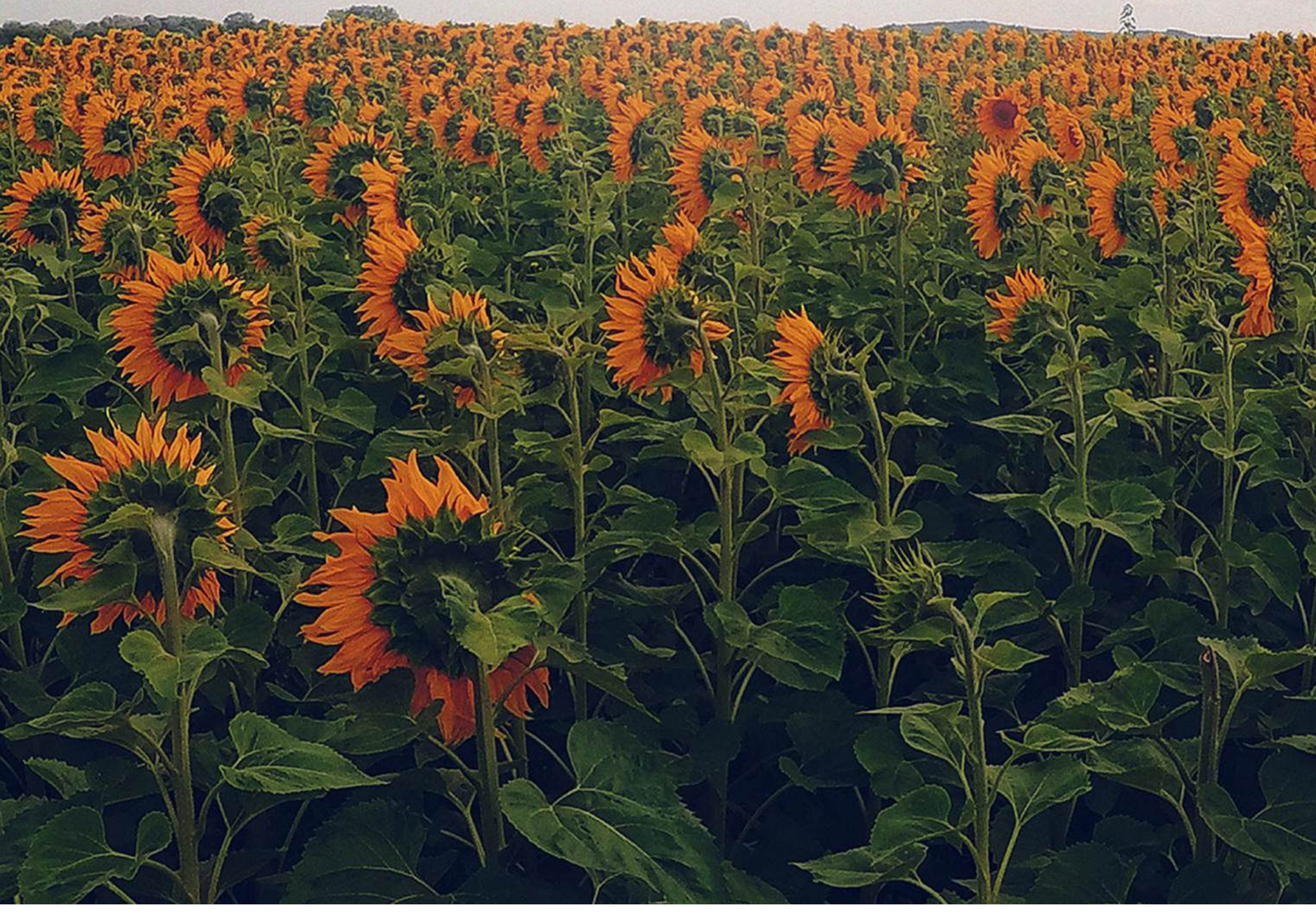




# Refreshing Times

ACTS 3 : 19

JULY-DECEMBER 2024 EDITION







# THE PREACHING OF THE CROSS

Article by Elton Tofa

**FOR THE PREACHING OF THE CROSS IS FOOLISHNESS TO THOSE BEING LOST,  
BUT TO US BEING SAVED, IT IS THE POWER OF GOD. (1CO 1:18)**

## **The Power of Preaching**

We have been entrusted with the glorious gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. When He rose from the dead, He gave us the Great Commission to go into all the world and preach the gospel (Matthew 28:19-20). Before He gave this commission, He said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me; go ye therefore..." (Matthew 28:18). This means our "going" is backed by the authority given to Him in heaven and on earth, underscoring the immense weight that the preaching of the cross carries. No wonder the Apostle Paul declared, "Woe unto me if I preach not the gospel" (1 Corinthians 9:16). It would be a great travesty of justice to withhold from the sinner that which has the power to save him. The gospel is indeed "the power of God unto salvation" (Romans 1:16) and has been committed to our trust. We are stewards entrusted with this gospel, and it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful (1 Corinthians 4:2). The Spirit was given to make us witnesses (Acts 1:8). Therefore, we must go, and we will go. This is why Paul states that we become "all things to all men" so that we may win some (1 Corinthians 9:22).

