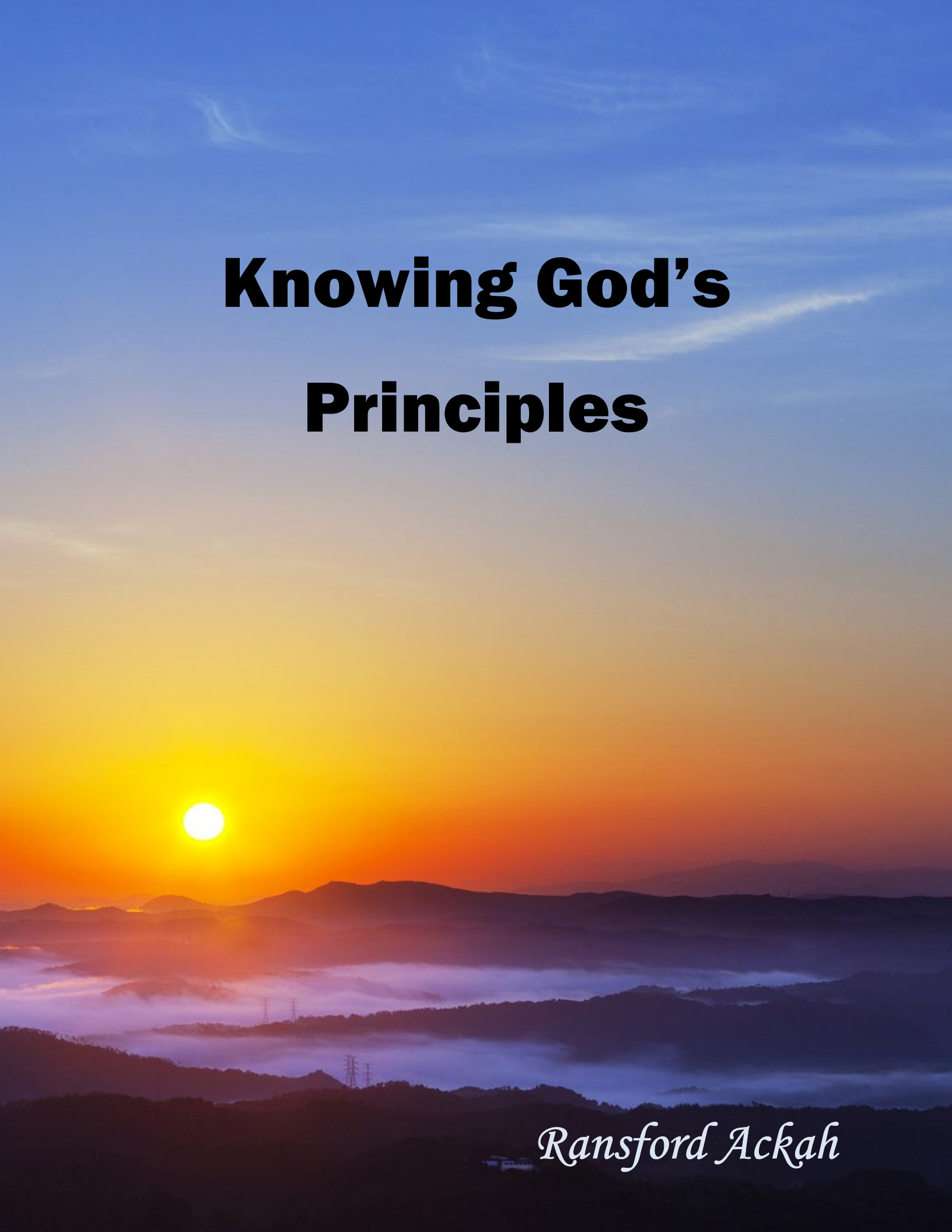




# **Knowing God's Principles**

*Ransford Ackah*

# Contents

|                                                              |    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Preface .....                                                | 5  |
| Chapter 1 .....                                              | 7  |
| Knowing God's Ways .....                                     | 7  |
| Moses: God's Chosen Vessel .....                             | 8  |
| Obedience to God and the Return to Egypt.....                | 9  |
| Passing Through and Passing Over .....                       | 10 |
| The Experience at the Red Sea .....                          | 11 |
| Loaves and Fish Ministry.....                                | 13 |
| Chapter 2 .....                                              | 15 |
| Knowing God's Operation .....                                | 15 |
| The Principle of Knowing God.....                            | 16 |
| Believing: The Work Of God .....                             | 18 |
| Chapter 3 .....                                              | 21 |
| Knowing God's Faith .....                                    | 21 |
| 1. Faith always confirms the Promises of God .....           | 22 |
| 2. Faith Exhibits the Proof of God's Faithfulness.....       | 22 |
| 3. Faith Acts Swiftly .....                                  | 22 |
| 4. Faith Weeps over the Folly of Unbelief .....              | 23 |
| 5. Faith Rests Exclusively in the Lord and on His Ways ..... | 24 |
| 6. Faith Follows God Always and Everywhere .....             | 25 |
| 7. Faith Always Overcomes .....                              | 25 |
| Will He Find Faith On Earth? .....                           | 25 |
| The story of Thomas (John 20:24-29).....                     | 28 |
| The story of Mary and Martha (John 11:21-27) .....           | 29 |
| The positive aspect of faith. (Mark 11:22-26) .....          | 29 |
| Here are some consequences of unbelief: .....                | 30 |
| Unbelief leads to the sin of presumption.....                | 30 |
| Chapter 4 .....                                              | 33 |
| Knowing God's Word .....                                     | 33 |
| Moving Mountains .....                                       | 34 |
| i. Feed on the Word.....                                     | 35 |
| ii. Absolute Obedience to His Word .....                     | 36 |
| iii. Confess What God Has Done .....                         | 37 |

|                                       |    |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| Chapter 5 .....                       | 39 |
| Knowing God's Revelation .....        | 39 |
| Chapter 6 .....                       | 43 |
| Knowing God's Church .....            | 43 |
| In Spirit.....                        | 44 |
| Chapter 7 .....                       | 47 |
| Knowing God's Growth .....            | 47 |
| 1. Redemption .....                   | 47 |
| 2. Forgiveness .....                  | 48 |
| 3. Knowing His Will.....              | 48 |
| 4. Christ's Headship .....            | 48 |
| 5. His Inheritance.....               | 49 |
| 6. The Praise of His Glory .....      | 49 |
| Chapter 8 .....                       | 51 |
| Knowing God's Indwelling .....        | 51 |
| The Human Spirit.....                 | 51 |
| The Spirit is Witness.....            | 52 |
| Practical Application .....           | 53 |
| Fervent In Spirit .....               | 55 |
| Chapter 9 .....                       | 57 |
| Knowing God's Way for the Church..... | 57 |
| God's Way for the Church.....         | 57 |
| My Spirit And My Brother .....        | 58 |
| Call On the Name of the Lord .....    | 59 |
| Live By The Spirit .....              | 59 |
| Chapter 10 .....                      | 61 |
| Knowing God's Intercession .....      | 61 |



## P R E F A C E

Christians today, face many distractions from the world as well as from the domain of Christian teaching and practices. In a way, this affects the spiritual health of many, causing their love for the Lord to grow cold or their youthful energies to be misdirected to serve other causes.

To know God's principles by which He operates is a refreshing way to survive this utter confusion and distraction surrounding Christians today.

In his book, "Knowing God's Principles," Brother Ransford Ackah provides amazing insights into the divine principles by which God operates among His people. Through practical lessons and illustrations he shows true seekers of the Lord how they might genuinely experience and be well-pleasing to Him in their daily lives.

Today, the principles of the inner life and walking by the spirit have eluded many dear believers. Instead of the beauty of a rich inner life being expressed, the secret desire to be known and accepted outwardly appears to be the driving force behind many Christian activities in our era. It is only with our human spirit that we can perceive, in faith, the wonderful things that God has promised to those who love Him.

Our Christian lives begin with the revelation of Christ in us, but we must proceed to see and experience the Church as well. Seeing the Church is by revelation. However, knowing the Church is by serving in a practical way in the body. Practical serving in the church affords the Lord an opportunity to deal with all our self-seeking, so that we may learn to seek the things of Christ. The things of Christ are the practical services in caring for His saints to produce the Bride of Christ.

This book unveils the secrets of the Lord's heart to the seeking believers. It will definitely help to restore your zeal for the Lord. You will be blessed if you apply these principles to your Christian life.

Daniel Nunoo



## CHAPTER 1

# Knowing God's Ways

*Readings: Ex. 14:10-16, 21, 22, 31; Num. 13:27-33;*

*Ps. 103:7; Prov. 3:5-6*

My prayer for this gathering is that each one of us touches the Lord in a living way. Our activities and jobs should not distract us from God. Having the wish to work for God and yet failing to contact Him is the biggest frustration for a believer. In the course of these messages we are going to see how we can know the Lord intimately.

In Psalm 103:7, the holy writing says, "He made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the children of Israel." This verse reveals something very important in our Christian life. We may come to a stage in our Christian walk where it seems to us that we are no longer progressing. We can no longer enjoy the Lord as in the past. We then begin to pray: "Oh God, where are You?"

The unfortunate tendency of many in such a situation is to give up their service to the Lord and perhaps even begin doubting that God is real. It is easy in such a condition to throw everything aside and invest time in worldly things, politics, etc. On the contrary, at this time, we need to seek Him more. The Bible says in Jer 29:13, "And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart."

The church is represented in the Old Testament by Israel, which passed through a similar experience in their history. God was looking for a people to whom He could make known His ways, desiring to reveal His move and His work to His people.

Today, it is the same with the Church. God is looking for a people to whom He can reveal His entire plan, counsel, and ways. The world wants to see His works, but the Church must know His ways. This is more intimate than knowing only His works and acts. Today many are going after miracles, but not many are seeking to know Him inwardly. Knowing His acts is absolutely different from knowing His ways. We must press on to know His ways. In John 5:39-40 Jesus said; "You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them

you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life”.

### ***Moses: God's Chosen Vessel***

In the case of the children of Israel, we see that God chose a man: Moses. He had a wonderful background, and God knew what He was going to do with him. At the time of his birth, all the male children were to be killed. But God, in His sovereignty, preserved him. He kept him and even caused him to enter the house of Pharaoh. God decided to keep this vessel, and he was preserved throughout his life. At the age of forty, he had not yet clearly seen the ways of God; consequently, he killed an Egyptian through his natural efforts, thinking that in so doing he was accomplishing God's design. His mistake caused him to be chased into exile for a long time. This is a lesson every child of God must learn: Even though God has promised to use us for a specific work, we must be patient, waiting for the right time. Doing anything for God with our natural strength and zeal will always lead us into trouble.

We see the same principle in the life of Abraham and his wife Sarah. When they waited for the promise of God (the child Isaac) and it was not being fulfilled, according to their concept, they used natural means to bring it to pass. Indeed, they did get a child through Hagar, but they paid dearly for it. As a believer, each time I failed to wait for God's timing and tried in my own zeal to help God fulfil His purpose, the result was always regrettable. Paul in Romans 8:8 stated, “Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”

In his flight, Moses met God in the burning thorn bush. In the blaze, he recognized the presence of God, who makes even His angels a flame of fire. According to Hebrews 12:29, “Our God is a consuming fire.” But interestingly enough, the bush was burning but it was not consumed. The words that Moses heard were those of God Himself. The holy ground on which he stood was formerly not holy. He had been there for many years, in fact, for nearly forty years. But this time, when God spoke, something new happened. Through the presence of God, that old common place became holy. Therefore, it is not the place that matters; it is God that makes the difference.

At this time, God asked him to return to Egypt. How difficult it was for him to return to Egypt after his former ways! This was a very hard demand from God.

Imagine how the Egyptians might have been searching for him; a foreigner who had committed murder. There were probably signs all over Egypt which read: “Moses: Wanted! dead or alive, for a handsome reward.” Now God comes to him and says, “Stop your running and hiding, go back to Egypt and present yourself to Pharaoh. Go and give yourself up! I have a message for you to Pharaoh. Go and tell him that God has sent you to deliver His

people from Egypt." That was not an easy task. Moses did put up some resistance and gave reasons why he was not the right person. Eventually, he agreed to do the task. The Lord often sends us where we are known, so that our message will be practical and effectual. People are impressed with what they see us do, not with what we say. For what we say must correspond with our daily living.

### ***Obedience to God and the Return to Egypt***

On his return to Egypt, Moses certainly had to depend on God concerning the smallest details of his life. Each day he went to God to receive instructions about what to do. That should also be our experience. Unfortunately our natural capacity often pushes us to act without the Lord, without searching for Him. The result may be excellent, but not lasting, because God's hand is not in it. On the other hand, if God is in what we do, it will last eternally. God is eternal, and what He does lasts forever.

Moses constantly depended on God when he was before Pharaoh. Whatever Pharaoh asked, Moses immediately went before the Lord, returning later to present the mind of God to Pharaoh. Pharaoh's words and his stubbornness did not matter. Moses did not argue with him, neither did he use his own wisdom to try to answer any of his demands or questions. He simply went to God and repeated to Him the words of Pharaoh. Moses did only what God told him to do and spoke only what God told him to speak. He had nothing to say besides what God had told him. In this case, Moses was a type of Christ in his dealings with the world. Jesus said in John 14:10, "Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works." Also in John 6:57 Jesus said, "As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me." We all, like Moses, need to be one with God and be mingled so much with Him that we may be one spirit with the Father, only doing and saying the things that the Father tells us.

