

The Torch

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THE LORD NEEDS YOU

If anyone says anything to you, say that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away.” - Matt. 21:3 NIV

Jesus Christ was on his way to Jerusalem, a destination where he had earlier informed the Disciples that;

1. He will be handed over to the Chief Priests and the teachers of the law – Matt. 20:18a.
2. He will be condemned to death – Matt. 20:18b.

Both events were sufficient enough to dissuade anyone from making such a journey but then, that is the reason why he came to the world. He had no choice but to fulfil destiny. He had arrived in Bethphage on the Mount of Olives with his entourage when he chose not to continue on foot with the journey into Jerusalem. Either under

spiritual direction or personal desire, he decided on riding into the City of David, with the bible retrospectively revealing that his action was in fulfilment of the prophecy of Zechariah who had prophesied that their king will come gentle and riding on a donkey – Zech. 9:9.

In order to achieve his intention, he directed two of his disciples to enter the village ahead where they will instantly find a donkey and its colt tied. They were to untie both and bring them to him and should anyone ask why they were untying them both, they should respond saying that, “the Lord hath need for them”. Both disciples went as directed and met the situation just as

he said. They responded just as they were told to do and returned with both the donkey and the colt – Matt. 21:6-7. The donkey was immediately decorated in a manner fitting for the use of a king with the disciples spreading their cloaks on it for him to ride on. The crowd following also spread their cloaks on the road for his donkey to ride on whilst others cut palm fronds waving it before him and shouting;

1. Hossanah to the son of David – Matt. 21:9a.
2. Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord – Matt. 21:9b.
3. Hossanah to the highest – Matt. 21:9c.

There is no doubt that all the events starting from the point he asked the disciples to go for the donkey and the colt to the point where the people started singing after him carry so much significance to the Christian today. Beyond the physical manifestations is profound spiritual significance of the events. Some of the points of note are as listed below:

1. The instruction to go and untie the specific donkey speaks volumes about the authority he exercises. The ownership of the donkey is irrelevant. All that is important is the need for it by Jesus Christ. Just as no one disputed with the disciples, so likewise Jesus expects us today not to dispute his call for us. He needs us to be able to establish his kingdom. Nothing should be too big for us to release to him in order to establish his reign. Several Christians are still holding back in terms of submitting to his call. Surrender to him in total today so that his reign in your life can start.

2. Submission of cloaks by the disciples and some people in the crowd, in the name of decorating the donkey, cannot also go unnoticed. Just as the cloak is worn to conceal the main garment, the Christian who is coming to him must remove all coverings and lay them at his feet. Such must appear before him without pretense and reveal all that needs to be known. Attempting to hide anything from him is an act of insincerity in relation to the decision to accept him fully as Lord and Savior. Lay everything bare before him by removing all coverings so that he can see you and accept you for who you really are.

3. The waving of the palm fronds was to demonstrate that the one that was being heralded was a victor of some sorts. With him riding on donkey, which was a means of transport for royalties in those times, they probably saw a victorious king in him and so heralded him as such.

4. However, the confused nature of the crowd that was following Jesus was very obvious. In that short space of time, Jesus Christ was projected as three different personalities.

- a. They regarded him as a king even though they

did not try to define his kingdom or assumed that he had conquered the roman empire and had arrived to take over his kingdom. No wonder they were waving palm fronds to signify victory ahead of him.

- b. By the time they started heralding him, they saw him as the son of David, who has come in the name of the Lord asking him to fulfil the mission of saving them, which is the meaning of the word “Hossanah”. That indicated their view of him as the one that will free them from the enslavement of the Roman empire, but then he had not fought any battle neither did they see any army with him to fight the battle ahead. That must have gotten some people in the crowd confused.
- c. So when eventually, some people in Jerusalem asked who he was, the response was very simple. He was just another prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.

The truth is that Jesus Christ is not any of what these people who have been following him consider him to be. That lack of conviction about his real personality probably accounted for their subsequent actions.

Most Christians are not too different from the crowd that were following Jesus Christ then. Lacking sufficient understanding of who he really is, they have expectations that will never be met and make demands that he will never grant.

