

# The Call to Spiritual Awakening: Responding to Blindness and Pretense

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## **I. Opening Prayer**

Father, the hour has come for us to be fed by Your word. Holy Spirit, calm us and take control in the mighty name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Holy Spirit, we rely on You to convict us. Help us to soften our hearts and take away the veils that cover our eyes, renewing a lasting sight to know You well. Father, do this in the mighty name of Jesus Christ. And in the end, let Your name be glorified. In Jesus' mighty name I have prayed. Amen. Amen. Amen.

## **II. Introduction: A Call to Encounter**

Welcome to church, the redeemer of our souls once again. Now that we are alive, we must respond to His call. Before I proceed to the sermon proper, I want to appreciate God for the lives of our fathers, on whose authority I am standing, and the church leadership. I appreciate them for giving us this grace to share the word. I also thank our fathers, mothers, and brethren; your coming to church today will not be in vain, in Jesus' name. Amen.

This church is a church where you truly must know what you have come to do. Otherwise, avoiding any form of pretense in your service, day by day, people are seeing you as true Celestians. Are you sure that at the end you will make it with Him? Let His thought always be in you.

My sermon to you this morning is titled: **Responding to Spiritual Blindness and Pretense.**

## **III. Understanding Spiritual Blindness**

Let's go to the Bible. Spiritual blindness isn't primarily about eyesight; it's about perception: what you value, how we interpret truth, and whom we trust.

### **A. The Problem of Idolatry and Hardness of Heart**

Isaiah, in the book of Isaiah, in very short verses that convey a lot of meaning, names the problem of Israel: idolatry paired with hardness of heart. This is a problem common in our midst. Paul also talked about the problem of his time, speaking about worldly wisdom that misses the cross. So, today we are relying on the Holy Spirit as we identify those pretensions which are the primary downfall of all of us in the world.

## **B. The Foundation of the Church and Current Challenges**

You all remember the reason this church was founded: because many had not been confronted with the things of this world. They don't know Christ any longer, so they go to worldly and fetish parties for help. The pastor was told that Satan left his mark upon them, and at the end, they could not see Christ. So, He's sending us as ministers to go and bring those in the world into the fold. But today, in the church, we are those people that we refer to. Most of us are not truly after God; we have many pretensions.

## **C. Self-Deception and Hidden Sins**

Some of us are blind. We've taken talents and gifts of the Spirit as though that is the way to salvation. Many of us, as choristers with singing, yes, we don't have Christ in our thinking; we don't even know Him. We sink. We commit different forms of sins, thinking God is not aware. You cannot hide it from God. You may cover your sins so that no one should know. Remember this: you cannot hide it from God.

## **IV. The Problem of Pretense in the Church**

### **A. False Prophecy and Spiritual Blindness**

Some of us are prophets. We thought because God has given us that gift, we manifest in it, but truly we are not known, and He has said in His word that at the end, He would deny you. We are blind spiritually. He told us that our mission is to bring people in the dark into the light.

### **B. Lip Service vs. Heartfelt Devotion**

Many of us claim to love God, but our hearts are far away. Be honest with yourself and search your heart. Jesus is calling you. Those with deceitful minds will never get it. Oh, for your goodness! You surely walk on it.

Let's quickly open Isaiah 29:11-14. You can see that the scroll, the vision, is unread. They could not read it. A sign of people who say they see but cannot perceive the truth. Most of us, when we talk about this church, we want to boast not of Christ but of the length of our worship in the church. Tomorrow you'll be the one saying it is a lie by mouth. That's what I said: they honor God with their mouth, with lip service, but God is yet to recognize them.

### **C. The Disconnect Between Actions and Faith**

We are here as people of God. How many of us are children of God? Because God created His people, yes, but you have to transform yourself to become the children of God, the beloved. Many of us are not beloved. You are just coming to church to attend Sunday service. What we do outside is different from what we pretend to do in the church. Some of us will come and say, "Is it if you he does not know you?"

Isaiah 29:13-14 says: "These people draw near with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is based on merely human rules they have been taught."

This implies that their heart is not close to God. When you came in, you were told that unless you truly connect with God, you cannot truly belong.

## **V. The Need for True Encounter**

### **A. Beyond Human Cleverness to Divine Revelation**

Many of us join this church through the back door or through the window, as if sent to you. He said you should give your life to Him. You should give your heart to me. That's what He is requesting from you.

Let's cross-reference Romans chapter 1, verses 21-23. Pretense is not primarily about outward religion; it is the condition of the heart in which we substitute human cleverness for divine revelation. Yes, although they knew God, they neither glorified Him as God nor gave thanks to Him. Instead, their thinking became futile, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man, birds, animals, and creeping things.

Many of us, during the week, must have engaged in different forms of sins. We come to the house of God pretending; we are lying with Him. Even within ourselves, we speak evil of ourselves. We wish evil to ourselves, and tomorrow we'll be doing as if we are next to Christ.

