forever, Endless, Infinite.

All of it in essence, is talking about the same thing, although sometimes, there is a difference.

But 'God is Eternal' can be seen as - God is Everlasting, God is Forever, God is Endless, God is Infinite.

Now, it is very difficult for us as Human Beings to think of anything as Eternal. Because our human experience tells us that nothing is forever - "How things start and how they end."

So, for human beings to think of something to be Eternal, it is an amazing thought. It is very difficult to imagine what it is.

The other time I was watching a Documentary on the Longest Living Things - It was part of my Research as I was going to Preach this Message.

Some of the things that have lived long on this Earth and most of them are Plants or trees; a few were Sea Creatures.

There is actually a jelly fish that is supposed to be immortal, in the sense that it renews its Life every time.

And there are trees that have lived for thousands of years.

In essence, if you look at that tree, you can say, Oh! That's Eternal.

But you know, a tree that has lived for five hundred thousand years can easily be cut and burnt and so it's not Eternal because its Life can come to an end.

And even the jelly fish that is supposed to be able to renew its Life; somebody can catch it and fry it and that's the end of its Eternity.

So, no matter how long something lives on this Earth, just one moment the wind would blow,

fire would burn it. Something is going to end it and it would no longer be Eternal.

Last Year (2023) in Sierra Leone, there was a big cotton tree that the Sierra Leonians considered as Eternal. In fact, People have composed songs about how enduring that tree is - It's being there for over Four Hundred (400) years.

And in 2023 there was a windstorm and the tree fell down after Four Hundred (400) years.

This Year (2024), I read that a tree that supposedly was Planted in Ashanti for over three hundred (300) years; that some People just went and cut it down.

When we talk about God as Eternal, He cannot be cut down, He cannot be burnt, He cannot be fried, a Storm cannot move Him - He is there all the time.

That's the Eternity of God - God is Eternal.

And when we say that God is Eternal, we mean that He is, has always been and will always be.

... You cannot say that about anything that you know.

And of course, human beings use the word Eternal and forever in many ways.

You hear things like: "I am Eternally Grateful to you".

You know that word 'Eternal' is used in a very Subjective sense.

Because, if you tell somebody, "I am Eternally Grateful to you" - Your Gratitude started somewhere, when the Person did you Good. Before he did you Good, you were not Grateful. So, your Gratitude cannot be Eternal - It has a beginning, and it will end the day he disappoints you.

And you hear People say things like, "you are my best friend for Life."

You know that he is not your best friend for ever - He was not your best friend in the womb, he was not your best friend when you were born.

He became your best friend when you met few years ago, say in Secondary School. And one day they will offend you and you will say, we have cut off our Relationship; we are no longer best friends.

When we say God is Eternal, we are saying God is Forever, God is Infinite.

I don't want you to apply this kind of human discussion of forever, eternal and infinite to God because sometimes we do.

I've heard some People say, "God has disappointed me."

And it is because we don't understand Eternal in the God sense as we should.

I am going to explain Genesis 1:1 beyond Eternal; and what it means in this sense.

TWO (2) IMPORTANT THEOLOGICAL WORDS

1. Transcendent:

When we say God is Eternal, we mean He is Transcendent.

What does it mean?

It means He exists beyond and outside of all Creation.

When I say that a tree is Eternal, it doesn't exist beyond Creation - Of course, it is part of Creation.

When we say, "this statue is forever." It can't be forever, because it was made from the Earth.

Nothing in this universe can claim to be forever; because it has a beginning.

But when we say, "God is Eternal" we mean He is Transcendent - He goes beyond anything and everything that has been created.

There is nothing you know that exists outside of Creation - Everything you know is inside of Creation: Whether Tables, Mountains, Rivers, Moon, Sun, Planets, Galaxies - They all are inside of Creation.

But God is outside of Creation - And so we say, He is Transcendent!

It also means that God does not derive any aspect of His Being from outside Himself - There is no part of God that comes outside of God.

What does that mean?

It means God is God all by Himself - He is not made God; He is God all by Himself. He is Self Existing, He is Self Sufficient, He is Self Sustaining and He does not depend on anything to be God.

And He has no need of anything - God does not need Worship in order to be God.

We worship Him, but He doesn't need it to be God - Whether you worship Him or not, He is God.

- He was who He was before human beings were created for us to be able to worship Him.

- He was who He was before Angels were created; before they could worship Him.

God does not need worship.

God does not need Sacrifice - If you Study other Religions, most gods need Sacrifices or the food of the gods.

And so, if you don't feed the gods for a long time, they get very angry.

In our Tradition, a Priest or a Diety would say, "the gods are angry, that is why they caused accident - Because they need blood." They need to feed, because if they don't feed, they starve and go out of existence.

God doesn't need Sacrifice, He doesn't need worship, He doesn't need your Praise. He doesn't even need you to believe in Him - He needs nothing.

Why? Because if God needs something, we can use His need to manipulate Him.

... Are you getting it?

It means, "if I withdraw what He needs, then I can now control Him and become His god."

Since God needs nothing, there is nothing you can use to control Him. You cannot deny Him of anything.

He exists by Himself - God is Transcendent, He does not need His Creation. He created it, but He doesn't need it because He was God before He created it.

So, Genesis 1:1 is telling us all these about God, because He is Transcendent. He was before the Creation came. He existed before the Creation, so nothing in the Creation can control Him.

You know, when it comes to worship, we use Natural Things to try to talk about God.

I understand that the intention is not malicious but it is heretic.

For Example, when you are sitting with your father and you want him to do something for you.

And you go and maybe, Prepare his best food, massage his feet and then you say, "Daddy I need this and I need that." And then he says, I will give it to you.

So we think that is how worship is - God is there, we are massaging Him with our worship, "I Love You, I Praise You, I Worship You, O God. You are Mighty."

As if God is an "Egocentric African King" who needs to be Praised - That once you say these things, God will respond with, "Okay, my son, my daughter, I will give you that." No!

Because if you can do that to God, He is not God - You are His god.

If your Praise and your worship can turn Him, then He is at your beck and call.

But God is Transcendent.

He is not only Transcendent; because He has created the world, and the world exists, the Universe and the People exist.

He cannot be so far away and say: "I am so Transcendent, I am not bothered about the things that are in the world - The Moon, the Sun, the Earth, I don't care about the People." No! He cannot do that.

2. Imminent:

There is a Second thing about God - God is Imminent.

What does that mean?

It means, God actively works through and within His Creation - He is not His Creation, but He works through His Creation.

He is aware of His Creation; He is Present in every Part of His Creation. He fills all time and all space of His Creation.

I like how David, the Psalmist puts it (talking about God) in Psalms 139:7-12

Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your Presence? If I ascend into Heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the Uttermost Parts of the sea, Even there Your hand shall lead me, And Your right hand shall hold me. If I say, "Surely the Darkness shall fall on me," Even the night shall be Light about me; Indeed, the Darkness shall not hide from You, But the Night shines as the day; The Darkness and the Light are both alike to You.

... Very Profound words!

So, basically David is saying that no Part of God's Creation can escape from His Presence and His Power.

Though He is Transcendent, no Part of God's Creation can escape. There is no corner of the Universe that escapes from God.

And if you listen to what David is saying in that Passage (Psalms 139:7-12) - He says, "If I ascend into Heaven," And he is not talking about Heaven (the Abode of God). Of course, God is there.

But he is saying, if I travel into Intergalactic space; at war speed to some Galaxy. He says, God is there, I can't escape. If I go a billion Miles into the Universe, God is there.

Then he says something interesting. He says, "If I make my bed in hell," - You say, hell? The devil is there, God is there.

And by hell David is not just talking about Satan's abode, he is talking about death.

So David is saying, whether I am alive or I am dead, God's Presence surrounds me - That's awesome!

In Heaven, on Earth, in Hell, in Death - God is there.

He says, "And dwell in the Uttermost Parts of the sea," if I go to the deepest Point of the ocean, God is there.

You cannot outrun God's Presence; you cannot stretch beyond God's Presence - That's the Eternal Nature of God.

"The Darkness and the Light are both alike to You" - He is there in Darkness, He is there in the Light. He is there at all times.

So, He is Transcendent - He is beyond His Creation; but He has not abandoned His Creation. He is there at all times and in all Places.

When you look through the Bible, God's Name tells of His Eternal Nature - It says that God is the Everlasting God. He revealed Himself to Moses as "I AM".

Sometimes He is called the Ancient of Days - It doesn't mean He is an Old Man.

He is also called the Living God.

All these terms are expressing one idea - That God is Eternal.

And if you are going to build Faith in God, this is where everything starts - The Eternality of God. Without God's Eternality you cannot understand how He deals with us.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE ETERNALITY OF GOD

I am going to give you Three (3) Implications of the Eternality of God: Practical Application.

What does it mean when we say God is Eternal?

1. God is Always Present:

The first Implication is that God is always Present - He is never absent. And nothing can take Him away.

He is Present in our moments of Pain and Suffering; He is Present in our moments of Joy and Celebration.

He is Present when we feel lonely; He is Present when we feel loved.

He is Present when there is crisis; He is Present when there is Peace.

God is always there - He is Eternal. You can't switch Him off.

And for a Believer, you have to understand that there is no moment in your Life that God is not there.

Many times we think God is there because we are happy - "Oh! I just had a Breakthrough, God is with me."

Now I know He is with me because I Prayed and the Breakthrough came - Woow!

Now you know God is there.

What if all the things are taken away from you, would God go? No!

When a child is born, God is there. When a Person dies, God is there.

He is not absent when we die; neither is He absent when we are born - God is Ever-Present.

There would be no time in your Life that He is absent - That is the Eternality of God: He is

always Present.

2. God Never Changes:

The Second Implication of God's Eternality is that God never changes - He is always God at all times.

He is not "Half God", "Quarter God", "Three Quarter God" - He is always God at all times!

He never Changes - He is Imutable, He is Infinite.

God never improves, never becomes smaller, cannot be Holier than the Holy He is now. His Holiness is fixed, His love is fixed.

He cannot be more Loving, more Holy because if He can be, then He is not. And if He is not, then He cannot say, I AM. He cannot improve, He cannot learn. So, God cannot Change.

You know, People read the Bible and say: "The God of the Old Testament; He was very harsh. But the God of the New Testament is very Kind - As if God improved over the Ages.

He just looks at them and say: These People are so bad, if I hate them I am going to kill them. So I am going to Love them." No!

God has been who He is at all times. His Grace is the same; His Mercy is the same; His Love is the same; His Compassion is the same; His Power is the same; His Goodness is the same at all times - It will never improve.

Human beings improve, because we want to get better - So, we learn and improve ourselves. Trees grow, God doesn't grow. He is always God, He never Changes.

And that is very important! That is why we can trust Him - In Joy and in Sorrow, in Riches and in Poverty; in all situations; the Steadfast Love of God never ceases.

That is what Job understood.

So when he lost everything, he knew God has not Changed.

He said, God still loves me, I know my Redeemer lives;

I don't understand what has happened to me; I don't understand why all of a sudden I have lost everything; I don't understand why my children have died; I don't understand why my Businesses are lost - I don't understand all of that but God never Changes and He loves me.

He loves me when I lose everything, He loves me when I am in Good Health and when my Health is Struggling. He loves me when I have a Good Time and when I have a Bad Time.

God's Love does not correspond to your experiences.

Are you following me?

Now, when you know all that, you become Steadfast in your Faith, immovable through thick and thin, through water and fire.

That's why the Apostles of Jesus Christ never left Him; that's why the Prophets of Old never left God - They were beheaded, eaten by Lions, cut into two, burnt but that never shook them.

They understood the Eternality of God: because if you don't understand that, your Christianity would be Circumstantial.

When Life is Hard, I go to Church.

When I get a Breakthrough, I go to Church.

When things are Good, I go to Church.

When things are Bad, I go to Church.

"Oh! These days I don't even know whether God is there."

Listen, whether God would be there or not there is dependent on you. Because you think, "if my money is not there, God is not there." Then guess who is your god - The money and not the God of the Bible.

If you get broke today God is God, and He has not loved you less - He has loved you with an Eternal Love.

... That is how He loves us - He loves us Eternally.

That is the Second Implication - That God never Changes.

3. God's Presence is not Limited:

And the third and final Implication, because God is Eternal, I can always experience His Presence - God is not far from me:

I can talk to Him anywhere, He can reach me anywhere and anytime.

His Presence is not limited to a spot on Earth - He is not on a Mountain, not in the Valley, not in Jerusalem. Where else? He is not in Accra, not in Nigeria.

Of course, He is in Jerusalem, in Accra, in Nigeria, everywhere: but you cannot confine the Presence of God to a Spot - You cannot!

So, all of us who go to Places to seek God, you don't understand His Eternity.

It doesn't mean you shouldn't go to Places - I mean, if you are a Christian and you want to go to Jerusalem to go and just observe the History of your Faith: The Old Testament, the Life of Christ; and just know how these things happened in the Historical context, that is Great!

If you go to Jerusalem and you go to River Jordan, you are told "this is the water that Jesus was baptized" - That's nice.

But remember, the water that Jesus was baptized in has flowed long ago (laughter).

So, the one you are seeing now is not the water - It flowed long ago.

But if you stand in the Jordan River, thinking that there is a Special Anointing there; you don't understand the Eternality of God - Alright?

God is Eternal, His Presence is not Limited to the Wailing Wall (for example), not Limited to River Jordan - You can go there and enjoy the Historicity of your Faith.

But the Reality of God, David - He was the one who was in Jerusalem, He started Jerusalem. He said, "when I go to the ends of the world You are there: to the Skies, to the Heavens, to the Place of Death, You are there. Wherever I go You are there.

When I am in Darkness, in Light, You are there - Nothing can hide God from You."

God is Eternal.

Let's say that together: God is Eternal!

Don't ever forget that! And that is your first Lesson on God - That He is Eternal.

The Jews call Him the Eternal, the King of the Universe - He is everywhere at all times, we cannot escape Him, and we cannot escape His Presence.

Our belief or disbelief in Him does not Change His Eternality - He would be God after all of us have left the Earth and after a New Generation comes, He would be God.

He would be God if the whole world says, "we don't believe in God." He would say, fine! But I AM.

"We don't believe You are" - He would not even Prove Himself. He is who He is at all times and He is who He is before He created what we see now.

And may the Lord help us to understand that He is Eternal, He is Changeless, from Age to Age He is the same - Amen.

PRAYER

Let's Pray for a moment!

Just talk to God, He hears you:

Eternal God, we come to You. We Thank You that You are who You say You are.

You are the Changeless One - Time, Space and Location do not Change You. You are always who You say You are.

Thank You! Our Trust is always in You, and our Hope is in You: that even when things are dark, You are the Light.

When we are in the Valley, You are there. When we are betrayed, You are there. When all men abandon us, You are there.

When we feel no Love, You love us - You never Change, You never improve, You never become something. You are always who You are in Eternity

Help us Father, to know You truly as You are: to grow in the Knowledge of who You are.

To Love You and to Serve You all the days of our lives.

In Jesus' Name - Amen!

SPECIAL SUNDAY SERVICE WITH PASTOR (DR) MENSA OTABIL (GENERAL OVERSEER, INTERNATIONAL CENTRAL GOSPEL CHURCH (ICGC) CHRIST TEMPLE, ACCRA GHANA)

TOPIC: GOD - PART 2 (OMNIPOTENT CREATOR)

DATE: 21ST JANUARY, 2024

BIBLE TEXT: GENESIS 1:1

This Year our Theme is GOD. Last week I did the first Part of my Teaching on God:

- And we talked about God's Eternality: That God is Eternal.
- That God is Imutable: He never Changes.
- That God is near to us at all times. He is never far away from us.

And today I will do the Second Part of our Message - And we are focusing on:

GOD - PART 2 (OMNIPOTENT CREATOR).

The God who is Eternal is also Omnipotent and He is a Creator.

Genesis 1:1 (NKJV) says: In the Beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth.

That is how the Bible introduces God to us - He is a Creator and that is a very Powerful word.

We are going to look at the Two (2) Words in our Subtitle - "Omnipotent Creator".

1. The first word is Omnipotent:

What does it mean when we say God is Omnipotent?

It means, "He has all Power to do what He wills to do."

It is a big Statement about God - He is Omnipotent.

'Omni' means "All" and 'Potent' means "Power".

So, He literally has all Power to do what He wills to do.

And I want you to Pay attention to how I have defined it. I didn't just sat, He has "All Power";

neither did I just say He can do everything - I said that God has "All Power" to do what He wills to do.

When we look at the Bible, we see God as the first cause of the Universe - He is the One who is causing all things to be. He created the Heavens and the Earth; He has "All Power".

And the reason why we say He has "All Power" is because there is no one here mentioned as helping God, aiding God, or assisting God in any way to do what He is doing

He is doing everything all by Himself - He is not doing it in response to Prayer, in response to a Need. He is not doing it because somebody told Him to do it, or because somebody enabled Him to do it.

... He is doing it all by Himself.

All the Power needed for Creation came from Him.

When we talk about "The Created Universe", He is Omnipotent - "For with God Nothing shall be impossible.

We say nothing is "Too Hard" for God - That God can do anything.

And recently, a Popular one that came up is, "What God cannot do does not exist."

And for a few years, there was a huge debate whether that is a Theologically accurate Statement, or it was a false Statement.

When we say God can do everything, of course Nobody means that God can act against Himself.

That is why we define Omnipotent in the Will of God - God can do all things according to His Will.

When People say, "What God cannot do does not exist" they are not saying that God would do everything, including telling a lie - No!

God cannot act against Himself, God cannot lie, God cannot uncreate Creation and God cannot create Himself. God cannot end Himself either. He cannot at any Point say, "I am no longer God." It's impossible for Him not to be who He is.

So there are things that God cannot do, yes I agree - He can do all things but according to His Will. His Will is Prominent there.

... God is Omnipotent, He has "All Power" to do what He wills to do.

2. Creator: God is the Creator.

What does that mean?

It means He Actively and Purposely brought all things into Existence.

He used His Omnipotence to create all things in the Universe - There is no Creator outside of Him.

And though He created all things, He Himself is uncreated: He did not become. He is, has always been and will always be. He created the Heavens and the Earth.

Genesis 1:1 talks about the Creation of the Heavens and the Earth. But we also know that there are Angels and other Spiritual Beings.

So the Question is: At what Point were they created? Were they created during the time the Heavens and the Earth were created? I don't know, because I was not there!

But later on when you read the Bible, it says that the Angels rejoiced when the Earth was being formed.

So that gives us a clue that somewhere between the Creation of the Heavens and then the coming to being of the Earth, somewhere in between, the Angels most likely were created.

Let's go to Hebrews 11:3 (NKJV) - By Faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are Visible.

Here the Bible is giving us a further clue as to how God created the Universe - The Earth and all the Planets as the Passage puts it.

And the Passage says God created what is Visible from what is Invisible - He created the seen from the unseen; He created the Material world from the Spiritual world.

There is first, the Spiritual and later, the Physical - Natural or Material.

So it gives us a clue as to how God does things - He doesn't start with Physical Things. He starts from Spiritual Things and then the Spiritual Things Produce the Material Things.

And it's not only about the Creation of the Heavens and the Earth; but it is about every way in which God works in our lives. That when God wants to do something for you, He does it in the Spiritual realm before it manifests in the Material world.

As Human Beings, we want to see it Materially before we can believe it. But God says you have to believe it Spiritually before it becomes Material - He created the seen from the unseen.

Every Blessings you want from God first starts Spiritually, then it becomes Material.

So, if you are always walking by what you see; you walk by sight, it is going to be difficult for you to walk by Faith.

The Passage (Hebrews 11:3) says, "my Faith ..."

There are things you don't see now that God has already made.

There are things in your Life that you don't see, and may not see this Year (2024) and next few years to come; but God has already streamed it and made it - It is done!

"How can we say, it is done?" It is done in the unseen Spiritual world; and it will become Material in your Life time.

The things we see are made from things we do not see.

God creates from the Spiritual into the Physical but you've got to walk by Faith.

You have to learn this Principle - When you learn it, you have to learn to stay cool: when you have Prayed and see nothing, you know God has already done it. But the unseen finishes before the seen manifests it.

The Word of God is not seen; the world is seen. And the one which we see came from the one we don't see - The Word of God Produces the world!

And that is going to be how you walk by Faith in your Life - God says it, I believe it, that settles it!

Let's say it together: God says it, I believe it, that settles it!

When you move in that Premise, there is a Settlement in your Heart that, "what I don't see yet has already been framed by God: He has already done it in the realm of the Spirit."

God is a Creator - He doesn't create the Physical first. He doesn't create the seen first. He kick-starts with the unseen and then He comes gradually to the seen. He creates what is visible from what is invisible.

Now, when you read through the Book of Genesis Chapter 1 and you start from Verse 1, "In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth."

As you Progress, you'll see that God makes many things and all kinds of things are happening.

There is Light, there firmaments, and then Plants and animals are coming.

So God is making all things - Everything doesn't end in Genesis 1:1. But things continue to happen.

So, when we talk about God "The Creator", there are different Processes in God's Creative Methodology.

In other words, God makes things in different ways.

And there is a Passage in the Bible that captures God as the Creator.

Isaiah 45:18 (NKJV) says, For thus says the Lord, Who created the Heavens, Who is God, Who formed the Earth and made it, Who has established it, Who did not create it in vain, Who formed it to be inhabited: "I am the Lord, and there is no other."

There are Four (4) words there that I am going to comment on: Created, Formed, Made and Established - All these are different aspects of God's Creative Words.

ASPECTS GOD'S CREATIVE WORDS

I will speak about each of the Four (4) Aspects:

1. God Creates:

There was Nothing, then God created Things (Genesis 1:1).

Out of Nothing, He made things.

When there is zero, He can create one (1).

When there is Nothing, God can make things happen - God creates and makes things out of Nothing.

2. God Forms:

God created the Universe, and out of the Universe formed the Earth.

