

A MESSAGE DELIVERED AT THE AGLOW NIGERIA INTERNATIONAL LEADERS RETREAT 2022 HELD VIA ZOOM BY HON JUSTICE CATHERINE OGUNSANYA

WORSHIPING GOD WITH YOUR SUBSTANCE

I thank our National Leaders especially our National President Mummy Bisi Adeluyi for the opportunity afforded me to minister at this Retreat.

The Theme for Aglow Nigeria International for the year 2022 is RESTORATION and I perceive in my spirit that one of the areas our good Lord is determined to restore us is in the area of our finances and generally with everything he has blessed us with.

By way of a preamble there are certain facts that cannot be controverted about the nature of the God we serve.

1. He does not need our money, for he is the owner of everything on earth for the scripture says *"The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof"* Psalm 24:1, Psalm 50:10 make us to understand that *"every animal of the forest is mine (God's), and the cattle on a thousand hills."* Haggai 2:8 says the silver is mine and the gold is mine declares the Lord of hosts. See also Deuteronomy 10:14 Psalm 89:11
2. God is not a glutton that eats just anything sacrificed or from everyone, not every substance/sacrifice is acceptable under him. The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to Him- Proverbs 15:8, Proverbs 21:7.

In 1 Sam Chapter 15, in disobedience Saul thought he was doing well in keeping the best of the sheep and cattle, fat calves and lamb and everything that was good believing he would sacrifice them to God when God told them to kill everything and everyone of the Amalekites.

The message of the Lord to Saul at the mouth of Samuel in 1 Sam 15:22 is this

"Does the Lord delight in burnt offering and sacrifices as much as in obeying the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice and to heed is better than the fact of rams.

God rejected Saul and his substance and animals of sacrifice.

3. It is God that gives power to get wealth Deuteronomy 8:18. 1 Sam 2:7 "The Lord makes poor and rich. He brings low, He also exalts.

Psalm 112:3 wealth and riches are in his home and his righteousness endureth forever.

Ecclesiastes 5:19 says God will give a man riches and wealth and empower him to eat of it and to receive his reward and rejoice in his labour. It is God's gift. It is not the work of any man, so no man dares boast of his resources.

Money is not evil; it is the love of it that is the root of all evil. 1Timothy 6:10

Having the aforesaid as a premise as to the nature, and character of God concerning wealth or substance, it is important that we understand that bottom-line in life it is all God and he alone is to be worshiped. The two key words in our discourse are "*Worship*" and "*Substance*"

The Merriam Webster's 2022 Online dictionary defines "*worship*" to include honour, or show reverence for a divine being or supernatural power" and the synonyms to the word worship include "*Adore*", "*adulate*", "*deify*", "*hero worship*", "*idolize*".

All of the above expose what the heart condition of a man should be when he gives his substance to his creator.

All of these words connote a complete reverence and devotion and total surrender to God with our substance.

The word "Substance" on the other is defined by the same Merriam Webster's 2022 online dictionary as "physical material from which something is made or which has discrete existence." It is also defined as "material possessions" and the synonyms to the word substance include "commodity", "entity", "existent" etc.

THE HEART CONDITION

Our God in every service to him is always interested in the heart condition of a man because he knows and he sees the heart. How you are and what you will become if he commits riches into your hands – Jeremiah 17:10 says God searches the intents and the purposes of the heart. 1 Sam 16:17 says God looks at the inside of a man not on the outside.

It is only ₦100,000.00 God helped you to make in profit and alas your husband, the pastor, the Fellowship is in trouble. That man's heart is not right in dealing with the manifold grace of God upon his life in that regard

In Genesis 18:19, God said he knew the heart of Father Abraham that he would teach his children even before he gave him kids.

God knew the heart of Our sister in Proverbs 31 that if he blesses her no one around her will lack.

What is in your heart when you give? Some give absentmindedly. At the time of offering do you pause and ask God or just pick the N100 that peeps through the zipper of your hand bag? (1) Is it my best? (2) Am I excited? (3) Are you looking at what others are giving?

Many believe God is not fair, they believe they are praying and serving God better than the other person. Who made you the judge? Psalm 75:7. It is God who lifts one up and pulls one down. God is not mocked, what a man sows he will reap. Gal 6:7. Always check your heart condition. It is not unholy to be financially blessed as long as it is God who has made it possible and he has made a way for you- Isaiah 43:19

Your heart condition when you give might determine how much substance God will commit into your hand in future.

The scripture says what do you have that it was not given to you by God- 1Cor 4:7.

The scripture also says by strength shall no man prevail-1 Sam 2:9

ATTITUDINAL ESSENTIALS

ATTITUDINAL WORSHIP

More often than not, our understanding of a thing determines our approach and attitude towards it. The bible says in the book of Hosea 4:6 that my people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. There is the general saying that when the importance of a thing is unknown, abuse is inevitable.

The need to have a strong grasp of the deep mystery behind worshipping God with our substance cannot be overemphasized, as it will make giving unto God and for the interest of His kingdom a great delight to our hearts.

For example, the book of Malachi 3:10-11 tells us the importance of worshiping God with our substance in the place of Tithing. When we worship God with our tithe, we are assured God will rebuke devourers for our sake and open unto us the windows of heaven. Not just that, the fruits of our ground shall not be destroyed neither shall our vine cast its fruit before the time in field. All nations shall call us blessed. I am aware there are lots of teachings flying around watering down the need to pay our tithes but be not deceived, it is our whole life God really demands- Romans 12:1.

