

THE MARKS OF THE
**TRUE
CHURCH**



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Preaching the Shining Word

Sunday 11th September 2022

FOUNDATION SCRIPTURES:

Matthew 18:15-17 (NKJV): “Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’ “And if he refuses to hear them, tell [it] to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.

Psalms 119:105 (NKJV): “Your word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path.”

So far in this series...

The ‘church’ that is referred to in Matthew 16:18 is not a physical building but a called-out people that participate regularly in the worship of God, with an innumerable company of angels.

We the church, are God’s Kingdom ‘NOW’ on the earth. We have the keys of heaven and have the power to bind and unbind.

3 Distinct Marks of the True Church:

1. **Preaching of the word** – this will be further expanded in this text.
2. **Administration of sacraments** - (ordinances) e.g., communion and baptism.
When we take communion, we should remember the victory that Christ has accomplished for us.
3. **Exercising of church discipline** – a brother living in sin is equated with someone who is lost. It is our responsibility to go after the lost, so that they can be restored and received back into the fold.

Every saint must belong to a local church because the church is the safety net.

Turn to God's Shining Word

In Jeremiah 2, the people of the world were going through a dark situation. However, instead of waiting and trusting in the Lord, the rulers transgressed against God, by ruling the people in a way that magnified themselves in the eyes of the people, instead of God. Besides, the prophets were giving prophecies that would gather money for themselves, instead of speaking *for*, and speak *forth* God.

Consequently, because the people that ought to have known God didn't know Him; they were providing faulty solutions that were not going to work.

Amos 8:11 (NKJV) says: “Behold, the days are coming,’ says the Lord God, ‘That I will send a famine on the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord.”

In response to a time where God's people had chosen to turn away from God, there was a famine prophesied, but not in the typical sense.

In the prophesied 'day' in this scripture, there would not only be a famine of food and water, but a famine of the word of God.

God has a vision for the church: He wants the church to grow, expand and occupy until He comes on Judgment Day. For us to do this, we must turn to the word of God.

In the midst of the circumstances of life, always turn to the word of God.

The Lamp of the Word

We are in this world and we are part of it, but there is something inside of us that gives us light and makes us distinct.

Psalm 119:105 (NKJV) says: “Your word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path.”

It is important to note that you only need the effectiveness of a lamp in a dark place. Similarly, the word of God is effective, even in the midst of the dark places that we have to tread.

Don't despise the word, because it is a lamp to your feet.

The world has turned its back against God, who wants to shine His light in the world.

This signifies that man in the earth is moving, living and having his being in a dark and murky place; a place that is squalid, dry, and neglected.

We are privileged to have God's word, which shines and puts the spotlight of God upon us. Thus, the word is not only for structure, it is also for enlightenment.

Even in the midst of darkness, there is light and that is in the word of God.

Hence:

We live in a dark place, but we have the Word of God that allows us to shine.

We are Privileged!

The words of scripture are a lamp to us the privileged ones. Why are we privileged?

This question is also reflected in **Romans 3:1-2 (NKJV)**, which says: “What advantage then has the Jew, or what [is] the profit of circumcision? Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God.”

The benefit of being a believer is that you have the Bible.

You cannot be a believer and despise the Bible because it is one of the core benefits you have as a believer.

Only the genuine believers enjoy the word of God.

God speaks to us through His word. (see **Hebrews 1:1-4 NKJV**).

Whenever you pick up the Bible, Christ is having a conversation with you.

Need a solution for an issue you are experiencing? Pick up the Bible! As you read and sit under the word of God, you receive spiritual light. This is because God’s grace in His word won’t leave you where you are, but will teach you how to live godly, soberly, and righteously.

Do you want to see the beauty, power, and effects of God? Read the Bible.

Public Reading of the Word

Nehemiah 8:3 (NKJV) says: “Then he read from it in the open square that [was] in front of the Water Gate from morning until midday, before the men and women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people [were attentive] to the Book of the Law.”

There must be public scripture reading in our gatherings.

“We must be a church where we put a premium on the public reading of the Word.” – Pastor Kola Taiwo, New Wine Church Woolwich.

Give Heed to the Word

“If we give heed to the word in the Bible, which always shines as a lamp in a dark place, we will have Christ’s joy, peace, life, light, security and all other blessings, rising up in our hearts to shine in the darkness of where we are today, before Christ’s second coming”. – *Pastor Kola Taiwo, New Wine Church, London.*

As you read the Bible, something will well up on the inside of you, just like the disciples on the road to Emmaus.

We also read in the book of Nehemiah chapters 8 to 13, that the whole nation as a result of seeking and returning to the word, experienced the rising up of joy, peace, life, light, security and all other blessings, as result of being reconstituted with the shining word of God.

In **Nehemiah 8:12 (NKJV)**, we learn that there will be rejoicing as a result of the reconstitution and responding to the shining word. The people in Nehemiah 8:12 experienced joy and peace because they responded to the Word of God.

Teaching of the Word

Also, the teaching of the word matters. There must be teaching based on the reading of the word in our gatherings. (**Nehemiah 8:14**)

Life: There will be tangible and visible effects of the shining word in the saints' daily response. (**Nehemiah 8:18**)

Light: The shining light of the word of God will expose us to our reality. (**Nehemiah 9:2**)

Security: In **Nehemiah 13:21**, we see that the shining light of God's word will protect the people of God from subtle attacks of the devil upon the church.

There are things that the world is trying to sneak into our churches that unless you read the Word of God, you wouldn't know.

We need to secure the Church. How do we secure the Church from the doctrines of error? Through the word of God!

All other blessings: The reconstitution of the word will bring about a cleansing and God will remember His people for good. (**Nehemiah 13:30-31**)

Our Enjoyment:

Isaiah 60:1 (NKJV) says: "Arise, shine; For your light has come! And the glory of the LORD is risen upon you."

"Those who will truly arise and shine are those who will return to the shining word." – Pastor Kola Taiwo, New Wine Church Woolwich.

Our Response:

Galatians 2:20 (KJV): "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

This verse is proof-positive of Paul's situation which should also be our situation and based on four things:

1. **Conviction** – **Hebrews 11:1-2 (NKJV)** says: “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence (*conviction*) of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report.”

2. **Courage** - **Joshua 1:7 (NKJV)** “Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go.”

We must have courage. Receive the grace to develop the courage to stand on the word.

3. **Strategy** - **Hebrews 12:1-2 (NKJV)**: “Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares [us,] and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of [our] faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

The simple strategy is this: looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, through the Bible.

4. **Timing** - **Ecclesiastes 3:1 (NKJV)**: “To everything [there is] a season, A time for every purpose under heaven.”

Don't let the element of time discourage you. Stay in the word and let God's timing be made beautiful in your life.

Lastly...

Receive the grace to preach the shining word of God!