Unfortunately, we do a lot of things God has not told us to do. Many times we are either rebellious or presumptuous. Rebellious, because when He speaks we do not obediently do what he says. Presumptuous, because we often do what He has not commanded us to do. But this man, Moses, lived only by God. We also must learn to depend on Him for the accomplishment of His divine purpose.

The Lord through Moses did several mighty miracles to convince the Jews that he was the one sent from God. Then he had to perform ten miracles to convince the Egyptians that he was God's messenger and deliverer of His people. Miracles are very important for the heathen and the unbelievers to persuade them to believe the true God. But the believers do not necessarily need miracles to convince them that God exists. The true believer must

know God inwardly in his inner man. Moses had that experience, but the Jews and the Egyptians needed to see miracles to believe in God. "He made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the children of Israel (Ps 103:7)."

Israel rejoiced day after day, because they saw God's doings in Egypt. But Moses remained calm at the sight of miraculous things. He knew God's ways, not just His acts.

### ***Passing Through and Passing Over***

Before they left Egypt, the children of Israel were preserved from the angel of death by sacrificing a lamb and applying its blood to their doors. While the people of God were in their houses eating, the angel of death was killing all the firstborn of the Egyptians. No firstborn of Israel died; thank God for the blood! The blood was a sure salvation for the Israelites. The blood of Christ is still efficacious today. God said: "For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt."

There are two phrases that are very striking in this chapter: "For I will **pass through** the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will **pass over you**, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt (Exodus 12:12-13)." "**Pass through**" and "**pass over**". . . the passing through was for judgment and destruction, but the passing over was for mercy, to obtain salvation.

I have always believed that if a Jew had not obeyed and had not applied the blood on his door, his firstborn would have been killed. At the same time, if any Egyptian had feared God and had believed His word (and if he also had applied the blood on his door), I believe he would have been preserved. In other words, if we follow the demands of God, He will keep the promises He has made. This illustrates the need for us to know the principles and ways of God. If we apply the blood on our door, we will be preserved; otherwise we will die. It is a matter of believing what God has said, not a matter of who you are. Salvation from sin follows the same principle. If you believe in God's word, you will be saved, but if you do not believe, even if you are the son of a prophet or a high priest, you will be condemned.

### ***The Experience at the Red Sea***

Pharaoh had become subdued and had allowed the Israelites to leave. They were happy and now could shout, "Free at last, thank God, we are free at last!" They, therefore, left Egypt on the eve of the Passover and not long afterwards found themselves before the Red Sea. Their joy did not last. Here, they were tested. Did they believe that God was leading them to the good land? Such experiences show us where we are in our faith. Unfortunately, the children of Israel had doubts about what God was doing, and they did not believe in Him. Note that at this moment, only forty eight hours separated them from a complete exit from Egypt, where God had accomplished all the miracles and wonders.

Yet in two days they had already forgotten what God had done for them. They murmured and even blasphemed. They said that God had brought them out of Egypt to bury them in the wilderness, because there were no tombs for them in Egypt. That was a very serious accusation against God. But Moses knew God's ways. He took all those problems back to God on the mountain while the children of Israel murmured, sobbed, wailed, and vented their anger. At that moment, only one man knew God's ways – Moses! He did not side with their unbelief and rebellion. His attitude was to go back to God and ask Him what they should do at that moment. In his heart, he knew that God would accomplish His word and would not deliver them from Egypt only to destroy them in the Red Sea.

Moses knew and believed that God was not going to bury His people in the sea or in the wilderness. Perhaps he did not know the exact means God would use to make a way for them, but he believed that God was going to intervene one way or the other. The scripture says, "God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good? (Num 23:19)"

He knew he had to draw nearer to God. And God, as always, spoke again: "And the LORD said to Moses, 'Why do you cry to Me? Tell the children of Israel to go forward. But lift up your rod, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it. And the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea. And I indeed will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them. So I will gain honour over Pharaoh and over all his army, his chariots, and his horsemen. Then the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gained honour for Myself over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen. (Ex 14:15-18).'"

At that moment, God revealed to Moses that He would open the sea for them and use it to bury the Egyptians. The unbelieving Jews who followed Moses were certainly surprised to see what God had done. However, Moses was not amazed, for he had faith in God and knew God's ways. All the people were thus able to cross the sea. After arriving at

the other side, they worshipped the Lord and danced with joy. They had just blasphemed and insulted God, but now they were praising Him. Do you not think that God knew He could not count on this sort of people? The scriptures say: "Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men, and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man (John 2:24-25)."

We experience the same thing in our Christian life. Difficulties are often necessary to reveal what is hidden in our hearts. If we can hold firm our faith in the face of problems, God can confide His work in us. Due to this principle, God has not given His confidence to many of us for the accomplishment of His work. God will grant us many circumstances in order to train us to depend solely on Him.

Some days later when they came to the waters of Mara, the people had still not learned to depend on God for everything; this was their problem. The Old Testament mentions the word "faith" on only two occasions; very often the expression "trust in God" is used. The Christian life depends entirely on God in all things. Actually faith is rest. When you believe that God is able to take care of your situation, you will rest and have no anxiety. But, trust occurs when you do not know anything and have no confidence in yourself; you just resign yourself and rely on God. You have the peace that the One you are depending upon is able to care for you and therefore, have no fear. Do not be afraid of people's reactions. Believe in God's solution.

In Ephesians 2:8, we are told that we are saved by grace through faith. Then, in 2 Corinthians 5:7, we are told that we walk by faith and not by sight. In Romans, Paul also tells us "that the just shall live by faith (1:17)." We also read that "it is by faith you stand" (2 Cor.1:24) Thus we are saved by faith, we walk by faith, we live by faith, and we stand by faith. Therefore, the Christian life is a life full of faith. Then finally, we read that "... whatever is not from faith is sin (Rom 14:23)."

Moses was a man full of faith. The children of Israel worshipped God only when they saw miracles. Their whole experience with God was through the outward things they saw, but Moses had an intimate relationship with God.

Throughout the entire history of God's work on this earth, God's people have been very outward and natural; they only praise, thank, and worship God when they see an outward manifestation. Indeed, this is sad. In the Christian life we often depend on visible manifestations of God; when these stop, our faith also stops.

At times the Lord will halt some of His works in order to test us, to determine whether we depend on the works or on Him. Is it the gift we trust or the Giver? Is it redemption or the

Redeemer? Is it salvation or the Saviour? One song writer wrote, "Lord I love You for Yourself; not for what you do or give".

### ***Loaves and Fish Ministry***

There is a very interesting story in the gospel of John. After Jesus fed the five thousand in John Chapter 6, they were delighted, following Him and seeking Him, because of what they saw Him do, not because of who He was. "Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, 'This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.' Therefore, when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone" (John 6:14-15). Their desire to make Him King sprang from the outward benefits they saw and gained from Him. Later they came again seeking Him. John 6:24-27 says, "They also got into boats and came to Capernaum, seeking Jesus. And when they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, 'Rabbi, when did You come here?' Jesus answered them and said, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. Do not labour for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him.'"

A lot of ministry today is mainly based on loaves and fishes. People are going to "church" for what they will gain for their natural survival. The goal of many so-called Christians is their own comfort and sustenance. Their emphasis is mostly on good health, financial prosperity and physical protection. Consider this famous verse, "Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers (3 John 2)." In Africa, the largest churches are the ones which pray for people to receive visas to travel abroad and to prosper financially. People are seeking God for all kinds of reasons other than God Himself. Paul said in Philippians 2:21, "For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus." How many are loving Him purely without any motive?

We should not depend on outward things. Let us consider the Lord and His interests first. Jesus said, "... do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble" (Matt 6:31-34).

One day when the Lord was in a crowd, a sick woman came to Him wishing for his healing touch. She disobeyed the law in order to come to Him. Her sickness forbade her to

touch anyone, but she believed that only one moment of contact with Jesus was going to cure her. She touched Him and she was healed. Immediately, Jesus felt in Himself that someone had touched Him, not in an accidental way as the others might have done. He knew that someone had touched Him in a living way, because virtue flowed out from Him into this woman. What we must seek in these days is that each time we come to the Lord, something divine from Him will enter into us, saturating and thoroughly permeating us. We need His touch and His life to build up His body. We need to gain more of Him

## CHAPTER 2

# Knowing God's Operation

*Readings: Ex. 33:1, 2, 11-18; Num. 13:27-33; 14:3, 6-10, 21-24.*

We must clearly grasp how God operates in this universe. Understand that every man is constrained by our Creator's governing principles. For example, to use an oven, we should know how it works. Otherwise, we cannot cook, and we might even think the oven is defective. The problem is not with the oven, but with us. What you do not know can hurt you. "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge (Hosea 4: 6)."

If we know the principles of the Christian life, we shall see many things happening; but if we ignore them, we will think the Christian life is vain. Consider some verses in the New Testament that reveal the principles on which God operates. According to 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." The principle described herein is very clear. If someone wants forgiveness of sins, he has to confess them. In Romans 10:9-10, it is written "that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." It is clear once again that to be saved, we have to believe and confess with our mouth. This principle is valid no matter who you are or where you are on the earth. According to 1 John 5:12, "He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life." If someone wants life, he needs the Son. Therefore, if you reject the Son of God, you reject life, because He is life. He does not just give life, but He is Life! The Lord, one day, told the Pharisees, "You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life (John 5:39-40)." This principle is still valid today. Your level of knowledge does not matter. Nothing can be accomplished without this principle, for if you want the result, you must meet the condition. John 4:23-24, says "But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who

worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” If you do not worship God in spirit, your worship is not acceptable. God will be satisfied only when we worship Him in spirit and in truth. This means no falsehood or hypocrisy.

Sometimes I wonder how a Boeing 747 can lift itself above the ground and stay in flight for many hours. But scientists have found the right aeronautic principles and have applied them correctly so that this fact can be accomplished. Application of the right principles yields the right results. We may reach a stage in our Christian life where we can no longer go on, because it seems to us that nothing is happening. This is the most important time to come back to the word and discover the principles by which God operates.

Romans 8:8 tells us that those who are in the flesh cannot please God. Often we act in the flesh. We can even pray in the flesh. One time I found myself at a prayer meeting and someone was praying. I found the content of the prayer to be good, but then another person prayed to balance the prayer. At that point, I knew in my spirit that this church had problems. The Lord quoted from the Prophet Isaiah saying, “These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honour Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me (Matthew 15:8).” This reveals another principle: we can pray diligently to God, or work outwardly for Him, but if our heart are far away from Him He does not recognize what we do.

Hebrews 11:6 says that “without faith, it is impossible to please God.” Perhaps our way of doing things is pleasing to us, but there is no solution outside of faith. Without faith it is impossible to please God. It is by faith that our Christian life began, and it is by faith that our Christian walk continues. In Exodus 33, Moses walked by these principles. Many problems surrounded him, but he knew God and His principles, therefore, he was never afraid. The presence of God was his strength.

Psalms 25:9 shows us yet another wonderful principle. God guides the meek in His judgment. The meek inherit the earth. The stubborn and rebellious people whom Moses led to the good land had stony hearts. God told Moses to withdraw from them so that He would destroy them (Numbers 14:11-17). If we were in Moses’ stead, what would we have done? I think we would have been very happy if God had spoken to us in such a way. But it was not so with Moses. Here was a man who knew God and His ways. He even advised God, telling Him not to do such a thing, and God listened.

### ***The Principle of Knowing God***

“Behold, I send an Angel before you to keep you in the way and to bring you unto the place which I have prepared. I will send My fear before you, I will cause confusion among all the people to whom you come, and will make all your enemies turn their backs to you (Ex

23:20,27).” God gave Moses a great promise, but Moses was not selfish. He was more concerned for God's people than for his personal interests.

Moses pleaded with God and said, “Now therefore, I pray, if I have found grace in Your sight, show me now Your way, that I may know You and that I may find grace in Your sight. And consider that this nation is Your people. And He said, ‘My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.’ Then he said to Him, ‘If Your Presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here. For how then will it be known that Your people and I have found grace in Your sight, except You go with us? So we shall be separate, Your people and I, from all the people who are upon the face of the earth.’ So the LORD said to Moses, ‘I will also do this thing that you have spoken; for you have found grace in My sight, and I know you by name.’ And he said, ‘Please, show me Your glory.’ Then He said, ‘I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.’ But He said, ‘You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live.’ And the LORD said, ‘Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock. So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by. Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen (Ex 33:13-23).’”

When God told Moses He Himself would not go with them, but would send His Angel to go along with them, we see a heart that was absolutely for God. I believe that many of us would have been satisfied to have His angel. It was better than nothing, and the promises would have been fulfilled all the same; but Moses did not settle for that. Many today would settle for an angel, but Moses wanted His Person, God Himself. Moses seemed to be saying, “No, I do not want your angel, I want You.” He was not satisfied at all with the option of an angel. He wanted God Himself to come with His people. A songwriter said, “Lord I love you for Yourself, not for what you do or give!” May we be desperate for Him and not settle for anything else.

