

# THE FATHER'S HEART

...according to all that is my Heart and in My Mind. 1 Sam 2:35



## BEHOLD JESUS PART 1

By: Pastor Ikenna Okeke

Text: John 4

A basic understanding of who the Lord Jesus is essential for every believer. Many in the church today have learned the denominational practices and have been ordained as workers, deacons, pastors, and bishops, yet they may not truly know Jesus. Intelligence and the ability to recall and present facts do not equate to a personal relationship with Him. For instance, while AI can assist in preparing a sermon, it does not possess knowledge of the Lord Jesus. The primary issue facing humanity is a lack of knowledge of God. Adam and Eve, despite being created in God's image and likeness, did not truly understand who God was. This lack of understanding allowed the serpent to deceive them into disobeying God. No wonder scripture says "My people are being destroyed because they don't know Me...." (Hos.4:6 NLT)

There are many religions in the world today, each claiming to know the way to God. Often, celebrities who have experienced incarceration later announce that they have become Buddhists or have adopted another faith. This situation may lead one to question whether Christianity is just another religion or if it is indeed "the Way, the Truth, and the Life." (John 14:6). The truth is this: If our beliefs are merely principles and steps for worship, then we could very well be just like any other religion. However, what makes Christianity completely different from other religions is that there is a Person at the center of our faith and His name is Jesus. He is not just a Person, He is God. He is God who becomes man; He is God revealed to us. He is God in every sense (John 1:1-3). This God took on the form of a Man for the purpose of relating with mankind. He came to announce that God loves the world so much that, rather than let us perish, He became a man to bear the punishment for our sins (John 3:16). We are not trying to find our way to God; instead, Jesus came as the Way, revealing Himself to us.

The Bible says "He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him" (John 1:10). This statement should remind every believer not to let the influences of the world sway them. Despite the world's intelligence and knowledge, it did not recognize its Maker; He came into the world, yet

they failed to acknowledge Him. Any believer who may lack something that the world values should not feel depressed about this. Instead, the knowledge of their Maker should inspire joy, even in the absence of worldly possessions.

The main purpose of John the Baptist's ministry was to point the Lord Jesus to the world. He came as a witness to Him. Scripture says "The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!' (John 1:29). Beloved, until you have that encounter and revelation knowledge of Jesus, your journey in this world is risky and unpredictable. Even if you may be confused about some principles or steps to take, if you know Him, you can always go to Him for direction.

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- JOHN 1:29

In the same chapter, the scripture says "Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples. And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, 'Behold the Lamb of God!' The two disciples heard him speak and they followed Jesus." (John 1:35-37). John's disciples left him to follow Jesus because John effectively pointed them to Jesus as the Way and the Truth. Although they initially regarded John as the Christ they were expecting (John 1:20-27), John consistently directed them to Jesus as the Messiah. When he identified Jesus as the One, his disciples wasted no time in leaving John to follow Him. Beloved, this should be the ideal expectation in any true spiritual environment. Regardless of the shortcomings of a congregation's members, if their minister faithfully points them to Jesus, they should ultimately follow Him. Jesus is beautifully incomparable to anything else; no one can truly encounter Him and remain attached to their pastor, tribe, bishop, or denomination.

As soon as Jesus saw the two disciples following Him, He said to them "What do you seek?" and they said to Him "Rabbi, where are You staying" (John 1:38). Naturally, any man will be excited to see people following him as their role model, but Jesus was not excited about that. Rather, He asked them why they were following Him. Many people do not want to know why others follow them and do not bother. They fail to realize that they will give an account to God for each follower.

Jesus in response to them showed them where He was staying, and they remained with Him there. Andrew was one of the two disciples who followed Jesus, and after staying with Him, the bible says he went and informed his brother Simon Peter that they had found the Messiah (John 1:41). This implies that they had all been searching for the Messiah/the Christ.

To "Behold" means to see, to observe, to consider. It is not just a glance. To behold the Lamb means to acknowledge the Lamb (Jesus) our Saviour, God, Redeemer, etc. As Peter and the others continued to follow Jesus, he experienced the miraculous catch of fish, yet remained focused on Jesus rather than the breakthrough itself. Peter valued Jesus more than the miracle. When people don't truly know Jesus, they often see Him only as a miracle worker. But Peter understood that Jesus offered far more—a source of living water that could flow from within. Beloved, when we encounter Jesus, our focus shifts from temporary gains to a deeper transformation. Like Peter, we should desire not just blessings but the change from sinner to saint that only Jesus can bring (Luke 5:8). This kind of desire as seen in Peter is exactly what God promised: "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name" (John 1:12). By his action, Peter was basically saying: 'I don't really care about the breakthrough or the blessings of this earth, take me with You' because he had come to know Jesus, and wanted to be like Jesus.

