

# External Ministry of the Church

Nigeria 2019

If you will turn with me to Isaiah 1. Isaiah 1 is about what Israel failed to do so that God rejected them as His people. Before I start this, I should also say that I'm going to do a shorter message and we will have time for a Q&A afterwards. When we think about what the church is supposed to do for the community and as the heads of various agencies, what we should be working towards for the community, we should consider why God rejected Israel, why it says in Jeremiah 3, that He divorces Israel because this is what God considers to be serious for what the people of God are supposed to be doing. If we go to Isaiah 1:16, it starts with Isaiah saying the same thing as I said in the last session, wash yourselves and make yourselves clean. "Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil." That's what the church has to do to itself, not by itself because that is the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit enables us to turn from sin, where ever since Adam ate that bite out of the fruit we have been in rebellion to the laws of God. God promises in the new covenant in Jeremiah 31, that He will give us a heart of flesh and He will write His law upon our heart. So now instead of wanting to rebel against God like Adam and Eve did, we will want to submit to God like the second Adam did, because we are part of the second Eve as the church of Jesus Christ. So the Holy Spirit causes us to put away evil from before our eyes, but if you go back to the great commission, it says to teach them to obey all things I have commanded you. In the Greek it's actually vague, whether it's referring to the disciples or to the nations because as the light of the world, the church does teach the nations so we have a responsibility to cease doing evil among ourselves, but this is a primary effect of a church in the community. It's supposed to cause the community to cease from doing evil. I know it's easy to say, but there is so much evil in Nigeria, there's so much evil in the United States. How does the church cause people to cease from doing evil? It goes back to a simple principle in Scripture, darkness flees before light. If we are faithful in being the light of the world, if we're faithful in shining forth the light of God's commandments, if we live in such a way that we live in obedience to God's commandments, the society will change because darkness cannot exist with light. When you turn on a light in a dark room, the darkness doesn't stay, it disappears. It's a really important concept to understand how God designed the world, He designed it so everything declared His glory. The world didn't have to be designed so that when you flipped a light switch the darkness disappeared, but God ordered the world that way so when He says you are the light of the world, we know what effect we can have on the world around us. All the things in the world declare the glory of God. A father and son declare the nature between God the Father and God the Son. God washing His bride in the water of the word declares what the responsibilities are between a human husband and wife. God ordered the world to teach us about Him so when you see darkness in a society, it is always because the light is not shining. When you think of the role of the agency heads to the community, one of the most basic things is to shine forth light because even if you're just going and renting chairs, you can do things the way the world does it or do things the way God says to do it. You can lie and deceive or you can walk in the light. Those little things when we interact with the world are what causes the sin to leave a society.