God appeared in a cloud and talked face to face with Moses, as with a friend. At last God had found someone who knew Him. The heart of this man wanted neither angels nor miracles. What Moses wanted was God Himself. He asked to be shown His way that he would know Him. He had known God from the beginning, through all his experiences with Israel in Egypt and in the wilderness. But when he found himself in front of God, he asked Him to show him His way. Here we see that Moses wanted a different type of knowing.

The New Testament word “know” in the Greek language has two meanings. The first is “Ginosko” (“I know”), which refers to outward knowing. This knowing comes by learning,

reading or some other means of acquisition. However, there is also another type, and that is "Oida" that is inward knowing, a knowing that comes not by reading or outward preaching. This word describes a deep, inward realization of God's presence, power, promises, and ways. Paul said, "that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead (Phil 3:10-11)." This is the kind of knowing Moses was talking about. May we all know God in this way.

God gave Moses the promise that He Himself would go with him. Troubles, problems, and difficulties in the Christian life often come because we do not know God in such a way. Without this inward knowing of God, we will not have His presence. Without His presence, the Christian life is vain. The only condition necessary for joy and satisfaction in the Christian life is His presence. Moses even added, "If You do not go with us, we are not going."

Unfortunately, many Christians are doing many things for Him, without His presence. In John 15:5, the Lord tells us that "for without Me you can do nothing". Unfortunately, for many of us, it does not make any difference whether the Lord is there or not. But, all our activities without Christ are vain. If the Lord Himself is not with us, whatever we do is vanity, even if we know all the right methods. Let us learn from Moses, who pleaded with God: "If Your presence will not go with (lead) us, we shall not go." Moses said to God, "for how then will it be known that Your people and I have found grace in Your sight, except You go with us?" It is only when God goes with us that we become distinct from other people. What we pretend to be is nothing; rather, the determining factor is His presence among us. If His presence is with us, then we are separated unto Him. God is looking for such a people. It is not a matter of gathering a group of people and calling yourselves a church. Only His presence gives life and makes us the true assembly of God.

### ***Believing: The Work Of God***

We are a separated people, set apart for God. Time, however, tends to dilute our memories, and we forget the troubling years. In the beginning, I knew that God would build the church, and nothing else was important to me. The things of the world held no attraction for me. With time, though, we become "sober" and calculating in many things. But right now, brothers and sisters, we are a people separated for the purpose of fulfilling God's intentions. He needs a sanctified people. When Moses saw that God was sanctifying him, he asked to see His glory. His ways always lead us to His glory. One day we shall be like Him; today we are being transformed from one degree of glory to another.

Moses had a servant named Joshua. Joshua loved to be in the house of God, so he loved to remain in the tabernacle (Exodus 33:11). Like Joshua, we are also captured by the presence of the Lord. I think that Joshua was so impressed by this glory that when he went to spy the good land with Caleb and the ten Jews, he saw the land from a different perspective.

The spies went to the land and brought back fruits. The fruits were so huge that two people were needed to carry them. The size of the fruits proved the truthfulness of God's word, that the land was truly a good land. But the ten spies came back with discouraging report, which caused the people to murmur. But, Caleb calmed the murmurings of the people and encouraged them to go up and take the land as conquerors. What was the difference between Joshua and Caleb and the other ten spies? They all saw the same country, but they gave two divergent reports. According to some of them, there were terrible giants in the land, but the others saw only good fruits. From whence came the difference? It came from their faith. It is faith in the Word that keeps us marching on. Unbelief nullifies the Word of God and despises His plans; it is the source of all the world's problems.

The unbelieving ones, seeing only the outward things, murmured and wanted to return to Egypt. We, on the other hand, have to see what God is doing today among us. Big, outward shows do not change our inner being. God deserves a people who are absolutely dedicated to Him and His plan. He needs a people who know Him inwardly. We should, therefore, pray, "Lord, open my eyes that I may walk in Your ways."

In John 6:24, a crowd seeking Jesus followed him by boat to Capernaum. He said to them, "You seek me because you ate the loaves and were filled." So let us ask ourselves, "What sort of seeking is this?" The answer is that they were not touched by Jesus Himself, but by outward things. Jesus, therefore, advised them to labour for the food that endures to everlasting life. We should not seek for things that perish, but for things that endure for eternity. It is to the true seekers that God will reveal His ways and fulfil His will. All things will pass away, but He alone will abide forever. If what we are doing is in God Himself, it will remain. In John 6:28, they asked Jesus, "What shall we do that we may work the works of God?" Believing is the work of God. Unbelief is the work of the devil. Let us, like Caleb and Joshua, believe in what God has said.

God wants to use us to build His church on earth. In our spirit, we believe many things that we do not see. The New Jerusalem and the rapture are yet to come, but in a spirit of faith we believe in them. If God says something, believe Him.

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil brings forth an independent life, while that which comes from the tree of life is dependent on God in all things. God desires a church in

every city. Let us believe that, and let us not look at what we see, feel, or think. God will help us walk according to His ways and maintain absolute faith in Him, that each of us may live by His Word.

## CHAPTER 3

# Knowing God's Faith

*Readings: 1 Cor. 10:1-13; Num. 14:6-10, 21-24; Heb. 4:1-2*

In the verses above, we read that what happened to the children of Israel was recorded for our instruction. If we consider carefully what transpired, we will learn many useful principles that will prevent us from repeating the same mistakes. In Hebrews 4, there is even a warning to take heed lest we miss the promises. The children of Israel missed them, because they did not mix the Word with faith. If half of the truth we have heard in the church life was mixed with faith, I sincerely believe we would have become overcomers by now.

Our Christian life changes the moment we mix faith with the Word. When I see the Lord face to face, I know that much will be required from me, because I have heard and received so much. Imagine the changes that would have happened in our Christian life, if for twenty years we had blended the Word with faith!

We have heard many things and received many riches, but have these things become our reality? The children of Israel heard the Word, but it did not profit them. Why? They heard it without exercising their faith. Sometimes we may be in the meeting, but actually it is only our body that is present; we are elsewhere. Let us exercise ourselves to mix the Word with faith. Oh, that this Word would cause a positive change in us! Let us also pray, "Lord, work these things into me; Lord make me a useful vessel in my locality." We should pray this prayer each time we read or hear something positive from the Word.

We saw in Exodus the story of the 12 spies, 10 of whom were unbelieving. Unfortunately, the majority often influences the minority. In this case, there were two brothers who were faithful to the truth. These two, Caleb and Joshua, stayed in the presence of the Lord and mixed faith with what they heard. In this message I will like to illuminate several items that will greatly help us to continue with the Lord. Let us consider seven things that helped these brothers to stay faithful.

### **1. Faith always confirms the Promises of God**

Numbers 13:27 shows that what Joshua and Caleb saw corresponded perfectly with what God had said. They said they had truly seen a land where milk and honey flowed. The other ten spies gave a completely opposite report. Perhaps you will tell me, "If I see giants I shall repeat what I see: I see giants." But faith differs from seeing with your natural eyes.

We have been redeemed, and we belong to Him. We should, therefore, not put our trust in ourselves, but in God who has given us everything. If we believe in what He has told us, we shall also have the reality of what He has said. John 3:33 tell us that He who has received His testimony has certified that God is true. Yes, when you believe God's Word you confirm that God is true. If He promises something, He fulfils it.

The Bible tells us that everything that is not a product of faith is sin. Without faith, you cannot please God. In order to please God, faith is necessary. Also necessary is the inward reaction that says "Amen" to His Word.

### **2. Faith Exhibits the Proof of God's Faithfulness**

Faith exposes to people the faithfulness of God. In Numbers 13:26, it is said that they came back to Moses and Aaron. They showed the fruits of the land. This shows that God is faithful. Faith always proves that God is faithful. These fruits spoke for themselves. In bringing them back, everyone could realize that God was faithful.

In Acts, the apostles testified concerning the death and resurrection of the Lord. They demonstrated to the world by their living that Jesus had been resurrected. They did not spend their time "telling stories" about the Lord; their lives proved that Jesus had risen from the dead and was living. In Acts 4:10, Peter testified: "let it be known to the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole." The man proved that Jesus was alive, for in Jesus' name he was healed. Peter added that Jesus was the stone rejected by them, the builders. When they saw the boldness of Peter and John, knowing that these were uneducated men who had been with Jesus, they were deeply astonished. And they testified that these "men have been with Jesus." Such a testimony and demonstration should be seen anywhere we find ourselves. This country should know the faithfulness of the Lord through our living. Each believer should be an evidence of the reality of God and His faithfulness. It is only through faith and a total dependence on the Lord that we can manifest such a living.

### **3. Faith Acts Swiftly**

Faith does not wait for another day. It acts immediately! In Numbers 13:30, we see a man, Caleb, who quieted all the people and told them to go up and take the land. This

brother spoke such words in the midst of a people who were in great confusion. While the ten spies were going everywhere in the camp, spreading negative news about the good land; and while the people were beginning to murmur and become concerned about their wives and children, Caleb swiftly spoke, "Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, 'Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it.'"

These are words of faith. I am not saying we should not be concerned about the livelihood of our families, but we should not put all our energies into our sustenance. Let us have faith that God will take care of us!

Caleb exhorted them, "let us go up at once. We are well able to overcome it." Unbelief always questions sooner or later. Unbelief leads us to seek a solution, but not immediately. If in the church life we see a problem or a need, our natural tendency is to take care of it later. It is never the right time. If we see, for example, that the children's meetings are not what they should be, someone may say the children are still too young. Unbelief, we should remember, always waits until another day. Whenever I push something to the next day, it is never accomplished.

When you hear a word of faith, mix your faith with this word and immediately put it into practice. The future depends on today. If you have the wish to reign with Christ, then realize that today is the determining factor. Abraham Lincoln said, "I shall pass this way but once and any good thing that I can do, let me do it now for I shall not pass this way again."

Do what you can do for the Lord and for the church today. Tomorrow does not belong to you! Today belongs to you, but tomorrow does not. There are many countries that must be possessed; today is the best time to do it.

#### ***4. Faith Weeps over the Folly of Unbelief***

When Caleb and Joshua heard the people murmuring, they rent their clothes and began to weep (Numbers 14:6). Those whose eyes are opened, weep for those who are in darkness. We grieve when we see the condition of the world and the people of God. If we see the true condition of the church, we cannot but grieve and weep. How can we eat, drink, and sleep peacefully in a world such as the one in which we find ourselves? Jesus wept for the unbelief of His people and for Jerusalem, which weighed heavily on His heart. Joshua and Caleb wept for the people of Israel.

When Jesus saw the crowd and the sick, He was moved with compassion for them. In Matt 9:35-38, we read, "Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no

shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, 'The harvest truly is plentiful, but the labourers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into His harvest.'

Today there is a multitude of 'unbelieving' believers. They are saved, but they do not have the faith to see what God wants to do among them. We should pray that God opens our inner eyes to see our real condition.

May God deliver us from our lazy contentment. While many people are going to hell, Christians, comfortably relaxed in their armchairs, are watching television. For them everything is okay. God, they say, has blessed them with a good family life, a good car, a beautiful house, and a good job. Everything may be going well, but should they turn to the Lord, they will see that things are not going well. A living faith will produce compassion for those who are in spiritual darkness and need. May the Lord unveil us!

### ***5. Faith Rests Exclusively in the Lord and on His Ways***

Numbers 14:8-9 describes what Caleb and Joshua said about the land. They said the land was excellent; it was very good. How often do we see the church life in some other place as being better? We need eyes to see what God is doing in our locality. Let us mix faith with the Word. We should echo exactly what God has said. They said that God was going to give them the land.

God's desire rests on us, His church. We have a song that says we are at home. We can sing "halleluiah" for Christ and the Church. His heart desire is in the Church. The Church is the only thing that makes God happy and satisfied. At the time of the baptism of Jesus, God said He was putting His pleasure in Him. Today, God is putting His pleasure in the church. If we go back to our localities and the atmosphere is not like it was before the conference, God is still present.

Joshua and Caleb added that God was going to bring them to the land. If God has said it, He would do it. They even said the giants would be their bread. They had the faith to say that the giants no longer had protection. Let us proclaim such words of faith.

God has withdrawn His capital from all banks and invested it in the church. "The Eternal One is with us." What a word! It does not matter where we find ourselves; we should proclaim, "The Lord is with me." In every kind of situation He is there with us. Their testimony of faith expresses His pleasure, "God delights in us"; His promise, "God will bring us"; His power, "God is able" (Numbers 14:8); His presence, "God is with us" (Numbers 14:9). My prayer is that every believer will be able to declare these four things whenever he or she is in any trial or trouble.

After one of the meetings, a sister came to confess to me that she would not dare give a testimony, though inwardly she felt pushed to do so. I told her not to be afraid to testify. No giants were seated in the hall. Our tongues become untied after we close from the meetings. We should not be afraid to get up and share our testimonies. If in the meeting you feel the Lord is pushing you to get up, do it. Be full of faith, and share what the Lord has given you. Say what the Lord gives you by faith, for the edification of the church. You have victory every time you trust in the Lord.

## **6. Faith Follows God Always and Everywhere**

In Numbers 14:24, God said that Caleb, who was driven by another spirit, would be led to the good land and that his descendants would possess it. May our hearts be centred only on God. For Caleb, the difficulties did not matter, because his heart was for God and for Him alone. We need an attitude that pushes us to follow Him no matter our circumstances.