In life, if you have a friend who can acquit you of every crime you commit, and that friend has an evil character, you will likely go on a rampage, committing more wrongs because you believe he will always save you. However, if your friend has impeccable character, you won't engage in actions that conflict with his values. Similarly, any believer who claims they can live however they choose is essentially saying that while they might understand all the principles of Christianity, they don't truly know the person of Jesus. The Jesus who forgives your sins does so with His holy blood, which means you cannot plan to sin intentionally and then expect to return to Him for forgiveness. This attitude reflects a lack of true understanding of who He is.

When scripture says "and whatever you ask the Father in My name, that I will do, that the Father may

be glorified in the Son" (John 14:13), it doesn't mean the vocal sound of the name of Jesus, but what this is saying is that "whatever you ask the Father in My character, in the pursuit of what I represent, My Father will do it for you." So, it is possible not to know Jesus and be praying in His name, while iniquity and vileness fill your heart.

Jesus knew that He would come to Earth to save people before He was born. He saw that there would be no special accommodations for Him. Believers who understand this about Jesus should not feel discouraged when they face accommodation problems. You can't be shouting that your God is not a poor God, when the scriptures say, "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor that we through His poverty might become rich" (2 Cor.8:9) So, there are experiences that do not define your identity in Christ, but for some reasons, God permits you to go through them for His purpose. Jesus had no business becoming a man, but for the Father's purpose of the redemption of mankind, He agreed to go through it for us. Beloved, no matter your present predicament, behold Jesus, who when He was reviled, did not revile in return. Jesus being the Master, laid aside His garment and began to wash His disciples' feet (John 13:4-12) (He was not compelled to do so). Jesus could walk on water, yet the only time He did so was in the middle of the night. He didn't do it for showmanship. The carnal man will have done so at noon when everyone will see him!

SO HE GOT UP FROM THE  
SUPPER, LAID ASIDE HIS  
OUTER GARMENTS, AND  
WRAPPED A TOWEL  
AROUND HIS WAIST.

— JOHN 13:4

Jesus had the authority to justify anything before the Father because He is God, yet He humbly said, "Not My will, but Your will be done." (Luke 22:42). He obeyed in all things (Heb.5:8). If you find yourself struggling with obedience, take a moment to reflect on Jesus' perfect obedience and ask Him for the strength to follow suit. Always remember that your walk with God is about following a Person—Jesus must be your standard at all times.

# BEHOLD JESUS

PART 2



by Pastor Ikenna Okeke

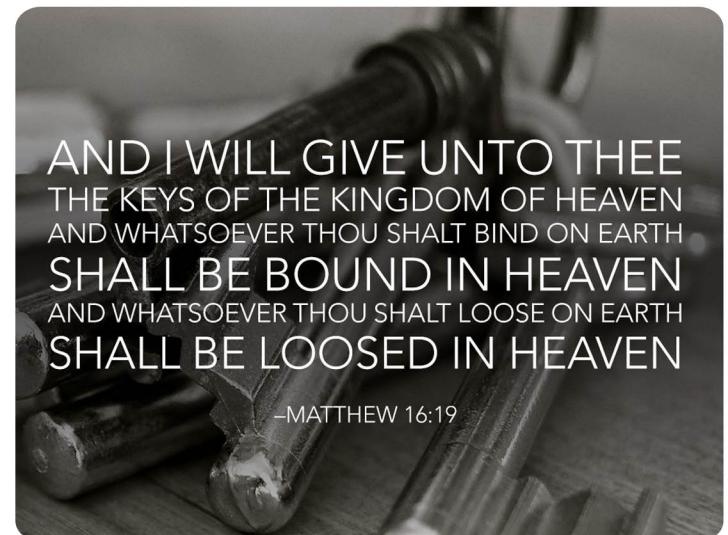
Text: Matt.16:13

"When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, 'who do men say that I am?' So, they said, 'some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.' He said to them, 'but who do you say that I am?' [Matt.16:13-15]. The implication of the Lord Jesus' latter question to His disciples is that everyone must have his own personal revelation of who Jesus Christ is to him. Jesus said He heard what they said men say that who He is, what the bishop says He is etc. but who do you say He is.

