

Labouring For God's Church

"But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it." (Matthew 16:15-18)

The Lord Jesus Christ was asking His disciples, ***"Who the people say the Son of Man is?"*** They gave Him some input, ***"Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets." (Matthew 16:14)*** Then He asked them a direct question, ***"Who do you say I am?"*** Simon Peter was the first among the disciples who answered Him. ***"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." (Matthew 16:16)*** Christ commended Simon for that answer, and perhaps Peter was so happy that he came to know Christ. But that was not the end of what Christ had purpose in Peter's life. Christ right then declared to Peter His good plan for him. ***"And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it." (Matthew 16:18)***

Christ's plan for Peter is that He will raise him up to build His church. Christ was calling Peter to be a spiritual stone that He can build His church on. At that moment and at this stage of Peter life he came to know Christ. But whether Peter was aware or not with what God had called him to do and to be, that what he need to concentrate and focus. Peter has to give his life fully for Christ sake; he ought to prepare himself and to be ready and equipped of what Christ had asked him to be and to do. In fact it took time from the day that God had called Peter to the date he accomplished that in the day of the Pentecost when God pour out His Holy Spirit on the disciples and Peter stood among them to address the first message of the church to a big crowd. Before that happened Peter was in the growing process of training and equipping to take the responsibility of what God had assigned for him to be.

As Christ died on the cross for our sins and rose from the dead to give us eternal life, He called us to be part of His church. Part of the salvation is to be part of His church. We are saved by grace through faith; Christ's blood is for the atonement of our sins, but no salvation outside the church. For to be part of God's church is to be part of the Kingdom of God. ***"Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit." (Ephesians 2:19-22)*** When God save us He put us in His church. We cannot separate between the salvation of God and to be a spiritual stone God can use to build His church. Apostle Peter himself emphasized that in his letter later on as he wrote the following. ***"As you come to him, the living Stone -- rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him -- you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 2:4-5)*** God call us to be a spiritual living stone in His temple, the church. Therefore it is your responsibility to cooperate with God to fulfill that calling in your life.

Apostle Paul in his letter to Timothy wrote the following: ***"In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for noble purposes and some for ignoble. If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work." (2 Timothy 2:20-21)*** So it is in our hands to clean ourselves from the ignoble things that contaminate our lives like lies, laziness, negligence, immoralities, corruption, greediness, etc. These all make us ineffective instrument, the master cannot use to build up His church and His kingdom. God wants us to be clean so we can be a spiritual stone in His church. The Word of God and His promise to us encourage us to purify ourselves. ***"Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God." (2 Corinthians 7:1)*** For God had promised in ***Matthew 16:18 "On this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it."*** Therefore, we need to purify ourselves so we can be the spiritual living stone that God can use to build up His church.

"Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church. I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness -- the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me." (Colossians 1:24-29) Here in this another passage Apostle Paul describing his pleasure and his rejoicing inspite of his suffering that he pass through; he was happy because it was for the sake of the body of Christ, that is His church. Paul laboured for the church and he became the church servant by God's commission to present to the church and to every believer the Word of God in its fullness, so the non-believers would see the glorious riches of God, which is Christ in us, the hope of glory.

That what we are called to be and called to do; to live our lives for Christ in the way that the world would see Christ in us. And therefore we admonish and teach everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. To this very end we need to labour struggling with all His energy, standing firm in faith, serving Him diligently and effectively by giving our lives for His body, the church.

My Dear and Beloved: The Word of God it teach us the following: ***"Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her."*** As well as, Paul laboured for that purpose. He served God by becoming the church servant, and he said, ***"Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ."*** Therefore, what then about us, you, and me, shall we fail to obey God's commands by giving our lives for Him and becoming living spiritual stone in his house, the church? No, we will not fail God; we will do our part as we agree to pray

My Prayer: *Father God I come before you in the name of Jesus who died on the cross for my sins, who was buried but rose from the dead to give me eternal life. Lord I commit my life into your hand, help me Lord to obey Your Word and to do Your will in being a living spiritual stone in Your house, the church. Help me Lord to labour and to persevere to this very end. This is my prayer in Jesus name, Amen.*