The lepers in the scripture understood it was wrong to withhold the "good news" about the food they discovered (2 Kings 7:9). How much more should we, who possess the gospel, share this good news? We are not ashamed of the gospel because it is the power of God unto salvation. Let us go into the highways and compel them to come (Luke 14:23). To preach is to share this message. Let us utilise every available platform to proclaim this good news.



## The Message

Not only are we called to preach, but we also have a clear message and mandate. Paul refers to it as "the preaching of the cross" (1 Corinthians 1:18). This makes the preaching of the cross the focus, theme, and epicentre of our message. The finished work of Calvary is central and should be afforded the prominence it deserves. That is why Paul asserts, "We do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord" (2 Corinthians 4:5). When he came among them, he desired to know nothing except "Christ Jesus and Him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:2). When the Galatian church wandered from this message, Paul rebuked them, reminding them how he had vividly portrayed Christ as being crucified among them (Galatians 3:1). Our message should compel people to see Christ crucified.

## The Foolishness of the Message to Some

Of all that God could have used to save men, in His wisdom, He chose the foolishness of preaching (1 Corinthians 1:21) to save those who believe. To those seeking high and lofty things, this message becomes a stumbling block. To those who pursue the wisdom of this world, it appears as foolishness. Jesus was crucified between two thieves: the one on the left mocked Him, viewing the crucified Christ as foolishness, while the one on the right saw the power of God and was saved (Luke 23:39-43). It pleased God through the foolishness of preaching to save those who believe (1 Corinthians 1:21).

### The Power of the Message

To us who believe, the message of the cross is indeed the power of God (1 Corinthians 1:18). We should never doubt its efficacy. Christ crucified is a wonder and will forever remain the greatest marvel for all eternity. When we behold Christ crucified, we see love unveiled, grace demystified, righteousness revealed, and mercy demonstrated. May we never be silent; may we never hold our peace. Let us proclaim to the world that the King was crucified for us. The love of Christ compels us (2 Corinthians 5:14).





# EMPLOY THE WEAPON OF PROPHECY

Article by Frederick Moyo

It is clear from the writings of the Apostles that our walk of faith is a fight, our journey in this life is a battle, and our progress in this pilgrimage is a warfare.

*For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*

**Ephesians 6:12 KJV**

*(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)*

**2 Cor. 10:4 KJV**

*Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.*

**2 Timothy 2:3-4 KJV**

*I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:*

**2 Timothy 4:7 KJV**



Although the struggle is real, we must be aware of two things:  
We fight from a position of victory. Christ has overcome the world for us, therefore we are already victors.  
We do not fight to win but we fight because we have won.

*These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.*

**John 16:33 KJV**

*But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

**1 Corinthians 15:57 KJV**

We have been endowed with mighty weapons of warfare, an arsenal of tools that we can use to maintain and realise the victory that we have. The amour of God (Ephesians 6:13-17), prayer (Ephesians 6:18), praise (Psalm 8:2, Matthew 21:16), acts of kindness (Romans 12:19-21), and the gifts of the Spirit are some of the tools God has given us. These are tools, not toys. We must of necessity employ them in every facet of our lives in the battle that rages on against the devil, his cohorts, the world, and the flesh.

One of these precious tools that we have been given to fight with is prophecy. Paul instructs Timothy to use prophecy as a weapon or tool to fight with.

*This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare;*

**1 Timothy 1:18 KJV**

The prophecy of the scriptures, which are more reliable than any other spectacular signs or manifestations, are what we should rely on and use as the body of Christ to fight a good warfare.

*We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*

**2 Peter 1:19-21 KJV**

Bring to your remembrance the great prophecies spoken by the holy men of old and you will be revived. Recall the promises of God, which are Yes and Amen in Christ Jesus (2 Corinthians 1:20), and your bowels will surely be refreshed.

*Do not despise prophecies (1 Thessalonians 5:20 NKJV). Prophecies are like fire ignited by the Spirit that burns persistently, giving comfort, warmth, light, heat, energy, zeal and the ability to consume all sorts of chaff. Do not put out the Spirit's fire (1 Thessalonians 5:20 ISV).*

The scriptures are prophetic. They carry the weight of God's voice. Whatever God has spoken will surely come to pass. His promises and decrees are reliable. We would do well to take heed of them.