The word 'formed' is very important - It means that God can make New Things out of what He

has already made.

That word is used for the Creation of Man in Genesis 2:7 - And the Lord God formed Man of the dust of the Ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of Life; and Man became a Living Being.

He didn't create Man from the dust of the Earth, but He formed man.

Why does the Bible use 'formed'?

Because the Earth was there already and the dust was there already - God had already created the dust, and then out of what He had already created, He formed something New.

That means that God's work is not finished just by one Action - He can start something in your Life and then He can form something New out of what He has already done in your Life.

God can start from Nothing and do something. But after He has done something, He can take that thing and do something else with it.

He can form, He can fashion, He can mould - God is not just the One who brings things out of Nothing; but He can also take what has already been done and do something New with it.

When we sing the Song: "Do something New in my Life; something New in my Life..."; we don't mean, God create me again.

You've already made me, but I want You to take this Life and mould it into something else and do something Fresh, New, Awesome in my Life.

God can take what is already existing in your Life and mould it differently - He forms Human Beings, forms animals (cat, dogs).

In other words, what God forms is not the same. He can do different things out of the same Raw Material.

He can do Strange, Awesome, Beautiful Things out of the same Source.

God is able to do things out of Nothing; but after He has done that, He can take what He has done and mould something New out of it.

3. God Makes:

It means to do, to Perform - It means that God can make things happen.

God can work in your Life and make things happen - It is not only in terms of the material things, He can make Day and Night. And Day and Night is not Physical.

He can make things happen in my Life.

So, He can create Things out of Nothing - He can take what He has done and do something New with it and then He can make Things happen.

For Example, when we Sing: "God will make a Way, where there seems to be no Way..."; we don't mean that He will create something Physical.

God making a Way for me is not that He will actually go and create a Path like the Contractor does. It just means that God will create Opportunities for me and God will turn Things around for me.

So, the God who can create Physical Things can also make Things happen in your Life - Where there is no Way, He will make Way.

When you are down, He can lift you up - Because God can fashion things, He can make things happen.

And may God cause things to happen in your Life - Amen.

So look at the senses in which God works;

- He can make Things out of Nothing;

- He can take the Things He made out of Nothing and do something New for them.

- And then, He can make Ways, He can make Things happen for the Things He has made.

So, when God makes you, He also makes a Way for you - He creates a Path for you.

God can make Things happen!

4. God Establishes:

It means to be Instituted, to be Shaken, to be Prepared.

God makes things be, but He also establishes what has been made.

In other words, after He has created the Heavens and the Earth, after He has formed it, after He has made a Path for the Earth ...

And those who Studied Astronomy would talk about Orbits within which every created thing moves - Every created thing moves in a Prescribed Orbit. Whether it's a Galaxy, a Planet, a Sun, a Star - They have to move in a Path that God created for them.

In the same way, when God creates us, He establishes us.

What does it mean?

It means that He gives us what is required to sustain us - He sustains what He has made.

When God created the Heavens and the Earth, He gave the Laws of Physics, Chemistry - Every Law required to sustain what He has done, He puts in Place.

IMPLICATIONS OF GOD AS A CREATOR.

When we say God is a Creator, it has serious Implications; and I am going to talk about Three (3) of those Implications, and then I will be done for the Day:

1. Implication 1: God is my Creator, Maker and Owner.

Let's say it together: God is my Creator, Maker and Owner.

This is serious!

And that's why He has rights on you - You belong to Him, as you didn't make yourself.

God did not create and leave us by the wayside, but He also owns us.

And the thing about Ownership is that the Owner can do whatever He wants to do with the things that He has made.

And God can do anything with you: Your Life is His - He owns us, and we don't own ourselves.

And He doesn't want us to give our Ownership to anything else.

That's why He says, "You shall have no other gods before Me" - Exodus 20:3

That is the only time God says "I am a "Jealous God"."

He didn't say "I am an envious God." He says, I am a "Jealous God".

Jealous means, I Protect what is Mine; and I Protect it with every Source at my disposal.

So, if you go and make something else your god, God has to step in and correct it because you are His Property.

Don't give Ownership of your Life to any other god and neither should you give Ownership of your Life to any Human Being - Not to your Pastor, not to your husband or wife; not even to your Parents.

Parents have responsibility, but they are not Owners.

That's why a Parent cannot look at the children and say, "I brought you into this world, I can take you out - "Because if a Parent kills the child, it's murder. Why? Because he or she is not an Owner.

As a matter of fact, you don't own yourself - If you kill yourself it is a crime.

If we have a Chance we would imprison you (Laughter)! - We call it Suicide but it's a crime. You can't kill yourself. Why? Because you don't own yourself.

If you own yourself we can say Suicide is fine. But if you kill yourself, we should imprison you. Why? You don't own yourself.

Husbands, you don't own your wives, wives, you don't own your husbands. Parents, you don't own your children. Pastors, you don't own your flock.

Who is the Owner? God!

Why is He the Owner? Because He is the Creator and the Maker. And He is the Only One who can say, "I Own this Property."

He has put His mark on me, He has put His Image on me.

In Modern Terms we say, "Brand". You know.

If you bought an Armani Suit - Armani would put his brand in the suit (a mark). And wherever People see that suit they would know, this is Armani Suit - Meaning Armani is the owner of this suit, he has loan it to you for a thousand dollars (Laughter).

DMC NOTES: Giorgio Armani S.p.A; commonly known as Armani, is an Italian Luxury Fashion house founded in Milan by Giorgio Armani which designs, manufactures, distributes and retails haute couture, ready-to-wear, leather goods, shoes, accessories, and home interiors.

In the same way, when you check your Life, at the back of your neck somewhere, there is a brand that says, Jehovah owns you.

God owns you, you are God's Property - He is your Maker, and He is your Owner for ever!

God owns us and that is why, when People want to mess with you, He Protects you.

When somebody says, "God, kill him." God says, can't you see that's my Property? You want me to kill my own Child?

... That's for another day!

So God is my Creator, Maker and Owner.

2. Second Implication: I am here because God wants me to be here.

I didn't choose to come to the Earth.

We are not here by accident - God willed our existence, He determined that we should be born.

Your Parents may think they brought you into the world; but God used them.

That is why, no matter who your Parents are, you have to know who your Owner is.

If I go to find an Armani Suit at the wayside with Nobody claiming Ownership of it, I still know who the owner is because the image has been branded - An Armani Suit, if it is thrown away, still has value.

Don't ever say, "I was dumped by my Parents, Nobody cares for me."

But you have an Owner; and your Owner decided that you should be born. And He decided you should be born at the time you were born.

If He had not willed it, you would never be born. Yes!

If God says, "I don't want you" - You won't come.

You are here because He wants you and He wants you because He has a Purpose and a use for you.

... I am here because God wants me to be here.

3. Final Implication: God is continually working in me to make me for His Purpose.

The Creator doesn't just do one (1) work; He continues to do His work in our lives.

So that even when I mess up, God does not just take me and kick me and say, "This is a wasted Product" - He takes me and remoulds me.

When you go wrong, God takes you and remoulds you.

You lose your way, He creates another way for you because He is the Way Maker.

God your Creator - He doesn't just create you, but He creates the environment and space you to live in. And He creates the Opportunities that come your way and He creates the Times and Seasons of your Life.

So that you were made by Him, and you live in "Equal System" - It is in Him you live and move and have your Being.

We don't just have our Being in Him, we live in Him and we move in Him.

Listen, your Life is not an Accident - There is a Plan that has already been fixed in the unseen, and it is manifesting in your Life.

All you need to do is to say, "Lord let Your Perfect Will be done in my Life."

I don't understand what I am going through, I don't understand what is happening but I know Lord, that You have a Plan for my Life and my Life is going according to Plan.

That is what we learn when we know God as Creator!

CLOSING PRAYER

Father, this Morning, we Pray that each one of us will know You as the Creator;

Not only in our lives, but also of the world we live in, of the Path we follow.

For we know You have made a Path for us - You have opened the Way for us.

I Pray Father, for each one, that we will find Value in our lives and we would find Purpose in the Opportunities that You give to us.

That no one of us would live a Life of despair and hopelessness, thinking that all is lost.

That in You we will find meaning, Purpose and direction.

And I Pray for you, that God who created you would also Order your Path.

That if you've lost your Way, you will see the New Way He has opened for you.

That if People have thrown you out, you will see the Hand of God bringing you in; because your Creator never abandons you.

In Life and in Death, He is your Creator for ever.

And He will lead and guide you in the Way you should go

In Jesus' Name - Amen.



SPECIAL SUNDAY SERVICE WITH PASTOR (DR) MENSA OTABIL (GENERAL OVERSEER, INTERNATIONAL CENTRAL GOSPEL CHURCH (ICGC) CHRIST TEMPLE, ACCRA GHANA)

TOPIC: GOD - PART 3 (GOD IS SPIRIT)

DATE: 28TH JANUARY, 2024

BIBLE TEXT: GENESIS 1:1-2

Today I am doing Part 3 of my Teaching on God, which is the Theme for the Year (2024).

- In Part 1 we talked about God as the Eternal;

- In Part 2 we said God is the Omnipotent Creator.

And today, we are going to look at:

GOD - PART 3 (GOD IS SPIRIT).

One of the things you have to learn as you read Genesis Chapter 1 is that, God is revealing Himself to us - It is a Self Revelation.

And so everything we read is God showing us step by step: Who He is, what kind of Person He is, His Nature, and all of that.

So we learnt that God is Eternal;

We learnt that God is a Creator - And He creates without any help.

He is Omnipotent - No one helps Him to create.

But who is God?

We know that the Heavens are Material, the Earth is Material - You can see it, you can touch it.

But who is this God who is Eternal, and this God who is Omnipotent and a Creator?

That is what Genesis 1:2 tells us about God:

Genesis 1:1-2 (NKJV)

1 In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth.

2 The Earth was without form, and void; and Darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the Waters.

The word I want us to look at is 'Spirit' - It has several Connotations like breath, Wind, Strength.

The word 'Spirit' is very difficult to define.

How do you define Spirit?

As you read the Bible, both in Greek and in the Hebrew; the word that is used for Spirit has different Connotations.

Generally, Spirit is something that is not Physical.

So I am going to attempt to define it in a way that makes sense to all of us.

THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT SPIRIT

1. Spirit is Immaterial:

The first thing I'll say about Spirit is that, it is immaterial - "Spirit is immaterial".

What does that mean?

It means that it does not have Physical Properties.

And that is why it is difficult to describe because everything we know has Physical Properties.

Even the air has Physical Properties - It has an Atomic base, it has Neutron, Protons, and then there is an Atomic base.

Although we don't see it, the air is Material.

The wind is Material - Although we don't see it.

But when we say something is Spirit, it means it has no Material.

That means it has no Physical Properties - You can't touch it. It is there, but it is not Physical.

Everything in the Universe has Material Properties - The Sun, the Moon, the Stars are all Material.

You and I are Material, the Church Auditorium is Material, as we can see it.

But when we say something is Spirit, it has nothing of these Properties.

So, how do you define it?

There is no Language in the Universe to describe Spirit because it doesn't occur in the Universe - It occurs somewhere outside of the Universe.

... First, Spirit is Immaterial: it has no Physical Properties.

2. Spirit is Invisible - You can't see it.

So how do you describe something that is not Material and that is not also seen? What kind of Qualification can you give to it?

The best is to say, "it's like air."

That's why sometimes, People say "God is air - When you want to talk to God you speak into the air." Because air is the closest Element we can use to describe Spirit.

But air has Material Properties - It has Hydrogen in it, it has Oxygen, Carbondioxide and Nitrogen. And all of these are Atomic.

But Spirit has no atoms.

So, although we use air to describe Spirit, Spirit is not air because Spirit is Immaterial, and it is Invisible.

What does Genesis 1:2 tell us about God?

Let's read it again - "The Earth was without form, and void; and Darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the Waters."

What does that tell us about God?

It tells us very Simply that God is Spirit -This God who created the Universe, He is Spirit.

- He is not made of the same Material as the Universe is made of.

- He is not made of the same Material as the Earth is made of.

God is spirit - ELOHIM.

But in the Passage, "God is Spirit" is described as the Spirit of God.

So this is what I say - The Spirit of God is God. The Spirit of God is not different from God. It is not that God is one Person and that He has a Spirit He sent into the world.

The Spirit of God is God - God is Spirit.

Right there in Genesis 1:2, we are told that God is a Spirit - The Creator is a Spirit.

Because God is a Spirit, it is very difficult to discern Him.

There is no Laboratory - The most Sophisticated Laboratory in the world cannot discover God.

Because a Laboratory can only discover something that has atoms.

Since God is a Spirit, and Spirits have no atoms, no Laboratory can find a Spirit; theb no Microscope can find a Spirit; no Telescope can find a Spirit; no Scientific Discovery can ever locate a Spirit.

Because a Spirit is made out of a Material that is not Atomic; and there is no way Science can discover a Spirit, it is the same as the Spirit in you - There is no Scientific way to discover the Spirit in you.

So People say: How do we find Spirits?

People die and they say the Spirit is gone - How do you find the Spirit?

Well, the Spirit is made up of an essence that is not Atomic - it is Material.

The Spirit in you is not part of your Physical Being - So they can cut you, dissect you in all pieces. Scientists, Psychologists can do all they can, they would never discover Spirit because, Spirit has no Material base - It is Invisible.

... Are you getting me?

And the Original Spirit of God is not the only Spirit. But He is the Original Spirit. Because, later on He also gave us Spirit - And Angels are Spirits.

Unfortunately, the 'Bad Boy ' is also Spirit (we would deal with him later).

You cannot invent a Human Instrument of any form to discover God. Because, every Human

Instrument is Atomic-Based. And Spirit is Non Atomic - It is not Material, and it is Invisible.

Genesis 1:2 tells us that, although God is Spirit, He is not Material, and He is Invisible - He is real and active.

The Passage says, the Spirit of God was "hovering".

The Spirit of God is real. Although it is invisible and does not have a Physical Property; He is real. He is not an Imagination, He is not something we speak of to comfort ourselves - The Spirit of God is real.

... So, there is a Reality that is not based on the Material world.

3. The Spirit of God can be Sensed and Felt.

He is not Material, but He can be Sensed - His Presence can be Sensed.

You can know when He is in a Place, and feel it but you cannot dissect it.

How does the Passage tell us that?

It says the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters - It gives the impression of a bird flapping its wings on water. When that is happening, the water would feel the Presence and be despaired.

So that is the impression that Genesis 1:2 tells us - That when the Spirit of God moves in a Place, although you can't see it; and although you cannot Physically feel it, you would still have a sense that God is there.

In the real sense, when People say: "I feel the Presence of God" there would be something that gives them that sense.

Sometimes in a Service you sense God's Presence:

- For some People, they would cry, shed tears.
- For some People, they would feel goose bump.
- For some People, they would feel like trembling.
- Some People would fall down.

All of these Physical Manifestations are telling you: that something you felt; which you couldn't

see in the Spirit realm, had an impact on you.

Just like in Genesis 1:2, the Spirit of God had an impact upon the Waters - He moved upon the Waters, He affected the Waters, He affected the Earth.

So, the Spirit of God is Immaterial, Invisible; but He is Real, Active, and you can feel His Presence.

And God has designed Human Beings with the Capacity to sense His Presence.

Now, you can sense His Presence and deny it;

- You can sense His Presence and say, I think it's just me.

- You can sense His Presence and say, I feel it's "Something-Something".

Whether you call it Something-Something, or Something-Nothing; the Spirit of God is Real, Active and He Witnesses to you all the time when He is Present in your Life.

And there are times you go to a Place when People are conscious of the Presence of God - Sometimes when Worshipping in His Presence and you would know that, although I can't see it, and although I can't Physically feel it; something is happening to me.

And that something happening to you is the Spirit of God - The Creator of the Universe telling you "I am here and I am working."

So, the Spirit of God is Real and Active; the Spirit of God can be sensed or felt - He is a Real Person.

4. The Spirit of God is Distinguished from Other Spirits.

Because at this Point, He is the Holy Spirit.

But by the time Human Beings were created, they also have Spirits.

So the Spirit of God has to be distinguished from the Human Spirits and also from other Spirits - The devil and his gang.

So that the Spirit of God is called the Holy Spirit.

Why is He called the Holy Spirit?

It's because He is not the Only Spirit - There are other Spirits but He is Unique! And so we call

Him Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is God - That is what I want you to understand when we say "God is Spirit"; you cannot Materially dissect it.

If you were the only Human among dogs, the dogs would hear a sound you don't hear.

Because dogs hear sound at a Level Human ears cannot hear.

And the fact that you are not hearing it does not mean it's not occurring.

... Are you getting me?

Even in the Natural world, there are Colours we cannot see - We cannot see Ultra Violet.

We cannot see Ultra Violet Rays but other Beings can see them.

The fact that you didn't see it doesn't mean it's not there - If you go under the Sun and you expose yourself to Ultra Violet Rays, the effect will manifest in your body and you will get all kinds of things happening to your body.

Because, although you don't see it, it is real.

Of course, Science later on is able to discover all these, because they are all Atomic based.

But God is a Spirit: whether you respond to Him or not, "He is Spirit."

Now, what I want you to note in Genesis 1:2 is the Condition under which the Spirit of God is moving.

It's very, very instructive. It says: The Earth was without form, and void; and Darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the Waters.

It says the Earth is void and dark" - All these are Negatives, they are not Positives.

The Waters there are a Symbol of chaos - Something Chaotic is not Good but the Spirit of God is moving.

The Bible is giving us a clear Picture of Who God is and How He works in our lives and where we can feel Him.

TWO (2) IMPLICATIONS

1. The First Implication is that: The Spirit of God rules over all Conditions of Chaos.

No matter how dark or Chaotic Life can be, the Spirit of God rules over it.

- And Darkness cannot hide the Presence of God.

- Darkness cannot stop the Presence of God.

- Chaos cannot stop the Presence and the Working of God.

Many times we think the Spirit of God is only Present when things are Perfectly in order. But Genesis 1:2 tells us that things can be extremely Chaotic in your Life; but the Spirit of God is still there.

And one of the things we have to learn as Christians, is how to sense the Presence of God in the midst of Chaos - When everything around us is wrong.

For us to know the Spirit of God is hovering; that the Spirit of God is moving: "God has not left me, and God is still at work "

If we equate the Presence of God only in Peaceful Environments, we only have half (½) Picture of the Presence of God.

The Presence of God is with you when there is Peace, when things are Settled - The Presence of God is there.

But when things are Chaotic and you can't see your way through; the Spirit of is still Present.

And no matter the Chaos in your Life, the Chaos cannot bury the Presence of God.

The Chaos cannot hide the Presence of God - The Spirit of God is moving over your Life (Amen).

I believe there is somebody sitting here today, inclusive all those reading now on the Label of DMC: this Past week has been the most Chaotic week of your Life. And you probably think "God has left me."

But did God leave the Earth in Genesis 1:2? No! He was there. There was Chaos, there was Darkness, yet He was there.

And interestingly, His Presence does not necessarily Change the circumstances.

Because somehow, we think that, "if God is here, everything must Change."

God is there, Nothing has Changed: it's still Chaotic, it's still dark, it's still formless and void.

... Is God there? Yes!

Sometimes God can be in your Life; God can be Present in your situation and the situation may not Change.

I am not saying "Will not Change." I'm saying, "May not Change".

And in the Period when the situation is not Changing, never Conclude that God is absent.

2. Second Implication: The Spirit of God Prepares me for the Word of God.

Now, if you know the account of Genesis Chapter 1 (this is what I am going to Preach on next week) - "In the Beginning God..."

Who is this God? He is a Spirit.

But then Genesis 1:3 would later tell us that as the Spirit of God moved.

Something else happened - God Spoke!

So, the Spirit of God is a Predecessor to the Word of God.

When you sense the Spirit of God moving in your Life, don't just roll on the floor and get up and go. Because, this Spirit of God in Genesis 1:2 is going to lead to Verse 3;

... Where God is going to release a Word. And it is by a release of the Word that Transformation begins.

If God's Word is not implanted in you, that experience of the Holy Spirit may still leave you in a Chaotic State although you have fully experienced the Holy Spirit; because it is just the beginning of a Process.

You must get the Next Process in other for things to start manifesting, and Change occurring in your Life.

When the Spirit of God moves, we feel His Presence, we sense His Presence - But that is not the end.

... The Spirit of prepares me for the Word of God.

I don't know about you: but I like the Anointing that makes me Stand! And if I fall, fine. But I like the one that makes me Stand.

Because I read in my New Testament that when Jesus Christ was baptized, He rose up (He didn't fall) and the Spirit of God was upon Him.

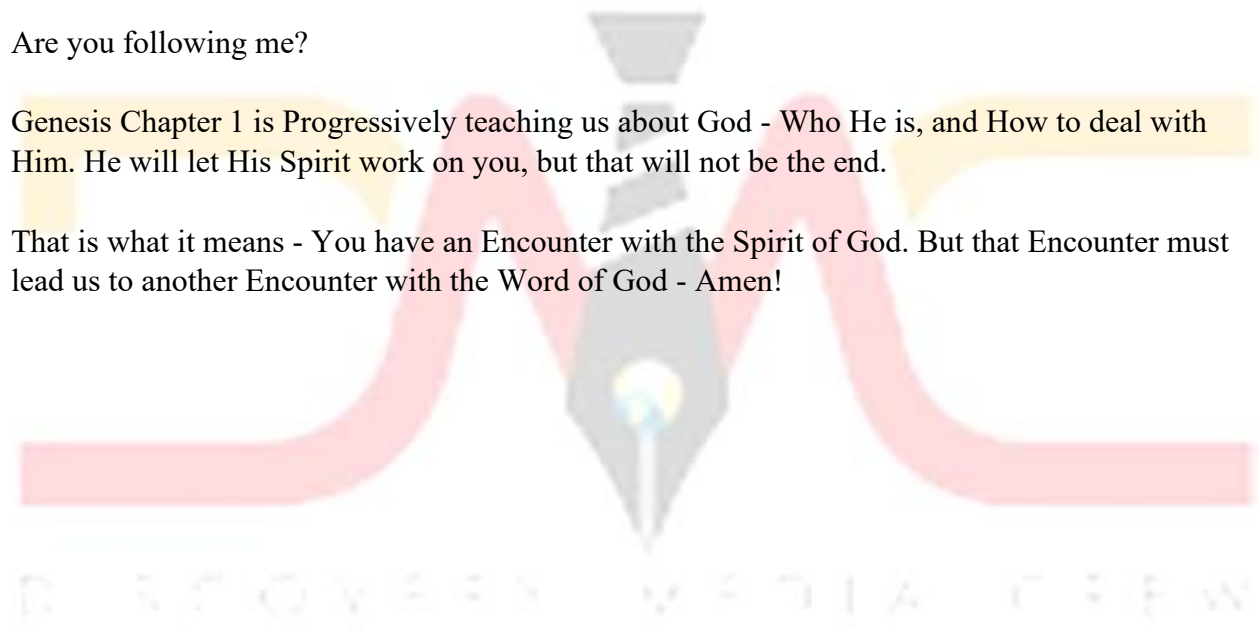
That's the one I like - I want the Anointing that make me Stand and hear Clearly the voice , "This is my beloved son and daughter."

