

WARNING!

A Sermon by Rev. T. G. Oshokoya
Preached on 20th August 1978



“NOW the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

“Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron” (I Timothy 4: 1 -2).

We have had the opportunity to hear of the perfect love of the Living God for about three weeks. We learn from testimonies that all the messages which God sent to us are perfect, righteous and true. Without any doubt, our hearts praise God that we are privileged to be members of the family of God in this glorious Gospel. Similarly, the hearts of those who have been redeemed, praise God for being amongst those who will inherit everlasting life. They are glad to be members of the Church of the Firstborn.

This letter written by Paul to Timothy was written to Christians. It is also a warning given to us to make sure that we know and that we stand upon all the Word of God, because He does not want us to be swept away from them.

“The Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith.”

We may be pondering in our hearts, would it not be the end of the world? The latter times does not tell us of one specific day as the last day in the world. But it tells of the last period, that is, the period that is very close to the end of the world. We are specifically told that some, will at a time, depart from the faith. We should know that, at a time, some people will not want to remain in all the Sound Doctrine. They will not want to consider it; they will not want to be obedient to it. If this is so, what will happen to them?

“Giving heed to seducing spirit”

We should ask ourselves, if there is anything that might make us not to desire the Sound Doctrine, and be desirous of seducing spirits. Certainly, we should understand that only our obedience to all the truth and righteousness of the Living God, and the love to keep all we hear in our hearts, that can deliver us from the perils of giving heed to seducing spirits. It is dangerous for anyone to question or twist the Word of God.

Each of us can testify that it was when we heard the Word of God and accepted it in its entirety without twisting and analyzing it mentally, that the Word flourished in us. As the Word

came forth, none of us could tell how we started to tremble; the power of God descended upon us and we determined to follow God. We started to seek God's help through prayer, even though no one took us to a school of prayer, but the Spirit of God taught us how to pray, and we prayed through.

God gave our hearts freedom from sin and we became justified people. Thus, we obtained deliverance from sin.

"To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word" (Isaiah 66: 2).

It is the heart that wishes to meditate upon and receive the Word of God in totality that God places His hand of mercy and blessing upon. Many of us pray: "God, lay Your hand on me; please lay your hand upon my soul", but we do not see the hand of God in our lives. We may not know the reason why God does not lay His hand upon us. The reason is that we contend with the Word of God. We do not accept what God tells us. We do not open our heart for God to dwell in as He wishes to do; yet we want God to lay His hand upon us.

Many times we think that God makes a mistake. No, God does not make a mistake. He does not change His Word, nor act contrary to it. He does all that He says, and brings all that He says to pass.

"In the latter times some shall depart from the faith".

Departing from the faith may baffle us, we may be pondering that going away from this Church is what is called departing from the faith. This is not so. You may be seated in this Church and may have departed from the faith. What we are saying is that you may become so complacent about the Word of God you have once heard and believed that you become relaxed. You become a carnal man and do the things that please you. You have departed from the faith.

**"THIS know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.
"For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous,
boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful,
unholy,
"Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers,
incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,
"Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers
of God;
"Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from
such turn away"
(2 Timothy 3: 1-5).**

Paul tells us that in the last days perilous times shall come. This is because people will not be willing to do all that God has given us in His Word. God has given us a sure promise that He can deliver us from sin, make us new creatures and co-heirs of eternal life and write our

names in the Book of Life. Many of us have testified that God has done those things in our lives, and it behoves us to remain in the grace all the days of our lives. If you rebel against God by failing to do all that He commands you to do, know of a surety that you have been cornered up by the spirit of the last days. You should speedily sort your way out with God so that He may not cast you away completely.

Consider how many we are at this camp meeting. Before long, the meeting will come to a close and we shall all return to our respective branch churches. People tell us that we are able to administer the Church because we are not yet many. They say that as the congregation increases in number, it will not be possible for the ministers to effectively oversee the entire congregation, in order to know those who are performing well and those who are not. Such people are only making a mistake. Even if we are not more than five, the eyes of a minister cannot follow us all. Even if we move in and out together, the eyes of the minister cannot see our hearts. It should be clear to us that there is no minister here who is watching to know if anyone is behaving well or not. We have someone who is greater than the minister and who is watching us whether we are few or many. That One is God. The Word of God watches every individual. We may be far or near, God is everywhere and sees every one of us. That is why He warns us to stand upon all the truth and righteousness of the Word of God that we have been taught during this camp meeting, when we return to our respective stations. These lessons should be used to guide our lives and hearts, and should also be used to measure the standard for our lives. We should study it and meditate over it because in failing to do so, we shall not escape the perils of the last days and before long, we shall find ourselves engaged in lust. Being lustful is not limited to a man or woman's being flirtatious. To lust is more than that. Whatever our heart desires that is different from the plan of God for our lives, is referred to as lust.

