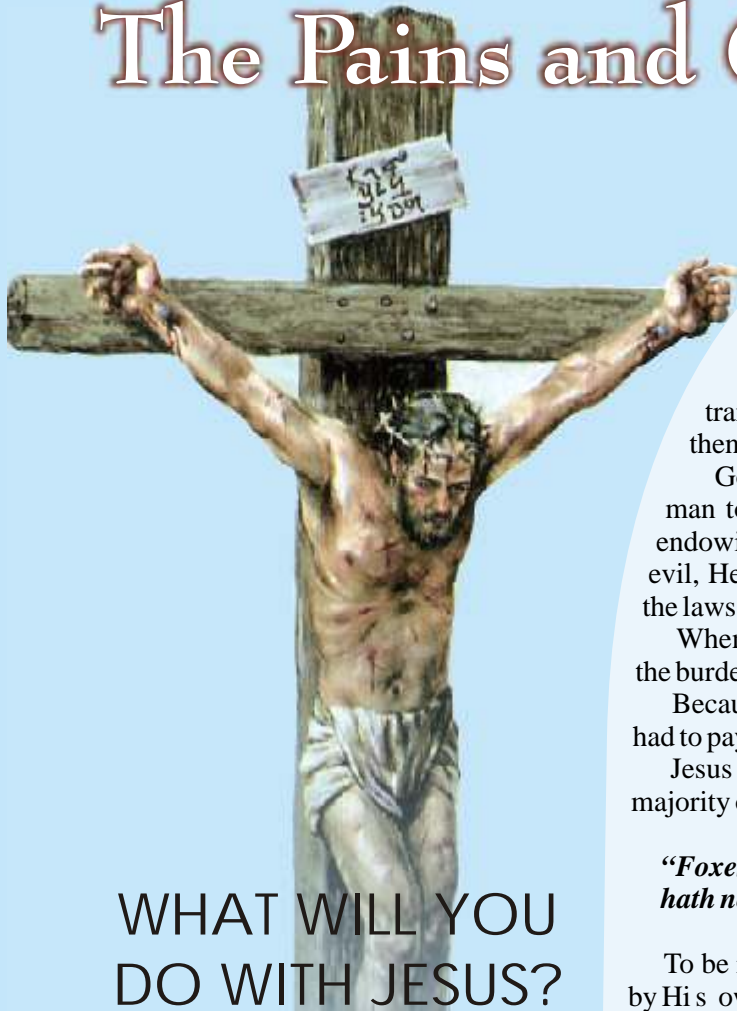


The Pains and Glories of Easter



WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH JESUS?

The solemnity associated with Easter observances draw many a soul to redefine their relationship with God. What a great opportunity it is for one to recognise one's spiritual state and do something about it! Credit always goes to anyone who takes concrete steps at reconciling with his Maker

A song writer of an earlier age said:

*Years I spent in vanity and pride,
Caring not my Lord was crucified,
Knowing not it was for me He died
On Calvary.*

The greatest thrust of the story of the prodigal son is that he came to himself, and amended his ways. One of the thieves crucified with Jesus represents in many ways, the ever sure mercy of God to pardon.

He was a hardened criminal. He had been

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Easter

affords the world a golden opportunity to think on the **pains** the Lord Jesus Christ went through to buy man back from the abyss of damnation to the **glories** of the Kingdom of God.

Man was essentially lost when Adam and Eve transgressed the Law of God in the Garden of Eden. Since then, anyone born of a woman automatically is a sinner.

God, not willing that anyone should perish, did not just leave man to suffer eternally from the hand of the devil. Apart from endowing man with a free will to make a choice between good and evil, He continually sent emissaries - prophets, judges, teachers of the laws and precepts, and His Spirit, to woo man back to Himself.

When all entreaties failed, Jesus Christ the Son of God came to bear the burden of sin and die in the place of man, The Innocent for the sinful.

Because man was to pay heavily for his sins, and could not, Jesus had to pay the price on man's behalf.

Jesus came to the world, but was not recognised as the Saviour by the majority of men. He did not even have a place to live in.

“Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head” (Luke 9:58).

To be rejected by folks is damning; yet Jesus was rejected and treated by His own like an outcast. He was indeed a Man of sorrows for our sake.