Aware that this was a major issue with all the people that were following him, he had asked the disciples who the people considered him to be and also who the disciples themselves consider him to be. Peter's response was the only one that was spot on as he said he was the Christ and the son of the living God – Matt. 16:13-20. He was not a king, neither was he just the Son of David nor was he just a prophet from Nazareth in Bethlehem. He was the Christ, the messiah of the Almighty God, to save the soul of mankind from destruction. Until he is seen as such, whoever is claiming to follow him is just part of the ignorant crowd. Just as he told Simon Peter that flesh and blood did not give that revelation to him but the Almighty God Himself – Matt. 16:17.

Avoid just following him and do all you can to know him. That is the only way that the relationship with him can have any meaning. May God grant us all the grace to know Jesus as the Christ and son of the Almighty God in Jesus name. Amen.



ESCAPE FROM POVERTY

Poverty is the noun of the word used to describe the financial state of an individual, group, country, etc. The one that is in the state of poverty is described as being poor. Although the word “poverty” is sometimes used in relation to other areas of life, several definitions tend to view Poverty mainly from the perspective of being extremely poor. To be poor is to lack sufficient money to live at a standard considered comfortable or normal in a society.

Being poor can also be relative, even when the point that is being considered is the financial state. This is because prevailing economic conditions differ from one environment to the other. Possession of a specific amount of money may class an individual as rich in one society but poor in another society. It is always going to be about the economic standard of the society in reference.

Although it is possible to be considered rich at all times irrespective of the society such a person finds him/herself, there may not be a guarantee that one will always be rich throughout life time. Cases abound of people who are poor at a younger age and successfully escape poverty as they progress in life and vice-versa. Some experience the phase of poverty in between two phases of wealth whilst some have period of wealth sandwiched between two life phases of poverty. Which ever is the situation, what is not in contention is the desire of all human beings, Christians and non-Christians alike, to avoid poverty as much as they can. This is because the state of poverty is one that gives the impression that life is not worth living.

To be poor as mentioned earlier is to lack financial ability to meet basic needs that is necessary for normal living in any society. There is no other way to avoid this than to have money. The Bible even says that money answereth all things even though it equally warns all that the love for money is the foundation of all evil that is found in the world today – Eccl. 10:19; 1Tim. 6:10. As much as it may be desirable to avoid poverty by possessing money, it is equally important for people to be careful about what they do to have the money. It is never going to be acceptable to the Lord and even men, if anyone with the belief that the end justifies the means, decides to escape poverty through illegal or more importantly, immoral routes. Of course it becomes immoral when the acquisition of the money is at the expense of the peace and comfort of others or inflicts harm and pain on fellow human beings or contradicts the laws of the Almighty God.

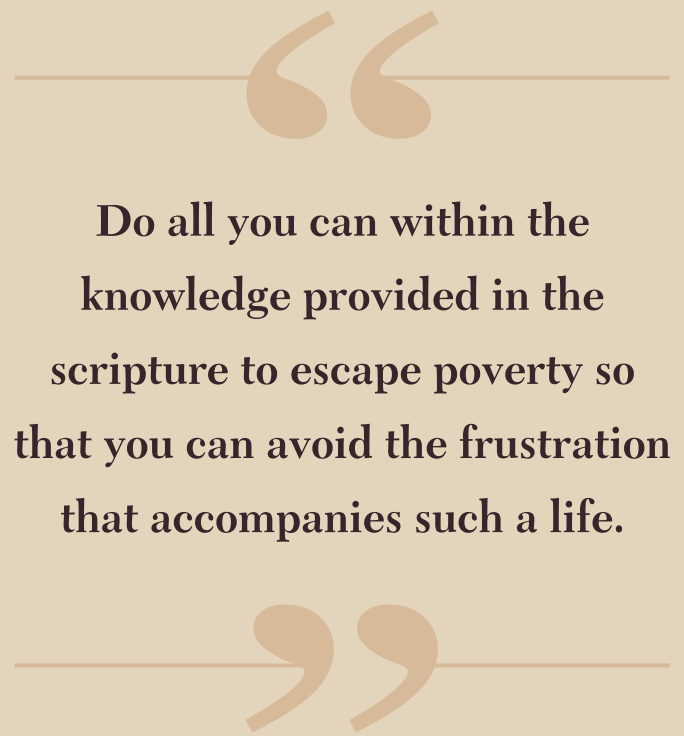
Nevertheless, it is important for the Christian in particular and all human beings in general to do everything legal and moral to avoid poverty because the one who is poor will hardly have a personality. Such may find it difficult to be positively recognised in the society. The opinion of such is hardly taken seriously and such will always live a life of sadness as basic comfort of life are out of reach. One may not be financially wealthy, which is the state of having money in excess or abundance and more than immediate needs, but escaping poverty will equate to being in the state that the wise writer of the book of Proverbs sought from the Lord – Prov. 30:8b-9. He had pleaded with God not to