### **B. The Veil Over the Gospel**

2 Corinthians chapter 4, verses 3-6 says: "And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."

You are still here today. You only know Christ exists. You don't believe Him because you don't obey His commands. So, they cannot see the light; you cannot see the gospel of the glory of Christ. You are yet to see the glory, the light, who is the image of God. He has said it, and it is sent to us that those who possess His Spirit are the only ones who can see His glory.

## **VI. Three Fundamental Encounters**

Unless you possess the Spirit, you cannot see. So, if the veil remains, unless the Spirit of God takes it away, you will remain in the dark. Many of us thought we were in the light, but we still remain in the dark because of our handiwork, our deeds. Show me your fruit, and I will tell you who you are. Many of us are connecting with Galatians chapter 1:19-20, not from 22 downward, the fruit of His Spirit.

Some of us, the work you do, what you do, is not aligning with God's precepts and principles. That's why you still continue in this place. There are people who bring others here like agents. You come to church through the back door; you show me your results. What changes have been in your life? Is God living with you? That you know is to cure people, to swindle people. Is that what God has called you to do?

He wants us, every now and then, to come into His presence as Celestians. He wants you to be a child of God. You have to be a Christian before you even become that Celestian you call yourself. Who told

you that you create an image for yourself? Some people only come to church to fulfill their lust, to satisfy their own interests, to do their own will.

In church, God is calling you today, beckoning on you. He might be shy. If not for that, in our fold, though it's common in other Christian denominations, I am challenging ourselves that in this world, how will a man of God know whatever, and you are telling him you are working for him in the name of God, but light and darkness cannot come together? It's not possible. You are there, and they will be happy. They pray for me, and that's why this thing they work. At a point in time, they say, "You know they are foolish," and that's why Paul was telling them that the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing. They actually founded the church together by the stories they will be telling. They will be telling you stories of how they remain who they are; they have yet to have the heart of God, and that's why the Book of Romans chapter 1, verse 28, says, "God gave them over to a reprobate mind to do those things that are not proper." Are you among them? Quickly come out now. You need to humble yourself and repent; salvation comes today.

Oh, He said, "The God is continuous. Waste no time. Give that back to your soul so that you don't perish, so that your soul doesn't expire before the time." Your Savior has come. He's sending me to you now, just like He has been sending many who have been here to you. How long will it take you to come back home? You know one thing about our God: He is a God of choice. He will not force you. He has given you choice. In the book of Deuteronomy, I think it is 30:15 or 11. He said, "I have laid before you today death and life." He's advising you to choose life. He expects you to choose life. He loved us. That's why He's advising you to choose life. Why do we remain so stony in heart? How long will it take you?

How long, brethren? There are three remedies, three things I want you to follow, and I haven't said it. I will reiterate them: there are three fundamental encounters you must meet if you want to escape from the blindness and perception that is common among us. We are sent to people.

What God has commissioned the church to do is to bring people from the dark to this light. So, if you are in this light, but you are yet to know that you are darkness in the light, then there's a problem. And the problem is, what about telling you three fundamental encounters you must meet?

### **A. Encounter with Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God.**

You need to give your light, your heart, to Him. You need to have an encounter with Christ. He's the first. He's the owner of His church. Celestial Church of Christ. Most of us are just going with the Celestial Church of Christ, but you know that by His blood, He founded it. So, you have to have an encounter with the owner of the church. You need an encounter. Most of us have yet to have that encounter.

### **B. Encounter with the Person and Ministry of the Holy Spirit.**

There's a promise, according to John chapter 14:16-17: "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth." Let somebody open Romans 8:9: "You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed

the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ."

When Jesus Christ was departing, He knew He would not be with the disciples physically, so He made the request for that special and wonderful Spirit of God, the Spirit of comfort, that is not given freely to the people of old, except on specific, special people. And Jesus Christ is now giving us freely. He said, "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter." Because He is the Comforter. But now that He's going, He's giving us the Holy Spirit, that He may abide with you forever.

Oh, my Lord, we need to pray the Father to give us the Holy Spirit to guide us in all we do. And that is why He has told us, immediately we get to this church, He told us in our hymn, "234 stanza one." Do you have the Holy Spirit? Oh, fully surrender. Oh, my brother, yes. Oh, my! Have you healed your Spirit with the Holy Spirit? Without the Spirit, our spirit is in vain, in vain. Ask the Lord Jesus to give it to you. That is the encounter I'm asking you to have. You need that encounter of the person and the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Some of us are manifesting the gift. We thought it was the Holy Spirit, but tomorrow, when He needs you, it drops gradually. But you are not of the flesh, but of the Spirit. That is what the book of Romans, chapter 8, verse 9 is saying. Then let's go to Galatians 4:6: "Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba, Father.'"