“He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

“Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted” (Isaiah 53:3, 4).

He committed no sin and therefore did not suffer pain on account of His own sins, but for man's sins. He came into the world to bear the burden of sin for us. He had identified with us in our sufferings by taking our problems upon Himself, bearing them unto death, so that we might be free. Therefore, sorrow became a part of His life.

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

“I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting” (Isaiah 50:6).

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Editorial Comment

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When The Trumpet Sounds!



Rev. Paul O. Akazue
Africa Oversser

One of these days the trumpet of God shall sound in the sky. It will be a glorious time for Christians who have endured trials and temptations. The dead in Christ shall rise first, while the saints still living will be transformed in the twinkling of an eye, to meet their Maker in the azure above. This is one of the glories of Easter.

Easter definitely rekindles in the Christian, the hope that awaits him. About 2,000 years ago, Jesus Christ laid down His life as the Paschal Lamb for all humanity. He died that man may not need to die a second death. In the process, he bequeathed unto humanity the legacy of resurrection.

Jesus Christ left no one in doubt about His power over death and the grave. He indeed proved His power as the Giver of Life, taking back the life He had willingly surrendered.

He warned humanity to escape from the judgment that is coming upon the world. As the omniscient God incarnate, He predicted what man should expect in the end time: nation rising against nation, rumours of war, falling away from the faith, and people listening to seducing spirits.

This is why the Apostle Paul admonished the Christians:

“Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.

“Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace,

“Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work” (2 Thessalonians 2:15-17).

It is hoped that you will find enough materials in this edition, that will trigger your enthusiasm to seek the best of Easter. You will do well to embrace the Resurrected Lord and Saviour, and you will not regret your action. Decide today!

Jesus was wounded for our sins. His hands, feet and side were pierced with nails and spear. He was also bruised by scourging, cut by thorns, and He underwent other physical sufferings in the process of atoning for the sins of the world.

Jesus was despised by men, but he avenged not Himself. In the hour of need, He was forsaken by acquaintances and abandoned by friends, to the depths of scorn. He was willing to suffer and be despised. He endured all for our salvation, bearing chastening in our place, that we might be reconciled and have peace with God.

“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:6).

Sheep are the most helpless of all animals when they go astray. In like manner, since the Fall, each man pursues his own interests, and seeks to gratify his own selfishness, regardless of the interest and good of others. Even when he desires to do well, he cannot, because he is helpless.

“THEN Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him.

“And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe,

“And said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands” (John 19:1-3).

Jesus was arrested and through a perjured trial, condemned to die by crucifixion, the most cruel and most shameful manner of death His enemies could have imagined.

Tossed about among His captors, and jeered at by a mob on His lonely road to death, Jesus bore His Cross courageously. At a point, He fell under the weight of the Cross. He did not consider running away or escaping the plot. He did not call the angels to set Him free, though He had the power to do so.

At Calvary, Jesus was hanged upon the Cross, and nails were driven through His hands and feet; then the Cross was lifted for everyone to see Christ in His humiliation. On top of the Cross was the inscription: “Jesus The King of the Jews.” Two thieves were crucified at the same time, fulfilling the Scriptures:

“And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death” (Isaiah 53:9).

Even one of the thieves mocked Him. The most agonising aspect of the pain was when God Himself looked away from Jesus, because God could not countenance sin. In His agony He cried, **“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”** (Matthew 27:46).

Jesus was eventually buried. On the third day, a power that surpassed death and the grave resurrected His body into a glorious celebration, that is being remembered at Easter.

But why did Jesus have to suffer and be afflicted so sorely? The Bible gives a succinct insight:

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

For every suffering of Jesus, there is a corresponding glory for mankind. If He were not wounded, our transgressions would not have been forgiven. It is so pertinent that even now, a sinner anywhere could plead the Blood of Jesus and be saved from sin. This is made possible because Jesus was bruised that we might be reconciled with God and have peace.



The triumphant resurrection

Christ was flogged in the public like a thief with the whip laced with sharp objects, which, when pulled, left indelible marks. This was the price He had to pay to buy peace of mind for saved souls. Besides, those stripes that gave Him so much pain are for our healing, even our physical healing.