Scripture continuing says "Simon Peter answered and said, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.' Jesus answered and said to him, 'blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.'" (Matt.16:16-17). After Peter declared who Jesus is, the Lord called him [personally] blessed [note that when Peter declared his opinion of who Jesus is, he said so to the hearing of all the other disciples, and they all heard him, but when the Lord Jesus was proclaiming blessedness, He did not generalize it, rather He directed it to only Peter. The implication of this is that, your blessedness will not come from what your pastor says to you, it will come the revelation that the Father gives to you.

Furthermore, scripture says "And I also to you that you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." [Matt.16:18] – from this scripture, we can see that Jesus is saying that He will build His church 'on this rock' – what rock was He referring to? He was saying His church will be a congregation, a number, a group people who have individual revelation from the Father of who/what the Truth is. The rock of people who flesh and blood did not convince. This shows us that it is an effort in futility to try to use schemes of men, comedians, dance etc. to build the church. The true church is going to be built by men and women who have had individual encounters with the Father, and any other one will not be on the rock. Once you are in church because of the revelation you have from the Father, no one can destroy your faith, because you will be running the race based on what He revealed to you. For example, when the Lord Jesus introduced the holy communion to the Jews, many left Him, and when He asked His disciples if they too were ready to leave, Peter did not tell Him that they understood what the holy communion meant, but he said they had no where to go, because they had come to know by revelation that Jesus had the words of eternal life and that He is the Son of the living God [John 6:65-69].

The implication of this for the believer is that, it will not be easy to be a Christian, because many times you will not understand what is really going on in your walk with God, God may not answer you the way you expect Him to answer you etc. but what keeps you, is that you know that there is no other Way, but stay with Him no matter what. He is the Way, the Truth and the Life. This also means that any believer that comes to church based on this rock, will not have any reason to back slide. This rock of revelation was what kept Daniel faithful to God in exile in Babylon, as well as his companions who based on their revelation of God, refused to bow to the statue that king Nebuchadnezzar made. The gates of Hades cannot prevail against the people who have this revelation from the Father.



AND I WILL GIVE UNTO THEE  
THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN  
AND WHATSOEVER THOU SHALT BIND ON EARTH  
SHALL BE BOUND IN HEAVEN  
AND WHATSOEVER THOU SHALT LOOSE ON EARTH  
SHALL BE LOOSED IN HEAVEN

–MATTHEW 16:19

Scripture continues and says "And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth, will be loosed in heaven." [Matt.16:19] – The first thing that will occur to you as you read this scripture is that you can call to mind many things that you bound that were not bound. One of the things we are learning about the Lord is that from His conception, birth, life on earth, His ministry, till He went back to heaven; in all of it, nothing was really done for Him personally. Since, this was the case, it then means that whatever you bind or loose in alignment with the interest of the kingdom of God, is only what will be bound or loosed. This means if we critically probe the frustrations that most believers are facing, we will discover that they all hover around personal agendas. Jesus did not come for our personal agendas, rather He came to bestow upon us a kingdom, and for you and I to benefit from that kingdom, at times we might need to decrease [just as John the Baptist said "He must increase, but I must decrease" – John 3:30]. However, the challenge is that most of us have been taught about increase all the time. Following Jesus means that there will be times of going down or decrease, and such times check if it is in alignment with the kingdom not your personal agenda, if it is, then rejoice in the Lord your God and move on.

In Jesus name, is not about the sound of the name of Jesus and how you pronounce it, rather it is about what

He represents, who He represents. It means that whatever you ask the Father in His name, must be in alignment with what He wants. It must be in His interest; in the assignment He sent you [whatever you need or require in pursuit of the assignment He gave you will be done in Jesus name by the Father].

