

Pursuing God's Face

By Bishop Dr. Douglas Muchiri

Beloved Saint,

The year 2006 marks 100years since the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Asuza in 1906. It is therefore a significant year of Outpouring. It is my prayer that the Lord has already begun a season of Outpouring in your life as He has been doing in my life already. And as I have been seeking the face of God, the Lord placed in me the burden to share with you some thoughts on "Pursuing God" as a critical prerequisite to enjoying continued God's Presence in 2006. Our Text is **Exodus 33:12-23**:

*"And God said, **"my presence shall go with you** and I will give you rest," Then he said to Him, **"if your presence does not go with us, do not lead us up from here.** For how can it be known that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people? Is it not by your going with us, so that we, I and your people may be distinguished for all the other people who are upon the face of the earth?"*

*And then in verse 18 Moses said unto the Lord **"Show me your face"**...*

Ohh I'm so excited but maybe before I share, let me quickly remind you of the 2006 ASCA Conventions so that you can begin praying and preparing for them intelligently and in the Spirit.

2006 ASCA Conventions

This year we will have two major ASCA Conventions. The International Convention will take place on **August 4th, 5th & 6th 2006**. More details will be forthcoming but please mark this date and begin making plans to attend this Convention. Remember last year we had a very successful ASCA International Convention in Delaware and likewise this year we are believing God for an even greater and more powerful Convocation. Once again the dates are August 4th, 5th and 6th. Please pass word around and invite practically everyone.

But before that, the 2006 ASCA National Convention will be take place in New Jersey on **April 28th, 29th and 30th**. This will be our first 2006 Convention and so it is very, very important that we all attend. I am believing God that in this Convention, God's Presence will overshadow us in a mighty way. So yes, do go ahead and book your Air Tickets for Newark International Airport, NJ. For remember it is always prudent to do your bookings early when the tickets are cheap: so don't wait any longer to make you reservations. For more information or details on the convention please feel free to get in touch with the Rev. Joseph Nzeketha @ 908-359-7952. Do also visit the ASCA website @ www.asca-usa.org.

May I also add that since no meeting succeeds without intense prayer and fasting, I encourage all of us to go into intense praying and fastings for these Conventions. Yes the enemy may wage war on us, but he forever is defeated if we stand and oppose him as God would have us to. So let's not be lazy or fret for Victory is indeed ours. Also please do always keep me in your prayers for more strength, wisdom and discernment as I lead God's Saints. Ok back to our message.

Now whereas no one can really establish the different levels involved in getting closer to God, nevertheless no one will dispute that such steps or levels do indeed exist. For instance, Paul claims to know a man who was caught up in the third heavens. Also when we read of the life experiences of servants of God like Daniel, Elisha, David, Moses, Enoch et al we all over sudden realize that these people definitely related with God from a higer level than the rest of the people. These levels however may be best envisioned as being dynamic, fluid and intertwined together rather than static. In a very simplistic way and for the sake of our discussion today, I want to propose at least three such levels involved in pursuance of God. We will use the life of Moses to exemplify these levels.

General Level

This is the first level in serving God. In the general level, one gets to know the revelation of God in a “general sense” without any spectacular, supernatural occurrences in his or her life. For Moses this realization becomes evident to him as he is growing up because somehow his mother must have revealed to him that he was not of Egyptian descent even though he was being raised up as an Egyptian. His true identity is therefore revealed to Moses in a general “natural” sense.

It may also be safe to assume that given the circumstances that Moses was born in and raised in, Moses must have truly believed that somehow, God’s hand was upon him and that is why he found himself in the position of destiny whereby he now sought to operate in. For this reason, Moses believes who and what he is from a General Revelation stand point to the extent that he even kills an Egyptian who oppressed a fellow Jew.

Like Moses, many Saints today find themselves in this level where they continue to serve God not out of any supernatural revelations but out of the general conditions they find themselves in. At times they may point at several general significant pointers that qualify them as servants of God just like Moses did and do you know what, they are right in a general sense.

A classic example of a person who was very successful in operating in this level is Jabez who though born of unfortunate circumstances, arrested his life experiences to seek God and deliver his people. The majority of the Saints today operate in this general level. The sad reality though is not that there are many who operate from this level, but that such people have allowed themselves to settle for less in their lives -- if in fact this is all that they will ever seek... Ohh how I wish that they sought hard after God into what I call the wilderness level.