When Jesus was eventually crucified, He was made a sacrifice to bring about the redemption of the whole creation, so that God's eternal programme could be carried out for man on earth. Such a sacrifice on the part of God showed His divine perfection, justice, mercy and boundless benevolence. The Law was upheld, sin was judged, and a basis of pardon and eternal reconciliation was made possible. Even the travail of His soul was for the restoration of man and his dominion, as it was before the Fall.

During His earthly ministry, Jesus said, “I am the door” - the Door that leads to the Father. When He died on the Cross, the veil of the Temple, which was an inch thick, was rent from top to bottom. This opened the way for everyone to enter into the Holiest of All, and to make petitions directly to God, instead of having a priest pray for

them.

Besides, at death, Christ became our High Priest, bearing His Own Blood before God for our sins. When we pray to God, we pray in Jesus' name, and ask that the Blood He shed be applied to our hearts.

It is really surprising that the Blood shed more than 2000 years ago is still efficacious today, and it is potent to heal the sick who believes.

When Jesus died, He went into Hades and held captivity captive, thereby conquering death, grave and hell. That is why the Bible asks:

“O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” (I

Corinthians 15:55).

The Christian can now go to the grave with victory. Jesus Christ became the Firstfruits of resurrection, the Signpost that dead Christians will resurrect when the Archangel eventually blows the trumpet.

Jesus is sufficient for anyone who will give his heart to Him. He will provide and supply every need such that we will not need to trust in frail, changeable man. Christ is alive forever, standing firmly with us to the end!

The earthly glories that were created by the suffering and death of Jesus are mere shadows of the Glory awaiting the Christians who eventually make the Rapture. John the Beloved said:

“It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3:2).

As you ponder the pains and agony Jesus went through, you may make Jesus happy by turning your heart over to Him. This act will bring to your heart the glories associated with Easter. Jesus will be pleased and there will be joy among the angels in Heaven. You can then expect to share in the First Resurrection - the resurrection of the just.



...I go to prepare a place for you

Dead, Yet Speaketh

THE BLESSINGS OF THE GOSPEL

Samson E. Ekanem

The Gospel means good tidings, good news. The good news was brought by our Lord Jesus Christ. The Gospel is a living entity, the Gospel is a changeless Gospel; and the changeless Gospel changes lives. The Gospel is wonderful. Everything may change in this world but the Gospel will remain forever.

“But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away:

“How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious?

“For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory.

“For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious” (2 Corinthians 3:7-9,11).

There are so many reasons why the old dispensation gave way to the new. Even though the old dispensation was glorious, it was the dispensation of death and condemnation. ‘Do or die’ was the ethics of the old dispensation. The Law was so strict that it took faith before the Children of Israel could observe it. Without faith, it was impossible for the Children of Israel to keep the Law. If a child was rebellious and disobedient to his parents, such a child would be taken out of the camp and stoned to death.

Under the new dispensation, the ethics is ‘look and live.’ Even though it is just ‘look and live,’ faith must be exercised. Without faith no one can receive any blessing from God. Before we can receive anything from God, the faith of the old time must be practised today. Without faith, we cannot please God. When we believe God and are saved from our lives of sin, the fear of death is removed from us. At sanctification, we have a holy and pure heart.

Why should a saved soul fear death? A saved soul should not fear death because he knows that death is the chariot that transports one to Heaven. The old dispensation was glorious but the new dispensation is more glorious. The Law was written with the finger of God on the Tables of Stone, but today, in the new dispensation, when one is saved and sanctified, the Word of God is written in his heart. It is our aspiration that the Word of God be written in our own hearts. It should be through your desire; God cannot force you. God will not write His Word by force in anybody’s heart. But when you have a zeal, a desire for it, and you are saved, and sanctified, that is the time God writes His Word in your heart. This is a blessing of the Gospel.

“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful” (Psalm 1:1).

The man with the Word of God written in his heart is a happy man. His happiness is neither a matter of riches nor poverty, knowledge nor ignorance. That is the blessing of the Gospel. When the Word of God is written in your heart, no matter the place you go, the Word of God will go with you. Even if you are in a place where there is no teacher or preacher, the Word of God will lead, safeguard, keep, help and protect you.

