

TRINITY HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH

SUNDAY SERMON

18th of August, 2024

TEENAGERS SUNDAY SERVICE

Topic: Standing Out and Knowing God More

Preacher: Evang. Ayobami Adegboyega

Text: Jeremiah 29:13

MESSAGE

Yesterday, we had a good time with the teenagers and we considered an interesting topic: Standing out and Knowing Him More in Times like this, and I am going to be going through some of the points I shared yesterday before I talk about what I have today. In Jeremiah 29:13, the Bible says, 'And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.' One of the major challenges anyone who wants to seek God face is that of absolute yielding to God. An average young person in today's world wants to follow God and still follow Satan. They want to be in and out, or better put, want to sit on the fence. They want to identify with the body of Christ and at the same time, when the world system brings their own to us, they want to embrace it. So, we say, 'Can we have a little alignment? Let the world shift a bit and let the church shift a bit,' and because of this, we see a lot of compromise, for we want to belong to a system that is enticing to us. But what is the admonition of God to things like this? We talked about this yesterday and I feel God wants me to say it again to benefit the parents.

2 Corinthians 6:14 – 18, 'Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?... That you are a believer and we know that your friends are unbelievers... the scripture says that there is no ground for cordial relationship.... If somebody gives his life to Christ in those days, one of the things that changes is his association. He cuts off with friends who have been influencing him badly and not adding to his spiritual journey. But these days, we mingle and those mingling are not without side effects, because it doesn't matter how powerful a service is, the company you keep in the course of the week has a way of influencing you negatively or positively. Gone are the days of prayer partners praying together and going on evangelism; that even when the church is not going on evangelism, you and your friend decide to. That your partner will call you to intercede for someone.

Verse 16 of 2 Corinthians 6 says, 'And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them and walk among them. I

will be their God, and they shall be My people.” I told the teenagers yesterday that we should be proud of our identity. We have a lot of identity crises in this present age and time; when a young girl says she is a virgin, she becomes an outcast in this present world, among her peers, her colleagues, and acquaintances. They call them church girl, church guy. Many of them even find it difficult to share their church fliers on their status, because they start tagging them ‘church guy’, ‘church girl’, and because many of them are not sure of who they are in Christ, in fact, many of us seated here are not sure of who we are in Christ. The scripture says you are the temple of the living God. You know, there are scriptures that when you meditate on, they change your orientation for life. In the Old Testament, there is the temple which contains the outer court, the Holy of Holies, etc. but when Jesus came, the veil before the Holy of Holies tore and by the Holy Ghost, the temple has moved and is now inside of you. So, when people are seeking God, they come to you; you carry God around. A lady told a guy who is trying to sleep with her that ‘You want to sleep with a body where God dwells?’ If you know who you are, it helps you to know how to behave. Your identity is tested anytime sin comes your way. Joseph could take what happened to him to be an opportunity to sleep with the woman and clean his mouth. That, ‘I am not in Nigeria and I can do whatever I want. This is an opportunity for ‘blanket’.’ But Joseph said, ‘How would I do this and sin against God?’ If we don’t come to this realisation as believers, the devil will keep cheating us. So, know your identity as the temple of the living God.

Beware of mixture as believers. I’m not saying that you can’t have colleagues and friends who are unbelievers. As a matter of fact, you are supposed to be the light that shines in darkness, but if your close friends, who counsel you, who you are in their community, are unbelievers, it’s not going to help you to know God the more. 1 Corinthians 15:33 says, ‘Do not be deceived: “Evil company corrupts good habits.”’ It doesn’t matter how well-trained you are from home, if you change environment and mingle with unbelievers, it is going to affect you. This is why whenever you change community, you should look for people who speak your language. When you go to campus, join fellowships; people from different groups will come to you but find a Fellowship, because you need to choose your community.