Moses killed an Egyptian in order to help his people and also to fight their cause, but this was not yet the plan of God for him. He therefore experienced a lot of hardship and inconvenience. Moses was not happy about the sufferings and affliction that came upon his people. He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter and chose rather to suffer with his people than to enjoy the pleasures of the King's palace. Moses could have been a prominent personality in Egypt, but he rejected all the positions of honour in order to do the will of God. Though God had determined that Moses would be the one to lead the people out, yet God was not pleased with what he did. This caused him to flee from his people whom he had intended to assist. Going ahead of God in anything puts us in lots of problems and difficulties; therefore, we should be very careful. The news of what Moses did began to spread about the city. On the second day, Moses went out and saw two Israelites striving together and he intervened because they were his people. The response of one of them was **"Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian?"** The response baffled Moses, he feared and said, 'Surely this thing is known.' Moses hurriedly fled the city and dwelt in the land of Midian for forty years. For forty years, he did not come near the king's palace; neither did he see his people whom he had thought to deliver from bondage. For forty years he was in the field as a shepherd and as one in servitude. Not waiting on God caused Moses this problem. Disobedience unto God can also bring this to us. We should know that it is a dangerous thing for us to be self-willed after we have been saved. Failure to wait on God in all our ways will bring about our departing from

the faith. The danger entailed in departing from the faith is that all the works of sin, the flesh and the devil will return to the heart. As one departs from the faith, the seed of sin returns to the heart and it will not be difficult to give heed to seducing spirits. The spirit of the latter times causes many not to desire to do the will of God which they already know, but expect God to continue to repeat His laws.

“. . . God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie” (2 Thessalonians 2:11). Here, Paul through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit addressed the people that **“the mystery of iniquity doth already work,”** that is, the deceiver, who does not let people know all the truth of God, doth already work, deceiving the people. Those who bear the deceiver’s yoke, who are not free from his deceit, are those who do not believe the truth of God. If you believe God, the devil cannot deceive you. Is it not surprising to hear that a regenerated heart turn again to lust? If you love anything more than God, that is lust. But if you submit your heart’s desire to God’s care and bring every thought into submission unto God, the devil will definitely not have dominion over you.

It was to show us that we have to bring our will into submission unto God that Jesus said:

“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 7:21).

If we bring our thought and the desire of our heart into subjection to God’s administration, it is certain that we will, by the grace of God, be able to do the will of our Father Who is in Heaven.

“Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works?”

“And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Matthew 7:22,23).

Jesus said this because He knew that it was easier for people to call the name of God, and to perform great feats in His name, than to fully follow all the precepts and laws of God with all their heart and soul.

If we call the name of the Lord, the Bible tells us that: **“And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity”.** Besides calling on the Lord’s name, some may have such fervent faith that they have used to overcome law suits, diseases, ailments and even death. They may have had much victory through their faith and also may have been opportuned to share their testimony with others that their faith in God has given them a lot of victory. Their faith in God may be so well-grounded that they may be able to counsel people that if they have faith in God, they may also experience the same victory. Yes, but faith only is not enough. The Word of God tells us: **“And though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing”.** Truly we may have all the

faith, but if we do not have the love of God in our heart to the extent of doing His will at all times, the judgement is the same: “I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity”. The meaning of the statement is – depart from me ye disobedient and unbelievers.

Jesus told His disciples, **“He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned”**. The faith that brings about salvation is quite different from that which many profess to have today. Faith that leads us to repentance, that makes us confess and forsake our sins, is that which brings about salvation not to be regretted of. Our faith, or in a clearer language, our obedience to all the commands of God is what gives us salvation. How many of those who perform miracles and wonders are actually obedient to the commands of God? The Bible tells us about Abraham: **“He believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness”**. That is, Abraham obeyed the commands of God and his obedience was counted to him for righteousness.

Likewise, John told us about Jesus: **“He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him (that is those who were obedient unto Him) to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name”**.

The opposite of faith is **unbelief**, and what unbelief brings about is that God permits people to have strong delusion that they may believe a lie. Behold the danger that unbelief places people in. It should be clear that being overcome by spiritual wickedness in high places, does not debar people from performing miracles and wonders. Paul the Apostle makes this known to us:

**“Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,
“And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved” (2 Thessalonians 2:9, 10).**

We should remember this Word anytime we see many miracles and wonders being performed by those who do not believe the whole truth of God. Without any doubt, it is the power of Satan that such people employ. Many people do not desire to be attentive to all that God commands them; rather, they adhere to the thoughts and intention of their hearts.