You need the ministry of the Holy Spirit for certain things so that you don't fall, so that you stop pretending. So that it can help you, because the body, the flesh, cannot do it. That's why most of us are still falling. We are relying on our flesh. It will always stumble and make you fall. Because you are sons. God sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts.

Yes, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father," because you need the Holy Spirit for guidance, to guide you day by day, for guardianship. You need Him for empowerment because He's the Spirit in charge of it, to grant you power to suppress sin. That's what you need it for, to give you power, to empower you so that these things stay with you every now and then, so that you can win. Flesh cannot do it; you will be rising and falling. Many fall because they rely on their own flesh.

You need to encounter the Holy Spirit so that He can empower you over these things. You also need it for direction. The Holy Spirit will keep you from self-destruction. The One who lives forever. Oh, my, God! You need an encounter with the Holy Spirit so that He can grant you discernment, so you can know the gimmicks of the devil when he's bringing them. So, discernment, so that you can have the Spirit of discernment. Why? So that you can guide yourself. That is why, until you have an encounter with the Holy Spirit, you may be falling.

You will just be standing; today you'll be seeing, it is very important. With obedience, His followers abide when you obey, because there are processes. You won't just have it. First, obey Him when you have an encounter with the Son. The next thing He's going to give you is the Holy Spirit. As the song says, "Jesus lives in me." It is when you possess that Holy Spirit that you confirm you are a carrier of God. Without the Holy Spirit, you need to seek brethren. Otherwise, pretense will just be taking over every of your activity by day. That's what you see: Jesus Christ, we agree with the devil, when He was going to make His appeal.

### **C. Encounter with the Word of God.**

And finally, the third encounter is an encounter with the Word of God. The book of Mark chapter 5 describes a legion of demons that saw Jesus Christ. He beckoned on them, and they pleaded, and Jesus answered them. In fact, He did what He requested for because He honored Him. How much more when He was told, "I command."

You want to show that you are a Celestial; how do you want to show it with a negative character until we are sorry? We never know, or when He sees the kind of fruit that He will come back and apologize for, not with the character they've known you for. And that's what they believe Celestial is all about. You say you are a child of God, but it's only on Easter Day that you proclaim it. They play you. You need the Holy Spirit. You have to have an encounter with Him for sensitivity so that you know who you are. The third encounter is with the Word of God. Rolling 40 minutes, you shall have known me in this church. Don't go against time.

Please encounter with the Word of God. You need an encounter with the Word of God. That's why many people think Celestial is not a Bible-believing church, which is a lie. There's nothing we do that does not conform with the Word of God. It is because our life does not conform. That is why if people want to see your church, they need to see it through you. You need to have an encounter with the Word of God. In 2 Timothy 3:16-17, it says, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

The word of God is His character. You want to know the character of God? You don't even know the Word of God. How God operates is through the Word of God. That you should know. When what you see as a vision or what you want to do does not submit to the Scripture, then it is not from God. And that's why you don't know the Word of God. You know when you don't understand the Word of God, when you are being prophesied to by anybody, you won't be able to discern and even change a situation with the Word.

I don't know if it happens to you. Sometimes you go to a vigil, when prayers are being offered, you will not conform with it; you will now switch to satisfy what you are asking for. When you don't have the Word, you can't do that. For a long time, 365 days, people say, "Oh, it's because you don't understand the Word." You are leaving the owner, the controller of the universe. You are waiting for an angel to come once in a year for one person. Some of you are still waiting. Come to Christ! Talk to Him! Don't wait!

You need to understand the Scripture. Know the Word of God so that when Satan comes, you know the Word. Jesus Himself conquered the devil by the Word of God. He said, "It is written." That is very necessary. Some of you have any small dream, and you say, "Oh, daddy, the dream is good!" You convert it from prayer, saying, "I bear the mark of Christ, let no one trouble you." Bear the true man of Ephesians 6:17: "Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

These three encounters are very necessary as Celestians, in order to be delivered from spiritual blindness and deception. Try it! Have this encounter, and you will testify and you will see that you are living a life pleasing to God, because if everything you do does not return glory to God, then your life

is in vain. Before I go, God's wisdom is wise. In fact, the foolishness of God is wiser than the wisdom of men.

## **VII. Conclusion and Prayer**

Let us go down on our knees as we call on Honorary Senior Evangelist Odufuwa Edmund to pray for us after the Sermon.

Jehovah Jesus Christ, Holy Michael, Father, we thank You for Your word. We thank You for the instrument of Your glory. Accept our thanks in Jesus' name. Amen. Holy Spirit, as You've spoken to us, let this word of Yours germinate in our minds and increase us in all spheres of life, in Jesus' name. Amen. On the day of judgment, let us all be welcomed as Your children, in Jesus' name. Amen. As long as you live on this earth, we will live as victors and not victims, in Jesus' name. Amen. Thank you for prayers answered, for in Jesus' name we have prayed. Amen.