We also talked about how to stand out and know Him more. Because if we say something is good, we also need to teach how. But, before I say how, I shared with them the kind of time we are in, and we saw that in 2 Tim. 3:1 – 5, ‘But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents...’ We treated ‘disobedience to parents’ yesterday, that in the times of the daddies that are seated here, even though our parents did not go to school, we obeyed them. In fact, the obedience in those days was so severe that it is the parents that will tell you whom to marry. As you grow old, they are already telling their friends in the neighbourhood that their daughter will marry their own son, and when they tell the son, he would also agree. Your parents may not be in alignment with the Holy Spirit every time, but that does not mean you should be a disobedient child. You can speak better English, but that does not mean you should disobey them. Many people are even ashamed to showcase their parents, because they don’t want embarrassment. You must

honour your parents; honour your father and mother, praise them and celebrate them, because it's a sign of the end time when you disobey them. A woman walked up to me and said, 'Can you talk to my boy because my boy said I shouldn't call him but be texting him instead.' A lot is happening and we need to educate our young people that there is a stance of God about parent-children relationship. Honour your father and your mother; honour them! One of the ways to get the blessings of your parents is to honour them. Honour them with your resources and your respect.

The next one is 'unthankful' (2 Tim. 3:2). When your parents or other people do something for you and you don't give thanks, as little as that can be, it's a sign of the end time. Some people do not have the opportunity to be sent to school. You asked for a thousand naira and they have 500 naira, thank them. '...unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control...' (2 Tim. 3:2 – 3), there is this serious outbreak of lack of self-control. Once you pick a phone, you don't know where to stop. When you are watching a film, you don't know when to stop. Some people have headache when pressing phones, yet they don't know when to stop. '...brutal...' (2 Tim. 3:3), that is, 'being violent'. '...despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God...' (2 Tim. 3:3 – 4). People who love everything pleasurable. One of the things I have noticed with our young people is that when they are in church, they are so good and calm; they won't dance, sing and pray, but I know... you see, they are intelligent actually. A woman said one day, 'My children don't pray well when we are having devotion.' And one of the children said, 'Mummy shakes her head when praying, but must we shake our head? Is prayer not communication with God? I am speaking with God.' Daddy Mike Bamiloye was sharing with us and he said when we raise children, we should understand every stage. He said there was a time when Mummy Gloria will go and knock the doors of the children to come out for devotion, but the children would feel reluctant, because they know the devotion would take time as mummy would spend a lot of time speaking about what happened the previous day. But then, he said he would go to the children's rooms and encourage them, yet that wouldn't stop Mummy's admonition. Sometimes, when you are trying to put away the admonition of your parents because you think their *wahala* is too much, it's because they love you. You come to church, you don't sing and are not excited, but when you get to the midst of your friends, you become enthusiastic and dance well. What this tells us is that when your spirit cannot connect to God and bring out excitement, your spirit is not whole. Because when someone comes to the presence of God, it's him and God alone, his spirit and God alone, so, he should be excited, however, when it is not so, it's a sign of end time.

'Having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!' (2 Tim. 3:5). We talked a bit about this: that there are so many things that are formed but without power. I gave an example of where we went to film; we needed an airplane and got one parked in a museum, but that airplane had no engine inside, yet when you film and photoshop, it would look real. Seeing that airplane, you would admire it, but it cannot fly. There are forms and packages in our days that you will think are fire, sir, don't be deceived. Even tongues are formed today. You will hear some tongues and feel an angel has put hands on them, however, let that tongue be tested. There are

forms that are copy and paste in our generation now that you have to be careful of; and they go online and display all of this. They set the phone and take selfie while having their devotion, in fact, you can see tears coming out from their eyes and I say up till tomorrow, you can't convince me that that's worship. Jesus says God is Spirit and those who worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth, but there is no truth in that which they do. You are worshipping God and are recording yourself? Some even position the camera somewhere and are worshipping. You are not a worshipper, you are just a content creator. The scripture says, 'from such, turn away,' but the irony now is that we are like them.