In the old dispensation, the Israelites were commanded to bring animals to the Tabernacle for sacrifice. Today, we come to worship

God without bringing animals, because Jesus Christ is our sacrifice; He sacrificed Himself for our sins. This is a blessing of the Gospel.

The Bible explains the simplicity of the Gospel. Jesus is the Essence and Foundation of the Gospel. He laid down His life and made it very simple for us to worship God. The Bible says, **“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.”** When we come to worship God, He doesn’t demand bullocks or goats, but a contrite spirit.

The Gospel provides sufficient blessings for whosoever wants, but God will not force you to take them. If God would force someone to be a Christian, the whole world would have become Christians, because our God is powerful. But He wants your own freewill decision. If you want to be a Christian, obey His commandments and do what He requires. Then you will receive the blessings of God. People will know that you are a Christian, because they will see the bright and shining light in you.

The Bible says that you are the epistle written by our Lord Jesus Christ, not with ink, nor on the Tables of Stone, as the Ten Commandments, but written by the Spirit of God (2 Corinthians 3:2). Your life must be an open book for people to read, and through you, many people will be saved. That is the reason why Jesus is still keeping you alive and has not taken you to Heaven. We have not seen Jesus with our naked eyes, but we see Him in the life of a child of God. Let your light shine before men. Jesus Who saved you has made you a light, an epistle, and an open book to the world, so that people will read and understand the Gospel.

In the Old Testament, people were bound to keep the Law. But they longed for deliverance. The Gospel is far better than the Law and its ceremonies. The Apostle wrote that we should stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free. This is a warning to you. Stand fast if you have been delivered from the bondage of sin, from sacrificing to idols and from the vanities of the world. It is the Gospel that delivers from all troubles and bondage. If you have been delivered from the things of the world by the Gospel, don’t go back, stand fast – that is the way to Heaven. Stand for it. See the blessings of God and be a partaker of the Gospel.

The Scriptures say that our light affliction is for a moment but it works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. This is another blessing of the Gospel. The affliction, which a Christian has, is a great blessing to him because it brings him closer to God. The wicked people in the world are also afflicted but their

afflictions have no benefits. When they have afflictions, they may not turn to God.

The way of the Gospel is not just a flowery bed of ease. When we are saved, sanctified and baptised with the Holy Ghost and fire, it does not mean we will not be afflicted, but the affliction will be for a purpose, a blessing. The afflictions may be disappointment, persecution, grief, sorrow, or accident. All these are afflictions, but God has a purpose for them.

Paul was definite about what he received from God and preached. He preached the Word of God with certainty. Paul established the Church in Galatia, and he preached the sound doctrine. The Gospel which Paul loved, is the same Gospel that you and I love. The Gospel that he preached is the sound Gospel that we preach today. When he was away, some Judaisers came to establish a new doctrine different from what Paul preached.

There are many churches around us today, but we thank God for the Gospel of Jesus Christ which is the sound and wonderful Gospel given to the world.

In these churches, where a large crowd of people worship, there are no mourner’s benches where sinners could go and pray. You can’t hear preaching on sanctification, (without which no man will see God) or on the baptism of the Holy Ghost, as Jesus taught. When Paul visited the Galatians again, he saw the people embracing unsound doctrine. That was why he spoke with certainty: ‘I marvel that ye are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel which is not another but there be some that trouble you and will pervert the Gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed’ (Galatians 1:6-8). We preach a wonderful Gospel.

The Bible has not changed: holiness is still holiness, righteousness is still righteousness. That is the sound doctrine. It is the way to Heaven.

The Gospel offers peace. There is no peace in the world, in wealth, or education, but in the Gospel there is peace. The Gospel offers happiness, which money cannot buy. If you are in trouble and sorrow, and you embrace the Gospel, happiness, joy and peace will be yours. The Gospel offers healing. Many who are sick have been healed. The Gospel offers protection. Many people have looked for protection here and there and could not find it, except in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The money, education or wealth they have cannot earn them respect, but the children of God are the only people in the world who earn true respect because they embrace the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Most of all, the Gospel offers us Eternal Life. There is unity in the Gospel. When we gather together and remain in harmony, no matter where we come from, there is unity. If you are alone and you embrace the Gospel, you are no more alone. When you have a problem, other brethren share it with you. If you miss the Gospel, you miss everything - honour, respect, and peace.

