

LIVING BY FAITH

A stirring testimony of God's sustenance and blessing

INTRODUCTION

If you are a child of God, you are God's responsibility. I have experienced this. Every child of God should have a testimony to this effect. "For in him we live, and move and have our being". Acts 17:28. The Christian life is a life of faith in God. "He that cometh to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. Heb. 11:6.

God is in charge of your life and completely responsible for it. Unless you have not surrendered your life to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. You should trust God's love and faithfulness.

Years ago, I was invited to preach during a revival service in a church at a little town along the Warri/Sapele highway. It became a regular practice for the Pastor to invite me yearly. I gradually got to know some of the members and whenever I came into the service, I could tell if Brother A and Sister B is missing.

On one particular visit, I noticed the absence of an elderly man and I asked the Pastor about him. "He backslided about six months ago" he said. "What happened" I asked The Pastor answered that "the old man said that God was not faithful and loving and that God doesn't answer prayers. He can't serve such a God." I was startled. I asked the Pastor how the man came to this conclusion. Hadn't he experienced salvation? Here is the old man's story.

He is the head of his extended family. One of the young men whose own father had died was to pay the bride price of his wife in a neighboring village. The old man had to lead the delegation to the in-law's place. No vehicles were available and so they all had to go by foot. The group of women and children first left after which the bridegroom and the young men. The old man told them he was coming behind.

He then took time to pray and dress up. He prayed for the success of the ceremonies. He prayed for the trip itself. 'Since it was during the rainy season, he prayed God that it will not rain; especially along the distance around, the bushes, where he can't find shelter, should it rain. This is because, his special clothing will be messed up. After prayers, he dressed up and set out for the trip on foot as well.

It was a Sunday. He was happy. He was radiant in his traditional clothes; the most expensive ones that he had. Suddenly, midway, in the journey the weather suddenly changed. The rain came rushing and there was no place to run into. Within minutes he was soaked to the pants. He didn't know whether to go forward or backward.

He was embarrassed, his clothes were messed up. But he had prayed that God would prevent this very thing from happening. He became bitter and vowed not to go to church again, neither will he ever pray or serve the Lord. All the efforts of the church leadership to encourage him and pray for him yielded no results.

That first night of the revival when I was told this story, we again prayed for him and trusted that the Lord will restore him. During the service the next day, another old man attended and when we asked for testimonies from those who were either saved, healed or delivered the previous night, this old man came out. I talked with the Pastor to go and interview him as he wasn't present the first night and he is not known as a Christian in the community.

This man refused to talk insisting the other old man, we had prayed for the previous night be called in. Where was this thing heading? I thought. The Pastor had to send one of the ushers to call the man. He refused to come to the church. A second usher was then sent at the instance of this man who has come forward to testify, he said the backslider should be told that it was he in church that is calling him.

The backslider eventually showed up but refused to enter the church despite all entreaties. The testifiers now began his testimony. He asked the backslider, if he remembered the land dispute that they have had for years. The backslider

confirmed this, and said that he had defeated the man at all the courts where the case came up for hearing. The man then said that, upon his last defeat, he vowed that the backslider will not live to enjoy the land and so he plotted to kill him. When he heard of the marriage ceremony at the other village and the fact that his opponent would be going alone after the first two sets of people, he loaded his double barrel gun with gunpowder and went to wait for him in the bush.

He said that he was hiding behind a rubber tree watching this man coming. It was a sunny day. When the man was within shooting range, he corked his gun ready to shoot, suddenly, a heavy rainfall started. He was completely soaked within minutes and so was his gun and gun powder. As a result, the gun couldn't answer the trigger.

He went back home frustrated that he could not achieve his goal. Remembering that every other attempt before this also failed, he started finding out, what the protective cover of this man was. He must have traditional insurance. He must have native charms that protect him. He thought. But all his investigation and research, showed that the man is just a Christian.

By this time the whole church was agog with celebration. The backslider had come into the church and was rolling on the floor, crying to God for mercy and thanking him for his protection at the same time. The man managed to continue his testimony. He said' that he had to get what the other man had. So he's been looking for an opportunity to turn his life over to the LORD JESUS and have his idols burnt. He planned to come to the church whenever they advertise any special program or whenever someone invited him again. As he waited for this, he discovered painfully that the man had backslidden.

How many times has God so dealt with you and fought on your behalf without your knowing? Yet you keep complaining.

What should he do now that he knows the man has walked off his protective cover? Should he attack him now or go ahead to get what the man had. He believes that if he attacked him then, he will succeed.

But that will not give him the protective cover, which he now earnestly desired. He

could have attended the first night of the revival but this battle was going on in his mind. Now he has come, he wanted to become a Christian and to have the same protective power.