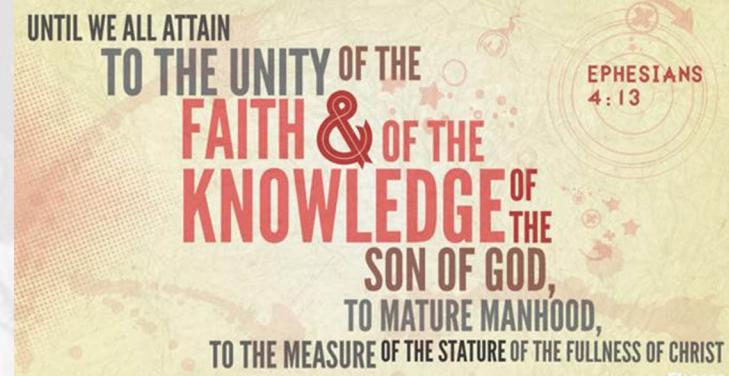
After the disciples came to know that Jesus is the Christ, scripture says "From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day. Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, 'far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You.'" [Matt.16:21-22] – Jesus was telling them how His assignment as the Christ will have to be accomplished, but the same Peter who had the initial revelation began to tell the Lord that, that will not be the Lord's portion – this time Peter was speaking by the flesh and not by the Spirit of the Father. The flesh is what causes frustration for the believer in his walk with God, but if you can desire only what the Father wants, it will just be happening just as you command it in Jesus' name. God only gives you what He knows is good for you in alignment with your destiny, not what you want.

"Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'if anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.' " [Matt.16:24] – The Lord Jesus in this verse was telling us why men are not able to follow Him, and anyone who doesn't catch this reason might think that he is following Him, but in reality, he is not following Jesus. Every believer must come to embrace the fact that following Christ, must of necessity involve deny himself, else he will just have an illusion of following Him. The Jesus you follow without denying self is just a talisman. Your cross is your calling in Christ – your cross is different from your neighbour's. Denying self will involve totally trusting Him, else you may not deny self in some situations, just as the rich young ruler could not trust the Lord enough to sell all he had and come and follow Jesus. Perhaps the man's call was not to be a treasurer in the kingdom, but an apostle – surely with the man's obedience to the other commandments from childhood, he would have been ready to give up to fifty percent to follow Jesus, but as an apostle, he didn't need all that wealth to follow Jesus [all he needed was to trust in the Lord, obey and follow Him]. Beloved, when you know that He is the Christ, the Son of the living God, whatever He tells you; surely, you will not argue with Him about it, rather you will gladly obey. The struggle we have with denying self flows from a lack of revelation of who is speaking to us. Life is a function of the revelation of who you are dealing with per time.

What is God's goal for saving anyone? Why does He still leave you and I here on earth after salvation? He wants us to be conformed to the image of Jesus [Rom.8:28-29]. All things only work together for good to those who are aligned to God's purpose. From the moment Jesus walked on earth, the Father's purpose is that many

other Jesuses walking after Him. The question is how can you be conformed to what you don't know. How can you be conformed to who you don't behold? How can you be conformed to who you don't admire? The challenge is that many of us admire Jesus as Saviour but we don't admire His ways. If we keep beholding Him and admire Him, the grace to imitate Him will follow us. The reason we struggle is that we do not admire Him.

The bible says "Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ." [Eph.4:11-13 NLT].



**Prayer:** Lord I want to know You, help me. I want to have the agenda of Christ.



# Creating New Avenues For Success by Expanding Your Professional Network

We have been on the series of “Rejection” and how to handle rejection from interviews. In our last article in The Father’s Heart Publication, we talked about ‘Turning Rejection into Opportunity: Building Career Resilience’. I told you how to use rejection as a learning experience and to develop emotional and career resilience. Now, let’s dive into an often-overlooked but invaluable aspect of rejection: using it as a catalyst to grow your professional network. Building connections is more than just a means of landing your next job, it’s about enriching your career journey, broadening your expertise, and establishing a supportive community that will stand by you through highs and lows. This article will be the conclusion of the series.

I have penned down key strategies to help you turn every setback into a springboard for networking success.

## 1. Follow Up with Gratitude

Rejection emails or calls can be discouraging, but by thanking the interviewer or HR for their time and feedback, you lay the groundwork for a positive relationship. Expressing gratitude demonstrates professionalism and keeps the door open for future opportunities.

- **Tip:** Send a polite, concise follow-up email within a day or two of receiving a rejection. Mention something you learned from the interview or specific insights you gained about the company. Showing genuine interest and appreciation can make a memorable impression.

## 2. Request Informational Interviews

Consider reaching out to individuals in roles similar to the one you applied for or with people in related departments. Informational interviews are not job interviews but rather opportunities to gain insights into industry trends, role expectations, and potential career paths.

- **Tip:** Reach out through LinkedIn or email with a brief message explaining that you’d love to learn more about their career journey and any advice they could offer. Be respectful of their time by proposing a short 5-10-minute conversation.

## 3. Engage with Industry Groups and Forums

Professional networks are rich in learning opportunities, and many industries have dedicated associations, online forums, or LinkedIn groups that offer discussions, resources, and insights. Engage with these communities to meet people, learn about your field, and stay updated on trends.