Many times, people desire the advice of the people of God, probably over problems that they have, but rather than taking the matter to the Pastor of the Church, they take the matter to a brother or a sister for advice. They may advise and even gather a number of people to pray over something their heart desires, after much prayer they may receive it but after a short while they may observe that, that which they receive is not the will of God for them, and that it has placed them into afflictions and problems. It is saddening that those whom they discussed the matter with cannot deliver them from the difficulties and afflictions. This is one way in which the spirit of the world presently seduces.

Brethren, we ought to understand that, God has not placed any brother or sister over us as a counsellor. Also, God has not chosen any family or elder for you as a counsellor other than the

Pastor of the Church. Whosoever seeks counsel from any source other than his pastor is only living in danger. It is possible that there are three or four ministers in a Church but definitely, there is one who is pastor over the Church, and it is he as the leader that God has given the command to counsel the people. You may be more knowledgeable or wiser than the person whom God has made your pastor, yet, God wishes you to take your matter to him. God has placed him there to counsel you, he is watching over you. Refusing to take your matter to him amounts to disobedience to God.

“Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life and few there be that find it” (Matthew 7:14)

How do we understand this? It means that you cannot go the way that pleases you; neither can I go the way that pleases me and still remain as a Christian.

It is possible for you not to know or regard that seeking advice from people other than your pastor is departing from the faith and sinful. When I say it is sinful, of a truth you have not stolen, you have not taken alcohol, but you have only taken your matter to people for advice; doing that indicates that you have departed from being directed by the Living God. Do you know that by doing this, many have entered into troubled waters and problems which they have not been able to overcome? This relates to our work life, business and the issue of marriage; all these have become topsy turvy and messy. The problems have caused many to become debtors and it has caused the Christian stand of many to be completely shifted. Being unable to accept the advice of the pastors has caused many to take wrongful husbands and wives in marriage. God has not ordained any of these hardships, afflictions and difficulties for us. In place of this, God wants us to prosper and enjoy our lives in this glorious Gospel.

“Ye have said, it is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the LORD of hosts?

“And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered.

“Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name.

“And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.

“Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not ” (Malachi 3: 14 – 18).

The verses above tell us how God spoke to the Israelites through Prophet Malachi, when God was about to bring them back to Him. God revealed all their mistakes and departure from the faith unto them. He wanted their hearts to be changed, in order for them to do things that are pleasing to the Living God.

God made it known to them that they did not care for His ordinance, neither did they keep His laws, yet they glory in the fact that they do things that are pleasing to God. God said that they had robbed Him; but they wanted to know in what manner they have robbed Him. God answered that it was through tithes and offering.

The Israelites pondered that they have not sinned against God. But as long as they failed to keep all the commands of God, that is, the payment of their tithes, they had sinned against God. The doctrine of tithes and offering was amongst the ordinances of God, and God wanted them to pay their tithes into the store house so that food may be in His house. It is possible for the children of Israel not to be willing to pay their tithes due to the unfaithfulness of their priests in their usage of God's treasure as was appropriate. Even if this was so, it was their own duty to pay their tithes and commit the unfaithful priests to God. If they performed their duty, God said He would begin to pour down showers of blessings upon them, and that He would completely rebuke the devourer that had destroyed the fruits of their ground. All the nations of the world would certainly know that the Israelites were a blessed nation.

When we arrive at our various destinations, we need to re-examine all the doctrines that we have heard during this camp meeting. Through this, we will be able to stand in the strength and power of God in our private homes or in the Church. If we fail to remain in the strength and power of God, it will be difficult for us to know what the will of God is for us in whatever we wish to do, even though the will of God is not difficult to know. God sent Samuel to the house of Jesse to anoint one of his children as king. As Samuel saw the eldest child come into the house, he was happy and thought that Eliab was the anointed one of God. But then, it was God who sent Samuel on an errand. Samuel knew the voice of God. How did Samuel know that God had not chosen Eliab as King? Immediately, God spoke to Samuel that He had not chosen Eliab. After this, Abinadab came before Samuel. As Samuel saw Abinadab also, his heart drew nigh unto him, but God let him know that He had not chosen him either. Similarly, all the seven children of Jesse passed by, but God had not chosen anyone of them. This baffled Samuel but Jesse let him know that his last born was in the field tending the sheep. Samuel immediately commanded that the last born should be brought. Through this experience, we ought to know that we should stand fast in the Word of God so as to know His will in all that we wish to do.