Let me also add that many of the Saints in this first embryonic level of serving God also have a tendency to think themselves as being more righteous than most people. They even brag by citing various experiences and factors in their lives to prove their calling. And whereas no one doubts their calling in a general sense, yet such people face the danger of becoming proud, unteachable and arrogant since they greatly depend on one’s egotistic power and experiences. Friends, it is better to pursue God further than remain dormant in this level.

Wilderness Level

All who operate in the Wilderness level for the most part enter this level out of frustration either from God or God’s work. For instance, when Moses killed the oppressive Egyptian, God did not vindicate Moses, but instead God allowed Moses to get in trouble with Pharaoh so that God could work further on Moses and what a better place to train Moses than in the wilderness.

The Wilderness is a place of brokenness and getting to know God and God’s heartbeat more intimately and personally. It is the God’s training ground where He breaks, sharpens and moulds us for His Ministry. It is a very significant stage for anyone who aspires to rise above the general stage. It is in the wilderness that the pride of a Prince is reduced to the Humility of a shepherd. Ohh yes, it is in the wilderness that the natural human accolades are reduced to dung in pursuance of God. Classic Bible examples of Servants of God that went through this stage include David, Elijah, John the Baptist and Paul etc.

In my view the majority of the Kenyan Pastors in the US today are in this level. Let me also add that whenever, a Servant of God or a Saint who is serious about pursuing God begins to realize his or her inadequacies in the Ministry, normally they begin an intense lifestyle of seeking God through His word, fellowship, self-sacrifice, giving, holiness, prayer and fasting.

In the natural though, one is however bombarded with acute feelings of desperation, frustration, loneliness, depression, failure, uncertainty and financial stress as natural supply is somehow diminished when one is being trained to supernaturally depend on God's provision rather than self or others. Does locusts and wild honey for John the Baptist; turning stones into bread for Jesus; Quails, Manna and water for Moses; Unleavened bread for David and Ravens for Elijah ring a bell?

Ministry at this level is tough enough to tempt the human self to want out in order to alleviate the pain, agony and frustration of the wilderness. For most people, their escape comes either by compromising the pursuit for God, or by preferring to submerge self in a so called "powerful" minister or ministry so as to be protected from the frustration of your "quest" for God.

And whereas this is not the ultimate solution, Servants of God with a higher calling must watch out so that the so called big fishes "personalities" don't swallow you –for remember it is the big fish that swallow the small fish. The rule of the thumb is, just know what it is that God wants of you and don't rest or settle for less until you attain it. Abraham and the temptations of Jesus in the wilderness are classic examples of the struggle with Self, Satan and the World in the wilderness.

A victorious example of a successful man who operated at this level is John the Baptist. You see, although John was a trained priest under his father's tutorage, yet John left the pride and pomp of the priesthood in Jerusalem and instead headed to the humbling wilderness where he ate wild honey and dressed in camel's clothing. But right there in the wilderness, God's hand was upon John. And by the way, did you know that John the Baptist is not recorded as having done any spectacular miracles apart from baptizing those who turned their hearts to God? So be faithful man or woman of God in your calling even in the wilderness and never ever compare yourself with others for your calling is definitely unique!

Let me also add that even though the **faithful Saints** who operate in this level, are very prayerful and some of them even work great miracles for God, yet their lifestyles are quite humble to the point that many bypass them as being insignificant, weak, powerless or naive! But never ever judge, classify or despise a Servant of God like that for remember "still waters run deep". Gideon is a classic example of this level of operation. For although in his eyes, Gideon was a broken soldier hiding from the Midianites, yet before God, Gideon was highly reckoned as a Mighty General that God could use to fulfill God's will to deliver God's people.