Because if you have an Experience with the Spirit of God and don't have an Encounter with the Word of God; there is no Transformation in your Life.

Are you following me?

Genesis Chapter 1 is Progressively teaching us about God - Who He is, and How to deal with Him. He will let His Spirit work on you, but that will not be the end.

That is what it means - You have an Encounter with the Spirit of God. But that Encounter must lead us to another Encounter with the Word of God - Amen!



SPECIAL SUNDAY SERVICE WITH PASTOR (DR) MENSA OTABIL (GENERAL OVERSEER, INTERNATIONAL CENTRAL GOSPEL CHURCH (ICGC) CHRIST TEMPLE, ACCRA GHANA)

TOPIC: GOD - PART 4 (THE WORD OF GOD)

DATE: 4TH FEBRUARY, 2024

BIBLE TEXT: GENESIS 1:3

I continue with my Series: GOD - PART 4. Today my Subtitle is, "THE WORD OF GOD."

Genesis 1:1 introduces us to God - It is God's Self Introduction.

What we see happening in that Chapter of Genesis is He saying, "This is Who I AM."

- So far in Genesis 1:1 we discovered that God is the Creator.

And not only is He the Creator;

- He is an Omnipotent Creator - Because He created without anybody's help. He did all things by Himself, He has all the Power to create.

- We also discovered that God existed before Creation - So He is Eternal and He is Infinite.

That is the Nature of God.

And in Genesis 1:2, we discovered that God is not only the Creator who is Infinite and who is Omnipotent and created all things; He is Spirit.

- A Spirit is not matter, and is not material.

- A Spirit does not have Atomic Composting.

- A Spirit is a totally different kind of Entity:

And God is Spirit.

If you pay attention to what we are learning so far, you'll find the Foundations of Major Christian Doctrines in the very first Verses of Genesis - God the Creator, God as Spirit, God as the Word.

And these are things that would later come up in the Bible eventually, in the New Testament, developing such Profound Theological Position of the Trinity.

Today we are going to Genesis 1:3 (NKJV) - Then God said, "Let there be Light"; and there was Light.

Usually, when I read that, I tell People, "Tell your neighbour, it is not your Uncle who said it."

This is the Third (3rd) Picture of God we see in Genesis Chapter 1;

- The first (1st) Picture: He is a Creator.

- Second (2nd) Picture: He is a Spirit.

- The Third (3rd) Picture: He is Word.

And so we see the Word of God here, "Let there be Light" - and there was Light!

We find that Phrase "God said" - Although word is not used, 'said' there implies word. It means, to have will or intend to utter a word. God had a will, a Purpose, and intention; and He spoke it.

When we are talking about God speaking, it's not just words that originate from His mouth or from His tongue; but words that come from Himself, from His intention - His will and His Purpose.

The Word of God has roots in God.

In Genesis Chapter 1, many times you find that Phrase "God said" - about eight (8) times.

In all the levels of Creation God speaks and He acts - The Word of God and then the acts of God.

When we say that something has been said, it implies that a word has been spoken.

When God said, "let there be Light" He released words.

It is very important! Because, from Genesis 1:3, we realised that God transmits His Will through His Word. And His Word Performs His work.

... His Will, His Word, His Work - It is Will that Produces the Word and it is the Word that Produces the Work.

So, if I want to see the Work of God, I must receive the Word of God. And the Word of God must come from the Will of God.

You cannot see the Word of God in a vacuum. You cannot just say: Oh! I want to see the work

of God; I want to see the Power of God, I don't have time for the Word. Or I have time for the Word, but I don't care about God's Will.

His Will Produces Word; His Word Produces Work - That's the Trinity right there in Genesis 1:3: "The Will, the Word, the Work!"

That's the sequence - God has a Will.

We know His Will because He speaks His Word. And when He speaks His Word, He does His Work.

That's the way God works.

And when we master these concepts, it helps us to receive from God. He transmits His Will through His Word.

The Apostle John, in the New Testament captures this Magnificent Truth in John 2:3 - The first Chapter of John is a reflection of Genesis Chapter 1.

John 1:1 - In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Genesis 1:1 - In the beginning God created the Heaven and the Earth.

This is the Foundation of Christianity - The Word is God.

The Word did not just come from God, the Word does not just represent God, the Word does not just carry God's idea - The Word is God.

And John develops that to the Point where He talks about the Word becoming flesh, and we know Him as Jesus the incarnate.

The Word is God - That is the big difference between Christianity and every other Religions.

Jesus is not just a Good Teacher, He is not just a Prophet, He is not just a Religious Leader; He is the Word of God. And the Word is God.

The Word became flesh. Right there in Genesis 1 and John 1; we are encountering the Word of God.

The Word is God, so we can say that God and His Word are one.

It is a Fundamental Doctrines of Christianity - The Word is God!

What does that mean? It means that God reveals Himself through His Word.

We know God because He has made Himself known.

How has He made Himself known?

Through His Word - His Word reveals Him.

If you have a Christian who devalues the Word of God, they are devaluing God's Revelation of Himself.

Unfortunately, we are in an era where there are Preachers who don't have any respect for the Word of God.

They believe that the Prophecy they deliver is more important than the Word of God that God had revealed about Himself.

And unfortunately, there are Christians who believe that the Prophet's word, it a Man of God's word, or a Pastor's word is more important than the revealed Word of God.

You cannot know God outside of His "Revealed Word" - At least the God of the Bible.

You may know other gods; but not the God of the Bible - The God of the Bible is known in the Bible. He reveals Himself through His Word.

Certainly, He works through His Word - "Faith comes through His Word."

Everything God does, He does through His Word.

God is desiring to touch the Earth - The Bible says in Genesis 1:2, And the Earth was without form, and void; and Darkness was upon the face of the deep.

And He wants to reformat the Earth so it can move from Unproductive to Productive.

And how does He do it? He doesn't just move things in the Earth; the first thing He does is speak.

Guess what? If God wants to solve a Problem in your Life, how do you think He is going to solve it?

You hear People say, "we want to see the Power of God; we want to see the Hand of God; we want to see the Work of God.

That's true. But how are you going to see it? Though His Word!

If you don't get the Word, you will not get the Works: if you devalue the Word, you devalue the Works in your Life.

So, God Speaks!

And of course, when we say 'God said let there be Light'; sometimes the logical Question you will ask is: "What Language did God speak?"

The Bible is written in Hebrew; so was He speaking in Hebrew?

Well, at that time Hebrew has not been invented as a Language - No man had been created then, to even speak.

So God Spoke!

The Words He spoke would not be a Human Language, but He spoke.

Because speaking is not always in the form of an audible Human Language. You can speak without Speaking - It's Possible.

For example, if you have a Television Set - I remembered when the first Televisions came to Ghana. If you want to make the Television work, you have to go to it; you want to turn the Volume, you go to the Television and turn on the Volume. You want to change Channels, you go to the Television to change the Channel.

In those days we had to hit the Television set for Picture Quality and Clarity.

That was our Language to the Television back then. And then something happened, called Remote Control.

And when you use the Remote Control, you stand somewhere and the Remote Control speaks to the Television.

What Language is it speaking? It is speaking a Coded Language of numbers through infra Red.

It speaks to the Television Set and the Channel changes, the Volumes goes up or down. And all the things you used to do by Physically touching the Television, are now being done remotely. Because a coded information is Passed to the Television, it responds to the Language coming from the Remote Control.

I can understand when the Bible says, "And God said". I believe God released a Coded

informational; Coded with His Will, His Purpose, into the Atmosphere.

God can speak into your Life without you hearing audible voice - God and His Word are one; God works through His Word.

... Let's go a little further:

WHAT DID GOD SAY?

He said, "Let there be Light." Which also means, 'Let light be!'

He calls the things that be not as though they were.

He doesn't Plead with a thing, He speaks it and it is.

Light be!

That's the first lesson we learn about the word of God.

Of course, we know the Creation itself was spoken by the Word - The Word of God Produces Light.

The Word of God does not Produce Darkness, it Produces Light - Light be!

In Genesis 1, this is the first time we are learning about God from the Bible. And it is telling how God works, what does what.

It is telling us that the essential nature of the Word of God is to Produce Light.

In John 1:5, the Bible says, And the Light Shines in the Darkness, and the Darkness did not Comprehend it.

If there is Darkness in a Place and God wants to dispel the Darkness, guess what He is going to do? He is going to send His Word.

His Word would Produce Light and the Darkness cannot resist the Light - That's how God works.

If there is Darkness in my Life, in my family, anywhere around me; and God wants to deal with the Darkness because I want Light, or even before I Pray without diminishing the Power of Prayer because we need to Fast and Pray.

But we also need to learn God's Processes well.

So if He wants to dispel Darkness, what is He going to do? He is going to speak a Word into the situation and that Word would Produce the necessary Light to dispel that Particular Darkness.

WHAT DOES LIGHT REPRESENT?

Three (3) Things that Light represents:

1. Light Represents Illumination:

It simply means, making things clear.

Light dispels darkness, light brings about illumination.

When we find ourselves surrounded by Darkness, understanding God's Word enlightens us.

The Darkness that the Bible talks about can be Physical Darkness or Metaphysical Darkness.

And when we say something is Physical Darkness, this is when we turn off all the Light, then we'll have Physical Darkness.

When you say it is Metaphysical, it can be Spiritual. That means Darkness that is not of a Physical Source and it can come in different forms;

- It can come through Demonic Activities;
- It can come through Ignorance;
- It can come through all kinds of things.

But it is Darkness! And its Source is not Physical.

Whether the Source of the Darkness is Physical or Metaphysical; the Light of God would disperse it - Amen.

And no matter how Gross the Darkness is, the Word of God would disperse it - Amen.

Illumination! The Word of God Producing Light make things clear.

Staying under the Word of God and the Light of God brings Deliverance.

I understand that there are Deliverance Ministries. People are used to but the Greatest Deliverance comes from the Word of God entering a Person and dispelling every Darkness.

Whether it is Ancestral Darkness, Demonic Darkness, Witchcraft Darkness, Mammy Water Darkness; the Light of the Word of God will dispel it - Amen.

And sometimes all you need to do is to get the Word of God deep inside of you, and every deep Darkness will be evicted.

... The Light of the Word of God dispels Darkness.

That is what God did in Genesis Chapter 1 - He is telling us, if you have Darkness, get the worse. Let the Word Produce Light and the Darkness does not comprehend it.

Just coming to Church and hearing the Word of God beign rightly taught and rightly delivered, will bring Deliverance.

Some of you have no idea of the kind of Deliverance taking Place in your Spirit.

In your Mind, you are going to find out all kinds of things that were harassing your Life just dispersed: simply because the Light of the Word of God has come into the Darkness.

Don't ever underestimate the Power of the "Written Word" of God - Don't confine it to a Low Level, because Satan's number one job is to make you doubt that the Word of God is real.

That's what he did to Adam and Eve. That's what he is going to tell you - That all you need is the teaching of the Word of God.

But If you believe what God says, it will dispel Darkness.

Whether it is Physical or Metaphysical, whether Demonic or Social, Cultural or Ignorance; it will dispel it - Amen.

Sitting under the Word of God dispels Darkness. That is why you need to find a Church where the Word of God is Properly taught. Because just by exposing your Mind to the Intelligence of God, it dispels all forms of Darkness.

You are being Changed gradually without you knowing it that you are being Changed - The Word of God brings Illumination!

2. Light brings Information:

It tells us something: when we receive God's Word - We receive Information about the things He

wants us to know.

And it is that Information that Produces Transformation.

The Earth's Transformation - From a Non-Productive ball to a Productive ball that could sustain Life was accomplished through the Word of God.

Value the Word of God; it will give you Information that would Transform you - Information Transforms!

- It would Transform you from a small Faithing Person to a Big Faithing Person.
- It would Transform you from a Timid Oppressed Person to a Liberated Free Person.
- It would Transform you from a Person running away from Demons to a Person who is chasing Demons.
- It would Transform you from a Person afraid of Witches to one who walks into the Territories of Witches and Wizards, shakes their hands for them to fall.

Because, when you have His Word inside you - People say, when you go to the Village don't drink water (maybe the water is Polluted).

But if you are telling me that Demonic Forces have Possessed the water, I will drink the water. Because if I listen and do not drink, I am saying, 'greater is he who is there than He Who is inside of me.'

If I believe the Greater One is in me I would drink the water.

How do I know? Where is my Confidence? It is not in my Anointing, it is not because I am a Pastor:

It is because I know the "Sure Word" of God - It has fortified me. The Word had "Cooked" me; and I am 'Cooked' in the Word of God.

The Word of God is inside of me, it is outside of me, it is in my Mind, it is in my Heart, it is in my world!

When you have the Word of God in you, you will walk like a Champion.

Wherever you go, you know that "Greater is He who is in me."

You'll walk on serpents and scorpions, and nothing shall by any means hurt you."

Because the Word of God has impregnated your Mind - The Word of God brings Information.

... And finally,

3. Light brings Instruction to us:

It gives us direction; it is our Instruction Manual - The Manufacturer's Manual on how we should run our lives.

When God said, let there be Light, He instructed Light to appear and there was Light.

God's Word is instruction - When you buy any item, like Speakers, Microphones, already made branded Clothes (except it's a wayside clothes); they all come with instructions - How to wash it, what kind of washing cycle you should use.

Anything Properly manufactured must have an instruction manual, to show us how to Properly manage and use that thing.

If you are Properly made by God, you have an Instruction Manual - It's called "The Bible".

And that Instruction Manual tells you what to say, what not to say. How to say, how not to say. How to see things, what not to see. What to look at, what not to look at.

And it says, "if you do these things, you will be above only and will not be beneath."

The Christian Life is not a Magical Life; it is a Life of Illumination, Information and Instruction.

It is an Intelligent Life designed by God for His Greatest Creation to live successfully in the Planet He has made for that Person.

You don't go out living your Life anyhow, saying, "I believe it will be well."

Yes, it is good to believe it would be well but on what basis? Where is the Manual? Have you read the Manual about how you should think?

It tells you what to think about.

Philippians 4:8 says: Finally, Brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

It tells you how to deal with People; how to deal with those who offend you. And if you follow

the Manual your 'machine' will operate at its optimal.

You are the Human Machine, and God is the Manufacturer.

He gave you the manual - It is the Word of God.

The Word that He used to bring all things (including you) into being. It's the same Word He tells you to use to maintain yourself in the world He has created.

The Word of God is actually God Himself: and when I walk in the Word, I am walking in God.

CLOSING PRAYER

Father, this Morning let Your Word touch every Life, break every barriers, bring Light.

That Your Children will not walk in Darkness, but they would walk in Your Word - The Word from God.

Not the word of a man, not the word of a Gift; but the Word of God Himself - The Great Manufacturer who made us.

Let Your Word have free course in us.

Let Your Word shape our Minds, our Thoughts, our words, our activities, our behaviour.

Let Your Word rule our Minds, that we may live a Life of Dominion that You creates us for.

That we would not be Subservient Slaves to the forces of Nature.

That we would be Master over every force of Nature and walk in Divine Power and Authority by Your Word.

In Jesus' Name - Amen.

SPECIAL SUNDAY SERVICE WITH PASTOR (DR) MENSA OTABIL (GENERAL OVERSEER, INTERNATIONAL CENTRAL GOSPEL CHURCH (ICGC) CHRIST TEMPLE, ACCRA GHANA)

TOPIC: GOD - PART 5 (HIS WORKS ARE GOOD)

DATE: 11TH FEBRUARY, 2024

BIBLE TEXT: GENESIS 1: 4-5

I am doing my Series: GOD - PART 5. And today my Subtitle is: "HIS WORKS ARE GOOD."

We've talked about the fact that in Genesis 1:1, God introduces us to God - It is God's Self Himself as an Eternal Creator, He existed before creation.

- He also introduces Himself as the Omnipotent Creator: The Creator who didn't need anybody's help to create all things.

- Then God introduces Himself as Spirit: God is Spirit. We looked at that in Part 3.

- And in Part 4 God is His Word: The Word of God is God.

Today we are looking at how God sees His work; how He approaches His own works - His attitude towards His work, which is Good.

So, we'll look at Genesis 1:4-5, and let us hear the reading of God's Word:

4 And God saw the Light, that it was Good; and God divided the Light from the Darkness.

5 God called the Light Day, and the Darkness He called Night. So the Evening and the Morning were the first day.

This is the first (1st) Statement in the Bible that talks about how God sees His own work - God has created some things, but how does He see His own works?

This is the first (1st) Verse in the entire Bible, introducing us to God's attitude towards His own Work - Is God Purposeful? Does it serve any Purpose? Is there any real reason behind things that happen to us?

These are very important Questions, because when you are in this world things happen; People say, "Life happened." And sometimes you wonder, is there any Purpose in the things that are happening? Is there any reason why the things should happen?

... And that is what we are going to try to discover from this series.

Now, when you look through Genesis Chapter 1, there is a Pattern beginning from Verses 3, 4 and 5, that is repeated throughout the Book of Genesis Chapter 1.

In other words, God says something will happen then the thing would happen. And He would see what has happened, and He would give verdict about the thing that has happened.

And then he would define what has happened.

Sometimes He would name what has happened and locks it into a Day.

There is a Process that starts and goes through the whole of Genesis Chapter 1 - God's verdict about what he has created that is Good.

God saw the Light that is us Good.

The Question is: WHAT DOES THE WORD 'GOOD' MEAN?

What is 'Good?'

It means that something is well, something is in order, something is beautiful.

So, when He says it is Good, it is not just Good because it is Morally Good; it is Good because it is in order and it looks nice.

God looks at His Work and He says, it is Good! It is in order, it is beautiful - This is what I wanted to do.

God called His Work Good!

And the Lesson we learnt here is that: God is the Judge of His own Work.

We do not determine the Value of God's Work - He determines what His Works mean.

Because many times we feel we are the ones who must determine whether something God has done is Good or Bad.

You go through something in Life and you determine whether it's Good or Bad.

But the Bible says we don't determine it - God is the Judge of his Works; I am not the judge of God's Work.

In our Local Parlance, there is a very Popular saying that, "The one who makes the Path does not know whether it is crooked or not".

So, the idea is that, when you are doing something, you are not the one to judge it - Somebody else must evaluate it; because the Path you are cutting may be crooked.

May I just let you know - It doesn't apply to God as it applies to you (Humans). It doesn't apply to God.

We cannot say that God is cutting a Path and He doesn't know whether it is Good or Bad: and then you are the one to go and say whether it is Good or Bad. No!

God did His Work and then He judged His Work. God is the Judge of His Work - He determines what His work means.

So when you are going through some things in Life - Maybe a Challenge or something happens and you want to pass Judgement on it; God says, "No! You don't have a right to do that: Because if it is happening in my world, I Am the One who determines what it is".

... In the first (1st) instance, He says that His Work is Good - God's Work is Good.

God is a "Good God", and His Works are Good.

WHY DOES GOD SAY HIS WORKS ARE GOOD?

1. Because, His Works are in line with His Will.

The Word 'Good' means that something is in order. It is exactly as it was intended to be.

So God says, "what I have done is exactly as I intended it to be - It is Good, it is in order. That is what I wanted."

That's a very Powerful Concept!

Because things happen in your Life you think God has made a mistake and so you ask, "why me Lord?"

And normally, when you say 'why me Lord?' it means, why not Him? Why should it happen to me? It shouldn't have happened to me - Why me Lord?

But everything God does fits into His Will - It is according to His Will.

He Charges what He does, He determines whether what is happening to you is Good or not Good. He is the Judge of His Works; His Works are in line with His Will.

2. It also means that His Works are Purposeful and Pleasing to Him

God's Work is Purposeful - He delights in His Work and He Celebrates His Work.

What you read in Genesis 1:4 is that, " And God saw the Light, that it was Good;"

It is like somebody who has accomplished a task and after he has done the task he says, Woow! You are saying, "this thing is exactly how I wanted it to be and it looks Good; and it is Purposeful. It is doing what I want it to do."

God's Work is Purposeful.

There is nothing happening in your Life, as a Child of God that has no Purpose.

When you are an Unbeliever, you can say, "I don't even know what's going on."

But when you are a Child of God, nothing happens in your Life that is not Purposeful - It may not seem Good, it may not feel Pleasant or it may not be what you wished would happen;

... But God never makes mistakes with His Works.

So, he looks at what He has done and He said, it a Good!

And it is interesting as you read Genesis 1:3-4, the Bible says, Then God said, "Let there be Light"; and there was Light. And God saw the Light, that it was Good; and God divided the Light from the Darkness.

But He didn't banish the Darkness forever - It is not that Light came and Darkness disappeared, and there was no more Darkness. The Light came and Darkness also was there and He appointed Spheres for them.