It was our pleasure to lead him in the sinners prayer, go to his house and bring the idols and family to the church and have the idols burnt. The entire village was stirred that night. I cannot tell you the exact number of people that were saved during that revival. Suffice it to say that attendance in that church was more than doubled.

I have had the privilege of visiting that church again since then. And both old men are still in church, serving the Lord and have been the best of friends. Child of God, you are God's responsibility. I have always experienced this since my salvation. In this little book, I will endeavour to share with you some testimonies from my own life experience that shows the faithfulness of the LORD to His own.

Like David of old, I can say "I have been young, and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken nor his seed begging bread," Psalm 37 :25.

PRINCIPLE OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

"The just shall live by faith". This declaration of the Christian's principle of life is found four times in the Bible (Ha2:4, Rom 1:17, Gal3:10, Heb 10:38). This underscores how important this fact is. It is more than a philosophy; it is the very principle of the Christian life. The just lives by his faith. The righteous shall live his whole life by faith.

In contrast, the unjust live by their own self sufficiency. They are puffed up and trust in themselves. Whereas the confidence of the just is in God, the unjust have their confidence in themselves and what they have set up. "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the Lord our God" Psalm 20:4. The righteous shall live his whole life by faith. He is saved by faith Acts 16:31, kept by faith 1 Peter 1:5 and lives by faith Gal. 2:20.

WHAT IS FAITH?

Faith is taking God at His word and asking no questions. Faith is believing whatever God has said or revealed, "Now faith is the substance of things hope for, the evidence of things not seen Heb 11: 1. Just as a title deed is evidence of real estate, so your faith is evidence of your eternal estate in God. "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen, for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal"2 Cor. 4: 18. "For we walk by faith and not by sight" 2Cor5:

Faith goes beyond reason. It believes without understanding "why". It defies reason. Faith does not always face facts. It never gives up. Faith does not make anything easy but it makes all things possible. It moves mountains! "And Jesus answering saith unto them. Have faith in God for verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall say to this mountain. Be thou, removed and be thou cast unto the sea and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things that he saith shall come to pass, he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore I say unto you. What things so ever ye desire when ye pray believe that ye receive them and ye shall have them. "Mark 11:22-24".

The Christian who sets out on a faith course, who assumes a life attitude of believing God, will find that ' things will continually work out in his favour instead of against him. Faith is the Power that changes the impossible to the possible. It turns defeat to victory. Faith turns sickness to health and darkness to light. It turns a dream into reality. '

Faith will be tried many times and in many ways (1 Peter 1:7). But faith will always be vindicated, because it is more than equal to any occasion. Faith knows how to wait on the Lord (Isa 40:31) and it is always victorious (1 In.5:4). Faith knows that "All things work together for good to them that love God "Rom 8:28 it is not that faith believes that things are good, or that all things work well. But it does believe that all things (good or bad) work together for good to them that love God.

SAVED BY FAITH

"And they said believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shall be saved and thy house" Acts 16:31. This was the answer of Paul and Silas to the Philippian Jailor

when he asked the question "What must I do to be saved?"

Man born into this world is lost. Lost from God. Lost in sin! God wants to save man. He sent Jesus to die on the cross for the Salvation of Man. Man is a sinner. Rom 3:23. Sin must be punished Rom. 6:23. Man cannot save himself. Acts 4: 12. Jesus took the punishment for Man's sins 1Cor 15:3-4 Faith in Christ saves man In. 3:16. When you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe Him in your heart you shall be saved Rom 10:9-10. Without Christ, man is dead in sins. (Eph 2: 1).

For man to come alive or be alive he must exercise faith in the finished work of Christ on Calvary. This is saving faith. For life to come into a dead man. He needs faith in Christ. "He that hath the son hath life and he that hath not the son of God hath not life" 1 Jn 5: 12. When we say that the just shall live by faith, we mean that they become just or righteous by their faith in Christ "for he hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" 2 Cor. 5:21. They pass from death to life by their faith in Christ (1 In3: 14).

Man cannot earn his salvation. You can not work for it; no matter how hardworking you are! Yes, you cannot purchase it, no matter how rich you are! "For by grace are you saved through faith and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God" Eph 2:8. It is freely given to all who will receive. "It is the gift of God not of works lest any man should boast" Eph 2:9. There is no question of not been able to afford it because of poverty. If it were on sale, no human being would have been able to afford it. Thank God, it's free.

As I write this, I remember, my life as a young person growing up in it denominational church, where the truth of God's word was not preached.

I thought that it was my efforts at purity that will save me. In fact I prided myself in the assumption that when the Lord comes to judge the world, I would be free simply because my good deeds far outweighed my bad deeds.