make him wealthy so as to avoid him forgetting the Lord but at the same time not leave him poor so that he does not have to steal and disgrace Him.

The use of the word “escape” in today's teaching is because the natural state of man is the state that encourages poverty. To avoid poverty will require that human beings go out of the normal and do the unusual. One of the desires of human beings is to enjoy life, but like the wise king advised, it has to be in one's work – Eccl. 2:24; 3:22. Enjoyment involves being able to afford things that make one happy and merry, and that will mean spending money. To legally have money to spend or to legally continue to have money to spend will however be possible only if one is willing to work. Truth however is that working is not always desirable as it exposes man to some level discomfort, a state that every human being will want to avoid if possible. The Bible says poverty creeps into the life of the one who loves a little bit of sleep, slumber and idleness – Prov. 6:10-11; 24:33. It therefore becomes obvious that the one that wants to escape poverty must be willing to work.

But very obvious in the society today is the hardworking nature of many people who are not just poor but are extremely poor. It then makes it obvious that as much as it is true that the one that is not working is destined for poverty, working does not always guarantee escape from poverty. This however is not strange to the Bible student who should be aware that it is the Lord that provides the ability to avoid poverty by giving ability to make wealth. He it is that prospers without stress – Deut. 8:18; Prov. 10:22. What a great revelation but how is that going to be possible? Is it the case that he will rain down manna from heaven? Definitely not because on the occasion when he provided manna from heaven, the manna ceased immediately they stepped into the land where they had the opportunity to work for what they will eat – Josh. 5:12. The lord may provide financial succor for his people but it remains just that as the child of God that desires to escape poverty must seek to have a land to farm on and prepare to work hard on the land. The land will be any vocation that will yield income. There will be nothing to harvest if such does not have a land, more so farm it in expectation of a harvest. The one who has nothing to harvest cannot escape poverty. So it becomes obvious that the Christian will only be able to escape poverty by simply working hard on a path that God has designed for him/her as that is when the Almighty God will be willing to bless such works. Working hard on a path that is not divinely designed may bring income but may not be sufficient for such an individual to escape poverty just as living outside the instructions of the Lord can even make the one that is wealthy walk into poverty unknowingly.

The Christian must aspire to work as there is no other



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way to escape the poverty that is presently plaguing Christendom than this. But the work to be done must be as revealed by the Almighty God. Not seeking direction from Him may not stop a huge income from coming in, but it will definitely not aid the individual to avoid poverty. Poverty is not the result of lack of income alone but also about avoiding unnecessary expenditures. For as long as the expenditure is bigger than the income, poverty will always be close by. In promising wealth, the Lord does not only bless the work of the hands of his people and open the gates of heaven to pour down blessings but also promised to rebuke the devourer that will introduce unnecessary expenditures – Deut. 28:12; Mal. 3:10-18. He has both sides covered to ensure that His children never experience poverty.

Do all you can within the knowledge provided in the scripture to escape poverty so that you can avoid the frustration that accompanies such a life. It is definitely not the plan of God for you. Prayer should be made to Him, only to seek direction on the right path that he has designed for your life so that you will be able to plant on your own ground, know what to plant and know how to utilise the harvest. Success in this will no doubt help you to escape poverty. May God help us to chase poverty away from our lives in Jesus name. Amen.

Please send all your reactions to:
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