What kind of life are you building?

*… Our fathers having received it in turn, also brought with Joshua into the land possessed by the Gentiles, whom God drove out before the face of our Fathers until the days of David, who found favor before God and* ***asked to find a dwelling for the God of Jacob BUT Solomon built Him a house****. However, the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands, as the prophet says:* (Acts 7: 45-48)

It’s interesting that both scientists and socio-political commenters agree that the COVID19 pandemic that is currently raging through the earth will alter human existence as we know it. Simply put, things are not going to be the same again. From the way we work, to how we relate with one another and even the how the economies of the world are being run will undergo significant changes and the truth be told is that no matter how great the changes are, some will lose while some will gain it all depends on how well you and were prepared and how we make use of the opportunities that come our way. Talking about opportunities, this pandemic and the lockdown gives every man another opportunity to reflect on life as a whole and especially how well we have lived our lives and ask ourselves some critical questions. This is the time to reflect on what is the purpose of your life; why were you born?

In a world that is beginning to look like a Hollywood horror movie, don’t you think it is time to make sure that when this “movie” ends and the credits roll, you will be on the winning side. Times like this should make you realize that the pursuit of material wealth and power without a defined purpose is a sheer waste of time and energy and likewise the pursuit of money, power and position for the wrong purpose can only lead to a tragic end.

So what really is important in life?

The Bible asks the simple question that what does it profit a man (or woman) if he (or she) gains the whole world and loses his (or her) soul. This question exposes the futility of pursuing “things” without putting the pursuit in the context of eternity. Allow me to challenge your thinking; were you rendered completely unproductive or useless by the pandemic? Let me take you a little further. Did you lose your self-value or self-esteem because you were unable to go to work or do the things you regularly do? If your answer is yes, then the pandemic has exposed where you get your self-esteem and self-worth from and it is not God. Even if what you do is that “critical” work in any religious organization (and it doesn’t matter what position you hold), the pandemic is a warning that your priority is in the wrong place/thing. So what is important. Again I would like us to hear Solomon, one of the wisest kings of all times “”it is time to sit down and ask yourself don’t you think it is time to really evaluate your life. if you die today, those things will get done but what will you say to God when you stand before Him to give an account of your life.

My brother and sister, don’t be deceived; am not talking about what is popularly called sin What can a man have that will make him so sure that irrespective of what happens to him, he is sure he has gotten the most important thing in life? These are critical questions that you must answer at this time.

What really is important in life?

The Bible verses we read at the beginning mentions two men, King David and his son Solomon another king. David wanted to build God a house where God can dwell in. This desire was borne out of an affection for God because David acknowledged that God had promoted from a very lowly place and has made him king over a very special kingdom. However, while he was still considering it, his friend Nathan gave him a message that God does not want him to build Him a house because he was a man of war and in the course of fighting many battles, he had shed much blood. At first, one will think God rejected David’s offer and that God was unjust to reject that offer because David fought those wars for the sake of God. For many this would be a great setback because they will feel that God has rejected them but David understood that for God to reject his offer, God had a better plan in stock for him and he rejoiced greatly when God told him that He will establish his lineage on the throne of Isreal forever. Now to you reader, do you not know that in the same way God used David to wage wars on behalf of His people the Irealites then, He has used Jesus Christ to wage against your enemy the devil. *Having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He (Jesus Christ) has taken out of the way, having nailed it on the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.* – Colossians 2: 14-15. I want you to understand that Jesus did not need this victory, you and I do! So why not make the most of it now. If you have never accepted Him as Lord and savior, why not do so now? Why wait till another day and another opportunity. You may never get another chance.

If you are uncertain about what will happen to you if you die today, this is your chance to make sure you have a secured future. All it will take is a simple prayer of acceptance. All it will take is a simple acknowledgement that you realize that you have lived wrongly and now you believe with all your heart that Jesus Christ died for your sins and you accept His Lordship over your life and that from now on, you will trust Him to lead you on how to live right. You can say all these in your own words, God is not interested in your diction but He is very interested in your sincerity and intention.

David with understanding he had went about preparing for the building of the temple and successfully handed over to his son Solomon. It is interesting that the Scripture uses a sentence to describe what Solomon built, … *BUT Solomon built Him a house -*Acts 7:47. The word “But” indicates a diversion, a digression which means what Solomon built was not a dwelling place for God but a house. It was a magnificent building no doubt. In fact it took 7 years to build it BUT yet God did not stay there for long why because there was a change from the original objective. Today, I know many Christians who seemly worship God but when you compare their experiences and their manner of living with what the Bible describes as the Christian experience, their experiences are not in alignment with what the Bible describes as the Christian life. and I believe you will likely know a few too.

Possibly, you are one too, you have been to all kinds of worship places, all kinds of hands have been laid on you. You have made all kinds of sacrifices and offered all kinds of offerings both financial and otherwise but yet you know that you still have a sense of emptiness. You know that if God was to ask for a list of true believers, you are unsure your name will not be on it and you really want to be sure. You really want to build a dwelling place for God that you are sure any time you reach out, He will answer you, then let’s proceed together.

Let’s start from the basics:

Lesson one: *The Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands…*Acts 7:48. It is very important you understand this. God is not interested in dwelling in a building no matter the shape, size, or cost of the building. He wants to dwell in the hearts of men! If you understand this, you will be happy because that means no body can stop God from communicating with you if He is in your heart. Let me illustrate with a true story, a baby had a severe case of enlarged adenoid and his parents were considering taking the baby for surgery because it was so bad that in the middle of the night, the baby will be gasping and sometimes his face will change color because the growth was blocking air from reaching his lungs. One night, the baby started gasping for breath and it was so severe that the parents could not sleep. They did all they could do but the situation did not change. The father decided to pray for the baby while praying, the gasping reduced and the baby fell asleep. Thereafter, the baby got better and there was no need for surgery again. Imagine if the father of the baby did not know that God dwells in the hearts of men and had thought he could only reach Him in a place, do you know that the parents and their baby could have suffered irreparable damage that night?