I have never smoked cigarette not to mention hard drugs. I have never been in alcohol, in fact I hadn't even had any affair with any lady. I didn't know what it

meant to steal or take something that didn't belong to me. "It is my type that will go to heaven," I boasted.

I was sincere. But I have since discovered that I was sincerely wrong. God will judge the world with his own standards not mine or that of any man or organization no matter how religious. I discovered that I was trying to earn what God has already given to me free. A gift only needs to be received, not paid for.

The just shall live by faith! Faith, in the finished work of Christ on Calvary. Thank God for those who shared God's word with me. I got convicted. Saying your prayers, going to church, doing good works etc

cannot save a man.

"All have sinned", the scriptures say. And the solution to the sin problem is Christ! No amount of penance can save a man.

Someone said to me the other day "I do not feel free to come to God, my sins are too many. Here is the answer from the scripture, "if we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness", I Jn. 1:9. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper but whosoever confeseth and forsaketh them, shall have mercy", Prov. 28: 13.

KEPT BY FAITH

"Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" 1 Pet. 1:5. God is able to keep those who He has saved! We are kept going by faith. "It is not by power nor by might but my Spirit says the Lord." Zech 4:6. I am always trilled when I hear testimonies of children of God who have remained faithful to the Lord over the years.

In my early Christian lire, I will always be excited when I hear of someone who was saved ten years ago. I remember attending a camp meeting and a brother who was to give us a talk, was said to have been saved in the sixties. I kept praising God for His faithfulness. I knew that the same God will keep me and that one day I can

testify to the same effect. To God be the glory in a couple of months, it will be twenty five years since that day in October 1977, when Christ came into my life! God has kept me. He's been faithful!

It hasn't all been smooth these years. As I take stock of all that has happened, I can only thank the Lord that he sustained me. There were time when certain doctrines became the vogue in the fold. God helped us. I was personally swayed by one or two of these but I never backslide. There were times when I fell into sin. I am been honest with you. But thank God for his grace there has not been a time when I deliberately turned my back on the Lord.

He too hasn't relaxed His hold on me. How time files! Its twenty five years just now! And I know that if Christ tarries, it will be my pleasure to keep the faith; for many more years before I take the final rest. There have been difficult times. Times when things were rough and it appeared as though God has forgotten one.

"But the steadfast love of the Lord never ceaseth! His mercies never come to an end. They are new every morning. Great is His faithfulness" Gen 3:23. Jude, in his epistle describes God as been "able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. Verse 24.

Paul writing to Timothy in chapter one verse twelve of his second epistle said" for the which cause I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which r have committed unto him against that day! And in I Thes 5:24 he said "Faithful is He who has called you who also will do it" Trust God. He will see you through.

I once counselled a young man who was afraid of becoming a Christian; because according to him, he didn't want to be a hypocrite neither did he want to be a Christian and fall back after a few months. Becoming a Christian and living the Christian life is by faith! "For we walk by faith and not by sight!" for we wal1c by faith and not by sight!" What do you believe? I believe that the Lord will keep me. I believe that I will continue to love and serve Him in spirit and in truth! I am His responsibility.

LIVING BY FAITH

"I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ that liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who love me and gave himself for me" Gal 2:20. "I live by the faith of the Son of God, it is no longer I that liveth, but Christ that liveth in me. What an experience!

Before you became a Christian, you were your own responsibility or your father. But once you give your life to Christ, it is no longer yours. I pray that God will help you to grasp the essence of the Lordship of Jesus Christ. You can't give your life to him and still retain it. He can't be Lord of your life and yet you are in charge of it. And this is something that has helped me, since I believed. I understand giving my life to Jesus to mean that the life does not belong to me anymore. It is His.

This means that everything that I am, own or that pertains to me belongs to the Lord. He can't own me and yet not own my property or position. Whatever I am or have, I consider that I hold in trust for him. And as such his decision is final. By implication, I must seek His will in everything that I do. Name it; Marriage, Child raising, Education, Career, Investment, Ministry, Time spending, Money management, Travel etc.

Since He owns me, only what He wills and not what I will should be done. There have been times when I wasn't 'certain about His will. I had to search His word' and pray. There have been times when His revealed will did not seem compatible with my person or thinking I have had to go to the place of prayer, not for him to change his will, but for Him to help me flow with it.

Take a life career for example. I believe that I will do well if I were a lawyer. I think that I am particularly gifted in this area. In my University days, I was always the best student in the Law courses we took as Accounting students. I believe too, that as an Accountant, I can do very well. I have worked in the Bank previously and I made progress; I have also tried my hands on public practice I made some money from this. But I know that all these are not the will of God for my life. I have God's calling upon my life to preach the Gospel and preaching I must do. As I write this I thank the Lord for the grace to know his will and settle down for it. "It is no longer I that liveth, but Christ that liveth in me.