Unfortunately, there have been brothers and sisters who have left the Christian assembly, because their close friends have gone away. Even if the best people leave the meetings, we need to tell the Lord, "Lord, I am for you, and I will stay in Your house until You come back." Even if the best brothers desert the Lord, we must stay with the Lord and continue on. Our Lord needs some people who will give themselves to Him and follow Him wherever He goes. According to the Revelation 14:4, the overcomers are those who follow the Lamb wherever He goes.

## **7. Faith Always Overcomes**

Those who have absolute faith in God will inherit the land. What is demanded of us is absolute faith in God and His work. He will be faithful if we are faithful to believe Him and His word. Victory is found in our faith. Such faith will overcome the world, which includes the flesh, sin, Satan, and tribulations. It is such faith that will lead us to the Promised Land.

Faith leads us to the promised rest and to the heart of God. We should carefully watch lest we be like the unbelievers. We are like the children of Israel; we have been saved, baptized, and sobered, but now we need to stay in Him and put all our trust in Him and in His word. We will then be able to overcome and receive, at the appointed time, the kingdom that He has promised us. And we will feast with Him at the marriage feast of the Lamb. Trust in Him.

## **Will He Find Faith On Earth?**

"When the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?" Luke 18:8. Kadesh-Barnea is a place of "in-your-face impossibility." The name itself comes from a

Hebrew word with a root meaning “fugitive, vagabond, wanderer.” In short, if you make the wrong choice here, you will end up wandering through a wilderness all your life. Many Christians are in this very place right now. God has given them his covenant promises. He has given them a wonderful history with Him, providing several miracles of deliverance. But the devil has come to them with lies, telling them they are not going to make it. He has convinced them they are not good enough, that God is still mad with them for their past sins, and that He will never forgive them. Tell me, have you begun to accept such lies? Do you think God is going to fail you in your time of crisis? If so, then at some point in your walk, you will stop taking God at his word. You will not act on His command. And what was true of Israel will also be true of you: the test you face at Kadesh-Barnea will determine the course of your remaining years.

Like Israel, you have been carried by God through an awful wilderness. As you look back, you can recall the terrible testing you faced, the painful failures you endured. You went through trials you never thought you could come out of. But God was faithful to you. Each time, he mercifully reached down and picked you up. How can you say, “God has failed me?” I stand here today by His grace. God bore me in His arms, the way a father carries his child.

God brought you out in order to bring you in. There is a promised land ahead for you, just as there was for Israel: “There remaineth therefore a rest for the people of God” (Heb. 4:9). The Lord saved you to bring you into a place of rest. What is this rest? It is a place of unshakable faith and confidence in the Lord. It is a place of trust in his promises, to see you through your most difficult times. But to get to this place of rest, you must first pass through Kadesh-Barnea. When you are there, you come face to face with a battle that is so intense; it is beyond anything you have ever experienced. There are enemies, giants, high walls, things that look utterly impossible. And you have to place your absolute trust in God to bring you through.

We have already seen how the Israelites hesitated to act on God's Word at Kadesh-Barnea. As a result, Satan brought them under the influence of ten demon-inspired liars. The result? The people ended up believing God was out to destroy them. And the same holds true for us today. When we refuse to act quickly on God's promises, we open ourselves to ferocious demonic lies. And those lies are meant to destroy our faith.

Satan wants us to think God has left us alone to fight for ourselves. He tells us the walls before us are too high, that there is no way over them to victory. He says we are going to fail, that our entire walk with Jesus has been in vain. He whispers that it is no use, we

must as well quit. I tell you, this is why God always wants us to act quickly on His word. He does not want the devil to have an opportunity to assault us with lies.

You may think, "I could never believe God hates me. How could I ever think the Lord is out to destroy me?" Yet, if we listen to Satan's lies, this is exactly what we end up saying: "God has brought me into an impossible situation. There is no evidence He is making a way out for me. Yet He said he would not allow me to endure more than I could take. Right now, this is more than I'm able to bear." Such thoughts are a direct accusation against God. They accuse Him of not being with us in the midst of our trials.

We again see such unbelief in Israel, when they came to Rephidim. This was the driest location in the wilderness, another place of crisis. The people became very thirsty and once more, they lost all confidence in God. They cried out, "Is the Lord among us, or not?" (Exodus 17:7), meaning, "If God were with us, we would not be in this crisis. This one is absolutely impossible."

Simply put, God's Word was not enough for Israel. The Lord had given them incredible promises. Yet in the midst of their crises, Israel never trusted in His Word. In spite of every promise, every ironclad pledge to see them through, they rendered His Word useless. How? They never mixed it with faith, "for the Word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it" (Heb. 4:2).

Instead, the people always demanded a new word from God. We see this in their question, "Is God with us, or not?" In other words, "We need to know whether God is with us in this crisis, not our last one. We have got to have a new revelation from Him, for this new situation." I ask you: how could they forget so quickly all that God had done for them? Israel had removed from their memory every past instance of God's deliverance. They never allowed his past supernatural works to build up their faith in Him. In spite of their accusations against Him, God spoke another word to Israel. He instructed Moses to tell them, "Dread not, neither be afraid of them (your enemies). The Lord your God which goeth before you, he shall fight for you according to all that he did for you in Egypt before your eyes" (Deut. 1:29-30). Now, this was not a new promise. God was simply re-stating what he had already told his people: "The Lord shall fight for you and you shall hold your peace" (Exodus 14:14). He was reminding them, "I told you in Egypt I would go before you. I said I would dwell among you, and fight for you against all your enemies." And he had done just that. God had delivered them at every turn, through every trial. Over and over God had told them, "I am with you. I'm going to fight for you. Now, lay hold of this promise, and do not forget it." Yet, at Kadesh-Barnea, they were trembling before their enemies and focusing on their own weakness. Finally, they reasoned, "we are not able to go up against them." They

were plainly doubting God's call on their lives, that he had sent them and His presence was with them.

You may think you would never react this way. Yet today, so many Christians say similar things: "Lord, are you really with me? I know what you promised me. But is it really true? Can I trust in what you have said? I've got to hear from you afresh once again. I need a new word. Please, give me some more assurance."

We end up trembling before the enemy of our souls. And it is all because we do not believe what God has promised us. We act as if He has never said a word to us. And that is precisely when we "tempt" him. Even though he has proven himself to us again and again, we continually ask him to prove his faithfulness anew, to send us yet another faith-building word. But God will speak only one word: "Believe what I have said to you."

Do you tremble before some besetting sin that towers over you like a walled city? If so, what has God said to you about this enemy stronghold? All through His Word, he has promised: "I will fight for you. Do not be afraid. Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world. No person, no enemy, can pluck you out of my hand. I will cleanse you and sanctify you, by my Spirit. Trust in my revealed word to you."

Jesus came as a prophet and a miracle worker to his own house, Israel. Yet, we are told, "He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief" (Matt. 13:58). What an incredible statement. Unbelief limited even Christ's power to work.

We see other tragic results of unbelief throughout the New Testament. The disciples could not cast out a demon from a small child, because of their unbelief. And Jesus rebuked them for it (Matt. 17:14-21). After the resurrection, Christ was shocked again by their unbelief: "And upbraided (disgraced) them with their unbelief and hardness of heart" (Mark 16:14). Moreover, Paul says of the Jews, "Because of unbelief they were broken off" (Romans 11:20).

### ***The story of Thomas (John 20:24-29)***

*Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Lord." So he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe." And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!" Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing." And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."*

### **The story of Mary and Martha (John 11:21-27)**

*Then Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?" She said to Him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."*

### **The positive aspect of faith. (Mark 11:22-26)**

*So Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God. For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will come to pass, he will have whatever he says. Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them. "And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses."*

Why is God's judgment of unbelief so severe in the New Testament? It is because believers today have been given something that Old Testament saints could only dream of. God has blessed us with the gift of His Holy Spirit. Under the Old Covenant, believers were only occasionally visited by God's Spirit. They had to go to the temple to experience the Lord's presence. But, today, God makes His dwelling place in His people. We are His temple, and His presence abides in every believer.

In the Old Testament, Abraham was only occasionally visited by an angel or given a word from God. And he believed what he was told. Abraham trusted that God was able to do all He pledged. He "staggered not at the promise of God" (Romans 4:20). Yet, today, Jesus is available to us every hour of the day. We have the ability to call on him our entire lifetime, and we know He will respond. He invites us to come boldly to his throne room, to make our petitions known. And he gives us comfort and guidance through the Holy Spirit. In spite of these blessings, we still doubt God in our times of extreme testing. Jesus rebukes such unbelief, saying, "shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:7-8). If Christ were to return today, would he find faith in you?

"The hand of the Lord was against them, to destroy them ... until all the generation of the men... were wasted out from among the host" (Deut. 2:15, 14). Here is some of the strongest language in the entire Bible regarding unbelief. You may say, "But that isn't the language of grace. God does not deal that severely with unbelief today." Not so. The Bible says that today, under grace, "without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. 11:6).

***Here are some consequences of unbelief:***

Unbelief defiles every area of our lives. This sin does not impact only on a single issue in our lives. It spills over into everything, tainting every detail of our walk.

Israel's doubt was not just limited to God's ability to slay His enemies. Their doubt spilled over into their trust for daily provisions. They doubted God's ability to protect their children. They doubted whether he would lead them into the promised land. They doubted whether He was even with them. That is why God told them, "Turn you, and take your journey into the wilderness... I am not among you" (Deut. 1:40, 42).

If we have unbelief in one area, it spreads like cancer into every area, defiling our whole heart. We may trust God in certain matters, such as believing he saves us by faith, that He is all powerful, that His Spirit abides in us. But do we trust Him for our future? Do we believe Him to provide for our health and finances, and to give us victory over sin?

***Unbelief leads to the sin of presumption.***

To presume is to dare to think we know what is right. It is an arrogance that says, "I know the way," and acts on its own. Here is yet another sin that Israel committed in its unbelief. When God told them to turn back to the wilderness, they did not obey. Instead, they came to Moses, "Okay, we sinned. But we have got it figured out now. We are ready to obey God's command to go up against the enemy." And they took matters into their own hands. This is where many doubting believers make a tragic mistake: when they fail in a matter of faith, they turn to the flesh. They do what they think must be done, but in their own wisdom and skill. Faith, however, always resists acting in fear. It waits for God to work. Faith is never willing to make something happen by going ahead of God. The Israeli soldiers went ahead of God by organizing a small army. They planned a strategy and struck out on their own. But the enemy chased them "as bees do" and destroyed them (Deut. 1:44).

I have seen horrible cases of believers who never did enter into God's rest. The Lord brought them to a place of severe testing; a family crisis, a financial struggle, a marriage problem, but they did not wait for God to act. Instead, they accused him of neglect, and tried to solve the crises on their own. Today, these believers have no rest, no peace, no sense of God's presence. Instead, they live in constant doubt. And they seem to go from one crisis to another. All they can talk about is their latest problem. Yet, every bit of their confusion is caused by one thing: unbelief.

The Psalmist says, "We spend our years as a tale that is told" (Psalm 90:9). This psalm is speaking of unbelievers. What is the title of their tale? They all lived and died in vain. It is the same story we hear people tell of unbelieving grandparents: "They lived all

their years in gloom. They did nothing but murmur and complain. And they died alone and forgotten."

This is the dread of unbelief. It cuts off your spiritual history, so that all that is remembered of you is a wasted life. When Israel's young generation asked, "What about grandpa and grandma?", they were told, "They only murmured and complained. They had nothing to live for, so they just sat around waiting to die."

"Some must enter therein" (Heb. 4:6). True believers are determined to trust God even if their prayers are not answered. It does not matter if all their goods are taken away, or even if they face death. Their desire is to enter God's rest. What is the evidence of such a life? They have "ceased from (their) own works" (4:10). They no longer lie awake at night, trying to solve their problems in their own wisdom and skill. Instead, they turn everything over to Jesus. It does not matter whether they end up in gain or loss. Their only focus is that God has a plan, and that he is working it out in their lives.

I hear Jesus asking the same question today: "when I return, will I find faith on earth?" I see Christ, the searcher of men's hearts, scouring all these venues, and finding few, if any, who truly love him. I see him searching college campuses, asking, "Who will believe me?" I see him searching villages, cities, churches, etc. for those who would accept him, and finding few. I see him searching entire nations, and finding only a remnant. I see him searching the modern apostate church, and finding no faith, only deadness, dryness, oldness, and lukewarmness. Finally, he searches His church, looking for servants with true faith. Yet, what he sees breaks his heart, grieving him deeply. I hear him cry as he did over Israel, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem ... how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" (Matt. 23:37). What is the reason for his anguish? God has sent his Son to reveal the Father's love to his beloved children. He has sent the Holy Spirit to comfort and guide them. Yet still, multitudes in his house have no faith. They do not believe he answers their prayers. They murmur and complain, accusing him of neglect. And they grow fearful and despairing, as if God has abandoned them.

As a minister of the Lord, I bear my Shepherd's burden. And I feel His grief. Right now, I hear him saying, "Even in my house, I find so few who have faith. Many of my own children, including my shepherds, faint in times of trial. They do not trust me for their families, their jobs, their futures. Indeed, many have made their choices."

So, what about you? The Lord comes to all of us, asking, "Will you believe me? Do you trust me? When I come, will I find faith in you?" How will you respond?