Lesson two, 1 Kings 6 tells us how Solomon built the temple. He took 7 years to build the temple and for the nation Isreal, this temple became a symbol of God’s abiding presence amongst them. No doubt the temple was great, it became famous but IT DID NOT BECOME A DWELLING PLACE FOR GOD which was the original intention. Unfortunately, the same thing can be said of many people today; they observe all kinds of religious activities and rites but one just needs to observe them to realize that something” is missing in their lives. In the same way, many would have thought Solomon had it all he was the wisest king in the history of mankind. He was so wise that people from other countries came over to Isreal to listen to him speak. The Bible records that he wrote about 1005 songs and 3000 proverbs but despite all he had and was at the end, God was angry with him. 1Kings 11:9. What made God angry with him are still the reasons why many people are not enjoying their relationship with God today. They are:

1. Distraction: The Bible says in 1kings 11: 1, that Solomon loved many foreign women despite the fact that God instructed the people of Isreal to keep away from such. For many people, “foreign women” include outright sinful habits/behaviors, things we do but our conscience warns us against, legitimate things that we like to do but have allowed to take the place of God for example, some people love watching football and it is so bad that they would rather watch football than worship . For some it could be religious activities which is done just to fulfill the law. I have come to realize that the reason many people’s offerings are not accepted by God because they give as a religious activity and not as an act of thanksgiving. This is also a foreign thing.
2. Depending on ourselves instead of God: Many Christians believe that *heaven helps those who help themselves.* What a lie from the pit of hell! Every child of God needs to know that *Heaven only helps those who depend on God*. I need to say this that dependence is not a weakness, it is a great strength. One of the surest signs of spiritual growth is becoming more dependent on God.
3. Lack of repentance: David made mistakes but he was a man who readily took to correction. Solomon was not like that, when Solomon was corrected, he ignored the correction and that altitude led him to a disappointing end. Unfortunately, this is fast becoming a trend especially amongst leaders in our country. Many leaders have become hardened to wrong doing and they simply don’t see the need for genuine repentance anymore. They do what is wrong with impunity forgetting that they ought to be models and examples of righteousness within their sphere of influence what they fail to realize that leadership is influence, even if people worship you and call you all kinds of names, you stop being leader when your influence over your followers begins to wane. And also let’s not forget that *For we must all appear before the judgement set of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.* (2Corinthians 5:10). We have to realize that God is not moved by popular opinion and therefore we all are responsible for living in integrity.
4. Dependence on other gods: A god is simply anything or anyone who has more authority over you than God. I am very sorry to say this but many people in this country are idol worshippers, they worship men and things and this explains why making any meaningful progress in this county is difficult. That also explains why many are trapped in empty and false religions and don’t have joy and peace in their homes. Until God takes His place in our hearts, we cannot expect to enjoy the full benefits of our new life in Christ until we are ready to receive Christ as LORD and Savior and not just a savior. If Christ is not Lord of all, He s not Lord at all.

Lesson three: God is still looking for a dwelling place in the hearts of men. He is not interested in the temple many are building because He is more interested in having a dwelling place in the hearts of people. Is your heart ready for Him? It’s possible you’ve been born-again for a long time but my sister and my brother, are you consciously building “a house” for Him or a dwelling place. If God was to project the thoughts of your heart for the last one week, will you be happy with yourself? Don’t you think it is time to pull down that house and start building a place for Him?

Some may say “But sir, I have tried my best what else can I do?”

My dear, you may have been trying but remember God is not looking for the man who is trying, He is looking for the man who is willing to receive. My dear, there is a sure way to go about growing and maturing in your walk with God. These are things you can do if you really build this place for God and they are:

1. Learn to pray with faith: The scripture says that whosoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. Prayer gives you the ability to interact freely with God. You are free to speak to God freely but make sure you speak sincerely and with the trust that God hears you. Many people don’t believe that God hears their prayers and hence lose the result they ought to get. You don’t need an intermediary to pray. Adopt the style you will use with someone you respect with God and trust that He will heal you and He will.
2. Study the Word: there are a lot of reasons to study the Bible but the main ones are: One, through studying the Bible, you get to understand the personality of God and Jesus. This is very important. Your knowledge of God’s personality will either deepen or limit your walk with Him. It is that simple. Simply make it an habit to study the word. I would like to suggest that for now ignore using devotionals instead set out to study the person of Jesus by reading the Book of John and then read from there to the end of the new testament and repeat it again. This givs you a grounded view of who Jesus is and what He has done for you and also what He expects from you. Thereafter, you can start reading other parts of the Bible.
3. Fellowship with people of like minds. Fellowship with other people who really want to know God for themselves. You may have to do a lot of searching before you locate one but please don’t give up until you find one. The truth is that the price you pay by searching for such a fellowship will always be worth it with time.
4. Boldly declare your salvation. Remind yourself of the new person you are in Christ. To be frank with you, you will need to remind yourself often about who you are in Christ until you “get it” but don’t lose hope. Keep declaring, tell it to yourself that you are a new creature in Christ Jesus and that old sins and bad habits have gone away. Declare it to friends and those around you. This may be difficult at first but if you persist, it will soon be evident that something has changed in your life.

Lastly, I want to let you know that your new life in Christ can never be compared to whatever life you had before now. It will be challenging at first but hold unto your profession and declaration and soon God himself will reveal Himself to you in Jesus Name, amen.

SHALOM