- So, can God use Darkness to accomplish Good? Yes!

- Can He use Light to accomplish Good? Yes!

So, there will be some Darkness in your Life.

The fact that you are Light, does not mean Darkness would never come - Darkness would come!

Light comes, Darkness comes; but God remains the same - He is Good all the time!

If you are going through a dark Path in Life, God is Good!

God is Good in the Light as well as in the Darkness.

That's where our Christian Faith starts - Our Christian Faith is not just Positivism.

Christianity is not Positivism - Meaning everything is okay.

But the Bible clearly teaches us that sometimes Darkness comes - Even after God has brought Light, sometimes Darkness comes but God is constant.

He is Good in the Light, He is Good for in the Darkness.

Interestingly, if you read the Passage (Genesis 1:5) the Bible says, God called the Light Day, and the Darkness He called Night. So the Evening and the Morning were the first Day.

He called the Light 'Good' but He didn't call the Darkness 'Good' and neither did He call it Bad. He just left the Darkness to be what it wants to be.

But the Constant there is not even the Light or the Darkness; because God overrules both the Light and the Darkness - The Constant is God:

- He is Good in the dark, He is Good in the Light.
- He is Good when you are down, He is Good when you are up.
- He is Good when everybody turns against you, He is Good when everybody is Praising you.
- He is Good when you are happy, He is Good when you are sad.
- He is Good on Pay Day, He is Good on Broke Day.

Everytime He a Good: That is why we say, "God is Good - All the time!"

It is a nice Slogan!

But when you are going through Life, it doesn't feel that way. Because sometimes when you are going through Life, you are like, God is not Good. You say, "God, as for this one, I will mark and fail You."

Unfortunately, He doesn't give you the right to mark Him - He marks Himself.

And He says, whatever you are going through, He is Good. Because we see Life only from a short time. The oldest Person on this Earth at this time (I think) is about one hundred and fourteen (114) years. That's not too old.

Even that Person, looking at Life, he or she has a hundred and fourteen (114) years Perspective. Whereas God has an Eternity Perspective.

And if you squeeze one hundred and fourteen (114) years into Eternity, it disappears!

Because, we see Life only from our Point of view and expands of our lives; we can change things now and not know how they will be five hundred (500) years from now. And they will be a thousand years from now.

But God looks at something from now and He sees how it will be a thousand years from now; five hundred (500) years from now.

So, when He says "it is Good", His Perspective is far wider than your Perspectives.

There are actions you are taking now, the consequences will be for a thousand years but you don't even know;

There are People you are talking to now; and the effect that conversation is having on those People can be for a thousand years.

For you, you are just living your Life but God sees the end from the beginning - That's why, He says, "I Am in it, it is Good!"

Somebody say: God is Good!

THREE (3) ACTONS OF GOD IN GENESIS 1:4-5.

When you look through the Passage, there are three (3) Actions of God that we are going to look at in that Passage (Genesis 1:4-5);

1. God "saw" the Light He has made.

"God saw" - What does it mean? It means God is aware of what He is doing.

You may not be aware, but He is aware of what He is doing. He saw the Light that He had made.

God does not hide from His Works - He is aware of His Works. He is Present before His Works.

... He saw the Light.

And just get this: God is aware of what He is doing in your Life - He is aware of it.

There are things that have happened in your Life - At the time they happened in my Life I thought it was the most horrible thing to ever happened in my Life; most horrible!

I would never say, God is Good - I would rather say God is wicked; He is terrible. What can come out of this?

1975 I lost my mother; 1976 I lost my father.

Of course, when you lose your Parents in one (1) year, what are you going to do?

We didn't own the house we were in, we were tenants in the house. All kinds of trouble came!

And because we were Young and Poor, Relatives came to pick all of us - My siblings and I were scattered to Relatives.

And I was sent to my Aunt in Accra who lived in Kanda Estate. And in that Estate I found other Believers, and we started a Christian Fellowship called, "Kanda Estate Christian Fellowship."

And out of that Kanda Estate Christian Fellowship came something called, "International Central Gospel Church (ICGC)."

Now, I cannot say God killed my mother; but if she had not died, there was no way I would live in Kanda Estate. And there was no way I could meet the People I met in Kanda Estate. And there was no way I would have started a Church!

Because, my mother would have told me, "Mensa don't!" - She would never have encouraged me to start a Church. Never!

I can almost imagine what she would have said if I told her God has called me - She would say, "No! God hasn't called you, be Patient."

Was it God who killed her? I don't know! But now I can look back and say, it was tough and it was Good because God had something in Mind that I could never ever had anticipated.

If I had to make a Choice, I would never make that Choice - Who would make a Choice to kill their mother?

So, when God does something and He says it is Good; you may not see it but God sees His Work, He is aware of His Work, He knows what He is doing. He is not crazy, He is Purposeful.

Somebody say, God knows what He is doing in my Life! I don't know it, I don't understand it all.

But God sees what He is doing. He is aware of it. He is not an absentminded God!

... The Second (2nd) Action is that:

2. He separated the Night from the Day.

He divided it - He set things in their rightful Place.

God is a God of order - He separated the Light from the Darkness. He brings order out of chaos. But the Light did not abolish the darkness - It didn't!

- So, God is saying: there are moments in your Life, you are going to experience Darkness. And there are moments in your Life, you are going to experience Light.

- There are times you can't see your way clear and there times you can see your way clear.

- There are times you can get confused and there are times you can get clarity.

But in both Seasons, God is Good!

If you are going through divorce, it's a dark spot. You think 'No Good can come of this.' But God sees the end from the beginning.

He sees things and outcomes we don't see.

He sees things far into the distance.

And He is able to Position you in Places you would never have chosen to be - Left to you, you would never choose it.

But in His Big Scheme, He needs you to do it. So He is going to contrive and create the right circumstances to Position you where He wants you to be because 'Greater Good' comes out of what He does in your Life.

When He says, it is Good, it is 'Greater Good'.

It may be Good for you as an individual - It benefits only you.

God wants what He does, not just to benefit you, but to benefit ten thousand (10,000) People.

And benefiting ten thousand (10,000) People is more important than benefiting one (1) Person.

In God's Providence, He is going to Place you in a Place where you can be of more benefit to your children and grandchildren.

Some of you, what God is doing in your Life is not for you, it is for your children;

Because your children need certain impetus - And He is going to create it because of the Purpose He has for them twenty (20) years down the line. And you would never make that Choice if you were given that option.

Even if you were told the benefit of it, you won't choose it - Thank God for His Mercy!

... God divides and sets things in their rightful Place.

The Third and final action we see in the Passage is that;

3. God called the Light Day, He called the Darkness Night.

I like the Final Declaration - He saw that the Light is Good and called it Day. And He called the Darkness Night.

... He didn't call it evil; He called it Night!

He says, there's going to be a Day Season and there's going to be a Night Season - A Night Season is not necessarily an evil Season; it's just a Night Season. A Day Season is just a Day Season.

And if you've lived on this Earth for a while, you know that, no matter how long the Day is, Night will come - No matter how Prolong the Day is, Night will come.

And no matter how Prolong the Night is, Day will come.

God says, the Light is just a Day, the Darkness is just a Night.

"Weeping may endure for a Night, But joy comes in the Morning" - Psalms 30:5B

Don't throw away your Life because you are in the Night Season - The Day Season is going to come, because of the Goodness of the Lord. He can show you Mercy in the Darkness, and in the Night. He can show you Mercy in the Light, in the Day.

... God is God of both during the Day and the Night; His Works are Good!

And this is how the Apostle Paul reflects on what Genesis 1:3-5 means to Believers. This how he puts it in 2 Corinthians 4: 6-9:

For it is the God who commanded Light to Shine out of Darkness, who has shone in our Hearts to give the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this Treasure in Earthen Vessels, that the Excellence of the Power may be of God and not of us. We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are Perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed.

He is drawing it in the New Testament Era, how we see what God did in Genesis 1:3-5; Then God said, "Let there be Light"; and there was Light. And God saw the Light, that it was Good; and God divided the Light from the Darkness. God called the Light Day, and the Darkness He called Night. So the Evening and the Morning were the first Day.

What is Apostle Paul saying? He is saying, the same God who said, let there be Light, and there was Light, is the same God who said let there be Light in our Hearts.

When we receive Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour, He brings Light into the Darkness of our Hearts.

If you are a Child of God and you are Born Again, you have received God's Light in your Life; and He says, because of that, we are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are Perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed.

The intended Purpose of what is happening to us doesn't happen - In other words, we got a big blow from Mike Tyson; we were struck down. But when we went down in the Boxing Ring and Probably for a moment, we were counted out!

But have you noticed that People who were counted out in a Boxing Ring don't die? They get up and continue living.

It's not as if when they count one (1) to ten (10) - Knock out!

For your Life you are knocked out - No! You can get up after that, go and continue with your Life.

Apostle Paul says we are struck down but we are not destroyed. Why? Because the same God who said let there be Light, has given us Light in our Heart.

If you are a Born Again Believer, you have the Light of God inside you. And because of that, you cannot lose in the battle of Life.

Because of that, you will never fail in the battle of Life.

Even when People think you have failed, God will find a way to turn your Failure into Success - Amen.

You can have somebody who Probably doesn't have a child and may never have Biological children. But who has influenced and trained somebody - A Nephew, a Niece, a child from the Children Church, a Student, etc

And that Person they have trained and influenced would Probably be the most influential Person fifty (50) years from now. And Probably, if they had children, they would never have taken care of that Person.

God has a way of turning your Darkness into Purpose.

And this Morning, we want to trust Him with our lives: that He knows what He is doing, and He is aware of what He is doing.

Please, let's get up on our feet - We are going to Pray shortly before we close.

PRAYERS

1. Lift up your hands to God and Thank Him for your Life.

Thank Him for the Darkness, Thank Him for the Night Seasons.

Thank Him for things you don't understand - Things you are going through that doesn't make sense to you.

Thank Him that He is working out His Purposes, He is bringing beauty out of it.

He says you are in the Night, but He would bring you out of it.

Romans 8:2 says, And we know that all things work together for Good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His Purpose.

Lift up your hands and Thank Him for your Life - Thank You Lord!

2. Ask the Lord to help you to see and Understand His Purposes for your Life.

Tell Him: I am not a Mistake, I am not a disgrace, I am not a failure - You are working Your Purposes for my Life.

In Your Scheme of Things, I fit on well. I am not a misfit; I fit into God's Plans, into God's Purposes.

Thank You Lord!

CLOSING PRAYER

Father, Thank You that You see what You have made and You call it Good.

You see us, You made us in Your Image; Patterned after Christ Jesus, with the Light of Christ and You say, it is Good.

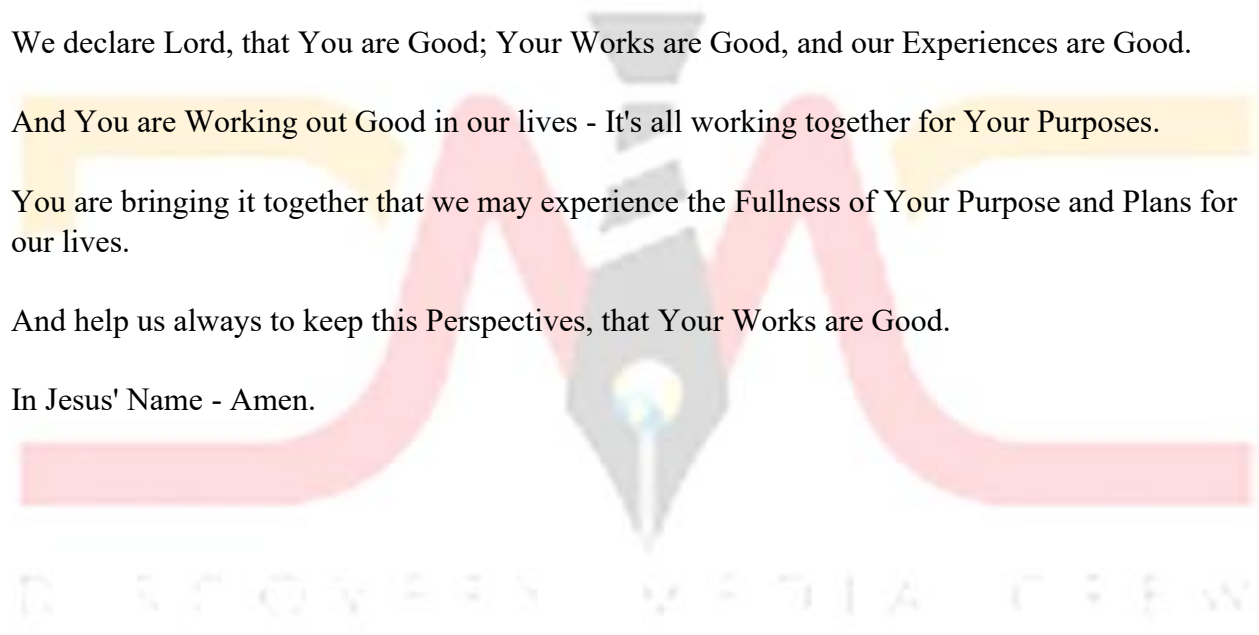
We declare Lord, that You are Good; Your Works are Good, and our Experiences are Good.

And You are Working out Good in our lives - It's all working together for Your Purposes.

You are bringing it together that we may experience the Fullness of Your Purpose and Plans for our lives.

And help us always to keep this Perspectives, that Your Works are Good.

In Jesus' Name - Amen.



SPECIAL SUNDAY SERVICE WITH PASTOR (DR) MENSA OTABIL (GENERAL OVERSEER, INTERNATIONAL CENTRAL GOSPEL CHURCH (ICGC) CHRIST TEMPLE, ACCRA GHANA)

TOPIC: MY MINISTRY VALUES

DATE: 18TH FEBRUARY, 2024

BIBLE TEXT: 2 TIMOTHY 3:10-11

Today I am going to do a Message about ICGC at 40. And I want to talk about, "MY MINISTRY VALUES."

... What is important to me as a Minister of the Gospel.

And I am going to talk about: Ten (10) Important Values to me as a Pastor. I am a Pastor and it is important you get to know:

- Who your Pastor is?
- What is important to him?
- What is he hoping to achieve?
- What does he think his Life is all about?

Because it's always good to know what the People you think are your Leaders consider Valuable to them.

I've put together Ten (10) Things I will be talking to you today about my Ministry Values - Not just Core Values, but things that guide me as a Minister of the Gospel and a Preacher of the Word of God.

And I hope that each one of them will get a Perspective that helps us - Amen.

My Bible Text is from 2 Timothy 3:10-11.

Just to give you a little background:

Timothy is a young Pastor who was Pastoring the Church in Ephesus. He was Paul's Protege - Somebody that Paul was grooming and leading in Ministry. And Paul was very focused on Timothy's Ministry and tried to help him to be a man of his own.

So, Paul wrote to Timothy as he was a Pastor and told him a few things, and also helped Timothy to know who Paul was and what he stood for. And our Bible Text today is part of Paul's instructions to Timothy.

2 Timothy 3:10-11 (NKJV)

10 But you have carefully followed my Doctrine, manner of Life, Purpose, Faith, Longsuffering, Love, Perseverance,

11 Persecutions, Afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra — What Persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me.

What I want to focus on in this Statement of Paul to Timothy is what he said about, "Doctrine, manner of Life, Purpose, Faith."

Paul said to Timothy, you've observed these things about me:

- What my Doctrine is: that is what I teach.
- My manner of Life: the kind of Life I live.
- My Purpose, Faith and Love.
- And then he talks about his Longsuffering also, which Timothy has observed.

One of the difficulties we face sometimes as Pastors is that People judge all Pastors to behave the same way.

So, when they leave one Church and go to another, they think that the Pastor is like their former Pastor.

Even when they sit in the Service and they don't see what they are expecting, somehow they still think it is so.

One of the things you learn about Life is that, People don't experience Life as it is: they experience Life as they expect it to be.

Some times People are going through one thing, but their expectation is very different. And they focus on their expectation instead of the reality. And we live with People as we expect and not as they are.

For example, if you've had a bad Marriage before as a man, and marry a new wife; you somehow Project the bad habit from the Previous Marriage into the woman who has done nothing. And no

matter how different she is from your Previous Partner, because the expectation is stronger than the reality; somehow in your Mind you think she is like that.

It's the same way with a woman who goes to marry a new husband - Maybe you had a bad Marriage and the man mistreated you; somehow you bring the Projection of the past into the new.

I am going to tell you what my Values are.

And don't try to project another Pastor's Values on me - This is Mensa Otabil and what I stand for!

TEN (10) IMPORTANT VALUES TO ME AS A PASTOR

1. To Truly Know God as He has revealed Himself in Scriptures:

This is very important to me!

This is where everything starts: To know the God of the Bible. Not the god of my Ancestors, or the gods of my expectations and experiences. But the God of the Bible. Because the Bible is God's Special Revelation to me, to you and to all of us.

Many times our view of God is not formed from the Bible - It is formed from Probably what we heard the Preacher say. Probably what somebody said or Probably our views of a certain Religion.

For most of us in Africa, our Ancestral Religion, in a lot of ways, determine what we think of the Living God.

But the Bible is the surest way to help us find God. And so, in my quest to know God, the Bible is central.

Not my Experiences, not my Dreams, not my Desires but what the Bible says about God - From Genesis to Revelation.

And that's why in my Preaching, I endeavour to stay within Scriptures.

I don't talk about certain things that have happened to me; but what the Scripture says. Because my desire is to know the God of the Bible - That's my Number one (No. 1) Value.

... Because the God of the Bible is the True God is the Universe.

2. To Live out my Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ through my Thoughts, Choices and Actions:

The Christian Life is a Life of Submission to Jesus Christ.

That means, to yield to the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Early Apostles of Jesus Christ called themselves "Slaves of God" - That's a very Powerful Statement.

In other words, when it comes to Christ, they had no choice but to obey Him.

And that is how I see my Christian Life - It is not about me trying to live the Life that Pleases me; but endeavouring to live my Life as Christ would want me to live through my Thoughts, Choices and Actions.

No matter how difficult it is to live the Christian Life, I must live it. And I must live it in my Thoughts, Choices and Actions.

It is not so much about the fanciful things - Being called a Man of God or being seen at a very high level.

But living the Christian Life; living it Personally, living it in my Marriage, in my family and among friends.

I want my wife to know me as a Christian - I don't want my wife to first know me as a Man of God; I want her to know me first and foremost as a Christian.

Also, I want my children and friends to know me as a Christian.

And I want you to know me first, not as a Pastor, but as a Christian.

Because if I am not a good Christian, I cannot be a Pastor.

Everything I do as a Pastor is Premise on the fact that I am a Christian; and that I am a Follower of the Lord Jesus Christ.

That is a very important Value to me - To live out my Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ through my Thoughts, Choices and Actions.

3. To Learn to be Sensitive to the Holy Spirit's Presence and Promptings:

The Lord Jesus Christ Promised to be with us through the Holy Spirit after He has Physically ascended to Heaven. And the Holy Spirit lives within us, not outside of us.

And if the Holy Spirit lives within me, then He will lead me from within - He is not going to lead me from outside me.

The Holy Spirit doesn't live in rivers. He doesn't live in Mountains or trees - He lives inside my Heart.

And if He lives inside my Heart, then it is from inside my Heart that He is going to lead me.

That is why in seeking Guidance, I don't go outside, I go within. Because the Holy Spirit lives within.

It is important that I commit my Life to the Holy Spirit and endeavour to sense His Leading;

- To what He is indicating to me and what He is doing.
- I don't Presume that everything I feel comes from the Holy Spirit. I cannot Presume that.
- Neither can I put God on the line, so that if what I said doesn't come to pass, they would say God has lied.
- Neither do I want to manipulate People into obeying me. By attaching the Holy Spirit to my statement.

Because if I come to you and tell you, "The Holy Spirit told me to tell you something..." Instantly, you feel compelled to do it. Because I said the Holy Spirit, you are not going to think, reason and you are not going to access whether what I said make sense or not.

So I don't use such Phrases.

Instead you would hear me use Phrases like: "I sense, I think, I believe Strongly that this is so and so."

That doesn't mean I don't hear from the Holy Spirit, or I don't feel His Guidance.

But I want you to think when I speak, I want you to reason when I speak and I want you to make a Choice that is Compatible with your own Will and your Volution.

I don't want you to feel, "I must do what has to be done because Pastor said the Holy Spirit told him."

You must hear the Holy Spirit, you must make your own Choices and you must take your own Actions.

It is a Choice I have made; that I would use Phrases that allow People to think, to reason and to make Choices, based on a sense of Conviction - Not Manipulation and being Compelled.

... So I have learned to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's Presence and to His Promptings.

4. To Build my Life on a Firm Theological Base, rooted in Rigorous Bible Studies:

As a Preacher, I am an Expositor of the Bible - I cannot teach from a Place of ignorance. I cannot just Preach about my Experiences. I must seek to understand the Scriptures, so I can teach its Messages.

And knowing the Bible goes beyond knowing Verses of the Bible or Memorising Bible Verses; It requires extensive Study.

And I seek to understand that.

So I study extensively across the Ages of Christian Theology.

I seek to understand what Christians over the Ages have taught and Preached about.

I quote some writings of the Founders of different Christians Denominations; even from People whose Core Beliefs I do not share. Because I don't like condemning People when I haven't understood them.

I want to understand where I stand, where he stands and be able to make an intelligent Choice, that although I fully understand where he comes from, I don't agree with his Conclusion. I don't want to make rash Judgements.

So, I read about all Christian Faith - I read about the Catholic Faith, the Anglican Faith, the Presbyterian Faith. I read about Methodians, I understand where they come from. I understand what formulate their beliefs and I have the full grasp of what they teach.

But in the end, I have to also come to my own Conclusion based on my reading of the Scripture and how God has revealed Himself in Scriptures.

