



EASTER SERVICE

March 2020

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ALABASTER MINISTRIES

UPDATE



Dearest Friends,

We are continuing with the subject of sanctification because it is the most important aspect of our Christian lives. Col 2:20 *"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."*

In the Old Testament temple there were vessels that were set apart and used for sacred purposes. In the New Testament we have taken the place of those vessels. In us dwells the Holy Spirit of God with His nature and all His characteristics, but for those to shine through we must put aside all our fleshly desires. The ending of "tion" in sanctification means a continuing process. We will never be perfect as long as we are a part of the human race but that does not mean we should give up and throw in the towel. So many of us give up when the going gets tough instead of ploughing on through. We should have the stamina of the ox. Oxen are submissive to authority, are mild and gentle and have a strong affection one for another. But when it comes to pushing through, they will keep going no matter how hard and how many times they must do it and they have the strength that even draught horses do not.

When we look back over the years, we should be able to see the

differences in our lives as the Lord has worked with us to get rid of our selfish aims and desires. There is a spirit of anger that runs in our family. It is not just the flesh because it has been uncontrollable in many of us and comes on with the slightest reason. I had it but I allowed God to deal with it. Fortunately, it was not something I had to battle, He just did it. Now, sometimes He will do that and sometimes we must plough on through and put down our flesh.

Joseph was a great example of a sanctification. Sold into slavery by his brothers, he eventually welcomed his whole family into Egypt during the famine in Israel. Would we have done the same or would we have sent them back to starve? Imprisoned in Egypt for something he did not do, he did not rail at God or become bitter. When approached by Potiphar's wife he refused her and ran but he left his cloak behind and she used that to accuse him. As Christians we have two options – we can run from sin as Joseph did or we can stand and fight it through prayer. 2 Timothy 2:22 *"Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart".* James 4:7 *"resist the devil and he will flee."* How do we resist – by prayer and intercession. What a powerful weapon the Lord has given us in prayers. Over the years in the life of a Christian there must be change. 2 Cor 5:17 *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new".* It is not a magic formula but a work in progress.

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8514 N. Donna Ct. Kansas City, MO 64153

"He shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified and meant for the master's use and prepared for every good work."

REPORT FROM PASTOR ERIC

I send you greetings from the warm heart of Africa and hope that this finds you well. The Lord has been faithful to me and my family and has continued to bless us through His humble servants in the body of Christ. The coronavirus has disrupted a lot of events including our large gatherings since we are supposed to observe social distancing and restrict contact. We have not been able to hold our annual Easter conference with the elderly and hope to be able to meet the rest of them as soon as this pandemic passes over. Pastor Roz has not been able to come to Malawi and we would not have it any other way with respect to the circumstances at hand. We would like to tell you that we miss you greatly and hope to see you again soon. The Lord has preserved the elderly and we will continue to do communion in our homes for if the Lord did Passover for the house of Israel in Egypt, He can do it again with us today. He is the same God, yesterday, today, and forever, He has never changed and His ways are still mysterious to the world.

We are experiencing severe food shortages in the Lower Shire again this year. This pattern in poor harvests is now becoming a big scare as we look at the many houses that will go without food in the coming weeks. It is pathetic that in my own home region there are about seventeen irrigation schemes that have not been utilized because the authorities have not completed them or have not bought pumps to pump the water from the river. We should not see people eating plankton seeds and river tubers with all the land that could have been used for crops if we had irrigation. This sort of living binds us and puts us under the less comforting mercy of principalities that make us give up our freedom for CONTROL. Paul the apostle, like a rallying commander that he was, says in the book of Galatians 5:1 "*Stand fast therefore in liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free and not be entangled again with the yoke of bondage.*" The Lord desires that His people be free even from hunger and starvation. May the intensity in the tone Paul the apostle uses in Galatians 5 cause his words to nearly leap off the page and into action. It almost seems like Paul deliberately meant for these words to stand out like a massive billboard; freedom is what gives us the opportunity to express ourselves and here in Malawi it almost seems like we trade that freedom for suffrage. I long for the day the Lower Shire shall eradicate famine and begin to enjoy bountiful harvests.



Communion celebrated at Easter. Our churches and elderly celebrate communion at least once a week. They also celebrate in their homes. We never do a distribution or Bible School without having communion together. God promised those in Egypt that if they celebrated Passover (the fulfillment of Passover is Communion) that the angel of death would pass over their homes. We should be celebrating this in our homes at this time. God is my protection and He is my healer.

