

WORKED ON TO BE WORKED WITH

This month of September we traditionally give emphasis to missions in all our CITAM assemblies worldwide. But in CITAM NGONG, there is a special twist in that after fourteen years in a tent we transition into the most beautiful sanctuaries of our time. We therefore will give attention to the issue of missions, what kind of a person God works with in the mission field. It is important to note that missions is not only a one month in year activity but we are all missionaries for the lord in our homes, work places and wherever God has placed us in our spheres of influence.

To be able to do justice to the subject of missions as a church, especially missions to a world which is our mission field, where sin rebellion and conformity is the order of the day we must examine the life of Daniel. Daniel 1:5-8, we glean four things that God requires of a person he is working on so that he can work with. God first changes our hearts and in the process then tests our hearts so he can know us. Often, we see and blame the devil in every challenging situation we face, forgetting that it is God who is at work in our lives irrespective of what he allows to come our way. He says, for all things work together for good for those who love the lord and are called according his purpose.

God can work with anything and everything he permits to come our way. After changing our hearts from who we were to what he wants, he in the process tests us. That is why he tested the children of Israel in the desert and told them it was nothing to do with the devil but it was him testing them so that he may know what was in their hearts. **Proverbs 17.3**-*Like fire tests the purity of silver and gold, God tests the heart of man.*

It's therefore not strange in the biblical account in the life of Daniel, that before every blessing there was always a testing. The reason God tests us is so that we may be able to speak his message on whatever mission that he sends us. He tests us then entrusts us. When we speak for him, we are not trying to please people but God. Brothers and sisters, consequently, God tests us with stress before he entrusts us with success. **Being worked on to be worked with.**

Thinking of missions, when God is working on us what does he expect to get out of his workmanship? He expects;

1. **Integrity:** Men and women who will never forget who God really is. In the life of Daniel, we see him standing his ground by not defiling himself. God wants to make you and I persons of integrity, so that who we are is not in conflict with what we say we are. Our reputation should precede us so to speak. **Romans 12.2**-*Do not be conformed to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is Good and acceptable and perfect.* God working in us to bring out a people of integrity. That makes our mission more successful when we go as one thing all the way.
2. **Discipline:** Daniel controlled his ego and appetite. He made up his mind not to eat the food and wine given to him by the king. **Roman 6:13-14**-*Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been bought from death to life, and offer every part of yourself as an instrument of righteousness. For sin is not your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace.* God is working in us so

that when we are presented in the mission field, we are seen as persons having some level of discipline.

3. **Courage:** it's being willing to stand alone if that is what it takes. Joshua was referred to as Moses's assistant. He had no identity. He was fine operating under the shadow of this great man of God. But when Moses died, God comes to him and says my servant Moses is dead, it's now you who will lead this people across the Jordan River. It must have come to his mind the trouble the Israelites had caused Moses. But God tells him be strong and courageous three different times. Brothers and sisters, one thing God works in us is courage to stand up to what is not right and for what is correct. That is the ability to stand and be counted even if it means to stand alone. **Exodus 23:2-** *Do not follow the crowd in doing wrong. When you give a testimony in a lawsuit, do not pervert justice by siding with the crowd. And do not show favoritism to a poor man in his lawsuit.* **1 Cor 16.13** -*Stand true to what you believe, be courageous and strong.*

Let's have courage to stand for one another even during this electioneering time. We shouldn't insult each other on social media yet we profess we are Christians. Let our identity be in Christ and let's say what we need to say in the lord.

4. **Humility:** Daniel was tactful with authority. Humility is power under control. He had authority yet he suggested to the chief official whom God had given favor with if he could eat vegetables instead on the wine and meat. Daniel had authority and yet he handled it tactfully. **Daniel 1.16-18** *He told the guard assigned to him to test them for ten days and if he wasn't as healthy as the young men eating the choice food, then you can decide whether we should continue eating our diet of vegetables and water, so the attendant agreed to Daniel's suggestion and at the end of ten days Daniel and his friends looked better nourished than any of the others in the king's training program. When the three years ended, all the men were brought before king Nebuchadnezzar and none impressed the king as much as Daniel and his three friends. So they were each promoted in the king's service. Being worked on to be worked with.*

It's my prayer today that God is working in us integrity and discipline. Positionally, we are justified as children of God. Progressively, we are being sanctified and changed into the image of God. That process is hastened depending on your submission and surrender to the God who is working in us. I trust God is also working courage in us so we can stand alone if it means standing alone. He is working humility in us so we may be seen to be a true reflection of Jesus Christ.