Although I may fully understand somebody, it doesn't mean I fully agree with them. But I would not make a Point based on ignorance and I would not condemn somebody because of ignorance.

If I am going to take a stand, it has to be an informed stand. Because that is what God requires from each one of us.

My Theological Base is very important - I study intensely, I think and reflect deeply, before I

Preach. And in my Preaching I don't quote too much from contemporary Christians - Not because they are wrong:

I believe my Theological Reflection goes deeper and wider historically, than just what contemporary People think.

5. To Develop an Inner Life of Prayer, Reflection and Self Examination:

This is very important to me!

Jesus frequently taught that, what manifests outside of us comes from within us.

What you have within you is critical to what you do outside - It's called, Inner Life.

And I have endeavoured to build an Inner Life - An Inner Life is Life Inward.

It is Prayerful, Contemplative, it is Meditative.

I search my Heart, my motives and desires and it is me judging myself very deeply, soberly and sincerely.

I seek to know myself better than anyone would ever know. And I think very deeply about my world, about my Life, about my experiences.

I spend hours examining myself. And sometimes I can be a harsher judge of myself than anybody can ever judge me.

The Bible says, if you judge yourself, you will not be judged.

I am the first judge of myself - I judge myself so deeply, that I am not able to listen to myself Preaching.

People love hearing me, I am not able to hear myself.

Because every time I hear a recording of myself, I go into judging mood - And I start criticizing everything I said. "Why did you say it that way? Couldn't you have said it in another way?"

People get blessed listening to me but I don't get blessed listening to me, because I judge myself.

My wife likes listening to my Messages but the moment I enter she has to put it off because I don't like it.

That's just me - It may be a crazy Part of me!

So, I consider Prayer as a part of my Inner Life.

Much as I believe in External and loud Prayer; I believe Prayer is not designed to Change God. Prayer is designed to Change me, so that I can conform to the Will of God.

There has to be an aspect of Prayer that helps me to Change from within and not just try to move the Hand of God as most of us like to do.

There are different forms of Prayer but I believe in an Inner Contemplative Transforming Prayer that Changes us.

6. To remain Called by God's Grace that Saved me, Sustains me and Uses me to Serve God's People:

I do not take the Grace of God for granted - I don't!

- The Grace of God sought for me and saved me.
- The Grace of God Picked me in my Youth and Called me to serve God.
- The Grace of God helped me when I thought I was lost in my Life; and brought me to an awareness of God's Sufficiency.

And I know myself more than anybody would ever know.

If it was left to me, my Personality and who I am; there is no way in God's Earth that I would end up talking to People because I am not a Public Person - It is the Grace of God that enables me to Stand before People;

And I have been doing it for over forty (40) years - Talking to People.

I do that knowing this is not my Natural Disposition; it is God's Grace. And it is His Gift of Grace that has allowed that to happen.

So I don't take the Grace of God for granted - His Grace is what sustains me and uses me. And I am always in awe of the Grace of God.

7. To Share the Profound Truth of the Bible in a demystified Practical and Easy to Understand way:

One of the most important Characteristics that I have as a Pastor is to Preach from the Bible - It is a very difficult task.

The Bible is God's Revelation to us.

However, the Bible was not written in our time; it was written in an older time, an older culture and it is different from the times we are now living in.

To understand what the Bible is saying, I have to carefully look at its Language, its Culture, the Timeframe, to understand God's Timeless Truth. And after that, I must find a way to Communicate it to a Modern Generation.

So they can understand what God has said in time Past, and is saying to them now.

Because of that, when I teach the Bible I aim at demystifying the Bible and aim at Simplicity.

I don't aim at Complexity; I don't aim at blowing your Mind with something, because your Mind is already blown!

I aim at putting the Mind together. Because my aim is to Simplify the Profound Truth of God.

God's Word is already Profound, and so I can't make it anymore Profound - I have to simplify it.

And I follow after Jesus Christ who taught the Profound Truth of God in a very, very, simple way.

Somebody asked Jesus, who is my Neighbour? And you would think Jesus would say, "A Neighbour is No. 1, No. 2..."

Jesus said: a Man was going from Jerusalem to Jericho, he fell among Robbers.

Then He said, Nobody helped the Man, but a Samaritan.

And Jesus asked the Question: Who do you think is a Neighbour?

Jesus simplified Profound Truth! And that is what I do.

And by the way, I Prayed for that Gift for years - In my formative years I used to Pray for hours, "Lord help me to simplify Your Word; Lord give me the Wisdom to simplify Your Word."

And I believe God is answering that Prayer.

8. I Endeavour to Point People towards Christ, and away from me:

This is not a Church you hear a Pastor telling Powerful Testimonies of his Exploits -; Christ is the

Center of our lives as Christians. He is our Saviour, He is our Example. He is the One we imitate.

In all my Teachings, my Hope is that you'll discover Christ and not discover Mensa Otabil.

And it's very easy for Preachers to make themselves the focus of People's Faith.

My desire is that your focus would be in Christ Jesus.

- He is the Word of God made flesh.

- He is the Ultimate Sacrifice for all Humanity.

- In Him is Life, in Him is our Hope.

If you have Faith in your Pastor it Profits you nothing because there's nothing a Pastor can do for you.

But if your Faith is in Christ Jesus, He will make all things Possible for you, and He will not fail you.

That's what my desire is: That you will discover Jesus Christ. That you will Love and serve Him. And you'll center your Life around Him.

9. To see the Pulpit as a Sacred Place - Not to be Profaned or used for Personal Advantage:

Standing in front of People to speak to them is a Great Privilege I have.

It is a Powerful thing to have People sit in front of you, listening to you. And that Privilege is very easy to abuse.

Because, if we don't understand the Privilege and the Grace that allows us to stand before People, we will abuse it.

The Pulpit is not about me - I don't use the Pulpit to settle quarrels.

I come to encourage you, because Life is giving you bad stuff already.

My desire is to help you know that this God you serve is a Good God; that He can lift you up, bless and Prosper you.

I consider the Pulpit a very Sacred Desk, behind which I stand to do my job.

And although it is my Pulpit in the Church:

- It is God's Place, and I must use it intentionally to represent Him.
- I must use words that Glorify Him,
- I must use Language that Glorifies Him.
- I must use temper that Glorifies Him: I cannot come and manifest anger and frustration on you.

Because that is not what the Pulpit is meant for.

And because I take the Pulpit seriously, I'm also very Selective about who comes to my Pulpit - They also have to be People who respect the Pulpit and don't come and abuse it and use it in a Profaned way.

People think if a Pastor talks in a real way, He is being real. But Profanity is not being real. Profanity is Profanity!

10. To Seek to become the Kind of Leader I can look up to and would love to Work with:

God has made me a Leader of People - He has made me a Leader of my home as a father, He has made me a Pastor, a Leader of my Congregation. He has made me a General Overseer and the Senior Pastor of ICGC, with so many Pastors and Churches (in this Denomination).

That's a very Powerful Place in Leadership.

Everytime I reflect as a father and a Leader of my home, I ask myself:

- If I was a child would I be happy to have me as a father?
- Am I the kind of father I would love to have; a father I can look up to?
- If I was not me, and I was my child, would I be the kind of father that I would look up to?

Because, growing up as a child, I didn't have the best father.

Fathers have Weaknesses and Strengths; but my father's Weaknesses were more than his Strength. And he didn't set the best example in his Marriage.

As a father; he didn't set the best example literarily about everything.

The Natural thing, you know "like father like son" - I should be like him. But I have said it many

times that, when I was growing up, one of my Greatest desires was not to be like my father.

Unfortunately, I look like him - My voice is his voice; I have a voice tone like his (which I like).

But I try to move away as much as Possible, from the way he conducted his Marriage, the way he raised his children.

I've tried so hard to be very different. Because if I repeat that, my children will be like me, and I will be like my father.

... That is what people call Generational Curse.

Generational Curse is broken by Choice and Will; and I chose the Will to break it!

I want to be a different kind of Leader at home but I also want to be a different kind of Leader as a Pastor.

Now I have Pastors under me, I always ask:

- If I wasn't the General Overseer and Senior Pastor of ICGC, would I want to be under a Leader like Mensa Otobil?

- Would I want to be a Pastor in ICGC?

I. My desire is to build a Church that people who are not the Ultimate Leaders still feel confident to operate in; because in that Place they find opportunities to be their best selves for God.

II. And it is my desire that People who serve under me don't feel disadvantaged - They don't feel that their lives have been shortchanged. That they have been denied Opportunities; that their Potentials have been sat on.

III. It is my desire that when People work under me, they would feel that they have the opportunity to be all the Lord wants them to be - If that is really what God wants them to be.

IV. I want to be the kind of Leader that I can work under.

You would normally ask yourself;

- If I wasn't the Boss, would I work in this Company?

- If I was just a Staff, would I work in this Company?

- If I was a Pastor in ICGC, would I be happy?

- If I was a Staff in the Office, would I be happy?

The truth is, not everybody can get to the ultimate Top.

Most People are going to spend their lives working under somebody; spend their lives looking up to somebody.

So, those of us who have the Privilege of being the ones People work under, and People look up to; we have the great Opportunity to ensure that although they work under us, their lives and not under us! That they can truly become what God wants them to be.

And ultimately, that's the kind of Leader I want to be:

- The kind of Leader I can work under.
- The kind of Leader I can serve.
- The kind of Leader I can respect.
- The kind of Leader I can look up to.

And in Summary, these are the Ten (10) Values that have guided me in my Ministry - I have not arrived, I am not Perfect by any Chance.

But I endeavour, I strive, I think, I Pray and I work so hard to be the kind of Person that I truly believe God has Called me to become - In my Morals, in my Thoughts, in my Actions, in my Beliefs, in my Relationship with People, in the way I love and care for People.

I want to be the kind of Person that People can truly look at and say, "he is a Christian" - that's all.

The Greatest Honour I receive in Life is for somebody to say: That's a Christian!

If I end up being called a Christian, I think I would have Succeeded in Life.

CLOSING PRAYER

Father, let the words of my mouth and the Meditations of my Heart be acceptable to You.

And as I have shared these with Your People, help each one here and all those reading now on the Label of DMC, to also develop the Values of their lives.

The things that are important to them and how they want to live their lives; and how they want to be known - As parents, as Business People, in every areas of their lives.

Help each one of us live Christ-Centered lives, Purposeful lives, Intentional lives, that we are building to Glorify You.

In Jesus' Name - Amen.



SPECIAL SUNDAY SERVICE WITH PASTOR (DR) MENSA OTABIL (GENERAL OVERSEER, INTERNATIONAL CENTRAL GOSPEL CHURCH (ICGC) CHRIST TEMPLE, ACCRA GHANA)

TOPIC: MY MINISTRY FOCUS

DATE: 25TH FEBRUARY, 2024

BIBLE TEXT: LUKE 4:17-19

Last week I talked about my Ministry Values. Today I am doing ICGC at 40; and my Sub Title is: "MY MINISTRY FOCUS".

I want to talk about what I keep my eyes on.

Luke 4:17-19 (NKJV) - Jesus telling us about His Ministry Focus

17 And He was handed the book of the Prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the Place where it was written:

18 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me,
Because He has Anointed Me To Preach the Gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the Brokenhearted, To Proclaim Liberty to the Captives And Recovery of sight to the blind, To set at Liberty those who are Oppressed;

19 To Proclaim the Acceptable year of the Lord."

From the Passage, Jesus was talking about His Ministry Focus: What His Ministry is about.

And He used a Text in Isaiah's Prophecy that talks about the work of the Messiah.

And Jesus announces that He is the Messiah, by going to the Book of Isaiah 61:1-3. After which He said, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." And the People almost killed Him for saying that.

You would think that they would be excited that somebody had come to Proclaim Good News. But they wanted to kill Him. Jesus said He was Anointed and He was sent.

Each one of us who are called by Christ, our Ministry, whatever we do must fit into what Jesus Christ came to do. Because we can have no other Ministry outside the Ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. Our Personal focus and desires must always find convergence in Christ Jesus.

In 1 Corinthians 1:22-24, let's hear Apostle Paul speaking. He says, For Jews request a Sign, and

Greeks seek after Wisdom; but we Preach Christ Crucified, to the Jews a Stumbling Block and to the Greeks Foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the Power of God and the Wisdom of God.

It is interesting that Apostle Paul talked about what the Jews are looking for. And he never fulfilled what they were looking for.

The Jews were looking for a Sign. He said, I am not going to give you a Sign.

The Greek said they are looking for Wisdom. He said, I am not going to give you Wisdom: I am going to give you Christ, who is the All in all.

Paul acknowledged that his Ministry was a Continuation of the Ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.

WHAT IS MY MINISTRY FOCUS?

I am going to talk about Seven (7) Things that are my Ministry Focus: Seven (7) Ideas that represent the thrust of what I am hoping to achieve.

1. To Preach the Gospel of Christ so that People can experience Salvation from sin through God's Saving Grace.

This is the Primary focus of all Christian Ministry.

The Lord Jesus Christ Commanded us to go into the world and Preach the Gospel to everyone.

Jesus described the Preaching of the Gospel as the Proclamation of the Acceptable year of the Lord - The Proclamation of God's year of favour.

That means God is not angry with you to destroy - God loves you, He wants to save, rescue and deliver you.

It's like somebody rescuing a Person who is trying to commit suicide - The Person is at some building, at the top and he wants to throw himself down; and a Negotiator is sent to go and talk to him.

What is the Negotiator going to say?

Is the Negotiator going to say, "hey, you are about to die?" Or he is going to tell the Person, "listen, your Parents love you, we all love you and we want to save you. We want you to be free?"

Out of these two (2) Messages, which do you think is going to be more appealing to the guy who wants to commit suicide?

It is not the Message of "you are going to die"; it is the Message of "you are loved, you can be rescued, and you can have a new Life."

That is the Acceptable Year of the Lord that Jesus came to Proclaim: That for those who have no hope, there is hope. And that God can save them. So that in Him, they may have Life and have Life more Abundantly.

... And that my friend, is the Gospel.

The Gospel is Good News - The Gospel is not criticism of human behaviour; the Gospel is the Proclamation of God's Love to redeem even the most despicable Sinner and make that Person a Child of God.

And I am committed to Preach this Message - It is my Ministry Focus: to Preach the Good News, not the Bad News. That when People give their lives to Christ, they would have New lives.

When I am talking to Unbelievers (Sinners); I don't criticize their sins because they are already Sinners - I Point them to the Saviour who can deliver them from their sins.

What Good is it to tell a bad man, "you are evil?"

Yes, you have affirmed who he is, but the Gospel says you can be made Righteous, you can be made Better, you can be Delivered. Your sins can be forgiven if you give your Life to Jesus Christ.

Good News is not an affirmation of the sins of the People; Good News is the Proclamation of Deliverance through Christ Jesus.

And that is what my Ministry focuses on.

In the Ministry of Jesus, the only People He criticized were the Religious People - The Pharisees, the Scribes, the Teachers of the Law!

But when it comes to People like Zacheous, the woman caught in Adultery; all these bad People, Jesus never condemned them. He never spoke evil about them.

He encouraged them to experience New Lives!

And that is what the Ministry of Christ is all about.

2. To Affirm and Exalt Jesus Christ as the True Lord over all Powers of evil and Manifestations of Spiritual Darkness.

It is part of my Ministry Focus to emphasize the Lordship of Jesus Christ. In His death and resurrection, Jesus defeated all Powers of evil and Spiritual Darkness.

Many times People receive Jesus as the Lord of their lives; but they don't see Him as the Lord of everything that is evil in this world.

The Bible clearly teaches that Jesus is Lord over all Satanic Principalities and Powers.

Many African Christians Struggle with the Lordship of Jesus - They feel that although Jesus is Lord, the forces of Darkness are not fully under His Control.

And some Christians feel they must continuously fight against Evil Spirits, in order to experience Victory.

And that view goes totally against the New Testament - Which clearly shows that Jesus defeated Satan and made a Public Example of him.

What God has defeated, we do not continue fighting.

If you believe He is Lord over all Principalities and Powers, you don't live your Life afraid of Evil Spirits, and expend all your Prayer time coming against Evil Spirits; binding the devil and binding Satan.

Because, most of us, all our Prayer is to gain Mastery over the devil.

And Jesus says, just trust me; I did that job for you; trust me, I have overcome this guy (Satan).

But Africans don't like it that way! We like hard job.

But it is my Ministry Focus to Affirm and Exalt the Lord Jesus Christ and the True Lord over all Principalities and Powers.

- He is Lord over all gods, idols and deities.
- He is Lord over all Demonic Manifestations.
- He is Lord over all Witchcraft and Evil Curses.
- He is Lord over all the Curses in your Bloodline.

- He is Lord over every Man and Woman of God.
- He is Lord over your Present and Future Realities.

Jesus is Lord! And no matter how you feel, He is Lord:

- And I am never going to Preach a Message that diminishes the Lordship of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- I am never going to Preach a Message that emphasizes the Power of Satan.
- I am never going to Preach a Message that shows how bad the devil is.

I am going to Preach Messages to show you how Powerful Jesus is; how much His Salvation and His Deliverances are.

There is no Curse I can break that Christ has not already broken; there is no Victory I can Preach that Christ has not already given. It is not in my Place to deliver you. He has already Delivered you. If you are Born Again, filled with the Spirit of God, you are already Delivered.

Somebody say: I am Delivered!

Two Thousand (2,000) years ago, on a Hill called Calvary:

- God became man, hung on a tree and died.
- Was buried, and He rose again on the third (3rd) day.
- When He rose again He said, "All Power is given unto me in Heaven and in Earth" (Matthew 28:18)

How dare you diminish that?

How dare you belittle that?

How dare you believe that your tiny Village has so many Demons that God Himself who died for you cannot deliver you - That it takes something else for you to be Delivered?

The reality is the Word of God; the Pretension is your Experience - And the Word of God says: Jesus is Lord!

Somebody say: Jesus is Lord!

3. Encourage Christians to trust in the Sufficiency of the Scriptures to answer all the Important Questions of Life.

The Bible is the Word of God - It does not just contain the Word of God, it is the Word of God. It is Complete and Sufficient for all our Instruction in Righteousness.

The Scriptures reveal God to us, reveal His Will to us, reveal why God created us, what God expects from us, the state of Human Beings, how God relate with Human Beings, what God has done to Satan, what God has done for us in Christ.

And then reveals the Final state of Human Beings - Those who believe and those who do not believe.

It is food for our Souls and Spirits - And I endeavour to root everything in my Belief system to the Scriptures.

If it is not affirmed with the rightly interpreted Scripture Provisions, I don't believe it.

You show me, and it is not Scriptural, I don't believe it - Because, "let God be true and all men liars."

We don't walk by what we see, we have walk by what God says.

Jesus said, It is written, Man shall not live by Bread alone, but by every Word that Proceeds out of the mouth of God - Matthew 4:4

The Bible is Sufficient, Efficient and Proficient for every Question you have in Life.

It is your Enabler, your Wisdom, your Life, your Instructor, your Motivator and your Encourager.

Whatever Question you have, you'll find the answer there in the Bible.

Of course, it would not be the answers to Questions like, "who stole the yam in my Village?"

You are not going to find a Bible Passage for that.

But it will show you the Character of thieves and based of that, you can make your own deduction as to who stole the yam.

4. Make Christians aware of the Triumphant Life that is available to them through the indwelling Power of the Holy Spirit.

The Christian Life is a Triumphant Life and it is a Victorious Life.

Christ died and rose from the dead to give us Victory.

Although Christians experience Sufferings, Pains and all kinds of Struggles in their lives; we have the assurance that in Christ we are more than Conquerors.

We may not have Freedom from every Pain, and from every Suffering; we may not have Freedom from every disadvantage, but in all of them, we are More Than Conquerors.

A Christian can be going through difficulty and still conquer.

A Christian can be going through pain and still win.

We can cry and still experience Joy.

The Christian Life does not exempt us from Suffering and Pain; but the Christian Life give us Victory through our Pain and Suffering because in all things, we come out Victorious through Jesus.

The Christian Life is a Triumphant Life - It is not a Mediocre Life.

It is not a Life of running away from Demons, Principalities, Powers, Witches and Wizards.

For most of you, almost all the Prayer you Pray is a run away Prayer - You are Praying to run away from some dark force.

An African is so "Incurably Spirited" - It is so engraved in our world view that we constantly look for some kind of Spiritual Manifestation troubling ourselves:

We see a cockroach on the wall, demon.

A frog just jumped and got into your bedroom, demon.

A nice lizard running away from the heat comes to hide under your bed, and you are binding and casting, in Jesus' Name.

The lizard is like, "what have I done? - I just want a cool atmosphere."

An owl just Perched on the tree, demon!

Thanks be to God who causes us to triumph always in all things through Christ - 1 Corinthians 15:57.

I don't know what you are going through, but you will Triumph over it - Amen.

I don't know what Life has brought against you, but you will Triumph over it - Amen.

You may be Weeping today, but you are going to overcome that - Amen.

You may be down now today, but you will be up - Amen.

That is the Christian Story - It is Triumphant in Christ Jesus. And ultimately, even in death we will be triumphant - Amen.

Some People die and die; we will die and live (in Christ) - Amen.

The Christian Life is a Triumphant Life; and it is my Commitment to focus your attention to that;

In Christ we Triumph over sin, over the desires of the flesh, over the Old Adamic Nature, over Adultery, and over all Powers of Darkness.

5. Break the Culture of Fear, Subservient and Dependency in the African Society: because of the effects of Idolatry, Slavery and Colonialism.

As an African I am aware of the Challenges that come with Black Africans.

But I believe God called me as an African to speak to the Culture I was born out of.

It doesn't mean I believe Africa is Superior to other Continents, No!

All I am saying is, when God calls you out of a People, He sends you to them as well; to answer the Question of the People.

Questions of fear, of Subservient, of Inferiority and Complete Dependency - Our inability to take hold of our lives and run our lives.

We've always wished that somebody would pick up our lives and run it for us.