These are used for food during times of drought. In order to get them someone must dive to the bottom of the river because that is where they grow. The rivers are not clear but muddy and the Shire River is renowned for crocodiles.

These are like tubers that grow beneath the surface of the water.



ABOUT US

We, Alabaster Ministries are based in the United States with a tax-deductible status under 501(c)(3).

We also have representation in the United Kingdom and are covered by Stewardship Services

Our representatives there are Michael and Penny Shellswell.

Phone: +44-7780-383452 (Michael)
+44-7551974316 (Penny)

In Malawi we have Oresti and Julie Yiannakis who are a wonderful support and without whom it would be extremely difficult for us to operate.

Our staff comprise of local Malawians, and volunteer staff in the USA and UK. It is our belief that we should train the locals to one day be able to totally run every aspect of the ministry in their nation and to train the next generation to one day take over while we support and give advice where needed.

God has blessed us with an amazing team of people who are always ready and willing no matter what comes against us. God is in charge and is faithful when we are about His business.

This is an exciting ministry to be a part of and we so appreciate your support.

CONTACT US

You can support this exciting and vibrant ministry by sending checks to:

Alabaster Ministries

**8514 N Donna Ct
Kansas City, MO 64153**

OR

Via the web site direct to PayPal.

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REPORTS FROM SOME OF THE BIBLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

AGNESS WATSON MAFUMBA

Information has the power to change anything in this world and that is why we must be careful of the source of our information. If we are well informed, then we have knowledge about certain things. At the time when I started attending the Bible school, I had some basic knowledge about the word of God but now that I have attended 9 months of intensive lessons, I am more informed than ever. I am in a slightly better position to successfully carryout my duty as a Sunday school teacher at my home church.

We leave the comfort of our homes every six weeks to attend the lessons without a second thought of our domestic challenges. We come and learn so that we can be better equipped to make sure the next generation is well informed of the living reality of Jesus Christ and His victory.



SELINA GERESONI KANKOCHE

I would like to encourage you today that it is important to be positioned in the right place so that when your opportunities come, you should not be so far away that you are not able to access and utilize them in the fullness of your ability. It is also important to be strategically positioned to be used of God

and taught by His Blessed Holy Spirit. Samuel was positioned in the right place when the Lord called out to him and so was David when Samuel anointed his head with oil. I was a cook at the Bible school and so loved to take part in the lessons and praise and worship. I had a hunger to learn so my positioning moved on the staff to allocate me a slot in the 2nd Bible school and now I can proudly say I am one of the lucky ones to attend this Bible school. The Lord has seen fit that an unlearned person such as me can be a part of something that seemed very impossible to me at the time. I am now learning how to read and write through this Bible School and it is my wish that the grace that has fallen on me spreads on and provide more opportunities for others.



REPORT FROM PASTOR FRANCIS BANDA

Please receive our warm greetings from Malawi and we hope that this finds you well. People have been gripped by fear with the overwhelming realities that have come to life with the Coronavirus. I heard a preacher today who said this is a shocking and sudden development that no nation was expecting to happen. This was a time when most people were imagining some of the greatest developments to happen in their lives and nations were forging ahead with their businesses to further better the livelihoods of their nations. BUT this is exactly what the Lord warned us would happen in the last days. There is no reason to fear because fear is the biggest LIAR of all and robs you of all your joy.

We believe that there is no fear in love and that perfect love drives out all fear. If we are afraid, then we have not experienced Jesus Christ in all His fulness, who is perfect in life and in love. We must draw a contrast between the reverential fear of God and being afraid; the fear of God suggests high regard and veneration for God. Obedience and good works born from the principle of love are not like the servile toils of anyone who unwillingly does something out of fear of a master's will. Obedience, love, and faith are like gifts provided to a dutiful child who does a service for a beloved parent willingly.