It is customary that on returning to our places of abode after the camp meeting, instead of re-examine the doctrine we have heard, some do not do this, rather, they think that they have received the power of prayer, and then retire to a spot. In the long run, the devil strikes.

Some compare their lives with the testimonies that they hear. That is totally wrong. We need to measure ourselves with the Word of God. We must follow all the truth and righteousness of the Bible. God wants us to store all His Word that we have heard in our hearts. Should we find any blemish or imperfection in our life, it is the Word of God that we have heard that will remove the blemish. You may think that some other things which are not written in the Bible may befall you. How God will speak to you about it may be your question. Go into the Word of God, meditate over it, if it is still not clear to you, take it to the Overseer of your Church who will explain it to you. Should there still be anything not clear enough to you, take such to God in prayer, He will make it all clear to you and He will direct you aright and appropriately. But if

you are careless, the devil will cunningly slip into your heart and deceive you. If you have the Word of God in your heart, and if it dwells in you, it will not be difficult for you to discern the voice of God from that of the devil

Paul tells us that many seducing spirits have gone into the world. Therefore do not return home and put your Bible aside or put the doctrine aside and say that you heard a voice. You heard no other voice than that of the devil, for without the Word of God, we can not hear the voice of God. When you apply all your heart and your entire mind to the Word of the Living God, my friend, if the devil speaks to you, the Spirit of God will challenge it in your heart. God blesses only those who have His doctrine, they are the ones He honours, and He does not allow the devil to deceive them.

“Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon His name” (Malachi 3:16).

That is the arrangement made by God. No one can change it. If the fear of God is in your heart to receive all the righteousness and truth of God that has been presented, God will always hearken unto you. You may probably not be in any place where there is a Church. The fact that you may be alone in a village or city will not prevent God from hearkening unto you. At anytime the opportunity arises, you and your family members should read the Word of God, meditate and pray over it. Do you know, God will come into your heart, and will interpret all that you read to you? By this, God will hear your prayer and will establish your feet in the faith.

Wherever we may be with the Word of God, it is the power of the Word that will govern our lives to the extent that the devil, sin or the flesh will not be able to rear their ugly heads in our lives. This is the privilege that we have in the Gospel. The guidance that the Spirit of God effects in our lives is part of the blessings of the Gospel for us. Doing all that is good and right does not mean that we shall not experience trouble, suffer loss or experience tribulation. We may suffer hunger because of our stand for God; still, God will uphold us by His Word to the extent that He will not allow us to go begging. The Word of God will help us to overcome whatever problem or difficulty that we may find ourselves in.

“And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him” (Malachi 3:17).

This is the promise of God. But whoever departs from the faith God will tell them:

“I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity”.

The same God who will send some away is the One who will hearken unto others, bless them, and write their names in the book of remembrance. Moreover, He will protect them as His eye balls, watch over them and spare them.

I presume that in this world, if there is anything that seems very big, very important, very precious, such a thing has to be the treasure of God. God said he would make them that meditate upon His Word His own treasure. I pray to God to make all of us His treasure. If there is anything our heart should yearn for, and pursue to the end of our lives, that thing is to be the treasure of God.

God told Abraham that He would curse whosoever cursed him and bless whosoever blessed him. Likewise, the promise is ours today. This is to say that if anybody rises up against us, God will rise up against such a person. That is, God will be our refuge, rock and all in all. In a nutshell, God will fight our cause in every battle that rises against us. We see the fulfilment of this in the life of the children of Israel when a battle rose against them. God made it known to them that the battle was not theirs but God's and that He would fight for them. God fought the battle for them, and gave them complete victory. Likewise, God is prepared to fight our battles for us.

For example, young ladies may be pondering and wondering how they would find husbands to marry in this Church. Likewise, young men may think that there are no young ladies whom they can marry in their locality. Some parents may be disturbed with regards their sons and daughters getting married in this Church. Such thoughts should not be allowed to disturb any of us at all. If we are God's children, let us rest assured that He cares for us, and He will perfect all that concerns us. If we trust in Him, He will provide fully for all our needs.

We have been privileged to read about how the people took their problems to Jesus Christ and how Jesus answered them:.

“Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or What shall we drink? or Wherewithal shall we be clothed? “(For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things” (Matthew 6: 31, 32).