## CHAPTER 4

# Knowing God's Word

*Readings: Joshua 14:6-15; Rom. 10:17; Mark 11:22-25.*

The lives of these men of faith impress me greatly. Let us remember that God intends for us to put their examples into practice; for faith without works is dead. Even if you have problems in your locality, you must learn to overcome them. Due to our natural tendencies, we are often swallowed up by problems. This is why we so desperately need brothers who will stand up to overcome.

There was a brother in Ghana who was inwardly burning at every meeting; he enjoyed each sharing and each song. Another older brother remarked to me that he was also burning during his younger days in the church. The intimation was that this vivacious brother would also become “dead” like him. Well, faith does not grow old. It is always fresh. It is not normal in God’s kingdom that the flood of passing years should drown and quench our inward fire. Such should never be the case. Do not think that a “sober” and quiet attitude is necessarily spiritual. Jesus Himself said, “Be like children.” Being spiritual is not an outward matter of shouting and jumping on a chair, but of exercising our inward spirit.

Abraham put his trust in the One who called him. He left the land of his father and journeyed to a country he did not know, having faith that God would lead him to a very good land. Lot followed Abraham, though he himself did not have such faith. After a dispute between their shepherds, Abraham proposed that Lot choose the part of the land that pleased him. By avoiding conflict in this way, Abraham walked by faith and not by sight. Lot, who chose the most fertile land, walked only by sight. His choice gave birth to nothing but problems, and God later condemned the apparently beautiful land Lot had chosen.

In Joshua 14:7 Caleb says, “I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadesh-Barnea to spy out the land,” and he added, “I brought him word again as it was in my heart.” His heart was right and pure. Such a heart is absolutely crucial in seeing God and His promises. A brother may attend a meeting without even seeing God.

Many problems in the church have their origin in the heart. Dissident discussions always come from a heart far away from God. Caleb, however, had a heart filled with the desire for God and His promises. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Matt.6: 8).

In Numbers 14:24 God testified of Caleb saying, "But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and has followed Me fully, I will bring him into the land into which he went, and his seed shall possess it." God said that Caleb was filled with "another spirit." The heart and the spirit are linked. Without a pure heart our spirit cannot be strong. The Lord often reprimanded the Pharisees because of their impure heart. Caleb had such a heart that did not doubt when faced with the word of God. In Joshua 14:8, Caleb states, "But my brothers that went up with me made the heart of the people melt; yet I fully followed the LORD my God." His brothers who went up with him to spy out the good land had melted the heart of the people and discouraged them. But Caleb followed the way of God completely. Declare the following with Caleb: "I want to follow fully the way of my God the Eternal One." Let us also pray, "Lord create in me a clean heart and renew a right spirit within me." David made this his prayer, and so can we.

Moses saw Caleb's heart and promised him that the land he surveyed would be his. This word was fulfilled, and he possessed it. I believe that, at the moment they set foot on the land, they had a realization that they would possess it. Those who entered the land did so by faith, but the rest of the people could not enter in, because of their unbelief. They perished in the wilderness. Unbelief always leads to death; faith always leads to life. If we do not believe His word, we shall have doubts, and death will appear.

### ***Moving Mountains***

When the devil came to Eve in the Garden of Eden, I think Eve was initially upright in her dealings with him. Suddenly, however, the devil sowed doubt in her, and that was her end. Many brothers and sisters have been led into doubt by the devil. Arguments and discussions produce doubt that end in death. Some have felt a deep deception, thinking they have wasted their time by giving themselves for the church. They say they have neglected their future, their studies, their work, their families, and themselves. They have believed the devil's lie, for today they are only preoccupied with their own concerns. Caleb was not like that. For forty five years he was faithful, and when he was eighty five years old he still believed the promise of God. Throughout the course of these years, he believed the word of God. He did not doubt God or His promise. The result is that he got what he was waiting for. His strength at eighty five was as when he was forty years old. Can you imagine that? He lived for forty five years during which his strength and vigour did not fade. The

years did not change him, for he testified that he could do what he was doing forty five years before. Vigour and health are promised to those who attach themselves to Him and follow Him, according to His promises.

Caleb's testimony also signifies that he maintained a strong and daring position before the Lord. When Caleb went to Joshua, the children of Israel already had their portions of the good land. Yet, mount Horeb where the giants, the Anakims, were hiding remained to be conquered. But Caleb was not afraid, fearing neither the giants nor the mountains. The one living in us is stronger than the one in the world. To prove to all that his strength was still great, he asked for that mountain. Caleb thus got Hebron and transformed it into Bethlehem, the place where Jesus was born. Even more, Bethlehem means the house of bread. These giants actually became bread, the pasture of God's people who had faith. There are many unsaved ones in this country. We need to take the challenge and boldly reach them with the good news of the gospel. Even if we have prayed and nothing is happening, we should continue to pray and we will see that God will give them to us. Faith never gives up. Let us persevere. Caleb knew the Lord would be with him to chase away the giants. If we had such faith, we would be surprised to see what the Lord would do. Is there a mountain too high that the Lord cannot overcome? If God is with us, we can chase the enemy away and take the land. Certain mountains are quite small, but they somehow slow us down and prevent us from possessing what God has promised us. There are three principles that allow us to get this kind of faith:

### ***i. Feed on the Word***

First, we see in Romans 10:17 that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. It is, therefore, crucial to study the word of God. His word is bread for us; it is our food. Irrespective of your strength, if you do not eat; you will gradually die. The word feeds our inner being to grow in the Lord. Without spiritual food, we cannot progress. Often we remain dumb at the meetings, because we are not fed.

By studying the scriptures, faith grows in us to such an extent that we are not overcome by problems. The word of God is so important. We must study the Bible as a habit each day. Such reading is difficult, because the devil opposes it. He does not oppose the reading of science or nature books, but when we open the Bible, our reading becomes a real fight. The enemy will use every circumstance to prevent us from reading. When reading the Bible, we can read without touching the Lord, without knowing what we have read. This fight is the same for all of us. Let us wake up and proclaim the word of God; let us be ready to receive it. God wants to talk to each and every one of us, but if we do not

come to the word, we cannot hear what He is saying. If each one of us cultivates the habit of going to the word, God will reveal many things to us. We have to love the Bible!

Jeremiah 15:16 tells us that we should find His word and eat it. Jeremiah knew the secret way of progressing with the Lord, which is to eat Him. Faith in His word means going to His word and being nourished. Job 23:12 shows that the word of God is more important than food: "I treasured the words of His mouth more than my portion." It is in this way that we become strong and utterly dependent on Him. Psalm 1:2-3 shows us that the one who puts his delight in the word of God shall be like a tree planted by rivers of water. This means that such a man will have a continuous supply of God in all aspects of his life. We can only become like Caleb and Joshua when we eat the word of God. It is from the divine Word of God that we get faith.

When the Lord Jesus was tempted by the devil he overcame not by His piety, but on the basis of the Word of God. Jesus said that man shall not live by bread alone, but by the Word of God. He often repeated, "It is written." We have to know the Bible. The devil also used the Bible, but the Lord replied, "It is also written." We have to know this "also," because the enemy will manipulate the Bible to tempt us (Matt. 4:1-11).

## ***ii. Absolute Obedience to His Word***

Luke 5:1-7 tells of the disciples going fishing the whole night. They did not catch anything and were washing their nets. This means they had given up. It was useless continuing. It was at this moment that they met the Lord. Many of us have reached this stage. We have hung up our nets. We have done enough and have given up. Jesus said to Simon, "launch into the deep," which means "do not give up so fast." He also said, "Let down your nets," meaning, in other words, that, "despite what had happened, give it another try." The Lord encourages us to continue, to always try again. Some have responsibilities, but want to give up because of discouragement. Rather, let us listen to the Lord and act according to His word. Simon told Him, "we have toiled all night and have taken nothing." It is almost the same in the church life; we have toiled and worked, and nothing has happened. But Simon said, "at your word, I will let down the net." We must obey His word; it is when we are guided by His word that something can happen. The result was such a huge catch of fish that the boat was sinking.

Mary, the mother of Jesus, during the wedding at Cana told the servants to do everything that Jesus told them. She did not know what Jesus was going to do, but she knew He could do something to solve the problem. When Jesus was walking on the sea, Peter wanted to go and meet Him. The Lord told him "come," and at His word Peter was able to walk on the sea. Let us not argue, but let us obey His word.

***iii. Confess What God Has Done***

Romans 10:9 tells us to confess with our mouth the Lord Jesus and to believe in our hearts that God raised Him from the dead. For with the heart one believes to righteousness and with the mouth confession is made to salvation.

Our lives are hid with Christ in God. We have been crucified with Him. Christ in us is the hope of glory. We should declare these facts. Praying with the word of God is an excellent way to increase our faith. Let us learn to say over and over what God has said. It is not necessary to talk about what the devil is doing; we should use our mouth to declare what God has done in Jesus Christ.

“At the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow” (Phil. 2:10). Let us declare this again and again. It is by the word of our testimony that the devil is conquered. “Jesus Christ is Lord!” May we get out of our dead situation and say to Satan, “We have been made alive in Him.” Sometimes, just a glance at the world will discourage us, but let us look at the word of God. Let us learn to declare these facts. The children of Israel had heard the word of God, but it had no effect on them. This was due to their lack of faith. What a glorious Christ we shall have if each one of us learns to proclaim the word of God, both in our daily life and at the meetings.



## CHAPTER 5

# Knowing God's Revelation

*Readings: Matt. 16:13-20; 1 Cor. 3:10-15*

We should remember to do all things according to the principles by which God operates. Here, we shall see the usefulness of all the principles we have seen. Many of us have heard of Matthew chapter 16, but I hope we see afresh what God reveals there. Perhaps we have some knowledge about these verses, but I pray we get a deeper revelation.

The disciples had spent so much time with the Lord Jesus, yet they did not really know Him. At one time, their boat was caught in a storm. They were all afraid, but Jesus was sleeping at the bottom of the craft, undisturbed by the tempest. The disciples, having no other solution, went and woke Him up. He arose and spoke, and the fearsome storm abated. The disciples wondered among themselves, "Who is this man?" After being with the Lord for such a long time they still asked such a question! They had seen Him perform miracles, yet they did not know Him inwardly. Of course, they had a certain outward understanding of Him, but they did not really know Him.

It is the same today. Many people have talked about Him and have even written books about Him without knowing Him. But on that day, as recorded in Matthew 16, He led His disciples far away from the bustle of Jerusalem and the pressing crowds which sought for miracles. They came to Caesarea Philippi, and at this place He asked them an interesting question; for He knew they wondered about whom He was. Jesus asked, "Whom do men say, I the Son of man, am?" In reply to this question, they expressed their opinions. When we talk about Jesus, we have our own opinions. They replied, saying He was John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah or one of the prophets. They, thus, put Him on the same level as the spiritual giants. But Jesus was not satisfied with these opinionated answers. It is not a good thing to live by the opinion of others.

Today, there are so many books written about the Bible that constitute the opinion of the authors. For example, there are plethora of books on the second coming of Jesus Christ. Recently, I read a book in which the writer said the tribulation was to start on September 28<sup>th</sup> of this year. He was quite sure of what he was saying. He had done many calculations to arrive at that date. Again, we should not depend on the opinion of others.

If we were contemporaries of the early prophets, we would have established the Church of John the Baptist, the Church of Jeremiah, the Church of Elijah, or the Church of the Prophets. The Church, however, can be built only on the revelation that comes from the Father. Jesus, therefore, stopped the opinions and further asked, "And you, whom do you say I am?" A brief pause ensued. And then Peter opened his mouth and said with exemplary clarity, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Such a word had never been spoken since the creation of the world. It was born of a direct revelation of the Father. It was not something he had read or heard somewhere else. He was specific: "The Son of the Living God." There are many dead gods in this universe, but this One is the Living God. This revelation is the greatest ever given to a human being.

Jesus looked at Peter with delight and said, "Blessed are you." The true blessing is to receive a revelation from the Father. Such a revelation does not come from the natural man, from flesh and blood. But it is the Father in heaven who alone can give such a revelation, and the church is only built on such revelation.

In Galatians, Paul tells us that it pleased God to reveal His Son in him. It is through this revelation of the Son of God that we receive His life. Each and every one of us should absolutely know the living God and His Son. Without this revelation, we dwell in darkness; with revelation, His eternal life shines. John says in John 17:3, "And this is Eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and the One You sent, Jesus Christ." Jesus came to express God on earth. He is the practical and visible expression of the living God. He is so wonderful! We cannot stop talking about Him. He went to the cross and died in our place. He then resurrected and became the life-giving spirit.

Simon Bar-Jonah's revelation would transform him. Jesus changed Simon's name to Peter. According to the principle of creation, we were formed from dust, which is not a solid element. Jesus told Peter, "upon this rock I will build my Church." The name Peter means a small stone, a pebble. It is on the basis of what Peter saw that He is building His church. Christ is the foundation of the church, for God is building His Church on the revelation of Jesus Christ. Revelation transforms us and qualifies us for His church. We ourselves have also gone through such an experience. When we believed in the Lord, we did not change outwardly, but inwardly something happened.