Simple decisions are difficult for most of us - We always want somebody to tell us what to do.

That is why the so called Prophets have a Free-Day in our Continent (African).

Because we don't know how to take Charge of our lives; we don't know how to make decisions; we are constantly unsure of ourselves - And it's an African Thing!

Most People in other Continents of the world have learnt how to make decisions and bear the consequences of their Choices and their Actions but we somehow just want somebody else to make those decisions for us. And there is a history to it:

It is bind up in Idolatry, in Slavery and in Colonialism - A Triple Heritage!

6. Promote Christian Work Ethic that is rooted in Productivity, in Pursuit of Excellence and Prosperity for Honest Labour.

I believe that God wants us to do well - He wants us to live our lives in Dignity and Honour.

At the heart of Human Dignity is work.

After the fall, God told Adam that he will eat through his sweat and toil.

It is dignifying to sweat and to toil in your field - Hard work is Honourable.

It is through our sweat and toil that we become Productive Human Beings and Prosperity comes from Productivity.

... And I believe we must aim for the highest level of Performance in all we do.

I believe God wants us to prosper but I don't believe in Magical Prosperity.

- I believe in sweat and toil prosperity.

- I believe you must sweat, work hard and trust God to bless the work of your hands.

That's how we Prosper, and that's how we do it.

God said to Adam, the Earth will Produce thorns and thistles for you - It is cursed. But if you Labour and you toil, you would eat.

In other words, you can be in a Cursed Environment but through toil and Labour, you will live a Dignified Life.

When you are in a tough situation; He gives you a Miracle and turns the situation around.

But it is not the Pattern of Life - The Pattern of Life is, wake up and work till you feel tired.

Hard work is not a curse; Labour is not a curse; getting up and going to hustle everyday is not a curse; standing by the roadside and selling is not a curse; being at your workshop and knocking things together is not a curse; being a Seamstress, standing in your feet to dress People's hair,

working hard as a Sanitation Person, sweeping and cleaning the street is not a curse - Hard work is not a curse!

Some do it as Doctors, Nurses, Teachers, Preachers; some Study Languages to have an Understanding of the documents that are forty (40) years old, and make it relevant in 2024.

You cannot say, "God will bless me if I don't work hard" - You have to work hard, and you have to make a Choice in your Labour because, everybody's work is hard.

The Person hawking and carrying something on their head, that is hard work.

The Heavy weight Person who wrestles - That's hard work.

The Footballer who is playing and People are just kicking his feet and he is having all kinds of injuries - That's hard work.

Everybody is working hard!

7. Empower Christians to take up Leadership Responsibility in all Spheres of Life and make Christ always known in their lives.

"Raising Leaders, Shaping Visions, Influencing our Societies through Christ."

And when I talk about Leadership, I am not talking about a Positional one or a Title; I am talking about an attitude and a responsibility. Christians must get to a Place and be able to take Charge.

We must be Salt of the Earth - We cannot hide or run away from the world.

Wherever you go remember this: "you are an Ambassador of Christ."

You are His Ambassador in a Fitting Workshop, in the Operative Theater, at the Hospital as a Doctor or a Nurse.

Wherever you go, wherever you work, you are an Ambassador of Christ - That's what Leadership is!

You are not only going because Christ has Placed you there:

- You are going there to be Salt.

- You are going to make Him known as Light.

- You are going to Showcase Jesus.

That's Leadership!!!

You may not get a Certificate for that; but when your Light is Shinning everybody follows you.

You may be the Lowest Paid Officer in your office; but everybody looks up to you.

People honour and respect you.

People come to you for Advice because you Showcase Christ wherever you go

That is what True Leadership is all about.

Those Seven (7) Things I have talked about are my Ministry Focus because I believe that's what God wants me to focus on.

There would be other Pastors who focus on other things. I have no Problem with that.

Peter said, "such as I have I give..." This is what I give.

And if any of these Seven (7) Things resonate with you and they are of your Aspiration and what you want to become in Life.

Then you are listening to the right Message or should I says that you are reading the right Message now on the Label of DMC!

And it will help you become the Person that God wants you to be - Amen.

SPECIAL SUNDAY SERVICE WITH PASTOR (DR) MENSA OTABIL (GENERAL OVERSEER, INTERNATIONAL CENTRAL GOSPEL CHURCH (ICGC) CHRIST TEMPLE, ACCRA GHANA)

TOPIC: THE ESSENCE OF MINISTRY

DATE: 10TH MARCH 2024

BIBLE TEXT: 2 CORINTHIANS 4:5-10

Last week I talked about my Ministry Focus. Today I am doing ICGC at 40. And my Topics is, "THE ESSENCE OF MINISTRY".

In 2 Corinthians 4:5-10, this is the Apostle Paul writing - The Corinthian Church was one of the difficult Churches that the Apostle Paul dealt with. It was a Church of Great Promise and also Great Difficulty.

They did do many things right and so many things wrong.

And he wrote two (2) long Letters to them. In 2 Corinthians 4:5-10 this is what Paul says (NKJV):

5 For we do not Preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake.

6 For it is the God who commanded Light to Shine out of Darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

7 But we have this treasure in Earthen Vessels, that the Excellence of the Power may be of God and not of us.

8 We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are Perplexed, but not in despair;

9 Persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed.

10 Always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the Life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.

The Apostle Paul in essence is talking about the real essence of Ministry, of what God has called us to do - He has called us to manifest Christ and to make Him known.

And in the last two (2) weeks, I have shared extensively on my Ministry Values and my Ministry

Focus.

DMC NOTES: You can get to read the Full Text of both Messages on this Link:

<https://discoverymediacrew.com/My-Ministry-Values-Special-Sunday-Service-With-Pastor-Dr-Mensa-Otabil-18th-February-2024>

<https://discoverymediacrew.com/My-Ministry-Focus-Special-Sunday-Service-With-Pastor-Dr-Mensa-Otabil-25th-February-2024>

Our Bible Text today - 2 Corinthians 4:5-10 summarizes and captures everything I believed that the Christian Ministry is supposed to be.

- That we do not Preach ourselves, we Preach Christ.
- That we who serve as Pastors are Slaves and Bondservants for Jesus' sake. We are not Masters, we are Bondservants.
- And it is God who make all things Possible, because we are just Earthen Vessels.

And yet He does so many amazing things with us, so that we can end up saying, "To God be the Glory."

And that is how I feel - That as we celebrate our Fortieth (40th) Anniversary in ICGC; the only thing I can say is, "To God be the Glory for the Great Things He has done".

When I was growing up as a Young Christian, the Christian Ministries didn't last for long.

Those days some of the Great Men and Women of God we came to meet in the 70's were used by God tremendously. But their Ministries lasted for very short Periods of time.

Now, when I think of it, some of them were very effective for just three (3) years, and then Nobody heard of them again.

Some of them were very effective for five (5) years, and Nobody heard of them again.

Some of them built huge things, and in just five (5) to six (6) years everything was down and they left.

Some of them are still living; but after forty (40) years, they stopped doing Prominent works for God.

And so, staying in Ministry for forty (40) years, there are People way better, far more Gifted than us, who have not done anything in the last forty (40) years.

"But we have this Treasure in Earthen Vessels, that the Excellence of the Power may be of God and not of us" - 2 Corinthians 4:7

God wants to put us in a Place where we can only say, "Only God could have done this; and only God could have kept us together as a Church."

Through all that we've been through - "We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are Perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken" - 2 Corinthians 4:8-9

We've gone through rain, through flood; but the Lord has kept us.

... And only God could have done that.

And the reason God does it is to leave Himself a Witness, a Testimony that: As He does for your Church, He can do for your Life.

And for the things that He wants you to do - That God will be with you and He will keep you, He will Prosper and sustain you - Amen.

Because, sometimes Life can be tough; but the Grace of God is your Sufficiency - Amen.

And I just want to encourage every one of you here today, or reading now on the Label of DMC - I don't know what you are doing: You may not be a Pastor but you are doing something.

May God give you a Story Greater than what we've experienced today - Amen.

If you are a Business man or Woman; we want you to build a business that does not only last for forty (40) years, but goes on and on for over three hundred (300) years ahead of you - Amen

That your work would not Perish in your hands - Your work would be enhanced - Amen.

That your family would not Perish in your hands and your Marriage would not Perish in your hands - Amen.

That whatever God gives to you would be sustained and would be kept together for the years ahead - Amen.

What God does for us as a Church, He wants to do for you as a Person, as an Individual - He is the same God, the same Bible, the same Holy Spirit, the same Grace that is your Sufficiency.

So, as we mark our forty (40) years, I am trusting God that you will also mark Great years in your Life in the things that you do - Amen.

One of the things that I really want to see is building something that outlives each one of us and keeps going.

Churches are not like businesses - Most businesses would last may be forty (40) years, a New Technology would come and knock off the business.

In the last few years of Vulnerability, Companies have gone bankrupt. But Churches are made to last for thousands of years.

So, we expect the Church of God to go on for thousands of years!

Churches are Lifelong Establishments and Institutions and so we must build a Church that has within it the DNA that survives for a very long time.

And that means that the Choices and Decisions we make now, the Actions we take now must always be focused on building a Legacy that outlives each one of us.

If we make ourselves the Center of everything that is happening, we will not be able to build for those who are yet to be born.

Because in the next forty (40) years, if you add forty (40) years to your Present age, you can determine where you will be.

I am not pronouncing your future - Just add forty (40) years to your age.

I was having a chat with my wife and she said, "so it means that somebody who was even a year old when the church (ICGC) started is forty one (41) years; a baby who was born the day the Church started is forty (40) years old" - That's awesome!

But the next forty (40) years - Add forty (40) years to your age now: some of us would be before Jesus, while others will still be on Earth.

But if you add another forty (40) years - Eighty (80) years from now; then Nobody who is here or reading this Message now on the Label of DMC in the year 2024 is likely to be there.

And if you add another forty (40) years - One hundred and twenty (120) years from now: a whole New Generation, a whole New People would be around.

A whole New Pastors, New Worship Leaders would be around then.

I don't know the instruments they would be using - Whether there would be Microphones, you have no idea!

Technology would have Changed Profoundly.

But Jesus Christ is the same Yesterday, Today, and Forever" - Hebrews 13:8

I believe that if the Apostle Paul comes to our Churches today, he would not find his way out because he didn't have a Screen, he didn't have a Platform. Microphones were not there, Speakers were not invented.

None of these were there!

There was no Air-Conditioning in his time.

But the same Message he Preached is what we are Preaching - The Technology has Changed, things are Modernized, but the Gospel is still the same.

And that's how it's going to be one hundred and twenty (120) years from now! - Technology would be mind-blowing: People may come to Church sitting on chairs that float or whatever; but the Gospel is still the same!

Time does not Change God, does not devalue God, does not depreciate the Power of the Gospel - The Gospel would remain the same for ever.

Now, what we need to do in this time, is to build our Churches in such a way that one hundred and twenty (120) years from now, when all of us are not here; there would be a Church that still loves Jesus, and still Proclaiming Jesus as "the same Yesterday, Today, and Forever."

There would still be a Pastor quoting from the Bible - May not be from a Book, but it may be from another Technological Device.

But the words must be the same - "In the Beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth" - Genesis 1:1

It used to be written on Stones, Tablets, Scrolls, on Paper then; but now it's written Digitally. But the words are the same - "In the Beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth".

The Church is Permanent! Technology Changes, but Christ remains; God remains.

And we must build the Church that remains in spite of the Changes of Time - Amen!

SPECIAL SUNDAY SERVICE WITH PASTOR (DR) MENSA OTABIL (GENERAL OVERSEER, INTERNATIONAL CENTRAL GOSPEL CHURCH (ICGC) CHRIST TEMPLE, ACCRA GHANA)

TOPIC: GOD - PART 6 (THE JUDGE)

DATE: 17TH MARCH, 2024

BIBLE TEXT: GENESIS 1:4-5

This is Part 6 of my God Series; and my Subtitle is: "GOD - THE JUDGE."

One of the things we know about God is that He is a Judge - God is a Judge!

A Judge is the one who decides the final outcome of a matter. He or she determines how things should rightly be. A Judge is there to defend what is right and Just.

In my opinion, and it may be subject to debate but that is my personal opinion, "Judging is the most Powerful responsibility on Earth."

And by extension, I believe Judges are the most Powerful People on Earth - They decide between right and wrong on all Natural matters; and Pronounce verdicts on them.

Judges overrule Presidents.

They can just make a verdict and get everybody into trouble.

They are very, very Powerful - It's a very Powerful Position.

And the Judges of this Earth derive their Power from the Ultimate Judge - God Almighty.

And so, that is what we are going to look at today - God as a Judge of the Universe.

The God who is Creator is also our Judge.

Many times we want to see God as One who loves us, One who is Merciful, full of Grace and all of that - And that is all true of God!

But don't also forget that this God who is Merciful is also a Judge.

And that, we find also in the Book of Genesis: In "God - Part 5" I quoted from Genesis 1:4-5, but I looked at a different aspect of God and His Works.

Today we are referencing the same Bible Text; and we are going to look at God as Judge.

Genesis 1:4-5 (NKJV)

4 And God saw the Light, that it was Good; and God divided the Light from the Darkness.

5 God called the Light Day, and the Darkness He called Night. So the Evening and the Morning were the first Day.

... God is the Judge of His Works!

I made the same Statement in Part 5 but did not expand on it very much.

The idea of God as a Judge is not something that comes up later in the Bible. As I said, the Book of Genesis is very, very important (especially Genesis Chapter 1).

Because all the important Doctrines about God are in Genesis Chapter 1.

Later on, they are expanded in the rest of the Scriptures. But right from Genesis 1, we see God that He is Eternal, a Creator, a Spirit, His Works are Good and we see that He is also a Judge - These are very important!

We see also that God is the Word - What we later come to formulate as the Trinity; these are all ideas Present in Genesis 1.

In Genesis 1, God is introducing Himself and He is telling us who He is.

Here we see that God is a Judge - He is a Judge of His Works.

Now, how do we arrive at the idea that God is a Judge, just by reading this Passage?

THINGS TO NOTE ABOUT GENESIS 1:4-5.

There are couple of things I want you to pay attention to:

1. GOD SEES:

God saw the Light that had been made - He sees!

He observes and inspects His Works.

When we say "God sees", it means that He looks at something and He pays attention to it.

In the context that we are using it in Genesis 1; it means He examined what He had done - God sees!

And it is an idea that you find through Scriptures - That nothing is hidden from God. He sees what is obvious and hidden; and no Creature, Thoughts or Actions can happen without Him seeing it.

That's the first thing we see about God from this Passage is that He sees.

And whatever we do, He sees.

As a matter of fact, He even sees our Thoughts before they become Actions.

2. GOD CALLS:

He called Light Day.

Not only does He see the Light, He also calls it.

What does it mean?

It means He names and He identifies things as they are - He sees and He Calls.

God calls Light by its rightful name, and calls Darkness by its rightful name.

God has names for all things - It is also a concept that runs through the Bible.

Not only does God see, but He calls.

He names things, Proclaims things and identifies things.

When God sees sin He doesn't hide it, and He doesn't decorate it.

When God sees that you've done something wrong, He is not going to massage it - He is going to see it, and He is going to call it as it is.

If you commit Adultery God will call it Adultery - He will not call it a Generational Curse.

If you are jealous and envious, He will call it Covetousness - He will not call it a desire to get.

... He calls things as they are!

Human Beings have a way of messaging things especially in our Community; when 'Big' People do bad things we try to rename the bad things.

And these days, we see that even among Preachers, we try to rename what Preachers do.

A Pastor is doing something wrong, we say "Touch not the Anointed."

A Pastor is committing Adultery you say, Oh don't touch him, he has Special Grace.

And a lot of that foolishness is settling down in Christianity.

But what does God call the sins of His People?

- He named and called the sin of Adam and Eve - He didn't hide it.

- He named and called out the sin of Cain.

- He called out the Drunkenness of Noah - The man who redeemed the Human Race.

God didn't say, for all the Goodness you've done, your Drunkenness is nothing. It's just your own Personal matter. No!

God calls things the way they are.

- He calls out the father of Faith, Abraham who lied, that his wife (Sarah) was just his sister.

- He calls out the Anger of Moses and the murder of Moses.

- He calls out the sins of both Eli and Samuel's children.

- He calls out the Adultery and the Murderous act of David - The man after God's Heart.

God doesn't say well, He is a man after my Heart and so I am not going to see what he wrong.

No! God sees, and He calls!

And don't ever get deceived that you are so Special to God; that because you give a lot of Tithes and Offering, Fasting and Praying; you are God's Special - No!

Nobody is God's Special - He will see and He will call.

... He sees and He calls.

3. GOD DIVIDES:

The Word 'Divide' means to separate, and to set things apart.

So God divided the Darkness from the Light.

He saw it, He called it, He separated it.

It's all Part of God's Judgement - He sees, He calls, He divides or separates or sets things apart.

And this is also an idea that continues throughout Genesis and throughout the Scriptures:

- God separated Abraham from his father's Land.
- He separated Lot from and Sodom and Gomorrah.
- We see it in the Laws of Moses: The Holy is separated from the Unholy.
- We see it in the Parables of Jesus: The wheat is separated from the tares; sheep are separated from goats.
- We see it in the concept of Judgement in the Book of Revelation: The Righteous are separated from the Abominable.

God does not mix things - He separates them.

When God is going to Judge, He doesn't judge brackets; He separates and judges - Two travelling together, one would be taken, one would be left.

... God sees, He calls, He separates.

In God's Judgement, He doesn't say, Oh you are a Pastor's son so you are accepted - He separates you from your father.

- Your father's Righteousness doesn't cover you.
- Your husband's Righteousness doesn't cover you.
- Your wife's Righteousness doesn't cover you.
- And your children's Righteousness doesn't cover you.

All of you men who don't Pray but rely on the Prayer of your wife; you think because your wife

Prays, God would be Merciful to you - Well, in God's Judgement, He sees, He calls, He separates.

There is coming a time when God will separate - Our Membership of a Local Church does not give us Salvation. Even in the Church, God will separate People.

Being in Church is Good; but if you don't belong to Christ when He is coming to Judge, He is going to separate!

Don't think that belonging to something that is Holy, you become Holy. Or that you belong to the right means you are right - No!

You can be wrong and still belong in the right Group.

Those are the ingredients of God as Judge and we see it right in the Book of Genesis Chapter 1.

God put all these concepts together in the first Judgement that He brought to Mankind.

And the first Judgement was on the first Parents of Human Race - Adam and Eve. They were the first to be Judged.

Now, I want us to go to Genesis 2 and see how "God as Judge" in the concept worked out - Let's look at how God Judges us.

Genesis 2:9 says, And out of the Ground the Lord God made every tree grow that is Pleasant to the sight and Good for food. The tree of Life was also in the midst of the Garden, and the tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

Remember, two (2) trees - The tree of Life and the tree of the Knowledge of Good.

Then Genesis 2:16-17 says, And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the Garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

God does not just judge us.

You don't know what you are doing then God slaps you with Judgement - No!

THERE ARE PROCESSES

When we read the Passage we see the Processes:

1. God gives us Options to Choose from.

This is because He created us to have Freewill.

Freewill allows us to choose and act responsibly - And that's what enables Human Beings to respond to God's Word: Either to obey or to disobey.

Human Beings have got a Freewill - We are the Authors of our own Actions.

That is why we are able to sin and that is why we are able to be accountable for our sin.

If we didn't have Freewill, then there will be no sin; then we will not be judged because it just happened. But we have Freewill.

And Please, listen to me carefully; because there is a lot of very wrong Doctrines all over being taught:

- Bad Doctrines that make People not to be responsible for their Actions.
- Doctrines that make Witches, Ancestrals, Yokes, Principalities, Powers, all kinds of things responsible, except you.

Now, if all of these things were responsible for your Actions, then there was no need for you to be judged because you had no Power.

But we read from the Scriptures that God would give us Options.

Listen carefully, you have Options in Life - You can be Good, you can be Bad; you can be a Fool, you can be Wise; you can be Rich, you can be Poor.

I have always said that Poverty is not by force - We are not poor by accident; we are poor by Choice.

So God would give us Options to choose from.

Freewill is what makes us higher than animals but freewill can also demote us and make us lower than animals - It is a free world!

God gives you options: You can decide which way you want to go.

I call Heaven and Earth as Witnesses today against you, that I have set before you Life and Death, Blessing and Cursing; therefore choose Life, that both you and your Descendants may live (Deuteronomy 30:19).

Your Life is in your hands.

2. He shows us the Best Choice to make.

Although Adam had two (2) Options to choose from, God Pointed him to the Right Choice:

And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the Garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die" - Genesis 2:16-17

God doesn't live us to blindly determine what He wants us to do; He Points us to the Right Way.

In addition to Freewill, we have Divine Guidance - "I have given you freewill; but if you want what I want for you, this is it".

"You have Freewill, but you also know my Choice." It is not that you have Freedom, and you don't know what is right or wrong; you have Freedom, and I have told you this is right and this is wrong.

We have Freedom, but God also Points you to what is best for you.

He said to the Children of Israel, I Place before you Life and Death, Blessings and Curses; but choose Life - Deuteronomy 30:19.

In other words, the fact that you have options doesn't mean He leaves you blind - No! That's not what He does: "You have options, but this one is better for you."

You can commit Adultery, but being Faithful is better for you. But if you want to commit Adultery, it's a Free Choice!

If you want what I want for you, stay with the one you are married to.

3. He tells the Consequences of our Choices.

He said to Adam, "for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

Now, some of us want to experiment and see what it is.

You have the Choice of experimenting with your foot for a car to run over. But you know what's best for you - You know the consequence! "If I put my foot there, I would find out but in the wrong way."

So why do you want to commit Adultery to find out how it is like?

Why do you want to have sex before Marriage to find out how it is like?

Why do you want to do that?

You will find out as Adam and Eve found out! Because there are some Lessons that doesn't reach you anything.

