



# Refreshing Times

ACTS 3 : 19

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A person with a backpack is standing on a hillside, looking out over a valley at sunset. The person is in silhouette, wearing a dark jacket and pants, with a large backpack. The background shows rolling hills and a clear sky with a warm, golden light from the setting sun.

# Having done all to stand

Article by Tinashe Mlambo

The Apostle Paul concludes the epistle to the church at Ephesus with a very important final instruction: “*Therefore take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand*” (Ephesians 6:13). This instruction is as true today as it was on the day it was written. After you have done everything you are supposed to do, after you have faced whatever you are facing, whether its a trial, temptation or trouble – you must remain standing!

We have different situations, we face unique, diverse & sometimes challenging circumstances, yet in all of them, no matter what the world or the enemy throws at us, we are reminded that after facing them, we have to remain standing because we can. We have it within ourselves to stand and not to give up or give in to overwhelming circumstances. Life can be very challenging. We live in a dark world, which can be as unbearable, unjust and unfair, so sometimes when believers don’t understand who they are and what they have in Christ they can spiral into depression. It is possible for some to consider suicide as the ‘only way out’ or to take the ‘easier route’ out by going with the crowd or popular opinion.

What is important to understand from Ephesians 6:13 is that there is what the Scripture calls ‘the evil day.’ Probably you have faced such a day, it could have been an unforgettable event, an unfortunate incident or a troublesome season, which was in all material aspects ‘evil.’ You could be in it right now, a condition you are battling with in your body, or a situation in your family, children, career or business. Maybe you lead a ministry which instead of growing, is declining or is facing a season of stagnancy which seems unending. An evil day just means any situation which isn’t in line with the Word of God. Whatever it is, after you have done what God wants you to do according to His Word, you must stand! So, what does it actually mean to stand? It means:

## •To Stand Firm

We are to remain strong, unmovable, and unshaken. “*So then, my beloved brethren, be firm, unmovable, abounding always in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord*” (1 Cor 16:58). We have to stand our ground, because we know that whatever we do in response to God’s Word is never in vain. Whatever you have set your heart and hands to do, do it with all your heart as unto the Lord. Whatever you desire and believe God for, remain strong, unmovable and unshaken. It shall come to pass.

The evil day is not from God, it is not of God, neither does it come with His permission or sanction. That day must be resisted through the Word of God. Never think God is behind the ‘evil day’ to teach you a lesson. God’s lessons are in His Word and not your circumstances. God is not the author of confusion or anything disorderly. If its evil, its not God!

### •To Stand Fast

We are to remain standing for long, for in due season we shall reap if we don't faint. This good fight is a fight to the very end. Consistently the Word of God tells us that the same thing we are told in Galatians 6:9 *"And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season, we shall reap, if we faint not."* Your reaping is dependent on your not fainting. You have to stand fast and stand for long. If you are believing God for a miracle, I want you to understand that there is a reason why severally in the Scriptures we are told how long a situation had persisted - a certain man, Aeneas had been paralysed 8 years, (Acts 9:33) the woman with issue of blood, had spent 12 years (Luke 8:43), the invalid man at the pool of Bethesda had spent 38 years (John 5:5), the crippled man at the gate Beautiful, had spent 40 years (Acts 4:22).

The Word of God is simply telling us, if you stand fast and remain standing, you will reap as long as you don't faint. How long the condition has persisted doesn't mean it can't change. Those years aren't thrown in as 'numbers,' they are to tell you there is no situation long enough that can resist the Word of God. The Word of God will come to pass, after you have done all, stand!

### •Stand in Faith

Lastly, 'to stand' means not only to stand firm and strong; or stand fast and long, but it also means to stand in the faith. The Apostle Peter writing to the dispersed believers says, "Withstand him (the devil), steadfast in the faith; knowing that your brethren in other parts of the world are passing through just the same experiences." (1 Pet 5:9). We are not encouraged to simply be stubborn; we are to remain "steadfast in the faith." Any resistance not based on faith is foolhardy. We don't simply rely on logic, or common sense when responding to our circumstances, to false doctrine or to issues like same-sex marriage. We resist them, steadfast in the faith! We use the Word of God; and nothing else. God's Word is the final authority.

Should you face or be facing an evil day, after you have done everything else, after you have done all, to stand. Stand Firm, Stand Fast and Stand in the Faith!



# THE GREAT MYSTREY

Article by Elton Tofa

From eternity past God had a mystery that was hidden from all creation. None of His creation knew about this mystery for it was concealed within God Himself. Everything that God did from the act of creation was preparing his creation for the unveiling of this mystery, as it was to be revealed in its own time. In these last days, God has unveiled that great secret to us.