A young man recently came to me to sign his JAMB (University admission) forms. I asked him if he had accepted Christ as Saviour and Lord. A short interview confirmed this. I proceeded to ask him if he sort God's will for his life, before filling in Petroleum Engineering as his choice of course of study. He looked at me very surprised. "Pastor" he said "Petroleum is the mainstay of the Nigerian economy, and the only place to work and live well honestly is in the oil industry. Pastor, I didn't pray about this. I don't think I need to. It is clear".

Many believers are doing the wrong thing at the right time. I believe that many who would have succeeded as Doctors are trained to be Engineers vice-versa. This is the reason for many failures, mediocrity, and frustration. I believe that a child of God who takes time to find out God's will for his life and pursue it, will find rest and peace in this life. If you agree that you have surrendered your life to Jesus. If you agree that He is the Lord of your life. Do you think it is right for you to do anything with your life without His knowledge, consent and blessing? Or is it that you can't trust Him? Or is it that you fear that He does not want the best for you? Or is it that you love yourself more than He loves you?

"The just shall live by faith." "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil to give you an expected end." Jer 29: 11. Some translations say "to give you a future and a hope." No man can do something with another man's property without his knowledge and approval. To finish what you want to do and merely inform Him, is a great slight! Is He really your Lord?

The church today needs to learn what the Lordship of Jesus Christ implies. He owns us. He rules and reigns over us. He is our shepherd, we are the sheep of His pasture. Hallelujah!! He should be in charge. Conversely just as you submit all to Him, He takes charge of all. He becomes responsible for you. Your safety, welfare, success etc. One problem is that many of us do not want him to Lord us yet we want to enjoy the benefits of his Lordship.

Some body once told this story. A man built a house of ten rooms. Five upstairs and the other five downstairs. Since he has given his heart to the Lord Jesus, he gave him the front room downstairs believing he has done well. That night Satan,

attacked him and dealt with him. He complained to the Lord Jesus the next morning. The Lord explained that Satan never came to where He was. The man then decided to give the Lord, the whole of the ground floor and congratulated himself that He was been generous. That night, Satan attacked the man again. He could hardly wait for the next morning, before complaining to the Lord. The Lord again explained that Satan ever got to where he was. In desperation, the man now gave the Lord four more rooms.

That is, the Lord had nine and he had one. He bragged about how much he had given. That night, Satan attacked him again. He rushed to the Lord. He couldn't understand, why he who owns the house, had only one room and had given nine to the Lord Jesus only for Satan to still be attacking him. Again the Lord explained that Satan never got to where he was. The man decided to give up. "Okay Lord, you take everything! The whole ten rooms I give to you." Surprisingly, the Lord did not drive him out as he had thought. He found out that when he gave everything to the Lord, he had more.

That night, Satan made the mistake of his life and visited for another round of attack. This time, he met the Lord Jesus at the main entrance. He apologized quickly. "I have knocked on the wrong door, I will go elsewhere", he explained. Meanwhile, the man was watching from upstairs. He couldn't hide his joy. He was now enjoying the benefits of giving all to the Lord.

Have you given all to the Lord? Or are there some, areas you do not want Him to be involved in? Is there anything you are withholding from Him? Another problem with some of us is that, after surrendering to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, we do not know how to leave ourselves in His hands, for Him to perfect His purposes and do whatever He wants to do with us as He wills. You are God's responsibility.

I do not understand it, when a Christian who sudden feels feverish; without praying quickly sends for medication. I am not against the taking of medicine to cure illness. But if you are going to apply a cure on somebody's property why not first inform him of what is happening and ask him to fix it? The scriptures say, that "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be delivered". Romans 10: 13.

The reason why we do not experience the Lord's deliverance is that we do not call on Him. When we are in trouble with our health, we call on the doctor. When we are in trouble with money, we call on our uncle or brother-in-law that is wealthy. We are calling on the wrong one! We simply do not know how to rely on the Lord. Yet we are told that the just shall live by faith! Do we doubt God's power? Is it His love and willingness that we do not trust? I don't understand it.

Recently, one of my younger brothers who is a Law student, sent a note to me through one of his course mates. There was a new development at school and he needed some money urgently. He is a child of God and has tasted of the goodness of the Lord. I gave his friend his fare back to school and told him to ask my younger one to see me.