The Spirit of God is the Spirit of love. One who bares His love inside them cannot look at the image of God in others and not love them. It is the nature of God to love, to be kind, and to give happiness. If our lives do not show any of these qualities especially now when the world is in most need of it then we need to ask ourselves what are we really living for? If the world obeys the Law of God which is love perhaps it would be a much better place. God has shown Himself to be perfect love. We cannot come short of the eternal happiness He freely gives unless we are in unbelief and impenitence. The love of God could not possibly be designed to be fruitless. Anyone who bears true love is known by what their life professes, be it a doctor, a physicist, an accountant, a great mathematician, a preacher or just an ordinary person. Love oils the wheels of his or her affections and sets him to do that which is helpful to the brethren. None of my words and thoughts could do justice to describe the free and astonishing love of a holy God towards the entire world irrespective of whatsoever me may believe. We search the world over and ten times more looking for fulfillment, love, compassion, and the ultimate rest but we never truly stop searching until we MEET GOD.

We have turned to the Lord in these past few weeks when our poor nation first reported cases of the Coronavirus. There has been a lot of SPIN of course with the political upheaval in the nation with some quarters looking at the strides being implemented politically but nonetheless the nation was gripped with fear considering our dilapidated health facilities and the fact that there were only less than 50 ventilators to cater for a population of 16 million people. What do you do in the wake of such a reality with a virus that has relentlessly terrorized the world? Would you flee to another country, maybe that would be an option if they were not already under a lock-down. My first reaction was "Oh My God!" We have observed social distancing and keep following the methodology that has been put in place by the health experts but we have also turned to something much closer to home, The Undying Love of God. When Israel was held captive in Egypt the Lord saved them through the feast of the Passover which was a foretelling of the Cross of Jesus Christ. Before the Lord embarked on the remarkable journey of the Cross, He gathered His apostles and had communion with them commanding that we celebrate communion in remembrance of our great salvation. The Book of Hebrews warns us, "How then shall we escape if we NEGLECT so great Salvation?" I am comforted by the fact that God chose to use the somewhat foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and the weak things to confound things which are mighty. I have confidence that the Lord shall keep and preserve us under His wings and this pandemic shall PASSOVER us, in Jesus name, AMEN.

REPORT FROM PASTOR PETER

We had a discussion with the elderly in my area and our focus was on the divisions and hatred among God's children. We looked at our own nation and district first and started with the words we sing in our National anthem.

The Malawi National Anthem says
 Oh God bless our land of Malawi
 Keep it a land of peace
 Put down each and every enemy
Hunger, Disease, Envy
 Join together all our hearts as one
 That we be free from fear
 Bless our Leader, each and everyone

I remember singing this prayer throughout my school days without ever listening to the issues this prayer addresses. I have lived through times of plenty and drought in our beautiful homeland and have never known a time when we were not dealing with hunger, disease, and envy in our communities. It is a common notion among Africans that we bring our colleagues down whenever they are successful because we would rather have no one succeed if we are failing. My home district Nsanje literally means Jealous. I have no idea why no one thought of changing that name but for years I have watched the level of jealousy grow among us. The Lord made us with a sound mind and

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REPORT FROM PASTOR PETER continued....

breathed His Spirit in us. We were a free people until the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life corrupted our nature. Our nature should be after the nature of God which is to love. Today Malawi is conflicted in ideologies across board. The level of instability that has been created by nepotism and ethnic rivalries has reached an unspeakable degree. The envy that is there for a specific people group is abominable. We envy one another and we do not want to see others do well. It is high time we came together as one people under God following God's governmental order and nature. Perhaps if we loved one another more than we love our selfish passions this nation would be a much better place.

We have suffered several years of unpredictable rain patterns and drought which has caused a great deficit in grain reserves and have seen disease ravage this country so much that we are at the mercy of donors time and again. *"If my people who are called by my name shall humble themselves and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear them from heaven and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land!"* 2 Chronicles 7:14. Disease and hunger have no place among the children of light. Christ did not freely give us liberty for us to be afflicted by all kinds of epidemics and famine. We have victory in Jesus and thus we have been made more than conquerors. Yes it is the last days we are living in and these things shall come to pass so that the holy scriptures should be fulfilled and as a sign for His return to collect His Bride but we do not have to live under the yoke of oppression, suffering, starvation, and depravation. The Lord has provided for us many affirmations including 2 Chronicles 7 that if we learned to look up to Him for solutions and forgiveness our lives would be different. For though we might live in this world, we are not of this world and thus all that we must do is invoke a prayer of repentance in truth and seek the Lord's hand in our endeavors. It is our prayer that the Lord heals this land and transforms it completely so much that future generations may enjoy peace and be free from hunger, diseases, and envy. May the Almighty God bless you and keep preserving you during these hard times.