I also talked about how to stand out. One thing that is key out of the several points discussed yesterday is that 'fall in love with Jesus'. If anyone will go far in any relationship, the first is to love. If any child will go far in Christ, tell him or her to love Jesus. Because, you can chastise them to do religious things, but until they come to the place of love, they are not there yet and that's the labour of the church for all the young people. 2 Thessalonians 3:4 – 5 say, 'And we have confidence in the Lord concerning you, both that you do and will do the things we command you.' I saw that scripture and discover that the love of God is a place in Christ that we get into by maturity, such that when you get into that place, it will be difficult for you to turn back. I don't know how many mothers here ran away from their parents' house just to follow a man and are still with the man now. Your parents said, 'Jumoke, you cannot marry Samuel,' but you just smile. Your mother came to you and said, 'Jumoke, listen to what your daddy said o', but you tell your mother, 'Mother, do you want me dead?' and mummy says, 'Please, don't kill yourself.' What causes this? Love. We were told of the story of a man who was sick and refused to eat: 'I don't feel like eating, I don't have appetite.' But when the fiancée, Cinderella, came and said he should eat, he started eating. Love can do crazy things. Do you understand? I am not talking about infatuation but genuine love which can do crazy things. So, if you come to the position of love and you love the Lord with all your heart and might, even your parents sometimes will think your *wahala* is too much.

My friend was telling me about a young boy who fasts always. He woke up in the early hours of the morning on to meet the guy in the living room studying the Bible and praying; that's a single boy who has found God. We take them to church but it must come to a position when Christ takes them over from us, until we come to that position, our work is not done. When you force him to church, something is lacking, but when he is like, 'Mummy, what job do I have to do this morning because by 9am I have to be in church.' The love of God is key; if love is not there, it's going to be difficult to grow in God. And I share with you the things that will make you love Jesus: having more knowledge of Him. You must be knowledgeable about him. If more couples are best friends, marriages will be better. Philippians 3:10 says, 'that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.' When you have knowledge of God, you won't be a half-baked Christian, because there are many out there, when they leave the territory of their parents, that's when you know they are not well baked. They argue about everything online: tithe, communion, speak against fathers of faith online, because we now

have Twitter and they follow everything going on outside, so, they think the next thing is to fight against the church. However, God is raising young people who will change the narrative.

I also talked about intentionality. Intentionality: when you mean what you are saying and what you are doing; you are intentional about God and not just faking it. You are in the church workforce and you are not being dragged to do what you do but doing it intentionally. You are not careful whether the senior pastor or leadership is looking at you, but you are intentional about it. Many of us are doing a lot, but are not intentional about it. So, intentionality is key. Today, I am going to round off by talking to you about a menace, one of the enemies of Spiritual Growth to young people and even adult, and that is: **social media**.

You know that in school, we were taught that Social Studies is the study of man and his environment. And then when social media became prominent, if you checked the definition, it says, social media is digital technology that allows the sharing of ideas and information through virtual network between man and his environment. There are two same words here: 'man and his environment.' But before social media came, our environment was limited to our vicinity, culture and beliefs, such that we could hear of what they do in China but were not seeing it. We could hear of what they do in America but you could only watch it on CNN and they will show the good part only, but when they want to tell the story of Africa, they would go to one village, not Abuja and Lagos. You could only see those things there, but today, the world is on our devices. I think it was in 2000 or 2001, we finished our annual programme, a drama revival, and one of us who have gone to serve in Port Harcourt came and was holding a mobile phone. He was holding a mobile phone and it was like he was holding an airplane. I said, 'Let's thank God for our brother, for God is blessing him.' I asked him to lift up his phone and I used that as a point of contact to bless others. Later, I called my aunty and she said the amount they sell SIM was 23,000 naira. So, prior to that time, you can never imagine, it can never cross your mind that there comes a time and you will be seeing crystal clear video of someone in Australia while you are in Ilorin, that is why I tell people that we are not there yet in technology. There are advancements technologically that if we don't build ourselves and our young people in, we are in danger. There is a global attention that this world needs as far as the ministry of our Lord Jesus is concerned.