When he came I asked him, if he prayed before sending the young man. He looked at me blankly as if to ask what I meant. "Did you ask God to supply the need when it arose?" I asked again. He muttered the word "no". "How did Jesus ask you to pray?" I asked him. "Our father who art in Otu-Jeremi?" Or "My big Brother who is in Warri?" or "Our Father who art in heaven?". He kept quiet looking at me. "You must learn to depend Upon God alone for your needs". I told him. And the only way you express this dependence is through prayer. Or why do you think God asked us to pray? He sees us and knows us?

When a need arises, do not physically calculate the source of your supply. God is your only source. You must trust him and be opened enough for Him to use any channel, David said "I will look unto the hills from whence cometh my help, my help cometh from the Lord who made the Heaven and the Earth" Psalm 121: 1. Paul admonished us to "look unto Jesus, the author and the finisher of our faith" Heb 12:2. It is guaranteed in scripture that "my God shall supply all your needs according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" Phil.4:19. We must take our eyes off the channel and look to the source. We must learn to

depend upon Him for everything. This is what is meant by "living by faith".

Since my salvation, I have always lived a life of faith. I got saved when I was in secondary school. Oh, you needed to hear me pray to pass my exams. It was as if I never read. In this way, God blessed my every effort: I was always alarmed when a fellow believer fails his exams. Are we serving the same God? I always asked. I

always believed that I would pass my exams in flying colours. The scriptures say that "I will be the head and not the tail, above only and not beneath" Deut. 28: 13.

As I write this, I remember my secondary School days. Those of us who led the local Scripture Union were always the best in class. And as I take stock of all of us today, the testimony continues. Brother George, is a qualified pharmacist in Lagos today. Brother Jabor is practicing law successfully in Warrington today. Brother F and Brother M are front line ministers of the gospel. etc. We had a practise of allowing only believers to beat us in the exams. If you see in my result sheet that I came out fourth position, do your investigations. All those ahead of me i.e., positions first to third must really be born again Christian.

The period of our [mal exams (West African School Certificate Examinations (WASC), was very crucial for me. First it was funds to pay the twenty five Naira enrolment fee. God miraculously supplied that. Then a Camp meeting was holding and I had accepted to speak during the meetings not knowing that the dates were the very first week of the exams. As I read and prayed. I sought the Lord's will whether to disappoint the brethren, because of my exams. They will understand. I thought. The call of God upon my life had been so evident and strong, such that I was already getting invitations to preach at this time in churches.

As I prayed, the Lord would not have me disappoint His people and I got assurance of His grace to cope. And so on the day of my first paper, I went to preach the first sermon at the camp meeting, before coming to write the examination. I was some minutes late for the paper. My principal then, was very annoyed especially when he heard that I was late only because I had a preaching engagement. He wasn't going to allow me destroy myself, I must call in my parents the next day. He fumed.

Main while the WAEC external invigilator came to him to complain of a student who was shivering and needed some medical attention. The principal told him that he knows, that I had some powers and that if the boy agrees, I can pray for him. The principal was not a Christian but he believed in my prayers. As I touched the boy in prayers, the boy fell. The invigilator was surprised. At this time in the Pentecostal movement in Nigeria falling under the power of God was not popular. When the boy got up.

He was okay and went onto write the paper which he credited.

Because of this, I was allowed to write the paper. At night, I was read as if there is no God and then pray as if I have never read. Everyone; my teachers, school mates parents etc. concluded that I have already failed the exams. But I knew that I will pass it. I knew the God I served. He hadn't disappointed me before and He hasn't changed.

I remember after our mathematics paper, I joined a group of students who reviewed the paper. All that I told them was scorned. They all advised me to either start reading for the next WASC exams or just concentrate on the Bible and be a Pastor. At that time in Nigeria, most Pastors were either primary school leavers or were only literate enough to read only the Bible. Those with the WASC were champions. But when the results came, I was the only student who credited both Mathematics and English Language. I had five credits at a sitting. Others who had Six and Seven credits had either Mathematics or English and so had to resist papers. Once again my God proved faithful.

When I eventually went to University I didn't need to do G.C.E. or WASC anymore. God is faithful. He will not allow those who trust in Him to be disappointed. Hence the prophet Isaiah said "Trust in the Lord for ever for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength" Isaiah 26:4. God is faithful to His word. "He has magnified his word above his name " Psalm 138:2 "God is not a man that he should lie, neither the son of man that he should repent; hath he said, and shall he not do it? Or hath he spoken and shall he not make it good?" Numbers 23: 19 and God has said" So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" Isaiah 55:11. "Heaven and Earth will pass away but my words shall not pass away, Matthew 24: 35.

If God said it, It is guaranteed and that settles it. That is why whenever I am facing any situation, I always try to find out what God's word says about it. Faith begins when the will of God is known. This is how to live by faith! As soon as I discover what God's word says about it, I line myself up with it, knowing that good will come out of it . "The scripture can not be broken" John 11:35 "All the promises of God in Him are yea and in Him Amen unto the glory of God by us" II Cor. 1:20.