There is in Jesus a supplement to salvation: the church. Unfortunately, after salvation, many people just want to go to heaven. Salvation makes us small stones for a specific goal: the building up of the church. It is not something we can accomplish ourselves. It is He who is building His church. The church, moreover, prepares the way for the kingdom of God. It is for God alone, not for you or for me.

Unfortunately, those who have founded denominations have not seen the will of God. No man can build a church. It is possible to build magnificent edifices, but only the Lord can build the church. It is true that He needs us, but only as small stones. Once converted we must pray, "Lord, reveal to me again what You are doing. Show your church to me. Show me the plan in Your heart."

I was eighteen years when I received the Lord, and I enjoyed talking about Him to everybody. I had such a desire to announce Him that I entered a Bible school. But my revelation of the Lord at that time was limited. One day the Lord showed me the second part of this revelation, the church. The whole universe was created for this goal. The goal of incarnation was to fulfil this plan of God. Why did Christ perform so many miracles? They were for the building of His Church.

The revelation of the mystery was hidden for centuries, but now it has been revealed to us. Today, we are being built together as the church. Christ loves His church now more than ever, and He desires to lead us to this reality. If we speak of Christ as the Son of God, there is some opposition, but the moment we talk about the church the gates of Hades oppose. This is what we see in Matthew 16, where Jesus talks about the gates of Hades not being able to prevail against the church. There are many frustrations when we receive salvation, but these are not insurmountable. Many more will come to believe in the Lord. But, against the second part of this revelation, there is a greater opposition. Satan, if he can, will not allow us to see this revelation, which is the church, the body of Christ.

Today, almost everyone believes there is a God in the universe. If we specify the vision and say that there is only one Saviour, Jesus Christ, far fewer will believe. If we go further and say that Jesus is the Spirit, still fewer will trust. And if we add that Jesus Christ is building His Church, very little faith will remain. If we side with the denominations, for example, we will have no opposition. But, the moment we take sides with His church, resistance rises. Do not forget, however, that the gates of hell cannot prevail against the church. To get something precious, you have to suffer for it. You cannot find gold or pearls on the road. The Lord is giving us the assurance that despite relentless attacks, the gates of Hades will never prevail. Let us all pray that we will see the Church. This Christ will build the church, and this church will one day become the kingdom of God. In a kingdom, there

are rules and regulations. Here in the church a King reigns. He lives in us and rules from within our inner being. Moreover, he is the Head of the church. We should not stop where we are, but pray for the removal of our veils that we may see the church. If we are serious in praying and searching to see what He is doing, He will reveal his ways to us. Let us remember that it is through the church that we shall reach the kingdom of God. May the Lord reveal His church and the kingdom of God to those who sincerely seek Him.

## CHAPTER 6

# Knowing God's Church

*Readings: Matt. 16:13-20; Eph. 1:9-12, 3:4-5, 9:16-17; 5:23;*

*Rev. 1:10-12*

The preceding message showed us the importance of seeing Christ. Such a vision of Christ is vital. However we must know that a vision of Christ alone cannot satisfy the Father. Seeing Him satisfies us, but He also wants to show us His Church, the desire of His heart.

It is the good pleasure of God to make known to us His church, the mystery of Christ. It is only when we are built together as His church that he will be satisfied. We were like fishermen, but God has redeemed us and made us fishers of men. This salvation is marvellous and is so important for every person. Man should be completely and utterly saved, but salvation alone is not the complete revelation of God. He desires to have His church. This church will become the Bride, which alone can satisfy Him. One day the Bridegroom and the bride will be united, and then the Father will be gratified.

Today, God is not yet satisfied. There are, in truth, many Christians. Many know God, but this is not the full gospel. The vision of Christ and the Church constitutes the full gospel. Peter had the revelation of Christ, but the Lord completed this revelation by showing him the church.

We need faith to see the revelation of the Son of God and to be regenerated. This faith allows us to be saved and to see Him, but God must then reveal the Spirit to us. Such revelation comes from the Spirit which alone can unveil us. It is not a matter of flesh and blood. A mystery requires a revelation, and this can only be received in spirit and in truth.

God Himself is a mystery, but Jesus Christ came to unveil and express (manifest) Him. From that time on, humanity has been able to progressively know this mysterious God. This is why Jesus could say that when we see Him, we see God. Everywhere the Son went He expressed the Father. There was a man on earth who expressed God and satisfied Him.

Jesus was also a mystery, a being that was both God and man. He had a human body, yet He lived differently from all other humans. In Him, God was manifested in the flesh. Yet in His inward being He was God. This mystery of God is thus expressed in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is expressed in the Church. In other words, if you want to see God, you must come to Christ; if you want to see Christ, you must come to the Church. The church exists to express this wonderful mystery of God in Christ.

Saul of Tarsus was annoyed with Christians who were turning many people away from the religion of their fathers. He, therefore, did everything in his power to prevent the gospel from spreading. And when he was on his way to Damascus to persecute them, one more time, a great light threw him to the ground and a voice cried, "Saul, Saul why do you persecute Me?" (Acts 9:4). In other words, the Lord was showing him that his touching of the Church was his touching of Christ Himself. The Lord is with the Church as His Body; He is with the church as exemplified in 1 Corinthians 6:17: "He who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him."

Unfortunately, there are many Christians today who will say, "Is Christ not sufficient?" That sounds good, but Christ is not satisfied if we fail to see His church. Ephesians 1:9 states that it is the will of God to make known to us the mystery of His will. There was something deep in the heart of God that was already motivating Him before creation. That God made a beautiful creation for man to enjoy, was only part of His hidden plan. God recognized that what He had created was good. This was true, but there was something more in His heart. It was man. After He created man, He could not be merely contented with saying it was "good." He said it was "very good."

### ***In Spirit***

We should remember that we are men. As men, a mystery surrounds us, and that is our spirit. Our human spirit distinguishes us from all other living things. The mystery of Christ and the Church can be revealed to us only in our spirit. Outside of our spirit, the mystery remains hidden.

It is impossible to bring Jews and pagans together to be one in Christ without the Spirit is operation in our human spirit. We have to be in spirit to have oneness.

I have often tried to explain the Church using my intelligence, but I have not been able to do it. We have to touch our spirit before we can see the church, the mystery of Christ. We need clarity in our inner man in order to see God's plan. The revelation of the church takes place in our spirit, and any progress we make in the church takes place in our spirit. It has always been and will be the case.

After the resurrection, two brothers were on their way to Emmaus. They had been with the Lord and had heard many things from Him. While they were talking, a stranger approached. The Lord asked why they were sad. Was it not a strange question? Was it possible to live in those times and not know what had happened? It would be like living in Saudi Arabia at the time of the Gulf War and not knowing anything about the conflict. These disciples were, therefore, surprised. The Lord spoke to them and unveiled the Scriptures to them, but they did not recognize Him. At the time, their hearts were heavy. They arrived at their destination and offered Him something to eat. Apparently, He prayed, before eating. As He prayed, their eyes were opened, and He vanished from their sight.

When the Lord disappeared, they became different people who could no longer do what they had planned. They could not even eat. Instead, they left immediately for Jerusalem to announce what they had experienced to the others. What a revelation! My prayer is that all of us will be led into the Spirit, and that we will see the mystery of Christ and the church. We should remember that without the Spirit, it is impossible to see the church.

Certain people come to the meetings and analyze all they see. But what they see with their eyes is only outward. We may even try to imitate something initiated by the Spirit, but it will not work, because the source of our attempts is not Spirit. It is not a matter of copying some outward practice. It is the Spirit that gives life; the flesh with all its carnal duplications profits nothing.

John, in the book of Revelation, tells us that he was in exile on an island, because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. He tells us he was in the Spirit on the Lord's day. Then he heard a voice. Why did he hear a voice? It was because he was in the Spirit. The voice speaks, but we cannot hear it if we are not in the Spirit. After turning to listen to the voice, he saw the seven golden lampstands. Many among us need to turn and see afresh what God holds in His heart. We should all pray that we return to Him.

Before having a revelation of the Church I was a good Christian, but I was empty and deep within, I was not satisfied. At that time, I was in a Pentecostal church where there were many messages in tongues. One day, I prayed in a dialect of my mother tongue, and one of the leaders thought I was speaking in an unknown tongue. He stood up and began to interpret "Thus says the Lord..." He interpreted what I said, and this gave joy to the whole meeting. But I knew that what he was saying was a fable. After the meeting, a brother came to me and said that the message and its interpretation were marvellous. I told him that this was not the case since I prayed in a Ghanaian language. The interpreter did not interpret even one sentence correctly. I told him so, but he lost his temper and did not take the correction kindly.

Later, the Lord showed me a revelation of Christ and the Church. I turned to my spirit, and I saw it. Seeing the church led me to pay a price. When we turn, we will abandon what we formerly held on to. Today, we are living in a period of great confusion, and we must realize how many abnormal things we must abandon in order to see this revelation. We must be ready to put aside all things except Christ and the church. Christ desires His Church, which will become His Bride.

It is true that Jesus will come soon, as many Christians think, but what will He be looking for when He comes? Spiritual giants? I believe the Lord is coming back to look for a Bride which is preparing herself. The church is the spiritual dwelling place of God. Outside of the church there is no work of the Spirit. What binds us together? It is the Spirit that joins us together and makes us perfectly one.

God is restoring His church throughout the earth to what she was in the beginning, as revealed in the New Testament. We have to be in spirit so that He may gain the church of His heart's desire. The building of the church, I repeat, is only possible in spirit. We should constantly pray, "Lord unveil me. Give me a revelation of the church. Let me see what you are doing today, and bring me back to my spirit."

## CHAPTER 7

# Knowing God's Growth

*Readings: Eph. 1:7-12*

In Chapter 4, we studied Joshua and Caleb. Caleb received Hebron as his portion, which was the region of the town of Bethlehem. God, in His sovereignty, will not only possess Hebron, but He will also transform it into Bethlehem. Our spirit can transform a negative situation and make it an occasion to express Christ. Unfortunately, we have often escaped from our difficult situations and failed to change our problems into a “house of bread”, Bethlehem.

In Ephesians 1, we see redemption, and we are told that in Him we can have redemption. God sent His Son to the world so that we can be redeemed. God predestined the time and place of Jesus Christ's birth. Jesus had a very precise goal. It was to accomplish God's redemption. Why is such redemption necessary? It is because, God's enemy, Satan, had frustrated His plan from the beginning. God had a purpose for man, but sin entered in and caused man's fall. Before man could reach God's goal, he fell. Therefore, it was necessary to bring man back to his initial position and make him suitable for the accomplishment of God's plan. The meaning of salvation is to bring man back to his initial position.

### **1. Redemption**

Redemption is different from forgiveness. To be redeemed means to purchase something a second time. After the fall we were lost to God. Let me illustrate this with a short story. A young boy made a small boat, which gave him much pleasure. While playing with it, the string holding it snapped, and the boat drifted beyond his reach. Some days later he found himself in a market, and suddenly he saw his boat on a table. He took it and told the seller that the boat belonged to him, but she said no. She required him to pay the price to gain it back. He got the money and paid the price. His boat had come to him a second

time. The first time he made it; the second time he redeemed (or purchased) it. This is the meaning of redemption.

God created us, but then the enemy stole us. God has paid the price with his own blood to redeem us; thus, we belong to him doubly – once by His creation, and again by His redemption. As a result of this we cannot do what we want, for we belong to Him. We have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb and are without spot or wrinkle.

## **2. Forgiveness**

The forgiveness of sins constitutes the second phase of salvation. It is one thing to have been redeemed by His blood, it is another thing to be dirtied as a result of our sins which require the cleansing of forgiveness. His blood washes us from all the sins we have committed. It washes us from the sins we committed yesterday, today and from those we shall commit tomorrow, because of the eternal efficacy of the blood. Jesus Christ offered Himself once for the remission of all sins. In the blood of Jesus there is an eternal element. When we confess our sins, God is faithful to wash us. The gravity of our sins does not matter, for if we confess our sins, God will forgive us. It is not a matter of feeling that we have been washed from our sins, but of believing the living word of God.

## **3. Knowing His Will**

Paul also tells us that after having given us redemption and the forgiveness of sins, God has made known to us the mystery of His will. Having been redeemed and forgiven, we are in the position to know the mystery. The revelation of the Son of God in us is so critically important for the plan of God. We cannot be satisfied with one stage; it is necessary to progress to the end of God's plan.

## **4. Christ's Headship**

We see in Ephesians 1:10 that God desires to gather all things under the headship of Christ. When we are redeemed, forgiven, and have seen God's will, He leads us to His church that we may be under His authority and headship. The problem with today's Christians is that each person is independent, doing what seems good in his or her own eyes. But, God wants to gather us under His headship. After the fall of man, Satan began to dominate man and spread his rebellion. Children do not respect their parents and rebel against authority. The whole world is in complete chaos. In the beginning the animals were submissive to man, but the fall with its rebellion has perverted this order. In schools, students dominate and teachers are no longer respected. Nowhere does one see submission to the authority established by God at the time of creation. And often, even in Christian homes, the woman "wears the pants" and the man has nothing to say. We should know that this is not the desire of God, but the work of the devil.

Today, we have to be brought back under His authority. The Lord must bring us under the headship of the living Christ. How should we live in the church? Do we do what pleases us, or do we obey His headship? We must pray this prayer each day: "Lord, bring me back under Your headship." Concerning our relationships, whether private or professional, in our families or the church, we must ask Him to bring us back under His headship. Do not do what seems good to you! Be brought back under His headship or you are a rebel, and you will not enter into His kingdom.