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

“As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

“Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

“For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

“Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:35-39).

Is there anything that can separate you from the love of God? I don’t think there should be, because the blessings of the Gospel are wonderful.

“And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

“They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover” (Mark 16:17, 18).

Jesus Christ the Son of God, Who founded the Gospel, mentioned some of the blessings when He sent His disciples out. The theme of the message that Jesus gave His disciples was, *“Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”* He sent His disciples to go and preach the Gospel to every creature, whether young or old, learned or unlearned. Whosoever believes and is baptised shall be saved, and he that believes not shall be damned.

The capstone of the blessings of the Gospel is the hope of Resurrection. Children of God have the hope of Eternal Life, the hope of the First Resurrection. (2 Corinthians 4:13,14). We live in the world where we have tribulations, suffer sicknesses and all sorts of afflictions, problems, persecution and accidents, but only the physical body is subject to all these. However, a time is coming when there will be a great change. God is going to change us! This mortal body that feels pain, sickness, accident, tribulations or affliction of any kind, will be changed in the twinkling of an eye, when the trumpet sounds. (1 Corinthians 15:54). This is a wonderful blessing of the Gospel.

Man has been given the freedom to choose between good and evil. Choose for yourself today, either to believe the Gospel and be blessed, or reject the Gospel and be damned. Danger is coming. Eternal death is coming. Embrace the Gospel of Jesus Christ today!

Rev. Samson Etuk Ekanem was the District Overseer of the Gospel work in Akwa Ibom/Cross River, Oyo/Osun, Imo/Abia States of Nigeria at different periods between 1969 and 1995. He was also a member of the Board of Trustees of The Apostolic Faith work in Nigeria. Rev. Ekanem was called Home on September 17, 1995.

RIVERS DISTRICT



The foundation of the magnificent edifice was laid in Port Harcourt on Monday, April 5, 1999. The dedication came up on Saturday, December 1, 2007.

OGUN DISTRICT

A youth forum was held at Ilisan, Remo, to encourage the young ones. Three of the youngsters prayed through to the three Christian experiences.

In the month of January, available records showed that 32 people were saved, 14 sanctified, 5 baptised with the Holy Ghost and fire, and 7 healed.

IKOT ENWANG DISTRICT

A camp meeting was held at Ikot Enwang, Akwa Ibom State, from December 16 to 30, 2007. The

peak attendance was 5,894, it was recorded that 213 people were saved, 133 sanctified, 66 baptised with the Holy Ghost and fire and 503 healed of different diseases.

A sister was grateful to God that though a poisonous snake bit her daughter, through the prayers of the ministers of God, the venom did her no harm.

ANAMBRA DISTRICT

God recently visited our work in Anambra District with miracles of healing. A woman who bled for seven months during pregnancy was safely delivered of a healthy baby. Another sister who carried her pregnancy for one year and ten months was graciously delivered by God of a baby girl.

COTE D'IVOIRE

The Africa Overseer, Rev. Paul Akazue, in the company of Brothers Kayode Ajiboye, Dotun Ewumi and Soga Tifase, visited Cote D'Ivoire from February 20 to March 1, 2008, for their camp meeting. There was a mighty revival and joy among the saints.

What Will You Do with Jesus?

(Continued from Page1)

tried in the court of this world and found condemned before man and the law. He too had no scruples about the position of the law. He accepted whole-heartedly that the only thing fit for him was to be humiliated, even in death.

But somehow along the line, he listened to his inner self. Led by the Spirit of God, he had conviction, contrition, confession and conversion.

It is apt to consider that by this time of Jesus' agony, Peter's faith had fallen, John had given up, and Mary had a sword piercing her heart. Jesus was at the mercy of the Scribes and Pharisees who kept taunting Him. He was disowned and rejected by the whole wide world.

No one at that time, that we know, spoke for Christ. Much was contained in the simple but brief prayer of the penitent thief. Even when everybody in the world disbelieved Jesus, he turned His way and said, "Lord!"

Who was he speaking to? The crucified Man next to him on the Cross.