During my secondary school career, I never failed or repeated a class. In the University, I never had a carry over. Someone said, but some unbelievers achieve that also. This is the problem the Prophet Habakkuk addressed in chapter 2 verse 1 to 4 of his book. God is the source of my strength. I do not know of any other person's source. I finished my School Certificate Examinations on June 6" and by the 7" a group of brethren in the same town where I schooled had requested me to pastor them. I had closely worked with them previously. I knew that was what was coming ahead long before they did ask me. The Spirit of God had prompted my heart to accept whenever asked. On Sunday 13" of June, I ministered in that church and accepted the Pastorate. That is how I got into full time ministry.

My decision to respond to God's call at this time brought me a lot of persecution from my parents and relations. Here was a young man who had just left Secondary School. He should be thinking of University Education immediately and a career in life. Moreover, at this point in time, Ministers of the gospel in Nigeria were renowned for poverty. There was no prospect of living "the good life" as far as my parents could see, if I were a Pastor.

My father did his best to persuade me to change my mind. First it was a friendly logical discussion. Then it was offers and "bribes". When none of these worked. He made a "U" turn. He started threatening. My mother too, was scared about what I was doing with my life. Those of you who got saved through the Scripture Union in the seventies and early eighties will understand the zeal and sincerity of those days and the persecution that followed it. My mother was subtle in her approach. She begged. She cried. My Uncle was stem. "You should just change your surname immediately, if you do not want to live a good life" he said. How can a young man with prospect go into full time ministry at this time, knowing fully well that it might end up as a covenant with poverty? I knew that I had God's calling upon my life. I also knew that God is able to take care of me. "Faithful is he who has called you, who also will do it! I Thes. 5:24.

At the end of the day my family rejected me. My father told me never to come home until I retraced my steps. My uncle insisted that somehow I can be forced and should be forced to stop the Church work. After all I was not in the "first and only" church, Jesus established. Psalm 27:10 was my favorite verse of scripture at that time. "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me

up."

What was the salary the church offered me that so attracted me. Zero Naira monthly! Only my house rent payment was guaranteed. And this was a ten feet by twelve feet single room that was to serve as my" bedroom, dinning, study, kitchen, etc. To live my daily life. I had to trust God. I was not on a salary. So to eat a meal, I had to trust God to supply it! To put on cloths, was something I had to believe God for. Secular job? It never crossed my mind!

"If God called me, he is able to meet my need", I always say. Then someone said to me, "God's work done in God's way at God's time, by God's man, will not lack God's support. Yes, God will provide for the work. He will also provide for me. 1 can't work for Mr. A and collect my Salary from Mr. B. 1 knew what it meant to live by faith from the beginning, No support was coming from anywhere.

No family member visited me neither was I allowed to visit anyone. This continued until Feb 1983 when I did a crusade in Warri which was very successful. My family's attitude softened a bit after this crusade. I believe for two reasons. One, it was clear to them by now that God's hand was upon my life. Secondly one of my cousins, a student at the University of Benin died at about this time. It would appear that while mourning, there was a new level of care for one another.

Here was I, studying my bible and praying daily, doing personal witnessing and visitation and then preaching every day. You never thought about the source of the next meal. I just knew it will come. I am serving a living God, I boasted. And God never disappointed me. Someone made a set of chairs for me. God was raising people to support me. However at this time, we didn't teach the people on giving and receiving or supporting the work and the minister. So things didn't move fast, there were times when one didn't have any food to break a fast. Yet, I cleaved to the Lord. By and large, the Lord sustained me. The only thing that gave me joy was the opportunity to share the gospel with somebody, I never thought of accumulating wealth. Yet the Lord took care of me. And it has been a practice since then, I do not receive a salary when I pastor a church.

In August 1986, I accepted the pastorate of a church in a different town. For the

first three months, I had no salary, I had to live by faith. Then the committee fixed my salary at forty naira monthly. When I protested, they thought that I was complaining of the smallness of the amount. All that I didn't want, was for any human being or group of persons to give a measurement of the yarn I could eat.

My life has been in Gods hand from the beginning. I didn't want to take it off him and put it in the hands of men. David said in 2 Sam 24: .14 "let us fall into hand of the Lord for his mercies are great and let me not fall into the hand of man" When the salary was doubled to eighty naira monthly I still wasn't happy. When the national headquarters took over" the payment of all pastors salary and my figure went up by over a hundred naira I still wasn't happy. By the time I left this denomination, the figure had gone up to two hundred and fifty naira plus. Yet I was not happy been on the pay roll of the church.