### **5. His Inheritance**

We see in verse 11 of Ephesians 1, that we have become His inheritance. We see that God is our inheritance, but how do we become His inheritance? To become His inheritance we need transformation. If we live a worldly life like pagans, we do not qualify to become His inheritance. Let us imagine a little what it is to become the inheritance of God. It means that God derives pleasure in every aspect of our daily lives.

### **6. The Praise of His Glory**

In Ephesians 1:12, we see that we become the praise of His glory. It is wonderful to be the praise of His glory, and that means that we express God in all things. We see from this that we must make progress in our Christian life. We should not think that being forgiven is an end in itself. We have to go on, progressing and growing in Him. We should pray, "Lord, find in me and in the church, such a reality." Brothers and sisters, the time is short, and the Lord will soon come. We cannot be raptured and be overcomers if we have not progressed. We have received God's complete salvation and this will lead us to the final stage. God has called us for complete salvation. When we open our heart and mouth, we receive what God has given us for our salvation. Following this, we must be led to the waters of baptism in which our old man is crucified and put to death. It is, therefore, necessary to be baptized as soon as possible.



## CHAPTER 8

# Knowing God's Indwelling

*Readings: Zach. 12:1; Job 32:8; Prov. 20:27; 1 Thes. 5:23; John 3:5-6; 2 Tim. 4:22; 1 Cor. 6:17; Rom. 8:16; John 4:24; Rom. 1:9; 7:6; 12:1; 2 Tim. 1:6-7; Acts 6:10; 7:59; 17:16; 18:25; 19:21*

Ephesians 2:22 tells us that the church is the habitation of God in the Spirit. The Spirit, then, is the only way of building the church. If we are not in the Spirit, then we are not truly the church, because God has done everything for us in the Spirit. Many of us know the numerous verses listed above. It is more important, though, to experience them than to know them. The church has gone through many difficult situations in these last years, but what is important today is that we should be in the Spirit.

God created man with a human spirit, in which He desires His Spirit to dwell. Thus, man is not constituted only of a body, but a spirit. Unfortunately the world is centred on the human body and its well-being. We, as Christians, however, must see the human life differently. Our lives are often governed by what makes our bodies comfortable, but the church life needs more than that. We need to know our spirit if the church is to be built. What will our lives be like when we go back to our localities? Are we going to operate in our spirit, or are we going to be like the worldly people who live in the sphere of the body and its comfort? Our lives must be governed by the vision presented in this message.

### ***The Human Spirit***

In Zechariah 12:1, we read that God stretched forth the heavens, laid the foundation of the earth, and formed the spirit of man within him. This verse should convince us that we have a spirit. What makes us like God? It is our spirit, that part of us which is of God. Without it, it is impossible to have a relationship with Him. Our ears are for hearing, our eyes are for seeing, and our spirit is for sensing God. Every believer in the church must know and use his spirit. The world cannot understand the spirit, and many Christians have not discovered these truths. Yet without our spirit, we cannot contact God.

Job 32:8 shows us clearly and unambiguously that there is a spirit in man. Man is not an improved monkey; he is a peculiar creature with a spirit in him. We are the only creatures who possess such a spirit. We should have a sound appreciation for our spirit, and behave as people who have one. Unfortunately, many people behave like animals!

Furthermore, Job tells us that wisdom is found in the spirit. Knowledge is in our mind, but wisdom comes from this spirit that God has put within us. In the church we need wisdom. Let us ask for it, and He will give it to us in our spirit. We should not solve problems by ourselves; rather, we must look for the solution in our spirit. Proverbs 20:27 tells us the same thing: The spirit of man is the lamp of the Lord, which searches all things.

1 Thessalonians 5:23 shows us that we have to be sanctified before the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our spirit will, therefore, be ready at His coming, our soul will be transformed, and our bodies will be transfigured. John says that the one born of flesh is flesh, but the one born of the Spirit of God is spirit; without our human spirit we can do nothing to please God. We need the Lord to be with our spirit everyday, as Paul told Timothy. We cannot live any way we please, for God is in our spirit.

### ***The Spirit is Witness***

In the church life, we do all things in the spirit. Without our spirit, we cannot serve the Lord for a long time. We should not live by our thoughts and feelings. We should also no longer seek to serve only with the saints who understand us, otherwise our service will become very carnal.

In the churches, God leads brothers and sisters who are quite unique to serve together, so that we will not serve from ourselves, but from the spirit. When we touch the spirit of the saints, we discover that the brothers and sisters are wonderful. In Ghana, we have a brother who cannot keep quiet. He both talks and says "amen" loudly. During a particular meeting I was seated in front of him, and I wanted to hear the prayers of the brothers and sisters. I could not hear, because of all the words he uttered to accentuate the prayer. This experience turned me very much to my spirit. If I was not in my spirit, I could not have prayed. I am a regenerated man, and I have a spirit that allows me to continue in the church life. We must live by our spirit regardless of whom we are with.

In Corinthians 6:17, we see that we are one with the Lord. We are one spirit with Him. It is by such union that we press forward to accomplish all things in the church life. In Romans 8:16, it is said that the spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. At times there is a testimony in our spirit that we are children of God.

Taxis are a little peculiar in Africa. A taxi takes four persons and stops anytime, anywhere. It is, therefore, necessary to pay attention and to have patience when following a

taxi. When someone raises a hand by the roadside, it stops immediately to take another passenger, (that is, if there is room). When this happens, I am forced to suddenly apply my brakes. I need my spirit to quell the reactions of my flesh whenever I follow a taxi. There is an inner witness that reacts in us whenever we act wrongly. We all, at one time or the other, are searched and exposed by the Spirit. At such a time we should turn to our spirit and recognize our error. Our spirit will be saddened and grieved if we try to justify our actions.

### ***Practical Application***

The church life is a normal and practical life. Difficulties will come, but we should remember that although we are called “saints,” we do not always behave like “saints.” Let us turn to the Spirit for strength and help.

In John 4:24, we are told that God is Spirit. This is a mystery. However, one day God was incarnated and lived a normal human life. The totality of God’s deity lived in Christ, yet Christ was practical and real.

Sometimes, we think our spirituality means having a serious face and never joking, not even with our wives. Our idea of a spiritual person is far from what the Bible describes. I am not saying we have to be carnal or natural, but we must live a normal and correct human life. If we have a healthy spirit, we shall behave in a very normal way. We have a spirit of a sober and sound mind that is not fanatical, bizarre, or religious. We are normal men, who live by our spirit. The Lord, recognizing the humanity of his disciples, advised them to pause, to draw away from the crowd and take a rest.

We have to worship God, but we cannot do it from ourselves. Only our spirit is qualified for the worship of God, as we see in John 4:24. Let us learn to go before the Lord, before coming to the meeting. For example, reconcile with your wife before coming to worship. Before the Lord’s Table, we must prepare ourselves and open our spirit to Him. If I am occupied with many things such that my only preparation is to take my Bible and run to the meeting, then I will not be in spirit and will not ready to worship the Lord. When we come to the meetings without preparing, then our meetings will lack His full presence. Often we sing many songs at the beginning of the meetings to help us come back to our spirit. It is better than nothing, but we waste precious time; we could have done that at home before coming to the meetings.

There is something that has helped me greatly in my married life for many years: I learned to turn to the Lord in my spirit. The secret is never to sleep on a problem. I know that I am not in my spirit when my spouse has offended me. We must deal with all situations by turning to the Lord in spirit. At the outset, it is never our fault, but always the fault of the other person. However, if we turn to the Lord, we will immediately realize that we are wrong.

This life in the spirit is very practical. Our human spirit is the only practical way of continuing with our Christian life.

In Romans 1:9, Paul speaks of “God whom I serve in my spirit.” When we serve God, there is a witness in our spirit. There are so many practical services in the church in which God wants us to serve. This service must, however, be done in spirit. Paul did everything in his spirit, no matter what it was. We should do nothing by a quarrelling and envious spirit. Philippians talks of Euodia and Syntyche, two sisters who unfortunately did not serve in spirit but were constantly in rivalry.

In Accra we have over 300 brothers and sisters, but only a few of them practically serve. If, for instance, we had only 10 percent (30 brothers and sisters) who undertook to be truly available night and day, we would gain the city of Accra in no time. Our problem is that many only come to listen to messages and to receive help, but are not available to serve. Since only some serve and the rest come to hear messages on Sundays, the church in Accra has very little impact on the city. However, if majority of us turn to the Spirit and say, “Brothers, you can count on us to build the church; we give ourselves to pray for the saints and to serve practically in spirit,” then glory will be expressed. Glory is only present when someone gives himself to exercise his spirit.

May the Lord have a testimony through our spirit and help us to serve Him! Let us lay aside petty things that frustrate the church life. We should not be like those who analyze whatever is done and never bring forth anything positive and edifying.

In Romans 7:6, Paul gives a very clear word, instructing us to go on in the Lord. He says that we are dead to the law and that we serve, like slaves, in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.

In the past, there were problems that discouraged the brothers and sisters and gradually made them cold towards the Lord and the church. Some even said they had wasted their time by giving themselves full-time to serve the Lord. We have to serve God in the newness of the Spirit. We should not serve in the oldness of the letter. Let us turn to Him and go on. We should not remain offended because of old stories and past deceptions. Do we want to keep our deceptions till the Lord comes? How are we going to meet Him? What shall we say to Him? What will be our argument? There is only one thing I wish to know concerning these past events: “For whom did we do those things? For whom did we invest?” If we served God, then we would never be disappointed, but if we did it for man, we would be deeply disappointed.

### ***Fervent In Spirit***

Romans 12:11 tells us not to be slothful: "As to diligence, not slothful, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." We should not bury our talents but rather invest them with "the bankers." We must know that God has invested much in each of us over the years, and we cannot bury them. We must utilize our talents and make them bear fruits. If we do so, the Lord will reward us at His coming.

Romans 12:11 also tells us to be fervent in spirit. I love to see brothers and sisters who are burning within. To be fervent in spirit is a most beautiful characteristic that should be found in each one of us. If we are singing, let us sing with our whole being. If we are praying, let us pray with our whole being. If we are testifying, let us testify with our whole being. When we are talking, our whole being is involved. Let us remember that our spirit is the part of our being that must flow out first. Let us touch our spirit and begin to sing, pray, and testify. We will then see how God is expressed.

Even if we are alone, we must enjoy being fervent in spirit. On the way to the meeting let us sing and be joyful. At the moment we come to the hall, we should be burning in spirit. We must be burning and be ready at all times to rejoice. This means, during the whole day, we need to touch the Lord. If we do, then we will have something to give no matter what happens. How the church life needs this! Before visiting a brother or a sister spend fifteen minutes in prayer. Perhaps, when talking to these saints we may talk about their family, work, etc. But if we have a habit of rejoicing and burning in spirit, we will be able to give something at the end that will feed and nourish them. This is the way to invest your talents.

2 Timothy 1:6-7 reminds us to stir up the gift which is in us, because God has given us a spirit of power, of love, and of a sober mind. God has given us a spirit. It is this spirit that we must stir up. The flame is in us, but it has to be rekindled! If I ignite a match and put it under a heap of branches, the fire will not immediately consume the branches unless it is fanned. Unfortunately we often see very good brothers with enormous potential seated at the back of the meeting hall with arms folded. They have not, as yet, given up, but their fire is out. They need to stir up the flame that is in them. Do not say that because another saint is sleeping you will also sleep. We cannot have such an attitude. We absolutely need to renew the gift of God in us.

We should not believe what the devil tells us. Our feelings are not worthy of belief. The Holy Spirit is a Spirit of power and strength. We should neither be deceived by our sentiments nor by the outward situation. Rather, let us take a stand for our spirit! A farmer had an eaglet, and not knowing what to do with it put it among his chicken. They lived

together and even slept together. But one day, another farmer took notice that, that tiny thing was not a chick, but an eaglet. So he took the eaglet in his hand and spoke to it, saying, "You are an eaglet and not a chick; you have another life which is capable of flying." He threw the eaglet up and it flew away. The life in the eaglet was not the same as the life in the chicken. Although the eaglet had lived as a chicken for a long time, at the right moment, that life within it was manifested.

We are not just fowls. We have the life and capability that can surmount and overcome all problems. Our destiny is not to be in the chicken coop, but to fly higher above the crowd and enjoy a better life. Our spirit is a spirit of power that can conquer every situation and put every obstacle under our feet. God has given us a spirit of power and of a sound mind. We may not be learned, but we can have a spirit of power and of a sober mind. The spirit in us is wonderful! We should not allow our situations and problems to devour us. Let us rise up above every obstacle, and take a stand for our spirit and we will gain power and strength!

## CHAPTER 9

# Knowing God's Way for the Church

*Readings: 1 Cor. 16:15-18; 2 Cor. 2:12-13; 3:16-18; Gal. 5:16, 18, 25; 6:1,8; Eph. 3:14-16; 4:23; 5:17-*

20

Among the children of Israel who heard the word of Moses, only a small number entered the good land. That is a very serious warning for us all! May we heed this word and desire to grow in the Lord. If we want to go on, then we must put aside every frustration and turn to God in our spirit. Let us spend time with Him and eat of the Lord in His word.