"Lord," he said, "Remember me when thou comest unto thy Kingdom," that is to say: "This crucified Man next to me is a King, and if He remembers me, it shall be well with me."

No wonder the Bible enjoins:

"If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:8, 9).

Although the world, including the disciples, was in absolute

unmitigated darkness, this wretched criminal shone brightly before the mercy seat.

Jesus, though, writhing in pains could not resist this "prodigal." He turned his way and said:

"Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43).

That man came to the cross a "good-for-nothing," but there and then, he pleaded his way into the Kingdom of God.

This season is another opportunity for you to decide what you will do with Jesus. Be assured, Christ still receives sinful men! His arms of love are so large that no matter how deep your feet might have gone in the mire of sin, He is merciful enough to draw you out.

When God forgives, He forgets. No wonder a condemned man yesterday could become a child of God today. Sure, it is possible, only that you have a role to play:

- ? Acknowledge you are a sinner
- ? Confess and renounce your sins
- ? Plead the Blood of Jesus to cleanse your heart
- ? Purpose to serve God till the end

You will be surprised how easy it is to change Masters. Your status will change at the speed of light - from an outcast to that of a heir. Your song too would become:

*Mercy there was great, and grace was free;
Pardon there was multiplied to me;
There my burdened soul found liberty,
At Calvary.*

From Cross Bearing To Soul Winning

Rev. Phillip Oludayo Olufowote, who crossed to the realms beyond recently, was an evangelist to the core. He embraced the Gospel in 1952. Before that time, he was a Cross Bearer in a white garment church.

An interaction between him and a child of God, Brother Thomas Oluyole, then of Ijebu Igbo, changed his outlook on life. Oluyole had in his possession, a tinder box, for which Olufowote developed a liking. He got closer and declared his love for the box, asking if it could be given him. The response he got stunned him. "Would you partake in my sin?" At first, Olufowote could not understand. Step by step, he was told how the planks used to make the box were stolen, and the plans being made to make restitution to the owner. The interaction, rather than scare him, eventually won the heart of this young man.

Later, he was invited to The Apostolic Faith Church. He not only came, he saw, and believed unto salvation. A year later, he was sanctified and filled with the Holy Ghost. That was the turning point in his life.

He became a lover of Bible teaching. The Sunday School classes impressed him greatly. Shortly after his salvation, he, on his own, started assisting in the collection of hymn books after each service. He eventually became, an usher four years later. Five years after this, he became a Sunday School teacher. He became the Secretary to the Board of Trustees in 1965.

Although quiet and unassuming, Rev. Olufowote's love and zeal for the propagation of the Gospel was well known. You would always see his sunny side during the evangelistic and revival services, his visage beaming bright each time a soul was saved. He

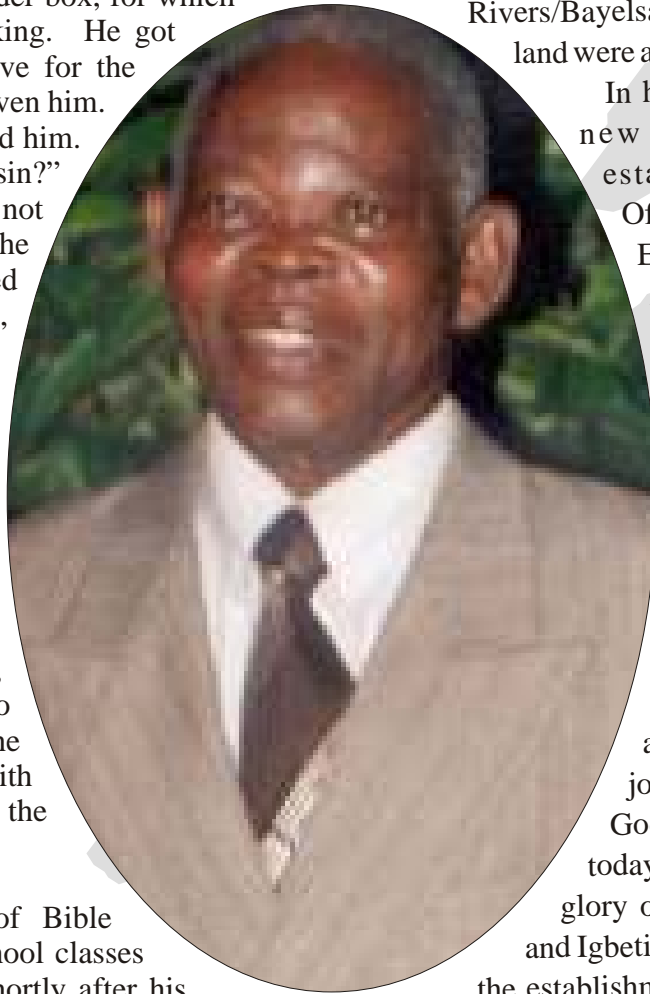
was on Reverend Timothy Oshokoya's Gospel team that visited Kano in 1961 and Ghana in 1967.