So you know what I did? After tithing, I will give out all the other money to church members and other ministers I knew, who were in need. When the local church was in charge, the treasurer will get so infuriated when he sees me give out the whole money as soon as he pays me. When it first started, I will sign for the money and tell him, who and who to distribute it to. When he kept complaining. I started doing the distribution by myself in his presence. That is, immediately he gives it to me. And this "continued even after the national headquarters started paying. But do you know what? I had a better tiring standard than, those fellow pastors who kept on complaining of the low pay and pressing for increments. When what you have cannot meet your need, it is not your harvest. It is a seed. Learn to sow it for your harvest to come in. He who sows can, expect, a harvest. This bas

helped me all through my Christian life. To get, I must give.

When I give money to some of them, they will ask me, how come I am able to give when we earn so little. God is my source of supply. I will tell them. I do not depend on a salary to live my life. I live by faith! I simply trust God to meet my needs. In fact when some small amount is in my pocket and I am trying to scheme in my mind how to use it, I quickly give it out and trust God to meet my needs. My future belongs to God! My life is in God's hand. He will take care of me. He will take me to my expected end. Halleluiah! it is a joy to live by faith.

I am a covenant child of God. I do not depend upon persons or conditions for my

prosperity. I bless persons and condition as channels of my prosperity, but God is the source of my supply. God provides his own amazing channels of supply to me now. My financial income cannot be limited. I am the rich child of a loving father. All that my father has for me comes to me speedily, richly and freely. The Lord is on my side, I will not fear, what can men do unto me?" Ps 118:6 "for he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee so that we may boldly say. The Lord is my helper, I will not fear; what men shall do unto me "Heb.13:5.

In 1989, as I spent time praying and fasting and asking God about the future of my life and ministry, I felt an impression in my spirit that I should get higher education and that this will enhance my ministry. Consequently I bought the Jamb forms, did the exams and secured admission to read Accounting at the Bendel State University, Ekpoma. Admission secured, I called the church committee and told them about it. I also contact the national headquarters of the church for an arrangement that will see me pastor the church and go to school at the same time.

But somebody didn't buy this idea. I was in school in February 1990, when I received a letter from headquarters, that I was relieved of my position and that all church property in my possession should be returned immediately. I was also to vacate the church rented house.

Where do I go from here? I had taken this step because I felt led to do so. I also knew that God was going to see me through. But I did not expect the amount of attacks I received because of it. What didn't they say? "Waive has backslided. He has abandoned his calling! He wont be able to go through school! No body will give him money etc".

My first school fees of four hundred and twenty five naira was borrowed. To register as a student, I needed to photocopy a number of papers, do chest x-ray etc. God miraculously supplied.

But I had no accommodation and no money. When I first resumed at Ekpoma it was a story of God's faithfulness. After all I am his responsibility. He is my Lord.

I arrived Ekpoma with barely twenty naira on me. Upon arrival, I just roamed the campus trusting God for an open door. The first person that recognized me was a young lady who said, she had listened to me preach before. When I told her why I was on Campus, she shook her head and told me I had missed God. She left.

The next person who recognized me said exactly the same thing and advised me not to waste my time and God's. Then I saw a brother I had known at Ughelli. He was understanding but his room was already filled, I ended up in the home of a certain minister who had preached for me at Ughelli a few years back.

He seemed to understand me. And for a week or two I stayed with him and attended my lectures from his home. Then one evening he called me to explain, why I couldn't live with him. He drove me in his car back to school. Where do I go to now? I ended up with another brother on campus and then back to the nearby village with a brother and back to campus until the academic year ended.

I remember the day the new pastor in church was introduced. I got ready to go back to Ekpoma, packed my bag and told everyone that I was leaving. But I had no Kobo in my pocket. After the church service the brother who came to do the introduction from Warri, gave me a ride to Effuruli and gave me fifty naira. I wasn't expecting this.

Anyway when I got to Ekpoma, I had about thirty five naira in my pocket and I was hungry. I went into the nearest restaurant and ordered food. As I sat down, the sales girl went to call her "madam".

They recognized me and told me that the Lord will have them to give me, free food as long as they are running that business in town.

Doors were now opening. Some one gave me some money to relocate my pregnant wife and child. The Christian life is a life of faith. I knew I was going to come out victorious. My bank account at New Nigeria Bank Ughelli had only N50.08 when I left for school. That was my total savings as it were. More than one person commented that he was sure financial problems will drive me back from school.

My father said the younger children were now his priority and that I couldn't eat my cake and have it. A maternal Uncle of mine sent for my father and asked who I depended upon to sponsor my' education. He warned that if I had him in mind, he wanted my mother to know that a Kobo of his won't get into it. He kept his word. When I got the news I laughed, because I never thought of him. I was depending on God alone.