You would find out what you want by jumping from a building, but you would learn nothing from that.

There would be no Lesson to be learned, because by the time you find out, you are gone!

Experience is not always the Best Teacher; some times, experience is the worse Teacher in Life.

4. He judges us based on the Choices we make.

By the time we get to God's Judgement, we would have no one to blame, but ourselves.

God's Judgement is certain; it does not come suddenly, it comes after we have ignored the Options He gave us, the Guidance He gave us, and the Consequences He told us about.

And if you ignore all of that, then there is none else to blame but to receive the full Judgement of God.

And the Bible says, there is a Day of Judgement coming.

Maybe you'll say "well, let me find out whether there will be a Day of Judgement" - Do you really want to find out?

Or the People who say, "I will find out when I die."

Really? Is that when you want to find out?

There are certain things finding out doesn't help you. Because, by the time you find out, there is no way out - By the time you find out, there is no Redemption.

And some of us are making Choices that we know are wrong.

I am not saying it's wrong - You know it's wrong.

How do you know?

You know! God has Pointed it to you.

You say Pastor, how do you know?

Your Conscience told you it's wrong!

You know it's wrong, unfortunately like Adam and Eve, when they found out it was too late: they were kicked out of Eden.

And with them, the rest of the Human Race - They found out, but they never went back to Eden.

God who is the Creator, who is the Eternal, the Merciful God, the Kind God, the God of Grace, the God who came in the form of Man to die for us is also the God of Judgement.

And He didn't become a Judge at the end of the Human Story in the Book of Revelation; He shows us He is a Judge right from Genesis - He judges here on Earth and He judges after Earth.

Some People don't have Judgement here on Earth - They can escape all Human Judgement but one thing you can never escape is God's Judgement.

They can never escape it - He sees, He calls, He separates or divides and He judges.

As we live our lives as Christians, all of us get tempted.

The Options of Life be thrown at you - "Of every tree of the Garden you may freely eat; for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

I don't know about you, but I think with a little Self Control, we can live a far better Life than the lives we are living.

Just a little Self Control - Just a little, "I am not going to do it." I feel it, but I am not going to do it.

Just like:

- I felt like putting my foot on the road - I never did it.

- I felt like jumping from a building, but I never did.

Have you ever asked yourself, "what will it be like to do a lot of things you've never done - To drink Poison, to do all kinds of things but you never did them?

There are many things in your home that can destroy you that you've never used to destroy

yourself because you have a Will and you exercised Choice not to go that way.

That same Will you use to overcome sin is the same thing.

For some things, People will hail you here on Earth, and God judges you.

For some things, People will judge you on Earth and God will judge you.

The fact that People hail you doesn't mean God is also hailing you - Your fans are not God's Fans and God is not in your Fan Club.

It has nothing to do with Witches Ancestral Spirits or whatever Yokes you are carrying, and all kinds of nonsense People are Preaching these days - Taking Personal Responsibilities for our Actions.

ALTAR CALL

So today, before I Close: If you are here or reading now on the Label of DMC, and you know your Life is not right before God.

There are lots of People living two-timing Christian lives - They love God, but they love the world too. They do this right, that right.

And then there are People who have never given their lives to Jesus Christ.

If you are a Christian and your Christian Life has been wishy-washy, in and out, inconsistent.

You say you are a Christian, but you are doing all the wrong things and you know it's wrong!

No Pastor says this is wrong, you know it is wrong because God Pointed His finger on your head and your conscience judges you.

You are a Christian but you are living that Double Life. Or you've never given your Life to Jesus Christ; you always say Oh! I think I can live my own Life - There is Judgement Coming.

PRAYER

I just want us to Pray a Simple Prayer for God's Forgiveness and for a New Life in Christ Jesus - That Christ would come into our lives and make us Brand New People.

Every eyes close, every head bow;

If you are here or reading now on the Label of DMC, and you're saying Pastor, I want to give my Life to Jesus; I want to be Born Again, I want a New Life in Christ, I want Christ to be the Lord of my Life.

Or you say Pastor, I gave my Life to Christ but my own Christian Life is not Stable. I want to really make a re-dedication of my Life to God. I am re-dedicating my Life to live a Consistent Life.

If you fall into any of these Categories of People, just lift your right hand wherever you are now.

And Point one hand on your heart and say with me:

Heavenly Father; I come to You today just as I am. I have sinned against You and my own Conscience.

I ask You Father; have Mercy on me, forgive me, wash me and Cleanse me with the Blood of Jesus.

From today, I ask You for Grace to live for You. Help me to do Your Will. Give me the Will, give me the Power, give me the Ability to make the Right Choice and stay with it

I receive Jesus Christ as my Lord and my Saviour and I Thank You for Your Free Gift of Salvation.

In Jesus' Name - Amen.

SPECIAL SUNDAY SERVICE WITH PASTOR (DR) MENSA OTABIL (GENERAL OVERSEER, INTERNATIONAL CENTRAL GOSPEL CHURCH (ICGC) CHRIST TEMPLE, ACCRA GHANA)

TOPIC: THE GREAT COMMISSION - PART 1 (GO)

DATE: 7TH APRIL, 2024

BIBLE TEXT: MATTHEW 28:16-20

Today I am beginning a Three-Part Series, and it is related to what Jesus told His Disciples to do after His Resurrection: concerning how His work should be done.

So I am starting a Series I have titled: "THE GREAT COMMISSION" - And this is Part 1. And my Subtitle is "GO"!

The Great Commission is the description of the Assignment that Christ gave to His Disciples. After He resurrected, He assigned them to go and represent Him, to continue with His Mission and to ensure that what He has started would reach out to the rest of the world.

That is the Great Commission - And that is what I would be focusing on.

If you read through all the Four (4) Gospels, they report the Great Commission in different forms.

But I will be focusing on Matthew's Account of the Great Commission because I think it captures it very clearly and very well.

Matthew 28:16-20 (NKJV)

16 Then the eleven Disciples went away into Galilee, to the Mountain which Jesus had appointed for them.

17 When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted.

18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All Authority has been given to Me in Heaven and on Earth.

19 Go therefore and make Disciples of all the Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

20 Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

It's interesting to note in the Passage that when Jesus issued the Great Commission there were Worshippers, and there were Doubters. There were People who were fully committed, and there were people who were not fully committed.

It is also interesting to note that many times in the Presence of the Lord, there are People whose hearts are fully behind what God wants to do in their lives and there are People who are not fully committed.

Even in this Church: There are Worshippers and there are Doubters, there are people in Church who say, I want to go all the way with Jesus and there are also People who say, I don't know whether I want to fully commit or not.

So, at the Great Commission there are Worshippers and there are Doubters.

The Question I want you to consider as I do this Three-Part Series is: Which one are you?

Don't say it with your mouth, ask yourself "What am I - Am I a Worshiper, am I fully committed or am I a Doubter?"

"I am here, do I really want to go all the way with Jesus or I just want to worship Him conveniently - I will meet Him on the Mountain but I am not too sure about what this is all about."

And I hope there would be more Worshippers than Doubters in the House of God - Amen!

We are going to look at the Great Commission, and we are going to break it down as I normally do - Try to define what the word means and then try to apply it to our lives.

WHAT DOES HE MEAN BY "GO"?

The first thing we are going to look at is the verb - The command "Go"!

When Jesus says "Go", what is He talking about? What does He want us to do when He says we should "Go"?

1. First, it means to depart from where you are:

What Jesus is saying "Go", if you are going to obey me, you are not going to stay where you are - You have to move. There has to be a movement.

If you were a Jew and you hear that command "Go"; it would be big for you, because everything

about the Jewish world is not about going, it is about everybody coming to them. Especially after the Temple in Jerusalem was built; All Nations were supposed to come to Jerusalem.

So for a Jewish man, "everybody must come to us: they must come seeking God from us."

But Jesus didn't say stay for People to come to you. He said, "Go"!

The center of Christianity is actually about going, not just waiting for People to come to us, but we making efforts to move to where the People are.

Anyone who wants to fulfill the Great Commission must be ready to "Go".

If you want to Preserve your dignity, then you would never "Go", because going is risky - When you go out you can be rejected just like Jesus Himself. But the Great Commission starts with departing from where you are.

It doesn't necessarily mean a Geographical Position; it also means an Emotional Place in your Mind, mentally making efforts to reach out to somebody.

That's the first definition of "Go"!

2. The second Definition of 'Go' is to carry something to another Place:

It has the idea of either carrying yourself or carrying something.

That means we don't go empty-handed, we go with something - And what we go with actually is the Gospel (which we will find out soon). But we go carrying something.

Can you imagine someone who travels a long distance; it used to happen when we were kids. I don't know whether it still happens - We used to have Uncles and Aunties who come to visit us back then. And they come with bread, gifts, etc. We were always excited to see them. They didn't just visit, they came carrying something.

Are you getting me?

So if these Uncles and Aunties come and said, "Oh I am here (without bringing anything)! We would all be looking and say okay, show us what you came with.

'Go' is not just about going; you must have something that you will give to the People - Your "Go" must be worth the going!

When Jesus says "Go", He is not just talking about movement, He is also talking about taking something with you when you go.

And that is what the command 'Go' means - To carry something with you from a Place to another Place.

Now where did Jesus say we should go? What is the target? What is the Group? Who are the People we must go to?

Jesus called them Nations: Go therefore and make Disciples of all the Nations (to the Outsiders).

When we "Go"; we are going to those who are the Outsiders.

WHO ARE THE OUTSIDERS?

1. The Outsiders are the Entire Human Race as a whole:

Jesus says go to all Nations, not some of them - It means the entirety of the Human Race.

Go to all the Nations - And this includes the Human race in every Parts of the world. The People and the Geographical Space they live in

2. Secondly, the Outsiders represent Identifiable Group of People:

You are not going to the masses, but to Identifiable Group of People of different races, colours, ethnic Groups and different Tribes.

There is something that marks the People out as different - They speak different dialects and have different Cultures.

They look different from you, and that is very challenging. Because many times, we want to treat everybody as the same - One size fits all.

But the Gospel is not a one size fits all Message - It is going to different Groups of People wherever they are.

3. Outsiders represent the Gentiles, Pegans or Heathens:

When the Jews use the word Gentiles, they normally mean People who don't worship the God of the Bible - People who are Idol Worshippers, People who have other Belief Systems.

When Jesus says, "Go into the Nations"; He is saying you are going to step out of your Comfort Zone, and you are going to confront People in a totally different world. Different groups of People - Gentiles, Heathens and so on.

This is what made the early Missionaries come to our Part of the world - Many People came from Europe, later on from America, to come and Evangelize Africa. And because we were People who hadn't heard the Gospel, they came and Presented to us the Gospel.

But now there is a Change! We in Africa have mostly become those who have the Gospel. And they in Europe have become those who don't have the Gospel. So those who brought us the Gospel are now empty of the Gospel. Evangelism is now from Africa to the world, because Europe has become Post Christian.

From the last sixty (60) years ago, Europe was the center of Christianity - That was where all major Christian ideas took Place.

But as God always warned the Isrealites - Remember when you become Wealthy and are Strong, that you do not forget the Lord your God. The Europeans have forgotten the One who made them who they are. And if you look at the Global World: Europe, America and the Global World are going down very fast.

Those of you who are running down there, you are running into a sinking ship - It's going down!

I mean, it's just a matter of time, America would not be the Super Power again; Europe would not be the Super Power again - They are just going down.

And the main reason is that they've forgotten who the Source of their help is - We think that it is Civilization; the Bible calls it Apostasy.

DMC NOTES: Apostasy in Christianity is the repudiation of Christ and the Central Teachings of Christianity by someone who formerly was a Christian (Christ-follower). The term Apostasy comes from the Greek word Apostasia meaning "Rebellion", "State of Apostasy", "Abandonment", or "Defection".

Now they are the Gentiles, Pegans and Heathens. And when we think about the Gospel we don't think about People bringing the Gospel to Africans; we are thinking of Africans taking the Gospel to the rest of the world.

When Jesus says go to the Nations, He meant all Group of People - Whether in Africa, Europe, Asia, the Middle East, wherever they do not know Jesus as their Lord - Go to them.

Sometimes you go to them in their Country; sometimes you go to them from your Country - But you have to go to them.

Let's examine the Great Commission - Our Assignment in the Light of what "Go" means and what the Nations represent.

1. First, it means to reach out to People as they are and where they are:

Sometimes it means travelling to where the People are.

But it is not the only way to go to the world because as you know, about Seventy (70) years ago, the only way you could go to where the People were was to travel to where they are.

And then we invented Radio - And through the Radio you can go to where People are without travelling to where they are.

We invented Telephone - Now you can call People where they are without going to where they are Geographically.

Now we have Television and we have Social Media - You can pick up your WhatsApp, do a small Message and blast it to every Part of the world in an instant. You can share Daily Devotionals and Sermons to everywhere.

So going is not just about Physically travelling; going is using every means necessary to take what you have to where People are - Go to where they are!

And we have to be so mindful of it so that in our reaching out to the world we don't become small Minded and say, "I must always travel to where People are because People are now reaching out to where the People are."

2. Our Assignment is to reach out to People in a way they Understand:

The means by which we communicate to People differ:

Some People would go to a Gospel Crusade to hear the Gospel Preached.

Others would be happy to welcome somebody into their homes.

Some would listen to Social Media.

When I was a young Christian you know, I was very zealous for the Lord. I used to preach everywhere - Everywhere I go I'm Preaching, everywhere I sit I'm Preaching. And I used to Preach on Public Transport. I did that for a long time.

We used to do something called "Dawn Broadcast" - Where you go and stand at Dawn behind People's Windows and tell them, "Repent, Judgement is coming!" And they would wake up early in the morning at 4:30a.m scared of Hell and give their lives to Jesus Christ.

I used to do House-To-House Visitation - I used to go to knock on People's doors.

But now some of these things are becoming difficult because you cannot go to Government Residential Areas to do Dawn Broadcast and say, Repent! Security would carry you (laugher).

So if you think of the old way you may feel, then I can't reach them again. But there are many ways you can reach them;

- You can Print Brochures and leave it in their Phones.

- You can reach them on Radio, Television, Telephone and Social Media.

There was a time we had to hold a big Crusade in order to reach People.

This time, WhatsApp can reach more People than a Crusade can reach.

So let us be Creative in thinking on what it means to "Go".

Of course, there are still certain People that you have to go to their homes - I mean, if you go to certain Neighbourhood, People are happy to welcome Visitors, because Nobody comes to them. And they are happy when somebody comes to them. But some areas are very Private, and they don't want you knocking on their doors when they have not invited you.

In fact, there are certain Parts of America, when you knock on somebody's door, or you enter somebody's yard without Invitation, they would pull out a riffle and they'll say, my friend I give you three (3) counts, leave my Property. And if you don't leave, you are gone!

So you have to reach out to People in a way they understand - Reaching out to Younger People is very different from reaching out to Older People.

I Preach to everybody, but there are People who can reach a Younger Generation - People in their fifties, sixties, etc far better than I can do because they speak their Language.

The Younger Generation have different terms and different forms of understanding. And each one of us, there is a People which you can reach out to, that Nobody else can reach.

I can speak my Native Language, but I can't Preach well with it - I Preach well in English Language.

But someone can take my Message and Preach it in the Native Language that it will be sweet in the People's ears.

Are you getting what I'm saying?

We reach out to People in a way they understand, because we are reaching out to different Groups of People.

If you go to America to Preach, you'll Preach differently from the way you Preach to Africans.

You can't go to Spain and say, hey, your mother is a Witch, your father is a Wizard, but God will give you Victory.

They would say you are crazy, where is it coming from? Is it From the middle age or what? But if you say that in Africa, People can relate to it, because they understand the concept of Witches or Wizards, and whatever it is in their concept. It is a Language they can relate to. But that Language is obsolete in another Culture.

So in Preaching the Gospel, we are Customising to every Group. That is what Jesus meant by Nations - Not Masses of People, but Identifiable Group of People. Some can Preach to Poor People, others can Preach to rich People.

3. It means to reach out to People with the Gospel of Christ:

... This is very important.

When we are reaching out to People, we are not Promoting ourselves but we are trying to draw them to Christ.

But remember this, that not everybody responds to the Gospel the first time they hear it. There is something called Pre-Evangelism.

WHAT IS PRE-EVANGELISM?

These are the things you do to Prepare a Person's heart to receive the Gospel.

This includes: Being friendly with People, being nice, building a Clinic in a Community, building a School in a Community so that people are won to hear the Gospel.

The Early Missionaries did a lot of that - They would go to a Place and render Services there until the People are won to hear the Gospel.

That is Pre-Evangelism!

- Taking Water to the People will not save them, but it would open their heart to the Message of Salvation.

- Building a School will not save them, but it makes them Pre-disposed to hearing the Gospel.

When I Preach I have so many People who listen to me on Radio and Television.

I would never forget a conversation I had with somebody in a Hotel in Accra -This Person from another Religion said to me, "I've been listening to you everyday." I said, woow! You listen to me? He said yes, I listen to you.

And then he said, because I listen to you, I have bought a Bible. When you Preach I also open the Bible to read. And then he said something that touched me. He said, "I am very close to becoming a Christian."

I didn't force him and say Repent. No! God is working on him. The Seed has been sown, it is been watered.

Not everybody get Born Again instantly - So when we are Preaching the Gospel, don't be disturbed about lack of Instant result.

The Early Missionaries sometimes go to Places and Preach, and for thirty (30) years Nobody would give their Life to Christ - Until thirty (30) years later there would be a first convert. And then the second, then the whole Village comes to know Christ.

What we are saying is that we are reaching out to People with the Gospel of Christ - Sometimes it's giving People food, visiting People in Hospitals, showing care and affection to Relatives.

Don't push them to receive Christ by force.

Be a nice Uncle or Aunt; buy the children bread when you go to visit their homes. Next time when you say, "I bring you Jesus" they will like it.

Not that you travel without buying anything and then one day you said, "I have something to give you, I want to give you Jesus" - They won't listen.

We have to win People's heart so that when the Gospel comes, they trust the one who is Preaching because he is a good Person.

When you say, I'm bringing you Good News, they will truly believe it hat you are bringing them Good News.

4. And finally, Reach out to People in the Authority of Christ:

Jesus Christ before He started the Great Commission said, "All Authority has been given to Me

in Heaven and on Earth."

In other words, "Go", because I have the Authority.

That means that when we "Go" out with the Message of Christ, we have the full backing of all Authority in Heaven and on Earth; and no Demonic Entity can harm you - "Blessed is he who comes in the Name of the Lord."

When you "Go" in the Name of the Lord you have God's Cover and Protection.

Yes you will confront Demonic Powers, Witches and Wizards, and all kinds of entities but we are not going empty; neither are we going in our own Authority.

We are going because the One who told us to "Go" said, before you go remember, "All Authority has been given to Me in Heaven and on Earth."

So we "Go" in His Authority and in his Power. We go fully aware that He Covers us, Protects us and we can go to every Enemy's Territory and know that, nothing shall by any means hurt us.

The Great Commission begins with "Go"! And we are to go to the Nations; different Classes of People; and each one of them needs the same Law but needs the same Law Presented in a slightly different way.

And as a Christians, each one of us must Participate in this.

There are many ways to Participate:

- Going Yourself,
- Sending People
- Financing it
- Paying for Television/Radio Airtime

All of that is Part of going, because what we do on Radio and Television as a Church is Evangelisation.

Each Message may not end up in Altar Call - People feel that every Message must end in an Altar. No!

Some Message is just to Prepare People - Prepare their heart so that when they hear the Gospel they are no longer doubters. They become Worshipers. Because all their Questions have been answered or their heart is opened to the Gospel.

So let me ask you the Question I began with: Jesus started with the Great Commission, there

were Worshipers and there were Doubters. There were Believers and there were Non-Believers. And they were all in front of Jesus.

And so for all of you here this morning or reading now on the label of DMC, what are you?

Are you a Worshiper, fully committed, ready to work with Him?

Or are you still trying to figure it out? "I will think about it later."

I hope that each one of us here today inclusive all those reading now on the Label of DMC are True Believers of the Lord Jesus Christ?

True Worshipers, committed to Him and committed to the Assignment He gave - The Great Commission?

Let's Pray!.

CLOSING PRAYER

Father we Thank You this Morning for Your Word which is Life and Light to each one of us.

Thank You Lord for the Privilege You have given to us to Partner with You in Sharing the Gospel to many People.

Thank You Lord that even in our ignorance You can still use us

Thank You Lord that even in our fear You can still use us

Thank You Lord that even in our Uncertainty, You can still use us.

So I Pray Father for everyone here inclusive those reading now on the Label of DMC, that each of us would be a Worker with You;

And we would be Mindful that we have an Assignment to reach the whole world, our immediate Community and all over the world, in all Nations with the Gospel of Christ.

And help us Lord, not to be Doubters in Your Presence, but to be Worshipers who are committed to Your Word.

In Jesus' Name - Amen and Amen!

SPECIAL SUNDAY SERVICE WITH PASTOR (DR) MENSA OTABIL (GENERAL OVERSEER, INTERNATIONAL CENTRAL GOSPEL CHURCH (ICGC) CHRIST TEMPLE, ACCRA GHANA)

TOPIC: THE GREAT COMMISSION - PART 2 (MAKE DISCIPLES)

DATE: 14TH APRIL, 2024

BIBLE TEXT: MATTHEW 28:18-20

Last week I started a Series on: "THE GREAT COMMISSION" - And we looked at "GO"!

DMC NOTES: You can get to read the Full Text of "The Great Commission - Part 1; on this Link:

[https://discoverymediacrew.com/THE-GREAT-COMMISSION-PART1-PASTOR\(DR\)-MENSAH-OTABIL](https://discoverymediacrew.com/THE-GREAT-COMMISSION-PART1-PASTOR(DR)-MENSAH-OTABIL)

But the Great Commission is not just about Going; it is also about Making Disciples.

So in the Part 2 today, my Subtitle is: "MAKE DISCIPLES".