It's noteworthy, to remember that this isn't just a mission month but we are also in transition as CITAM NGONG. And transition speaks of three things,

1. Trust
2. Growth
3. Greater responsibility

All those three things are the workings of God himself. God never works with a people he has not worked on. He never works with self-made vessels. God has vowed to not share his glory with any man. So, to secure his dignity, he chooses not to work with us just as we are. He first

breaks us into pieces then puts us together so that that we can bear witness to what only he can do with what he has worked on.

Paul writing to the Philippians showed his endearing to that congregation. It was a church an ideal church in many respects. it was an appreciative and benevolent church. It's no wonder the epistle to Philippians is known as a spiritual love letter. It is filled with affection, gratitude emphasizing on victory and joy. Paul referred to them as my beloved. In **Philippians 1:7-8**- *its right for me to feel this way about you since I have you in my heart and, whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me. God can testify how I long for you with the affection of Christ Jesus.* They were indeed Paul's joy and crown. He knew he was going to be away from them for a while.

This transition from a tent to the main sanctuary means a lot of things. It means a greater entrusting of God because there has been a greater growth and it means a greater responsibility because there's now going to be a greater visibility. It means a greater out of you because there has been a greater into you. To whom much is given, much is expected. In **Philippians 2:10**- Paul instructs them in the way to continue even in his absence. And so, it is the same for us;

1. **To continue in our loving affection for God:** we should work our salvation in fear and trembling. We should not forget that it is God who has made it possible for us to have that which we have. It doesn't mean fear that provokes dread but remembering the awe of God, because of his power, grace and mercy. He's talking of an attitude of humility and submission offering before God a proper reverence. We should not now concentrate on the vain material things but be humble. We should be a community that has a clear understanding of God and is not persuaded on things that do not matter. As we transition, the place we are going is not a comfort zone, it is a place where we can be able to do what we weren't able to do hence we should walk in awe of God.
2. **To continue in loving instruction about man and ourselves:** those who are conscious about our own weakness should know that it is God who is at work in our lives despite our past. He says in **Philippians 1:6-7**- *being confident of this very thing, he who began a good work in you will perform it until the day of Christ.* It is a statement of encouragement to all of us struggling. It has nothing to do with us because it is a statement of humility and meekness. It argues against vain glory and pride on our part and reminds us that it is all about God, for God and by God. You cannot be proud for what you are not doing. Moving from the tent to the sanctuary is by the grace of God. It should be a stark reminder that God can also do great things in our lives when we are in submission. So, let the new sanctuary be a memorial of God's awesome power because three years ago where the sanctuary stand was bare ground. If any of us are discouraged, go into the sanctuary and ask God to do the same for you because he can. You who has put the sanctuary together, put my matters together. God asks in his word, is there anything too hard for me? May this sanctuary change our perspective of what God can do in us and with us.

3. **To continue in loving instruction about the future:** we must look ahead at what God has in store for us. Yes, he has done great things in the past, greater things in the present but even with this realization it has come with great pain. We must therefore remember currently that there's a future promise in every of our situations in his word. Consider Jesus Christ, who endured scorn and suffering in the hands of men but overcame it all and is sitting at the right hand of the throne of God so that you may not grow weary.

This gospel of Jesus changes everything in our lives only if we are willing to submit to him. As we transition, let us remember that the work doesn't stop. We are still being worked on in order for God to work with us in reaching out for more souls. In **Ephesians 2:10** -*for we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them.* Change never happens to anyone who hasn't asked Jesus as the lord of their lives. And so, to begin an exciting phase in your life you must accept our lord Jesus's salvation in order to experience this working with in your life.