A deep understanding of the blessings and reward available for us would be a motivation to worship God with our tithe without anybody needing to encourage us. With this understanding, it shall become so glaring to us that:

- (1) It is a privilege to give to God. Give in adoration, eagerness of heart and spirit, joyfully whether it is much or little, in affliction or in plenty. 2Corinthian 8:2, Mark 12:4.
- (2) Lay it at His feet (Humility) Acts 4:35 "Jesus feet"
Stop chasing what you have given around saying I don't even know what they are using our money for. You have not surrendered it in worship. While it is good for leaders to be accountable, let's know it is God we are in business with.
- (3) Complaining and grumbling – 2 Corinthian 9:6-7.
Don't give grudgingly.

MEASURE TO GIVE – 2 Corinthian 9:6-7

Sow sparingly and reap sparingly

Purpose and decide in your heart what to give- 2Corinthian 9:7, and it must be preceded with much communion with God as to what he requires not accidental or giving out of compulsion. Don't give out of vain glory or competition- Philippians2:3; Mathew 6:3.

Sometimes, your giving may not make sense to you and others-Proverbs 11:24.

It makes sense to God. Just obey.

GUARD YOUR HEART

1. Your heart must be in tune with the Holy Spirit when you give
2. If all we focus on is our needs present and future we will never give in the correct measure and we cheat ourselves. Money will never be enough because as the great teacher Bro Gbile Akanni says "money always comes with an Agenda." If you are waiting for it to be much before you give you lack understanding. In 2Corinthian 8:2 they gave out of severe troubles and trial with joy.
3. If your heart not pure, you will give into the wrong consideration.

The flesh will always raise issues causing you to doubt when you want to give. Your heart is the first battle ground; guard it from the infiltrations of the devil.

Be careful of thinking or doing the following when you are asked to give or feel led to give.

- A Let the people who have money do it, and trust me they are the ones who will be blessed if you leave all the giving to them.
- B Only God knows how they will spend it.
- C Their own is too much in this fellowship/ church, Money! Money!
- D What will we eat tomorrow.
- E Grabbing Propensity- Exodus 16:19-20
- F Selfishness and self centeredness. Grab, grab is the order of the day

In Exodus 16:19-20, the children of Israel picked up manna in quantity more than they needed or were commanded to do. Don't be a glutton. The prosperity of the fool will destroy him-Proverb 1:32.

- F Checking what other people are giving- Comparing yourself with others 2
Corinthian 10:12, 1 Corinthian 4:7

Have you forgotten that the Christian race is a personal race? Many have not surrendered their bags and pockets to God. Many have a different destination

All the above are issues the Devil confronts us with when we determine to worship God with our substance.

Brethren, we do not have the same destiny, not everyone plans to have the same end. God's plan for you is different. Why do you believe others are cheating you if you pay more? No man can cheat you, they cheat themselves. No man can cheat God. Do your own God inspired bit and move on.

Misplaced Priorities- John 6:27

Have you ever asked yourself what and who are you working for??? If it is just to eat, clothe and have pleasure, then the priorities are misplaced. For if we seek first His kingdom and righteousness, all those things will be added-Matthew 6:33. Our labour must be first and foremost for the furtherance of His kingdom on earth.

Quality of Substance – Malachi 1:8 – Cain Offering- Cain knew what was required was a blood offering- Leviticus 17:11. Go and look for what God wants. Go and look for what God requires, don't give your remnants and just what you have.

When we bury our dead or give our kids out in marriage don't we look for money? Give God what he demands and not just what you like.

Poverty Mentality- I don't have is now your mantra. Why not God can do it?

For a Grass-hopper Christian – everything is not possible. Where is my faith and your faith? Think of all the challenges one has faced in life, all the lack and God always shows up for His own children and provide. I have never seen the righteous forsaken or His seed begging for bread- Psalms 37:15

The Devil only roars to intimidate us over every giving.

WHO TO GIVE TO

1. God- Proverbs- 3:9.
Honour God with your wealth and the first fruit of your increase
2. Brethren- Galatians 6:10
3. Friends- Mark 12:31
4. Fiends/Enemies- Romans 12:21, Luke 6:27

Enemy syndrome – Bless your enemies. Our righteousness must exceed that of the Scribes and the Pharisees, who only do good to those who do good to them- Mathew 5:20. The only way to overcome evil is with good. Roman 12:21.

OFFERINGS

The Old Testament provides for several categories of offerings to be:

Burnt offering

Grain offering

Purification offering – For mistake, sin.

Reparation offering.

Today, we must present ourselves heart, soul and body as a living sacrifice – Romans 12:1

Sacrifice of fools – Ecclesiastes 5:1

As children of God, we cannot do things carelessly including our worship of God with our substance. Don't vow and not fulfil. Have a good attitude; be reverent so your sacrifice is not one of fools.

Offering must cost you- 2Samuel 24:24. David said to Aruanah, he would pay for the threshing ground, not to get it for free when it was to be used as a place of offering.

The poor you will always have with you- Mathew 26:11. There will always be Christians who will not obey the scriptures on giving and so we will always have the poor with us; People who will argue with the scriptures on giving. People whom the Devil will deceive into believing that they need to hold back their resources even in the things of God.

Our obedience is an act of worship with our substance.

Always remember when you are giving any person anything in obedience to scripture, give and it shall be given unto you- Luke 6:38b and that your hand is God's hand giving to that person- Proverbs 3:27 (Message Bible). Can you imagine that every time you stretch forth your hand to give, your hand becomes GOD'S HAND. HOW WONDERFUL!!

NEVER withhold your hand in doing good; never you pretend you did not see such a person needs help- Deuteronomy 15:7.

Let's pray earnestly that if there be any way our hands are withered there will be healing- Mark 6:6-11. God is about to heal businesses, and establishments. All the work of your hands.

May our grounds yield its increase- Psalm 67:6 and our worship of God with our substance be acceptable in His sight.

Thank You and God Bless!