We know the problems that exist today for a woman to trade -buy and sell; more especially for her to own a stall in the marketplace. She must compulsorily enter into the membership of a society. If she is already a member of one, she must as a duty pay her dues for sacrifices and whatever appeasement they may want to perform in the market. We know that the Christian does not offer sacrifices or any appeasement, therefore it behoves a Christian woman to take her stand. If our women who are traders would trust God, He would pave a way for their trading without having to compromise their stand. Another habit being practised by traders is their craftiness to earn some profit. Surely, you as a Christian does not want to be involved in such act, you do not want to take that which is not yours in order for your business to prosper. If you are a mason, you will not do a work worth a hundred naira and claim that it costs two hundred naira, and later share the one hundred which you charged extra with the men with whom you convinced to inflate the cost of the job. This is the behaviour of the world.

God who created us knows that we must eat and drink, we must buy and sell. That is the reason the Bible says that **“your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things”** God has made provision for all our need in his Holy Word. If we fail to take heed to the Word and only pray that God should show us the way, we will only meet with deceit. If we do not heed the Word of God, the devil will open up a lot of avenues with which to deceive our heart and pull us away from God. If we compromise with the devil, our spiritual light will be dimmed and we will no longer have the manifestation of God in our life. The moment Jesus leaves the heart, everything that a person has gathered together will not be able to deliver him from trouble.

Just obey. God spoke this little statement to the people of old. The Bible does not tell us how Abraham became a wealthy man. But with time, he became so rich that Lot’s cattle rearers and his could no longer dwell together. God had told him that;

“...And I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing” (Genesis 12:2).

That was the promise of God for Abraham and anyone who believes God. It is by being obedient to God that we become a blessed soul. The Bible makes it clear to us that:

“The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it” (Proverbs 10:22).

Standing firm in the will of God is the means of having a godly life, and through which we receive God’s support in this world and in the world to come. Jesus Christ prayed to the Living God that His disciples - those that believe in His name, those whom He had given the Gospel and who have received it - should not be taken away from this world but should be kept safe from the wickedness of the world. This means that Jesus knew that His disciples must live in this world, but He does not want them to be partakers of the evil deeds in the world. The prayer which Jesus prayed for His disciples avails for us today too. What He requires of us is to be obedient to His commands, His holy precept. By this, we have the assurance that the grace of God will keep us safe from this wicked world.

Sometime, we think that the problem that befalls us is greater than our strength can bear. It is possible that we compare our life with that of an unbeliever. God wants us to know that a time is coming when He will put a difference between the good and the bad people in this world. In blessing, He will bless us abundantly in this world.

“The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it” (Proverb 10:22).

People marvel when they see our campground and all the work that is carried out therein. Do you know that it took us less than six months to build this gigantic house of worship? If God can provide sand, gravel, cement, corrugated iron sheets and other building materials, for a certainty God can bless every one of us. If this is so, what is it that you desire which God can not provide for you and for which reason you want to deny the faith? When God can stand by

you, be your God, provide for your needs, and do that which you desire for you, why then will you allow your heart's desire to push you away from the faith? God has not asked the impossible from you. What He desires from you is obedience to His Word. If you do this, know for sure that you will be a blessed person. You may say that you do not know the will of God. To know the will of God is not difficult. It is not by seeing a vision or by prophecy, but by every truth and righteousness of the Gospel that we hear. If you pray over what you have heard, God will personally make His will known to you. You will know more of the will of God as you remain faithful to all that you will hear of His Word, or that you will read.

We have read about those whom God said He would open a book of remembrance for and that He will write their names in the Book of Life because they feared God and meditated upon His Word. It could be so for you too, as you read this Word of God and meditate over it with the fear of God.

God loves you, and it is for this that He lets you know that in the last day, some will not be willing to keep the Word. They will wish to do only those things that please them. But you should personally speak to God who created the Heaven and the earth and who has purposed to make you His Own jewel. Cleave unto Him by going into a covenant with Him, to cleanse you of your sins, so that you may truly be His jewel. If you want to receive God's Word whole heartedly and use it to guide your life, your household and your business; know for sure that God will personally put His name upon you and you will be His jewel. The guidance and mercy of God in your life will be marvelous. The love of God will flourish in your heart to the extent that you will daily seek more of God.

Consider how wonderful it is to be a member of the family of God. If we adorn our heart with the Word of God which is despised by the world today, it is certain that we shall be ready when Jesus reveals Himself to take away His beloved ones to Heaven. Only those that have the Word of God in their heart will be pulled by the magnetising power of Jesus into the skies where they shall be with their Lord and Saviour in everlasting beauty and joy.

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