With regard to where we are in the world today, it is my observation that the many "who is who" Ministers today are in this category. I will not name names but it is not hard to notice what I am saying. The danger for those who consider themselves as being successful or as "having arrived" is the temptation to get familiar and plateau-ing in this phase as a so called "expert", "guru" or in religious terminologies "Prophet" "Apostle", "Bishop", "Psalmist", "Intercessor" etc. [*Please note that I'm not against religious titles per say however, my challenge is let all of us who bear such titles not be conceited, arrogant or be caught up in a humanistic pseudo spirituality that only leads one into becoming a "Messenger of Strife & Schisms, or a Messenger without a Message or a Messenger without Relevancy"*]. This is a great danger for the wilderness ministers notwithstanding that Moses and Abraham sinned against the Lord despite... then also remember King David despite experiencing great victories at this level also had great falls on the same level. And may I also remind you that John the Baptist also doubted Christ at this level. So the only way of one staying in tune with God's Presence is by Pursuing God even further and further while daily dying to self ... into the next level.

Face to Face Level

For lack of a better name, I will simply refer to this level as "face to face" level. Very few Servants of God pursue God to this level as normally complacency and pride and human riches, glory and accolades, and the spirit of Balaam catches up with them in the second level hindering them to move on further.

In this level, [notice I say in this level and not at this level], the Servant of God becomes continually broken and in a sense *he or she "is not in this world"*. For Paul, after seeing the Lord, the Lord placed in him a thorn "a messenger of Satan" to buffet him so that he may never become arrogant! Make sense? Okay let's now turn to Exodus 33:13-18 as a challenge to enter into this level.

Prior to this, Moses has already seen the hand of God at work, indeed he had already witnessed the power of God LIVE in the wilderness, but he knew there was one thing that he hadn't seen *vis a vis* - God's Face! So he persuades God to show him His face if he had indeed gained God's favor. And Moses got to see the back parts of Jehovah God!

Saints, the one basic characteristic of those who operate in this level is that they are always thirsting and hungering after God. They never seem to get contented with the many revelations of God in their lives since they are always wanting more and more of God. My question now is, are we there yet? Who among us in our generation is seeking God earnestly and deeply in this way? Ohh where are they that pursue God like Moses did in Exodus 33. Friends, if we are to experience a Revolution and an everlasting Revival of the Presence of God today, then there is no short cut -- we must Pursue God to the point where He allows us the opportunity to see His face. Are you ready my friend?

And my fellow Ministers, why are we so encroached in the things of this world that only cause us to deviate so easily into the things earthly and irrelevant to our higher calling? Why don't we realize that we have indeed received a very noble and high calling and henceforth, Pursue God as He beckons us... Ohh that this cry of my heart may be contagious to all leaders. Yes many will look down on you cause of your passion for God, but beloved, don't give up and don't even fret for God will fight for you and besides you are not the only one. God has a remnant and we are many! Amen and Amen!

At a time when Elijah thought that he was the only one left, God announced to him that He {God} had Seven thousand faithfuls who had never bowed down to Baal. So please, please, don't give up but instead lets all join forces and call Heavens down! The early Apostles did this and even though they were all martyred, yet it is because of them that we are what we are today. Now who will take the baton from them and pass it on? And let me further challenge us, if we all become complacent or engage in useless wars, how many among us will be trusted to usher in the Presence of God in our Generation? Ohh Kenyans Arise!

Beloved, my heart cries out today more than ever, Ohh that the Presence of God may fall on us like never before ... please help me call on the Name of the Lord. John the Beloved disciple pursued God's Face desperately and now we have the book of Revelation, Saint Paul Pursued God's face desperately and Christianity spread to the ends of the world. Ohh may I continue, Elijah pursued the Face of God until a chariot of fire took him to Heaven, Moses Pursued the Face of God until his body could not be found when he died, Ohh Enoch Pursued the Face of God until God took him away never to be seen again. Prophet Samuel Pursued the Face of God and lived a Holy life without any blemish in his entire career as a Prophet and Judge! But what can be said about the Kenyans in our generation? And what about here in the US, who has pursued God until ...?

Ohh beloved Saints, why are we content with spiritual handouts, and meaningless, powerless and repetitious religious experiences? Can't we honestly, passionately yet humbly Pursue God desperately for a Fresh Move of God in our Generation? This is where I am and have been, please join me dear Saints to Passionately and Desperately Pursue God's Presence and then in April the 28th, 29th and 30th, lets all meet at the New Jersey Convention for more corporate Pursuance of the Face of God. Amen and Amen.

I love you Saint,
Bishop Dagi