- **Tip:** Join relevant industry groups on LinkedIn, Reddit, or specialized forums. Participate actively by sharing articles, asking questions, or offering your own insights. Consistent participation can help you build credibility and grow a network of supportive professionals.

## **4. Leverage Social Media as a Networking Tool**

Platforms like LinkedIn, Twitter, and even Instagram can be more than just a job search tool, they're a space to showcase your personal brand, share insights, and make meaningful connections.

- **Tip:** Post content that reflects your knowledge, passion, and commitment to your field. Share relevant articles, comment on industry news, and don't hesitate to engage with the posts of professionals you admire. This builds a positive online presence that draws like-minded individuals into your network.

## **5. Attend Events and Webinars**

Industry events; whether online or in-person are ideal for networking. From job fairs to conferences to skill-building workshops, each event offers a chance to meet potential mentors, collaborators, and even future employers.

- **Tip:** Prepare an elevator pitch about who you are and what you're looking for. Aim to connect with at least three new people at every event. Don't be shy about following up afterward to continue the conversation, whether by email or LinkedIn.

## **6. Build a Supportive Peer Group**

Navigating rejection is easier when you have people who understand your journey. Building a circle of peers in similar fields allows for sharing experiences, exchanging advice, and providing mutual encouragement.

- **Tip:** Consider starting a small group of peers who are also job searching or aiming for career transitions. You can hold each other accountable, review each other's application materials, and celebrate each other's milestones.

## **7. Offer Value to Your Network**

Networking isn't just about what others can offer you; it's about reciprocation. When you reach out to professionals or peers, think about what you can offer in return. Whether it's sharing an article, providing insights from a recent conference, or introducing them to someone in your network, giving back fosters stronger connections.

- **Tip:** Each time you connect with someone new, consider what unique value you can bring to them. Sometimes, a simple, thoughtful gesture can turn a casual acquaintance into a valuable professional ally.

## **In Summary**

### **Turning Setbacks into a Networking Catalyst**

Rejection doesn't have to stall your career progress. By fostering relationships, expressing gratitude, and leveraging available resources, you can transform every "no" into a powerful tool for building and strengthening your professional network. Remember, resilience isn't just about perseverance, it's also about creating and maintaining connections that uplift and support your journey.

Stay proactive, keep learning, and use every opportunity to expand your horizons. Your network is one of your most valuable career assets, nurture it wisely, and it will serve you well. I'll see you at the top!

**Hyacinth Alapa**

Brand Strategist & Life Coach

hyacinthalapa@gmail.com

# Choose Gratitude

Will it all get too much, will I give in to complaint?  
Does anything change, or is hope growing faint?  
Feels like we're fighting shadows, wrestling the air,  
Calling on God, yet the world gets more and more unfair.

The enemy whispers, "You're wasting your time,"  
That pouring your heart out, that hope is a scam.  
But then we remember: we serve a faithful Friend,  
One who stays by our side, on whom we forever,  
depend.

Life's storms may roar, yet we won't fall,  
Anchored in love that stands strong through it all.  
For God gave His Son, who redeemed us from sin and  
now we're saved,  
A gift beyond measure, from the cradle to grave.

Our hope stretches past this world and its strife,  
To an eternity free of sorrow and cries.  
Where tears turn to joy, no shadow, no pain,  
In the glory of heaven, we'll live again.

So, rise each morning, let no day go skewed;  
Even while it hurts, choose to heal others  
Choose to walk cheerfully,  
In spite of your pain and its magnitude,  
Always, choose gratitude.

# UP COMING EVENTS

THE FATHER'S CHURCH CALENDAR FOR 2024

S/N	DATE	EVENT
1.	November 13 - 17	MSG Conference
2.	November 30	KLM Love Feast
3.	December 8	Joy Force Awards
4.	December 18	Carol Service
5.	December 22	Family Fun Day
6.	December 25	Christmas Day
7.	December 31	Crossover Service



## WORSHIP WITH US

**Sunday:** Celebration Service @9am

**Wednesday:** Kingdom Keys @6pm

**First Friday Of Every Month** -Throneroom Service @ 6pm

**First Sunday Of Every Month** - Communion Service @ 9am



Prayer line: 07031588404



Every Saturday @7.30am



[www.thefatherschurchonline.org](http://www.thefatherschurchonline.org)



Every Monday @7.45pm



[facebook.com/The father's Church](https://facebook.com/The father's Church)



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