The church has to be holy in its dealings, it needs to be above reproach so it is a rebuke to those who are in sin. All your actions in the community have to be based on how God says they should be done, that's how a society changes, by Christians being faithful not just when they are in the doors of the church but when they are walking out in the world. Especially when they are representing the church of Jesus Christ, whether it's a group of women going on a women's fellowship, does the world see you as different? In all things, when the church goes out in the world, it should not look like the world. If it looks like the world, you are not teaching the world to cease to do evil, you are not teaching the world to obey all the commands of Christ. Quite the opposite, what you are really saying is to ignore the commands of God, especially when you say 'Jesus loves you'. Jesus loves those that He loves and the love of Jesus is effective. He changes those He loves to they love Him and this is the love of God that you keep His commandments. You have a child and he says he loves you and asks for a hug, but he disobeys every word that you say, he doesn't love you, he is just manipulating you. This is what love looks like, the love of somebody under authority that someone in authority, is that they do what the one in authority says. The rest is just manipulation. If we want the world to learn to cease to do evil, we need to testify it by ceasing to do evil ourselves. When you think about what I said to do last time, accountability, we need to be holding one another accountable out in the culture. If in the culture you are running a store and people can't trust that your goods aren't going to be altered, then you're not teaching them to cease to do evil, you're not shining the light, so don't complain if someone rips you off because you gave them permission. The church is always the light of the world, Christ was the light of the world when He came, but when He ascended to heaven He left His body, the church, to be the light of the world. You remember what it says in John 1, that every single person walked according to the light that Christ gave them. Christ's mercy and grace in all of history has constrained sin and He has given that responsibility to the church. The evil in society is because the church has not shined forth the light and regardless of what ministry you are the head of, we all have the duty to be fulfilling the great commission. We have a duty to teach them what God commanded and we need to be keeping one another accountable, to be constraining the sin in our lives and to be testifying to the world around us that we are a holy people and that will change the culture, it will change Miango. We are promised this, His promises do not fail, but we have to have a zeal for holiness so that we shine forth the light. It's not Him that's failing in this community, it's His bride not shining forth the light. Let's make sure that we hold one another accountable so that the light shines forth. We can't just teach them to cease to do evil. Verse 17, "Learn to do good; Seek justice, Rebuke the oppressor; Defend the fatherless, Plead for the widow." We also have to teach them that the right thing is to do good to one another. You have a lot of unbelievers in America who send lots of money overseas for many things. They're not doing it because they want to exalt Christ, they're doing it because a hundred and fifty years ago in America the gospel was preached, but that still continues to have an effect today in the world because people in America still give money to those who are hungry throughout the world. They aren't thinking we should do good because we are trying to exalt the name of Christ, but the only reason they actually do it is because of the faithfulness of the church in previous generations. The church teaches the world to do good, but the most basic way it does it is to be active in the world to do good. I know of a pastor who was in a city with a tremendous religious heritage and because of that, all the homosexuals and sodomites came to that city and they had control of

the major events that took place in that city. It was a wicked place so what he said was as a church they were going to go sweep the streets, they were going to pick up trash. There was an annual parade and the church cleaned up after the parade even though everyone in the parade was a sodomite, but the city started to respect them because they were doing good and then he got put on the leadership committee of the parade and he was able to convince them that having all the sodomites there was hurting the city because no families would come to live there. The city threw out the sodomites and now it's a very family friendly city. That pastor and that church taught them how to do good by being willing to go and do good even to wicked people. As groups, as fellowships, you need to ask yourself how to teach the community to do good. How do we do good so other people, those who are not true Christians, start to do good? You know the Muslims and their month of Ramadan, they are supposed to give to the poor every day. Where do you think they learned that? Where did Mohammed get that idea? He got it from the Christian travelers that were going through the area. The Muslims giving to charity is because of the testimony of the church of Jesus Christ. Do you see the power of the church doing good? Because even those who hate Christ recognize the truth that this is good and they do good even with the wrong motives. This is what your groups need to be about, loving the people outside, loving your enemies, doing good to those who do evil to you to shame them to do good. It won't save them, but they will imitate the light and they will hide their evil because when we shine forth the light, the evil flees. Seek justice. This is so key for the church. Micah 6:8, "He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?" As the church, you should reject corruption in your courts and in your government. It is proper for the church to be speaking out about injustice. You can't accept injustice from someone who calls himself a Christian and reject it if he calls himself a Muslim because that's unjust and you've already lost your testimony. The church needs to speak against corruption in all forms. A society that doesn't have justice in its society and courts will always have poverty, always have poverty. If you cannot trust the courts to deal justly, you can't do contracts, you can't do business, and it impoverishes a society. The world says to get whatever we can, it will never turn from corruption itself. The Church is the pillar and ground of truth, it needs to stand and say it's not acceptable, it needs to be bold and shine forth light where there is corruption, it needs to band together in groups and say we will not accept this. Ephesians 5 says, do not partake of the hidden works of evil, but rather expose them. That's how corruption stops in Nigeria, but if you're unjust inside the church then that means you want injustice in your courts, and in your police, and in your government because if that judge sitting on the bench can say look how the churches do church discipline, the rich get off and the poor suffer, you can guess exactly what he's going to do. When the church who professes the name of Jesus Christ, accepts sin within its midst, it always creates an excuse for society and they will always grab that excuse and bribery and injustice will just increase. The men and women of God need to stand forth and say we will not accept this. God says our primary duty as a Christian is to do justly and we call ourselves a Christian community so we will stand in the streets and demand justice. Demand judges get removed that you know are corrupt. Call out the police that demand a bribe. Until the church is willing to do that, Nigeria will be poor because justice is required for the accrual of wealth. That ties into the next one, rebuke the oppressor. Rebuking the oppressor means you don't just demand justice for the wealthy, you protect the weak that are being taken advantage of. When you see the