The Apostle Paul speaks of this, saying, The mystery which has been hidden from the ages and from generations, but now was revealed to His saints. To whom God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the nations, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory; (Col 1:26-27)

What is that mystery? The mystery is CHRIST IN YOU THE HOPE OF GLORY. All that Christ did on the cross was to make men the dwelling place of God. It is a wonder to all the angels and all creation that the Almighty God who created heaven and earth chose to live in men. These are things even angels desire to look into. The Apostle Peter says: To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to you they were ministering these things, which things were now announced to you by those who proclaimed the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven--things which angels desire to look into. (1Pe 1:12)

All that we are called to be and to do will only be achieved when the Sons of God begin to understand that God dwells in them, Christ dwells in them and the Holy Spirit dwells in them. This is a mystery that is a wonder to all creation that God has chosen to live in men. It baffled the Apostle Paul that the Corinthian church had not yet grasped this truth. He said; Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? (1Co 3:16)

God lives in us. We are His temple. Throughout history, magnificent buildings and temples have been built for God yet God was not pleased to dwell in them. Solomon built a beautiful temple made of gold and precious stones. In all this Solomon understood that no temple on earth could contain God. He said: But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded? (1Ki 8:27).

It is for this reason Paul said: God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; (Act 17:24). God has prepared Himself a living temple and it is in His people. God Himself testified: And what union is there for the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God, just as God has said: "I will dwell in them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people." (2Co 6:16).

God is no longer a visitor nor are we visitors for He dwells in us and we in Him. Christ in us is the evidence of the great love He has for us. This is why the Lord Jesus prayed, I in them, and You in Me; so that they may be perfected in unity, and so that the world may know that You have sent Me, and You loved them just as You loved Me. (Joh 17:23).

In us who believe, Christ Jesus has finally found a resting place. At one point He had nowhere to lay down His head. And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head." (Luke 9:58). In us He has finally found a place to lay down His head.

That is why the end of the age will be summed up with this true saying: And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them. (Rev 21:3)

# BEARING THE NAME OF THE LORD

Article by Taguma Nyanga

In some parts of the world bearing the name of the Lord and professing Christ publicly attracts persecution, jail time and in worst case scenario even death. Simultaneously in other places children of God enjoy freedom of worship and some people even have the audacity to casually identify with the name of the Lord even if they have not known Him. The object of this article is not to curtail the freedom you were called to but to highlight the huge responsibility which you have as a bearer of the name of the Lord.

“For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but serve one another through love.” Galatians 5:13

The significance and gravity of bearing that name is such that when you err, people see beyond you, and it brings blemish & reproach to the name of the Lord. When you bear the name of the Lord, the world starts reading the story of your life as if they are reading the story of Christ. They stop to look at the servant and gaze on the master.

## WE BEAR HIS NAME



“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:” John 1:12

When we came to Christ, He gave us a name! When we believed and received Him, we were given a name - Children of God. Even today, men and women transitioning from light to darkness are accorded this right and special privilege to be called Children of God. We did not earn this privilege, to be called Children of God, but it was bestowed on us by the virtue of God’s love. In fact, God calling us His children is a demonstration of His amazing love towards humanity.

“Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore, the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.” 1 John 3:1

So, how is this a privilege? It is a privilege because it gives us access to an inheritance divine. An inheritance which is beyond everyone who does not bear that name. No matter how best you live this life, without that name you cannot access the divine inheritance. This privilege has made us joint heirs with Christ.

“and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.” Romans 8:17

We have a responsibility to represent His name well

Being called a child of God is such a badge of honour and those who carry this badge around must be cognisant of the associated responsibilities. Royalty is an honour yet those who come from a royal family do not lose sight of the fact that whatever they do reflects on the royal family.

Nevertheless, the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: “The Lord knows those who are His,” and, “Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.” 2 Timothy 2:19

Endearing yourself to evil and to the world undermines the beautiful name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are called to reflect Christ to the lost world. The world must see the goodness of the Lord in us and through us. Our lives must be a testimony enough to persuade and convict someone to believe and receive Jesus Christ. The name “Christians” was first used to identify those who were bearing the name of Christ, and they were bearing it well. They were like Christ, and they did not bring His name into disrepute. We have an ambassadorial role here on earth.

You are the only Bible some members of the society will ever read.

“Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God.” 2 Corinthians 5:20

As ambassadors of Christ, God is speaking to the lost world through us. We have become agents of reconciliation as we carry the reconciliation message not only through the words, we speak but also through how we live our lives. Except by some revelation, the world understands and pictures Christ in the context of how we carry ourselves and go about with our lives. The words of our Lord Jesus resonates:

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” Matthew 5:16

You are a letter, tell the story of Christ!

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