

Series: **THE GREATNESS CURRICULUM**
Topic: **Self-Leadership**
Speaker: **Pastor Godman Akinlabi**
Text: **Matthew 20:25-27**
Date: **Sunday, October 7, 2018**

*“²⁵But Jesus called them to Himself and said, ‘You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. ²⁶Yet it shall not be so among you; but whosoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant, ²⁷and whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave.’” – **Matthew 20:25-27***

The word church comes from the word ‘*Ecclesia*’, meaning ‘The called out ones,’ which is a pointer to our role in society.

Religion first made its appearance after Abel gave a sacrifice to show his appreciation to God for His blessings; it was the beginning of man seeking to please God, even though man’s connection to God started from a point of relationship. When God saw that it had become religion, He redirected our minds and perspectives, through the coming and life of Jesus Christ, to the fact that He wants a relationship. God was willing to empower humanity to please Him. And we see, through the acts of the Apostles, the effect of God empowerment on the apostles, disciples and early Christians in the works they did in Jesus’ name and the tremendous effect they had on their world.

Bringing this closer home, the church at the start of Nigeria (that is, at independence) was in its infancy, having been introduced through missionaries at the time of Nigeria’s colonization, thus, the Church could not actively contribute to nation building. 58 years after Nigeria’s independence, the church is no more at infancy but is now large in size and resources yet. On the other hand, Nigeria is still a country and not yet a nation 58 years after independence. The difference is that a country is a specific location identified by specific geographical delineation of separated land mass and borders, while a nation is a country’s identity, the dissolution of all its tribe and ethnicities into one entity, usually collected around specific ideology. In Nigeria we are still at that point where we see and identify ourselves by ethnicity first before being identified as Nigerians.

The United States of America is a capable nation, in other words, a nation that is like a big brother, carrying other countries on their shoulder. You do not have to be born in the US, you just have to become an American to enjoy huge benefits of being there; for instance, Arnold Schwarzenegger was a Russian immigrant to the US who was able to dream, work hard and reach one of the highest positions available, contesting for and winning the governorship election in California, the very State that helped make him the international star that he became. In Nigeria, a person born within cannot go to another State to contest, talk more of winning a governorship election without being reminded of where he is from and sent back there; we are not yet a nation and the church in Nigeria should lead the way in nation-building. We need to redefine the understanding of revival, moving from expectation of huge attendance and miracles as a rating of performance, to more substantial impact like the Welsh revival that brought industrialization to the world, including the dignity in labour movement where there was great respect for and massive employment of Christians due to their strong work ethics, amongst other positive impacts.

The passage above points to real greatness being demonstrated by service, the use of what you have for the benefit of your world, meaning that it is your duty to discover what you have, break the barrier of timidity and then execute greatness through that discovered talent or resource. To achieve the kind of impact that leads to nation building, we each need to develop strong self-leadership. Proverbs 6:6-8 [*“Go to the ant, you sluggard! Consider her ways and be wise, which, having no captain, overseer or ruler, provides her supplies in the*

summer, and gathers her food in the harvest”] gives a good illustration of self-leadership, the ability to achieve much with what is available and without external intervention.

Any time you solve problems for yourself, you gain capacity to solve problems for others. David, for instance, solved a national problem by bringing down Goliath, who was terrorizing the nation of Israel (1 Samuel 17:12-49). In speaking about his capabilities, which was like reading his CV, he showed that he had solved his own problems and that of his father’s house – the lion and the bear – so he was willing and capable of solving something similar, albeit several times larger and more terrifying. Nigeria today is in need of *Davids* to put a stop to the many Goliaths harassing Nigeria in its different sectors.

Problem solving is a direct function of leadership and a route to ruler-ship. Looking again at David, the line to the throne for him would originally be long and virtually impossible, but grace and his own capabilities shortened that route. David relied on God’s support throughout his life; he brought Goliath down by the power of God. There are many who want to use the anointing of God on their lives for personal gain, but the question for you now is, “What are you using the power of God in your life for?”

Problems are opportunities for leadership; Nigeria has a lot of problems and these are our opportunities. Acts 10:28 shows us that the anointing is for problem solving, as was the case with Jesus (our ultimate example), who used the anointing on His life to do so. Yes breakthroughs and miracles are good but you need to move yourself beyond that. You cannot keep thinking only of personal or immediate benefits when there are problems on a national scale waiting to be solved.

There is also the factor of environment. Your dream or vision can be high and magnificent but your environment can limit its actual expression. The church is losing huge grounds by not taking its place, especially in the political space. Our positive attempts and efforts can be frustrated by policies that can mess up the foundation of our values, that is why we should get and stay involved. We should understand that Jesus was a spiritual saviour and a political figure. That was why Herod became jittery when he heard of the prophecy and birth of *a King* . Jesus’ death was also based on the contention of Him being the King of the Jews – Jesus was as much a political figure as He was a saviour. The church is too much positioned in the function of prophet and priest but the bible calls us a *royal* priesthood, where *royalty* points to the necessity of influence over and involvement in government.

As Christians we have dual citizenship – of heaven and our local earth locations – and we must make positive impacts in both by operating like Joseph, Esther, and David who got involved in governance and politics to make the lives of people better. When things in this country change, 60 – 70 % of your prayer points will change because those things you seek would have naturally been solved through a functional system and enabling environment for success.

Here are some ways to be involved in Nigeria’s nation building process:

- Get involved in prayer, even though we will not stop there
- Make sure you are registered to vote as a first step toward governmental influence
- Get involved in an acceptable political party as a card-carrying member so you can be a voice in the selection process
- Get engaged in community projects
- Give financial contribution and support credible political candidates because he who pays the piper dictates the tune

Jesus came that we should have life in abundance; this abundant life is what we must make come true in our lifetime and for posterity.

Prayer:

Lord we receive Your blessing and grace over everyone of us as we take our place to be true salt and light of this great nation; we decree that Nigeria is rising again, in the name of Jesus. Amen.