Not only should we be mindful of the prophecy of the scriptures but we should know that they were given to us so that we may speak boldly and proclaim them as we navigate through this life.

*Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.*

**Hebrews 13:5-6 KJV**

EMPLOY THE WEAPON OF  
**PROPHECY**





# GOOD NEWS OF GREAT JOY

Article by Tinashe Mlambo

*But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people.” Luke 2:10*

One night an angel of the Lord appeared to some country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. The angel delivered to them news of such eternal significance, that many prophets and kings of old had wanted to hear, but they could not (Luke 10:24). Moreso, these same prophets for a very long time had inquired & searched diligently, seeking to know what Person or time the Spirit of Christ within them did signify, when He testified beforehand concerning our salvation & the grace that was to come (1 Pet 1:10). The news was of such eternal significance to the extent that there weren't just as many prophets and kings who looked to hear them, even the whole host of angels were longing to look into them. So incredulous and incredible was the news, that the angel of the Lord could only say “I bring you Good News of Great Joy.” Even that same angel couldn't contain the joy!

So, it's worth understanding the full import and importance of such news, wrapped in this manner of greeting 'good news of great joy': How 'Good' was this good news? And What 'Great' joy was there in such good news?





### How Good was this Good News?

*The good news was so good that it pertained to the arrival of a Divine Person – a “Saviour, who is Christ the Lord.” (Luke 2:11)* This was an announcement of the Second Man and the Last Adam. This was the announcement of the arrival of the federal Head of a completely new race which God was going to create. A creation like no other, which hadn’t existed before. In the birth of the Lord, we had all the prophecies in the Old Testament fulfilled in one divine birth. That night when the Lord Jesus was born, all + 500 verses in the Old Testament that pointed to, described or referenced the coming Saviour, were fulfilled. That’s how good that night was. There has never been a night like it – from a multitude of the heavenly host appearing in one night, to an extraordinary celestial event of a star appearing in the East.

How good was this good news? It was good news because it was good news of God, from God, about God. The good news was good, not just because there was bad news, but because it was news of God, from God, about God. Everything that God ever wanted to do in mankind, which is to conform man to the image of His Son, became possible when the Lord Jesus was born. The birth was a sign & seal of victory in history – for throughout Old Testament history the devil had, time after time, year after year, people after people, kingdom after kingdom, and nation after nation tried to destroy the bloodline of the coming Saviour and had failed.

When we celebrate the virgin birth of Christ – we celebrate a Miracle, a Mystery, a Man and a Messiah like no other, neither can there ever be any like such. Whether you do this once a year through tradition or every single day. Like the host of angels who praised God when the Lord Jesus was born, we must, of necessity every day or any day, Christmas day or not, say:

*“Glory to God in the Highest*

*And on earth peace, goodwill toward men”*

The birth of the Lord Jesus brought Glory to God and Goodwill toward Men – that’s why that night will forever be special! Goodwill toward Men is Good News.

### What Great Joy was in this Good News?

Secondly, while all good news brings some joy, because the news is ‘good.’ This good news would bring great joy because of what it stood for, which is this: that this good news *“will be for all the people”* (Luke 2:10). Not just for a single chosen nation out of many, but even to those who were not a people will become a people. This good news would bring great joy to anyone who heard it & understood it, because the coming of a Saviour meant salvation to everyone who had ever lived, from the first man created to the last man who will be born at the end of the ages. The coming of our Saviour, Lord Jesus, would give every single person who had ever lived, an equal & equitable chance at salvation. Finally, salvation was possible for everyone, great & small, far & near, young & old!

Such was the culmination of the arrival of Christ, that a certain old man, Simeon the aged, had lived for so long waiting for the consolation of Israel could only say, *“Let your servant depart in peace, for my eyes have seen Your Salvation” (Luke 2:29-30).* The sight of a young Baby was enough to fill an old man’s peace and fulfil the promise of a delayed death after years of waiting. The sight of the Lord was ‘seeing His Salvation’ and that joy of salvation was great. While He came into the world that eventful night, the world knew Him not. He came to His own and His own could not receive Him – He was numbered among animals in a manger. Holy, yet Humble in both birth & death!

Today we stand acquitted, royal, righteous & redeemed! We stand as creatures new, children of God, the church of the First Born, because God became flesh, was born, died and was raised again so that flesh can become the offspring of God. Its Good News of Great Joy, just as it was yesterday, it will be today, tomorrow, forever.



### Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year

*From our hearts to yours, we wish you a merry Christmas. The miracle of Christmas is the mystery of godliness... that God became flesh! The Only Man born to die: May you remember His birth, because of what His death meant: our complete & eternal salvation.*

*And because of Christ, you will have a Prosperous & Happy 2025!*





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[INFO@REFRESHINGTIMES.ORG](mailto:INFO@REFRESHINGTIMES.ORG)