All should pray, "Lord, I want to know you. Give me a righteous hunger and thirst." We should not allow this revelation to escape from our hearts, but rather keep it as a treasure. Jacob refused to allow the angel to go away without blessing him. We must act in the same manner. We should firmly attach ourselves to everything that is of the Lord.

We read from the book of Daniel that, Daniel purposed in his heart not to defile himself with the king's food (Dan. 1:8). Let us make a determined resolution never to be like the worldly people. There is so much corruption and obscenity in this dark world. But, God is looking for people who are determined not to defile themselves. We should not allow our old habits to get the upper hand in our lives. Let us come back to the Lord and allow Him to cleanse us of everything that has defiled us. The world has many attractive things, that is why we must resolve to do things the Lord's way.

### ***God's Way for the Church***

The way, I repeat, is our spirit. In 1Corinthians. 16:15-18, Paul tells us to be strong and to do all things in love. Then he talks about the house of Stephanas. The members of this family made a decision, dedicating themselves to serve the church. Every locality needs such a family that firmly decides to take care of the saints. The Lord is coming back soon. We must redeem the time by leading a holy life and building the church. Paul said in verse 17, he rejoiced at the coming of Stephanas, because he filled the lack created by the absence of the Corinthians.

There are many things lacking in the church life, but what is our attitude towards them? Are we prepared to fill them, or do we prefer to criticize the elders and other saints? When we see a lack, we should pray for wisdom to fill it. We should never join with those who give up and spend their time criticizing. If we are fully occupied with the things of the church, we will not have time to spend analyzing things. Unfortunately, many brothers and sisters act like an information bureau. They know the news and have information, but they are not capable of giving life and sharing riches.

We should use what we receive from others to fill the lack that we see. Paul said that those saints refreshed his spirit. Sometimes a little testimony can refresh. For this reason we need everyone's portion. We may think we have nothing to say when, in actuality, we have a word that will refresh all saints. Children sometimes say things that carry little meaning, but they are refreshing. If the same saints speak at every meeting, the refreshing words of others will be missing.

Nobody is useless. It is good to respect a brother who has a big portion, but we should not neglect what we possess. Each and every one of us has Christ. He stirs and moves in us. We should not shut our mouth. Rather, let us allow Christ to be expressed through our testimonies, prayers, songs, and messages. Each of us is important and can edify the church. Whether we have one talent or ten talents, it does not matter. Let us bring our portion for the edification of the church.

### ***My Spirit And My Brother***

2 Corinthians 2:12-13 shows us a very important principle. Paul said that a big door was opened to him for the gospel. This door was opened in the Lord; it was not because of the work of an organization. However, he had no peace in his spirit, because he did not find Titus his brother. Here is a very important principle, which can be summed up as follows: "my spirit" and "my brother." In my spirit I find God, but I also need to find my brother. Let us take care of both our spirit and our brother. The Spirit of God builds the church, but it can never be built without each brother or sister. In the meetings let us learn to give room to even the "very small" brothers. May we have a deep consideration for each of our brothers and sisters.

Sometimes we do not see a brother or sister at the meetings for a long time. We cannot remain indifferent. We have to find and take care of that person. I often take note when a brother is not at the meeting and seek to know what happened. Even if we have an open door from the Lord for the preaching of the gospel, we must also care for our brothers. Let us practice the church life in such a way! We should all learn to take care of our spirit

and consider our brother. Moreover, in 2 Corinthians 3:16, we see the necessity of turning our heart to the Lord, because often the vision becomes blurred and nebulous.

### ***Call On the Name of the Lord***

Let us turn to our spirit! However, let us note that this is not done by shouting. Beginning in the morning, it is important for us to turn to the Spirit within our spirit. There is a way to do this: call on the name of the Lord. Calling on Him unveils the heart and strengthens the spirit.

If calling on Him aloud makes us uncomfortable, let us alone and call. But whatever it takes, we must learn to touch the Lord in our spirit. It is so good to turn our hearts to the Lord. When we do, the veils are taken away and we can concentrate on Him. But we are bound with many chains! We need to be freed from such bondage. Let us follow the pattern of Lazarus, who, when resurrected, was liberated from the bonds that constrained him. For where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty! When we call on the name of the Lord, we experience this liberty. Of course, it is not a fleshly freedom, but a freedom in Christ that restrains us and leads us to the Lord.

The more we turn to Him, the more we can concentrate on Him. It is through this concentration on the Lord that we are changed. Transformation only comes through a close attachment to the Lord. The Spirit and the Word combine forces to change us from glory to glory. Perhaps we have known this teaching for a long time. But, if we do not concentrate on Him, it will remain a mere doctrine. Let us learn to come to the Lord in the Word and touch the Spirit. We shall see that He is in the Word to meet us. I repeat this unceasingly, because we do not practise it. We must learn afresh to call on the name of the Lord. When Stephen was being stoned, he cried to the Lord and called on His name. But shall we cry to the Lord only in hard times? Whether times are good or bad, let us call on the name of the Lord and touch the Spirit.

### ***Live By The Spirit***

There are three passages in the Bible that talk of the Spirit that gives life. In John 6:63, Jesus proclaims, "It is the Spirit that gives life, the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit and are life." 1 Corinthians 15:45 states, "And so it is written, 'the first man, Adam, became a living soul,' the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit." 2 Corinthians 3:6 speaks of God, "who also has made us able ministers of the new covenant; not of the letter, but of the spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life." If we want life, we must touch the Spirit

Galatians tells us to live by the spirit. In Galatians 5:16, for example, we are told to walk in the spirit so that we will not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. We are exposed to many

things which we cannot avoid, but we should not obey our lust. The power that liberates us from the bondage of lust is in the Spirit. If we turn to the Spirit, we shall see that we can overcome our lust. We all lust, but the key is to turn to our spirits. The Spirit will help us to overcome our lust. In chapter 6 of Galatians we see that if we are led by the Spirit, then we are not under the law. If we live by the spirit, then we can also walk by the spirit. Galatians is a book on the Spirit. "Walk in the Spirit" (Galatians 5:16). "Be led by the Spirit" (Galatians 5:18). "The fruit of the Spirit" (Galatians 5:22). Live in the Spirit." (Galatians 5:25).

The children of Israel were led day after day by the Lord. He led them even in the darkest night. They had the cloud, which protected them by day from the sun. The children of Israel had the pillar of fire, which brightened the night for them. All were arranged so that they could live by Him. Similarly, in the church life, the Lord prepares everything in our path that we might live by Him.

Our spirits is the only means by which we can go on in our Christian life. Our spirits mingled with the Spirit of God is the key. Let us learn to pray by the spirit, to read the Word and to do all things in our spirit.

## CHAPTER 10

### Knowing God's Intercession

*Readings: Ex. 17:8-13; 22:28-31; Matt. 17:19-21; Rom. 8:26-27; Heb. 10:19-23; 4:16; 1 Thes. 5:17;  
Es. 59:16*

In this last chapter let us consider a crucial principle by which God operates: prayer. The preceding chapters showed us that God operates through our faith and by the Spirit. Then we saw that the church is the goal of His operation. In this message we are going to see how we can progress toward this goal through the wonderful principle of prayer.

In Matthew 17, the Lord went up the mountain with three of His disciples. On the mountain He revealed His glory. He took only three disciples with Him, while the other nine stayed behind. One of these three was very intimate with the Lord, though he had never before seen Christ like that. On the mountain they practically saw His glory. Peter said that the place was marvellous. He was so impressed that he did not want to go back to the others. He wanted to stay there and make three tabernacles—one for Moses, one for Elijah, and one for Jesus. But at that moment a voice was heard; the Father told them that this One, Jesus, was His beloved Son in whom He was well-pleased. When the disciples got up, they saw Jesus only. Let us learn, brothers and sisters, not to elevate any person in the church. The only one person who pleases God is Jesus. No matter what help you receive from a brother, he still remains a brother. Only Christ must get the Lordship and the glory. Let us give all glory and honour to this wonderful Christ.

When they came down, they found the nine disciples arguing about an epileptic child. They could not chase away the demon in him. The father told Jesus the story, and He reprimanded His disciples. He referred to them as men of little faith. He cast the bad spirit out of the child and cured him. Later, when the disciples asked Jesus the reason for this failure, He revealed to them the secret of prayer. They needed prayer and fasting, true secrets for fulfilling God's intention. We need much prayer to live by the principles on which God operates.

Without prayer, we cannot do anything according to God's intention. Do not think that working for the Lord is sufficient. If we want to see the saints go on with the Lord, we must strive in prayer.

If the church in your locality is not growing, there is a reason. Certainly, only a few brothers and sisters are giving themselves to pray daily for the saints. Only prayer could drive away the demon from the epileptic child.

Exodus 17 recounts the story of the battle between Amalek and the people of Israel. We all know that Amalek represents the flesh, which prevents us so often from coming to God in prayer. Joshua had to go to the valley to fight. However, while he was in the valley fighting against Amalek, several brothers including Moses gave themselves to God in prayer. Amalek began to prevail over Israel when Moses' arms became tired, but Moses pulled himself together and was even supported by two brothers who helped steady his arms. Joshua then prevailed.

For Joshua to gain victory, he needed brothers to intercede on the mountain. When we go down into the valley, we must expect to meet with problems. That is why we must solidly establish prayer as a habit in our lives. What a privilege it is to carry all things to God in prayer! No matter the situation, we should come near to God and pray. It is wonderful to be able to pray with other brothers. We should have the habit of praying alone, and we should also learn to pray with others.

Prayer is the way to overcome all difficulties. We should make a list of the brothers and sisters and pray for each of them. Let us pray for their present situation. We are weak and need one another in prayer. When we have a negative feeling about a brother or a sister how do we react? The natural tendency is to lament and criticize. On the contrary, the best reaction is to go to your bedroom, kneel down and pray, believing that God will change the situation. Later, joy will overwhelm us when God answers our prayer.

Sometimes we have to pray for many months before anything changes. When we are praying for someone, it is not necessary to go to that person and tell the person we are praying for him or her. We should do it in secret. Above all, we should not be discouraged. We must persevere.

We should pray that each of us becomes a blessing to the church. In Ezekiel, we see that God had no one who was praying. Even the prophets were telling lies. God was looking for a man among them who would remain in His presence to intercede for the country, but He could not find such a man. God is looking for men and women who are determined to intercede for the country, but unfortunately, even today, there are not many.

What are we to do? Can God find one person to carry His ark? Who is ready? Are we willing?

It is necessary to have the habit of praying. Can God find such persons in your city? He is looking for such a people. Let us pray and consecrate ourselves to this work. God is looking for someone who is available. You, who are reading this message, are you prepared to start praying? God is amazed that nobody is interceding. He is looking all over the land for those who will pray. Prayer is a real labour. Unfortunately, we are very zealous to work for the church, but few are ready to pray for her interests. We pray much for ourselves, but God needs those who weep for His people.

Jesus prayed for many things in His ministry. He even prayed for us, those who were going to believe later. He was a man who knew how to come to God and pray for God's needs. According to church history, James was a praying man. He was known to have hardened knees, because of the long hours he spent in prayer.

Let us intercede for the most difficult problems and see what God will do. When our prayer is granted, we shall have joy and will wish to renew the experience. We should be intercessors. We should not allow the enemy to discourage us; we should pray and see how the Lord will respond.

We should not give in to our weakness when we start to pray. Our mind and our body are so weak. Although we have these weaknesses, we also have the Spirit to intercede for us with groaning. Some will ask us to pray for them; it is good to do so, but not only in their presence, but much more in their absence. In their presence we usually will just pray pleasing prayers. Good prayers are hidden prayers made to God in secret.

We should not pray to please the person who asked for prayer. God listens to prayers made in the holy of holies. This kind of prayer comes from our spirit.

In our spirit we can intercede through the Spirit of God. Let us take our position in Christ and pray with His authority.

Let us loose life and peace and bind criticisms and death in the church. Christ gave all authority to His disciples to go into the world in His name. This power is available to us in the holy of holies. Before going to the holy of holies, we have to purify ourselves of everything that defiles us. We have to deal with every hidden sin.

Mark 11:24-25 tells us to forgive our brother who has offended us. This means that we shall not be forgiven if we do not forgive our brother. Such a cleansing by forgiveness gives us boldness. Sin is a weight, a heavy load. Adam and Eve sinned and lost fellowship with God. Sin separated them from God, and they even had to hide from God. They had a

bad conscience towards God and, therefore, made a pitiful effort to hide themselves with flimsy veil of leaves. Let us go forward with boldness and confess our sins. Then we shall see that we can intercede for the interests of God. It is only by this practice that we can have a normal and glorious church life.

May the Lord restore this among us! Paul tells us to pray without ceasing. No matter how we feel we should pray. Before reacting, we have to pray. Do not act because you have been told to do so; pray first.

We need brothers who pray continually and who remain in an atmosphere of prayer and fellowship with God. A brother I know was in charge of washing plates at a restaurant, and while working, he would pray to God and maintain continuous fellowship with Him. If we are such people, we will find that God will do many things through us. He will be with us. God is looking for this among us. In Acts, the Apostles learned to pray often. Paul also experienced it, for even when he was in prison with Silas, he prayed. Let us consecrate ourselves to this work of prayer, day after day, until He comes. Amen.