Rev. Olufowote believed strongly in church planting, ensuring that new Churches were established within his area of jurisdiction. During his tenure as Overseer of Rivers/Bayelsa District, additional plots of land were acquired in 1983 and 1985.

In his days in Edo/Delta District, new branch churches were established in Ikpoba Hill, Ofounegebe, Oka III, Ologbo, Ewvehia, Ohe-Isi, Ekhiador, Abudu, Agenebode, Ekpoma and Ughelli. The construction of the church in Ilorin was accelerated during his sojourn in Kwara/Kogi District.

The Oke Ogun Area of Oyo/Osun District cannot forget Brother Olufowote in a hurry. He was their apostle, and he dutifully approached the job with all the energy in him. God honoured his labour and today, Churches are standing to the glory of God in Iseyin, Saki, Igboho and Igbeti. The same drive brought about the establishment of churches in Osun State including Ijebu Jesa, Osu, Imesi-Ile, Esa-Oke, Ibokun and Erin-Oke.

Brother Olufowote was a deeply consecrated man, a man of faith and a prayer warrior. Until his death, he kept praying for the expansion of the Kingdom of God in Africa. Even when his health was failing, he kept praying until he breathed his last. On Friday, December 21, 2007, at the age of 81, he went to be with his Saviour, Whom he loved dearly.



Jesus, The Giver of Life

As we commemorate Easter, it is needful for us to ruminare on the fact that Jesus Christ is the Giver of Life.

Christ is the Source of Life. Eternal Life can be had only through Him. “He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life” (1 John 5:12). Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6).

Jesus told Martha, “I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live” (John 11:25). As a proof of His resurrection power, He called Lazarus out of the grave. In John 5, the Jews were angry because Jesus had healed an impotent man on the Sabbath, but Jesus never hesitated to tell them that they were sinners. They claimed to be strict followers of God, but Jesus told them: “Ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not.” We see again that being a Christian means more than believing in God. We must have the Word (which is Jesus) abiding in us. The Jews, to whom Jesus was talking at this time, thought they were ready for Heaven. They even thought that they were living according to the Scriptures. But Jesus told them to look a little more carefully: “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have Eternal Life” (John 5:39). The Jews had missed something – Eternal Life.

Eternal Life is fellowship with God: “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou has sent” (John 17:3). In order to know God, one must be born again. Eternal Life is freedom from sin and condemnation: “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law



of sin and death” (Romans 8:1,2). Freedom from condemnation is obtained through belief in the Son of God. “He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God” (John 3:18).

Eternal Life means more than eternal existence. All mankind will exist eternally because man has an undying soul. “And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt” (Daniel 12:2). “And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever” (Revelation 14:11).

Jesus Christ is the Author of both the physical and spiritual resurrections. The spiritual resurrection: Anyone who is in sin is dead - separated from God. When he is saved from sin, he becomes spiritually alive. “The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live” (John 5:25).

A future physical resurrection is coming. “The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation” (John 5:28, 29).

Paul tells us that every man shall come forth “in his own order” (1 Corinthians 15:23). The dead in Christ shall rise first at His coming (1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17). Dead sinners shall not be raised until after the millennium (Revelation 20:5). Then, they shall be judged and cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:11-15). But Jesus, the Giver of Life, delivers from the lake of fire. Why don't you come to Him today for your deliverance? Tomorrow may be too late!