In my first semester, I had to use loose sheet, a notebooks before I could buy news print notebooks. But God remained faithful, If I had a need in school or my wife and children needed something, all I will do then, is pray; ask it of my father and then sow a seed. And you know that He is faithful! I am his responsibility! By the time I got to 300 levels, things had changed so drastically that I can remember some fellow students I helped with their fees.

My 400 levels was such a glorious time, I was in such demand to preach in churches across the land. The joy of ministry had come again. At this time, God was supplying me with funds faster than I could use. He also under-took for me in my studies, I graduated Second Class upper Division. What more could I ask For? David said "Oh taste and see that the Lord is good, blessed is the man that trusteth in him" Ps 34:8. I have tasted. I have seen that the Lord is good. I challenge you to begin a life of faith in God. "For by the flesh shall no man prevail" I Sam2:9.

THE FAITH STORY OF FRESH ANOINTING REVIVAL MINISTRIES

When the LORD led me to seek higher education as a prelude to beginning independent evangelistic and missionary ministry, I didn't know all that it will take. But upon graduation, I was immediately offered a Bank job, which I accepted. Just as I was settling down to the job, the LORD began to impress upon me that His calling is upon my life. To use His words, He said, He wouldn't share me with anyone. When I could not resist Him, I told my prayer partners at the Bank that I would be leaving for full time ministry.

As preparations for my exit began, brethren began to show concern. A dear sister high up in the Bank, offered to provide me a place to begin the ministry in Lagos

where I worked. But the LORD insisted on going to Warri. She then offered to transfer me to Warri Branch of the Bank. But the LORD would have none of these. She was very concerned. She didn't want Rita and the children to suffer.

She asked whether I had a place of worship or some brethren who will join me in starting the ministry in Warri. The answer was in the negative. She was very worried because she also knew I had no money. She suggested I seek counsel from senior ministers of the gospel and if I still feel the same way, she would prefer that I apply for a leave of absence without pay, which she can approve. The bottom line I think is that if things don't work out well, I can have somewhere to fall back on.

But serving God is by faith. My heart smote me when I first agreed to this. I had to resign. Faith requires courage in risk taking. Queen Esther said "if I perish, I perish". Upon my arrival in Warri in January 1997, I had to spend the whole month in fasting and prayers as I sought the LORD once again. My friends considered me stupid. How can you leave a Bank job just like that? Why didn't you secure a place of residence and worship and then some money before beginning the ministry.

But God honours faith, because faith honours Him (I Sam. 2:30) In March of that year, I was having a ride in someone's car, when we 'saw a vacant flat in a choice area of town. I mentioned that I liked it. The fellow simply stopped the car, checked the house, got the landlord and paid the initial rent for one year. By that weekend I was already staying there. My family could now join me from Lagos.

It was during that period of moving my family that I visited the sister at the Bank who asked about the ministry. She then offered a house she had bought on Udu road as a starting point for the ministry free of

change for six months. All hurdles to our entering the property and beginning the work were cleared by May and on the 17th the ministry effectively began. "This beginning of miracles" the Lord did to start **FRESH ANOINTING REVIVAL MINISTRIES.**

My wife and I had to begin joint personal evangelism. Getting chairs for converts to sit was not an easy task. But the Lord granted us favour as we went out to invite

people from time to time. We had many visitors to the church at that time. It appeared that joining a new ministry as a member was not a fanciful idea to many. But we thank the LORD for our converts who stayed.

By November that year when we were scheduled to move out, it was another miracle as the Lord proved Himself faithful. I have since discovered, that when the enemy comes out against us, God will work a way out of it and use it for our proliferation. (Rom. 8:28). The warehouse He provided us was formerly used by the Nigeria Agip Oil Company. How we got it is another startling testimony. Ministry is by faith!

After two years of steady growth, we were forcibly ejected from that warehouse. This was because an oil servicing company had made an "irresistible" offer to the Landlords. But again the LORD used it to promote us. We had to worship open air on a piece of land for quite sometime. It was not an easy experience. If I had gone by my senses or logic, I should have packed up. But ministry is by faith. God's man doing God's work in God's way at God's time will not lack God's support, we are told.

Today the Lord has blessed us beyond measure. Our church now meets in her own property, the building of which is almost completed as at the time of this writing. Our radio ministry is affecting millions of lives in our nation. We have also been privileged to take the gospel to other nations on three continents!

Younger ministers often ask me to tell them, the secret. It is by faith, I will always say. We must believe God's word. We must take God at His word and act accordingly, "God is not a man that He should lie, neither the son of man, that He should repent" "His word will not return to Him void but must accomplish the purpose for which he sends it."