We will go back to our Bible Text in Matthew 28:18-20 (NKJV):

18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All Authority has been given to Me in Heaven and on Earth.

19 Go therefore and make Disciples of all the Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

20 Teaching them to observe all things that I have Commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the Age." Amen.

MAKE DISCIPLES

Most times we simplify the Great Commission as Soul Winning.

That is, People giving their lives to Christ; getting Born Again; People receiving Salvation - That is part of it.

That is not where Jesus said we should end.

He said the Great Commission is about Making Disciples - Not just Winning Souls, but Making

Disciples.

That should be the desire of every Christian: not just to be Born Again, but to become a Disciple of Jesus.

And it should be the desire of every Church - Not just to get People saved and Born Again; but make them become Disciples.

Making of Disciples is at the heart of the Great Commission.

And that's what I am going to emphasize on in my Message today.

We've gotten used to People coming to Christ; respond to the Atar Call.

And many times we think that is the end.

We've noticed that it is the end of the journey for some People; because nothing happens afterwards.

The Great Commission is not just about People getting their hands lifted up but there has to be Discipleship Making.

WHO IS A DISCIPLE?

We will start by defining who a Disciple is:

A Disciple is a Person who is a Follower of Christ.

The word Disciple can be used in two (2) ways;

- We can use it in describing the Person who is a Disciple.
- We can also use it to define an activity: something that we do.

So God wants People to become Disciples.

But Discipleship is not an instant thing.

So, a Disciple is a Follower of Christ.

WHAT ABOUT DISCIPLESHIP?

It is the means of making a Person a Disciple.

What does it mean?

This is my Definition of Discipleship:

It is the Process of Learning the Teachings of Jesus; following after His Example, and living out His Life through the Power of the Holy Spirit.

Discipleship therefore, is a Process - It is a Lifetime Mission of every Christian and every Church.

Discipleship is also about turning our lives and our world around through Christ.

It is about Change, Transformation and turning our world around.

If you've noticed, the Ministry of Jesus Christ began with, "Repent" - He called People to repent.

That means, a radical Change of Mind that results in a radical Change of Life.

Christianity is more than Church attendance - You know that.

Christianity is more than saying a Prayer in Church.

Christianity is more than dressing nicely to come to Church.

... And I love the fact that you dress nicely to come to Church.

But Christianity is more than that! It is about Discipleship.

Everybody say: Discipleship!

And so today, I'm going to teach about how that is done - What is entailed in the Process of Discipleship?

And to learn that, we have to go back to Jesus Christ Himself.

In the same Book of Matthew, we see Him Calling His first Disciples.

And we want to look at what He told them to do; and what Discipleship should mean.

Matthew 4:18-20; And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Then He said

to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." They immediately left their nets and followed Him.

This is what Jesus wants from each one of us.

This is what Jesus says we should go to the Nations to announce:

"Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men."

In this Passage (Matthew 4:18-20); there is a Pattern of Discipleship that I am going to talk about today.

1. LEAVING:

The first highlight is Leaving.

A Disciple is a Person who leaves!

He is like a Person going on a journey - You don't go on a Journey by staying in the same spot.

I know that in this Modern time, we travel by being in the same Place - We call it 'Virtual Travel.'

You know, People can be in Ghana and in other parts of the world.

They can even take pictures as if they are in New York - Just by Superimposing or putting a background of Time Square behind their Pictures, suddenly the Person takes a Picture as if they are in New York.

That is Virtual - You didn't go anywhere; and definitely, you are not in Time Square. Alright!

The Bible says Peter left.

He didn't leave by staying, he left by leaving.

They had to take a step.

The Christian Life is about leaving where you are. It is a Pilgrimage.

So, anytime we become Christians, we have to understand that we are going to leave something behind; and we are going to move towards something.

Leaving is based on two (2) Things: Responding to the Call of Jesus Christ - We Respond and

we Leave

Just think of it this way; if I call your name and I say, "So and so Please, come!"

If I am calling, you don't sit and say, Thank You Sir and stay where you are.

If I am calling you, you have to get up from your chair and move.

When Jesus Christ Calls us, we have to get up, we have to move.

We don't have to be like the little child who is busy watching a nice Cartoon on the TV, Phone or iPad.

... And these days that's a big problem for Parents.

The children are glued to the Television, or using their Game's Pad or they have hijacked your Phone and iPad; watching all of those things they watch. And they are so glued.

These days, when the children are watching the Television or they are on their Game's Pad, they are so glued - All their attention is on it.

When the mother calls and says, hey John! He says, Yes Mummy. "Come and eat, dinner is ready."

What you'll hear is, I am coming Mummy - but he is still on the iPad; he is still in front of the Television.

The mother calls again: Johnny - Yes Mummy! "Come and eat." But he is still busy with what he is watching.

A lot of Christians are like that - God calls you, you say: Yes LORD. "Come!" You respond, "I'm coming" but we never move.

Many respond to their names, but they don't respond to the Assignment.

When Jesus says come! He doesn't want you to say, "Yes LORD, I'm coming." Meanwhile you are deeply engrossed in doing something.

Can you imagine Peter and Andrew: Jesus says, Come and follow me. And they say, Yes LORD - and they still go fishing.

But that is what we are doing; we respond to the name, but we don't respond to the Movement.

And there are lots of Christians who have responded by name to the Lord; but there is no shift of Location.

We have to respond to the Call.

But that responding is not just answering to a name - it is Moving.

2. TURNING AWAY:

It is also about turning away from the world.

Peter and Andrew turned away from the world they were familiar with.

We cannot love the world and Christ at the same time; because there has to be a turning away.

I have said it many times that Africa has become the Center of Christianity in the world.

Misologists say that Africa is the center of Christianity now in the world.

DMC NOTES: A Misologist is one who hates or dislikes reasoning or argument.

The largest number of People are becoming Christians in Africa.

The largest Churches are being built in Africa.

But the Question we have to ask is: Are we leaving anything? Or we are just responding to "Christian" by name but there is no departure from anything?

Because if we are going to be Disciples of Jesus; we don't just have to say Yes LORD, give me Children, money, Blessing, etc. We must Leave, Move and turn away from the World.

In conclusion, Discipleship is the main task of the Great Commission - Be committed to Making Disciples from today.

Shall we rise!

SPECIAL SUNDAY SERVICE WITH PASTOR (DR) MENSA OTABIL (GENERAL OVERSEER, INTERNATIONAL CENTRAL GOSPEL CHURCH (ICGC) CHRIST TEMPLE, ACCRA GHANA)

TOPIC: THE GREAT COMMISSION - PART 3 (BAPTIZE, TEACH, OBSERVE)

DATE: 21ST APRIL 2024

BIBLE TEXT: MATTHEW 28:18-20

Well, as you know, I've been doing a Series on: "THE GREAT COMMISSION."

In Part 1 we looked at the initial Command "GO!" And we've looked at the fact that going is not just about moving, but also carrying something with us.

In Part 2 we talked about Discipleship - Which is the main task of the Great Commission. And that's what we looked at last week.

Today we are going a little further to examine the Great Commission; and we are going to look at what it means to us, and how to achieve Discipleship.

Today I want to talk about the Assignment of the Church or the Great Commission: BAPTISE, TEACH, OBSERVE.

When we talk about the Assignment of the Church, we sometimes limit it only to Preaching the Gospel; leading People to Christ or Soul Winning - Which is great.

But that is only part of the Great Commission - That is actually the Introduction.

But the Question is: What do you do with the Person who has come to know Jesus Christ as Lord?

What do you do as a Christian?

After you get Born Again, what are you supposed to be doing with your Life?

When we bring or lead People to Christ, what are we supposed to do with them further?

All these are what we want to pay our attention to today;

Because the Christian Life is not just about going to Church, dressing nicely, having a great time, listening to great music and meeting friends, and all that - It's all part of it. But there is a greater reason why Jesus Christ told us to do His Work. And when we become Christians, we must be

about that business.

We are going to look at Discipleship; but today I am going to look at the steps that Jesus gave for us to disciple People as Christians.

In this Part 3 we are going to focus on Three (3) Words: Baptise, Teach, Observe.

These are the three (3) Actions that Jesus told us to undertake as we disciple the Nations.

Let's go back to our Primary Bible Text which we've been looking at from Part 1 - And that is Matthew 28:18-20. And let's hear the reading of God's Word;

Matthew 28:18-20 (NKJV)

18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

20 Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

Jesus says the reason you go to the Nations is to disciple them - It means that you are going to transform Nations.

That would include individuals; but it also includes Communities of People, Ethnic Groups.

All kinds of People who come to Christ must be transformed.

And the Process of Transformation comes through discipling them.

So He talked about Three (3) Things - And I'm going to occupy our thoughts with them today:

1. BAPTISE:

The Word 'Baptise' literarily means to immerse into. To deeply be submerged into something.

He says you should Baptise them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

The clear thing we get here about baptism is that it is both Physical and Spiritual.

I know some of you have been baptised; and some of you don't really think it's important. But it is a "Real Command" from Jesus.

He said, "baptise them" - It means that everybody who comes to Jesus Christ must be baptised. It's not Optional.

And He says, you baptise them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Now, most of us are familiar with Baptism - That it means you immerse somebody into water and bring them up.

That is the Physical act - You put the Person in the water.

But you don't keep them there forever - You bring them up.

Because if you keep them down for ever, they will die.

... So this is the Physical Action that takes place.

But there is also a Spiritual act that is taking place at the time you are doing this Physical act.

Because that Person is being identified with Christ in His Death and Resurrection.

So Jesus Christ is saying: Baptise them - Every Believer must be immersed.

There are several Church Traditions that baptise infants.

We do not belong to that Tradition - We believe that for a Person to be baptised, they must understand what is taking place. And they must have received Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour before they are baptised.

Why did Jesus say that a Person must be baptised?

Why did Jesus say that a Person who would be His Disciple; a Person who would live for Him must be Baptised?

He has His reasons:

I. It means to identify them with Christ.

Those who are baptised by immersion, Spiritually they are baptised into Christ.

This is a Physical Action with a Spiritual meaning - The Person is being baptised into Christ; identifying with two important things about Christ:

- His Death, when put down.
- And His Resurrection, when pulled up.

So when a Person is baptised, he is saying, "I died with Christ, and I have resurrected with Christ. I am identifying with Christ".

It doesn't mean that we just deep People into water and bring them out.

I mean, you can do all of that; but there has to be a meaning; there has to be a sense that, at this Point my Life is surrendered to Christ. I am identifying with Him, I am part of Him, and I am committed to living for Him.

A Discipled Christian is the Person who has a sense of Identity with Christ Jesus.

- We don't baptise People into our Church;
- We don't baptise them into our Community alone;

We baptise them into Christ - They identify with Christ

And the Bible actually says something about it in Galatians 3:27-28 - For as many of you as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither Male nor Female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

II. Apart from Identifying with Christ; Baptism identifies every Believer with the Body of Christ.

The Body of Christ is the Community of Believers who believe in Jesus Christ.

And Paul says the Body of Christ has no Male or Female; no Jew or Gentile.

And in our sense we can say - Black or White, Rich or Poor, Clergy or Congregation.

We are all baptised into Christ.

And a true Disciple is one who sees himself as part of every other Christian.

Jesus Christ warns His Disciples not to see themselves as different Nations, but as one Nation, one Kingdom, a Group of People belonging to Christ - That's what God wants us to have as a

Church.

That we don't build a Church where People see themselves and say, "Oh! I belong to this Group, I don't belong to that. That's not my friend; that's a different tribe, I can't deal with them."

The Christian Life goes beyond that!

We are baptised into Christ and we are baptised into the Body of Christ:

And in that Process, we see every Believer as our Brother and our Sister in Christ Jesus.

The Brotherhood, the Sisterhood of Believers; of those who are committed to the Lord Jesus Christ. And that is part of the Great Commission.

So when we go out as a Church and we bring People into Church, we don't bring them into Church and discriminate against them.

That is why we have to be careful as a Church; that we don't become so caught by external identification that we lose the Spirit leading.

In our Church we are going to have People who come in there, who don't look like you - Probably they come in dreadlocks and you say, "A Christian should not have dreadlocks; I don't like the way they are dressed; I don't like this about them. Why is she wearing all these kind of makeup and all of that?" We have to look beyond that.

And of course, People have to make adjustments in their own lives; on how they dress, how they Present themselves.

But we shouldn't let Limitations keep us from welcoming People into the Body of Christ.

That's what we do here in our Church.

When People enter the Church, we don't ask, what tribe are you?

Some Churches have Scissors at the entrance so that if your hair is not Properly done they bring it to the required Standard Measurement. But we don't do that here.

We believe People should come in and identify with Christ as the Scripture teaches.

That is what it means to disciple someone - And that is Part of the Great Commission.

A Church that really wants to reach out to the world must not become concerned about how People look externally.

... That's not all, Jesus says yes Baptise them. But He says;

2. TEACH:

You are to teach them - That's an important Part.

People come to Church, they get Teaching.

Teaching means to explain and to instruct.

The Great Commission is not just about Proclaiming the Gospel, but it is also about Teaching those who have received the Gospel.

And unfortunately these days, especially in Charismatic Churches, there is very little emphasis on Teaching.

People want to go to Church, they want Breakthrough, Favour, Increase.

We have so many problems and we put our Problems ahead of our Discipleship.

Jesus puts it differently; He says if you seek God as His Disciple; seek God and His Righteousness, all these things will be added to you. (Matthew 6:33).

And He knows you need a Breakthrough, Financial Favour, a wife, and a husband - He knows that you need these things but don't make that your Priority.

We come to be Discipled, to be Christlike and then He takes care of all our other Needs.

If we put our Needs ahead, we'll never become really Disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.

They would come into the Church; they may come in bad shapes; but through Teachings there would be Transformations.

HOW DO WE TEACH?

I. First, we instruct them with the Bible:

We don't instruct them with our words - And that is so important.

These days a lot of Pastors think that the way to disciple People is to train People to be like them, or fit into something they believe in.

And whether that thing fits into the Bible or not, they just want People who are committed to their way of doing things.

But we don't do that in Discipling People.

Remember, we are not Discipling People after ourselves.

We are not Discipling People to be like us; we are Discipling People to be like Christ. And the measure of that is the Word of God.

So we Teach them the Word of God - We put the Word of God Central to what People hear.

And I am committed to that - I am committed to the Teaching of the Word. And going deeper with you as we explore deeper in the Word of God because, that's how we get disciplined.

It's not just picking Bible Verses here and there that suits us - You pick a Psalm here, something from Isaiah that deals with your Enemies, and that gives you Power.

It's good to pick Verses that inspire you but the Christian Life is not about Cherry Picking; Picking Verses that inspire you, that make you feel good.

The Christian Life is learning the Totality of what God wants you to teach.

To disciple People, they have to be instructed in the Word of God and from the Word of God, not from my Books. Not from somebody else's books, but from the Word of God.

Of course if there are Books we have to read, we read them.

But learn to make the Bible an important Part of the Discipleship Program.

And to teach, we instruct them with our Exemplary Christian Living. Because every Believer is called to be a Disciple.

But at the same time, every Believer is called to help disciple other People who come to Christ.

Let's say somebody comes to Church, wants to learn the Christian Life; we say go to the Bible and teach them the Bible; and then they will look at your Lifestyle and our Lifestyle is totally different - We are Judgemental, and we are not kind. There is no Generosity in your Spirit.

People come to Church and you just treat them harshly. And still we say we are discipling them.

No! Because if we do that, we are not setting the right example.

II. You Teach by Exemplary Christian Lifestyle:

Paul says you immitate me as I immitate Christ.

So my job as a Pastor is not just to teach the Bible; but to also live an exemplary Christian Life.

I don't want People to say, "Oh! He is a Man of God - Touch not the Anointed."

That's not the way we look at it.

You want to look at a Person who says he is a Pastor, and you want to say he is an Exemplary Christian - Not that he is Anointed; not that he has Spiritual Immunity, not that he has a Special Grace; but he is Exemplary.

When People come to our Church, they should say, "these People really know their Bible."

But not only that, "they are living it out!"

The Questions you'll want to ask yourself are:

- Is my Life Exemplary?
- Can I take a New Convert and say, "I just want to help you live a Christlike Life; and I want you to watch the way I live?"
- Would that be a Good Example to that Person?
- If that Person followed you, will they feel that they are living a better Life?

So you have to think about it!

And it's scary when we ask ourselves these Questions; because all of us know we are Human, and we know our Limitations.

God knows our Limitations, but He still calls us to live Exemplary lives.

People who come to Church are going to learn from the People they meet in Church:

I. If the People they meet in Church are Loving, they will be Loving;

II. If the People they meet in Church are mean Spirited, they will be mean spirited;

III. If the People they meet in Church are Self-Centered, they will be Self-Centered. Then they are going to think the Christian Life itself is Self-Centered.

And I Pray that when People come to our Churches and they encounter you, they will remain - Amen.

By the way, you are the Best Christians that we have - We can't get anything better than you.

It doesn't mean that you are living the best Life; but that's all we have.

So when People come to this Church, most People are not going to meet the Pastor - A few People meet me directly.

But most People are not meeting me - They are going to meet Ushers, Counsellors, People in the Choir, People who are in the Praise Team - People who lead in Praise and Worship. People who play in the Band because they are faces of the Church.

So if you play the Band, you are saying, I stand here in the Band, but my Life also is consistent in Christ.

And so if after Service you are doing something else; you are putting off somebody whom you have discipled: and you are directly against the Great Commission.

I am not putting the Praise Team on the Spotlight but they have to be Mindful, because they are the ones who stand on the stage with Pastors.

You are bragging that you have been in Church for a very long time and that you know a lot.

It is good for you to have been in church for a very long time; the question is:

- Have you been Discipled by Christ?

- Is your Life Exemplary?

- And for the New People to whom you are bragging your longevity; do they see you as Exemplary Christian?

So that's how we Teach - With the Word of God and with our Exemplary Christian Life.

The third (3rd) and final thing Jesus said, "Teach them to observe all things that I have said."

3. OBSERVE:

To Observe means to keep and to honour.

And He didn't say you are to observe just what your Church teaches; but you are to observe all things.

It's all Centered on Christ Jesus - That must be the way that Nations are Discipled.

In fact, when you study Church History, you would know that even in Nations like Europe, before many of the Nations in Europe and the tribes of Europe came into Christianity; these are some of the things that transformed the Society; gave them better work ethics, better ways of working, better ways of Stewarding their Assets, better ways of treating the weak and the Vulnerable.

It's all Christlike, and it transformed their Society.

Unfortunately, most of those Societies are turning away from the Foundation that gave them the Morality to build the Societies they have built.

But we in Africa must do better.

"... To Observe all things that I teach."

What does it mean to us?

It means that when we bring People to Christ; when we go out, whether through Preaching - Whatever we are doing; when we bring People to Church we must Change them.

2. And it also means to Charge them to honour what Christ has instituted.

Christ instituted His Church; He Changed them to be baptised, to Partake of the Lord's Table - Holy Communion.

Those are Change. It's a command and we must observe it.

That's why, if you are in Church and you have not been baptised - I know you will say well, "I was baptised as an infant.

But at the time you were baptised, Somebody stood in for you and said "well, he has made a Decision to live for Jesus Christ."

Since you've grown up, you need to make a Decision to God and say "now I want to Publicly

identify with Christ: I need to go where He went."

Remember Jesus Himself said - He had to be baptised to fulfill all Righteousness.

If you are now saying, there are imperatives in our Christian lives and there are lots of options; then you are not a Christian.

If you are a Christian, do what Christ says - You need to be baptised.

So if you've not be immersed in water Physically, to show your identity with Christ; you need to do so.

He says, "teach them to observe to do all things..."

- And He Commanded that we be Baptised;
- He Commanded that we Partake of Holy Communion in Remembrance of Him.
- He Commanded us to walk in Love.

If you look at the Totality of the New Testament, He Commanded us to be a Church - To come together in Fellowship; to assemble together, to be His Body and to represent Him.

So these are the things that are important for Disciples:

- You cannot choose when you go to Church, when you don't want to go to Church.
- You cannot say, "today I want to rest, I don't feel like it."

It's not about your feeling my friends; it's about the Command of Jesus.

For those of us who are in the Church, who are going to bring People to Christ, these are the things we need to do:

- We are bringing them to Christ.
- We are bringing them to Identify with Christ.
- We are bringing them to be Baptised into Christ.
- We are bringing them to be Taught of Christ Jesus.
- We are bringing them to observe to do all that Christ Commanded.

And it's not just the individual, it is also for families, etc.

- And that we must be committed as a Church that obeys the Great Commission.

By going out, bringing People in, Baptise them, Teach them to Observe everything that Christ taught.

And of course, the first way to do that is for an individual to decide - I need Jesus in my Life. I want Jesus to come into my heart; I want to live for Him, I want to have a Brand New Life in Christ Jesus, I want to be Born Again.

ALTAR CALL

And if you are here, Inclusive those reading now on the Label of DMC and you are saying, Pastor I really want to start the Journey;

I want to live for Jesus, I want to be a Disciple of Jesus.

I want to serve Him with my Life, I want to Dedicate my Life to Him.

We are going to Pray a very short Prayer.

Maybe some of you have Prayed this Prayer before;

Or may be you have been inconsistent in your desire for Christ; you can join the Prayer.

If you are here's this Morning, Inclusive those reading now on the Label of DMC, and you are saying, Pastor, I want to start a New Journey with Jesus. I want to really work for You, LORD.

If that is your desire, I want you to lift up your Right Hand wherever you are and say with me:

Heavenly Father, I come to you today just as I am. I am a Sinner, I cannot save myself.

I Thank You Father, that Jesus died for me on the Cross of Calvary, to give me a New Life.

And today, I receive You as my Lord and Personal Saviour.

Lord Jesus come into my Heart; I have decided to follow You and to do Your Will all the days of my Life.

In Jesus' Name - Amen!



D. S. QURESHI & SONS MEDIA CENTRE