Social media says sharing of ideas to so many people; Jesus is an idea, we've got to share Him, and if we don't share Him, there are a lot of people that are sharing their own ideas with our young people. They tell them so many things that we do not know. If you are so happy and content that you have the control of your children, they are always inside the house, but they have mobile phones, you are deceiving yourself. In fact, many of them don't like going out which is not good. An American Survey says, a lot of children from the age of 15 goes into depression because of social media. A doctor tells us that they now diagnose young children with sight problems different from what was available before. A child that you don't start talking to about Jesus, instead you show him or her cartoons (cartoons even show obscene, homosexual materials nowadays), you have exposed him or her to a community already. For such child, it's going to be difficult to disciple him about Jesus after seven years. So, it's not a blessing that your child has a phone, it's

not. I'm going to share some of the things that will help us as parents, because I can talk about social media for a long time. There was a day they caught a lady in school who was not wearing underpants and she said Marlians don't wear underpants. So, what are the obligations of parents regarding social media?

Phone is a powerful tool, but if not well managed, it can destroy them. They don't have control over the wider world they are being exposed to, so you need to manage them. There are obscene things, likewise, there are legitimate things online also. There are matured minds that are trained and are making money online legitimately. They are working online now legitimately. I read a story online, someone said his father put up his property for 30 million naira and he used his company's name to buy it. Later, the boy told his parents that he, the boy they used to shout at for staying in front of the computer always, was the one who bought the property. He bought it so that they will know that his sitting in front of the computer can buy their property. There are legitimate ways on the internet, that's why you must expose them to them on time: IT, coding, etc.

Have access to your child's phone and social media platforms. Don't be an analog parent in a digital world. They come and show you something on Twitter or Tiktok and you say, 'This song is fine o,' then they go out and say, 'Mummy has fallen' and go to watch other things. Register on these social media and follow your children, invite them to talk to them when they post something wrong. They are born into it, but for some of us, it came to meet us, we have to catch up also.

At a tender age, keep your children's phone with you at night. Some of them don't sleep at night. Engage them on productive ventures that they can be doing. During this holiday, form a community for them, so that they won't be limited to online communities. Let the family have off-screen time, that this time or this day, no one is pressing phone; do this, because we are losing the community of our own nuclear family.

Finally, James 1:17: Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. Now, let me ask you: Are children gifts from God? Yes. If they are gifts from God, that means every child is a good child, including the one heading to cultism, involved in cyber crime, pornography, armed robbery, and so on. Every child that comes from God is a good child; most children are corrupted when they shifted from God to parents who handle them due to negligence and lack of sensitivity, then corruption begins to come into them. So, my challenge to you parents is that the gift of God in your hands not be corrupted. Therefore, labour, be sensitive, work; take it like a ministry, because the work of God must not be corrupted.

I have a word for somebody who says, 'I laboured on these children but they are not doing well.' If you have done your best, go to rest, God will handle them. Jesus laboured for 3½ years and Peter was unofficially the head of the Disciples but when Jesus died, Peter said, 'Guys, I am going back fishing.' But when Jesus appeared to them while they were fishing, he said, 'Have you caught anything?' He said, I laboured over your life, for three and a half years, do you love me more than this? Peter said, I love you. If it were to be some parents or Nigerian G.O.s, they would have cursed

them. In fact, some parents are saying these to their unyielding children also, and are cursing them. You don't need to curse them, because your labour is a seed, it will germinate. Jesus understood that. He told Peter he will be strengthened, but when he is strengthened, he must strengthen his brethren. When the Holy Ghost came, the same Peter that motivated his people to fishing also led 3,000 people to Christ. Watch it! Those same children will make you proud. You will say to somebody, 'Learn from me, I'm going to encourage you. Once you have trained them, they are coming back to make you happy,' Amen.

Prayer

Appreciate Jesus for this Word.

Say, 'Father, I need your help as a parent'. Say, 'I need your help as a child'. Help me, Holy Spirit.

Call to Salvation

There is wisdom in Jesus in Christ to lead you right, but God does not put this wisdom in a heart that hasn't surrendered to him. You want to surrender to Jesus so that this wisdom to live right and please God can be in you? Say this prayer: Lord, I give you my heart, I give you my life. I surrender to you. Take this heart and use it for your glory. Amen.