person taking advantage of someone because he doesn't have resources, you rebuke them, you expose them, you call evil evil. As groups in your church you need to bind together in order to do this in a way that affects the culture. Be faithful to be the light of the world. These last two I'm going to pass over quickly, but it's a check on how you're doing the others, how you're learning to do good, how you're seeking to do good and rebuke the oppressor. How do you treat orphans and widows? If you won't defend the orphan, you're going to have an unjust society. If you don't care for the widow, you're going to have a society that doesn't do good. This is why James says the purest religion before God and man is to aid widows and orphans in their distress. This is what the church is supposed to be doing to the world, this is the testimony of the church to the world and this is what your agencies should be about. Not about your pleasure, not about your desires and wants, but about fulfilling the great commission because this is what it looks like to teach them everything God commanded.

## Q&A

- 1. If the woman marries an unbeliever and he will not support the family, what is she to do?** 1 Corinthians 7:14 says what a woman is to do if she marries an unbeliever. "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy." Paul is speaking in this chapter about the importance of two believers marrying, but he understands the situation that sometimes you marry a man that's a professed believer and then you find out he's not a believer at all. Maybe you hear the preaching of the gospel after you are married and you're saved, but your spouse is not. Paul is saying not to leave him or her, but in the next verse he's saying if the unbelieving spouse leaves to let him go. The believing spouse does not leave for the sake of the children. 1 Peter 3 says it's also for the sake of the husband, but here he specifically states for the children. The reason you stay is so the children know who God is, so they have the picture and words of the gospel. If your husband allows it you should step in the gap. The picture is Deborah in the book of Judges where no man did what he was supposed to do and Deborah was righteous to stand up and to be a judge. That's what a wife should do. That's in line with 1 Peter 3 because it says a wife should submit to her husband even if he does not obey the word. If he says under no circumstance should you speak the word to my children, then you ask him, but it's by your submission that you might win your husband. Again, we obey the commands of God even if they don't sound smart in our eyes because God is smarter than we are.
- 2. If we have a problem in the fellowship and the leaders and elders cannot care about the solution, what can we do?** What you are not to do is use it to divide the church, to go behind the elders and pastors back and whisper, to try to undermine their authority. Not because they are righteous, but God has appointed them to that position so you appeal to them. You are like the widow that's going to the unjust judge. He was an unjust judge, but she kept going to him and going to him until he said he would deal with it. If the elders and pastor of your church are not dealing with an issue, it's proper to keep going to them. Because of the way your system is set up, I expect there is an appeal system up in the diocese as well and it's proper and valid to make an appeal to a

higher authority. The centurion wanted to kill Paul and Paul said, 'I appeal to Caesar', it is valid to appeal to a higher authority or to a different authority. There is always a legitimate place to appeal to authorities. The only absolute authority is Jesus Christ, all other authorities are overlapping. If a wife is beaten by her husband, it's valid to appeal to the police. God set them as authority as much as He set the father over authority. If a wife finds out her husband is committing adultery, it is valid for her to appeal to the elders of the church. There are overlapping authorities and we are to respect all the authorities. If you have two children, one child does something very very bad and your other child saw him do it and he doesn't tell you, he's not showing you honor because part of showing honor is to respect their position. If we say you must submit to your husband so you don't tell the elder his sin, you're showing disrespect to authority and we can't use the excuse of submitting to authority to show disrespect to another authority. I've been in this situation before and that question comes up.

3. **What can a leader do to achieve his goal?** That's a very general question, but I will give a specific answer. I talked about other things like accountability when dealing with yourself, but just like James talks about in James 4, that it's righteous for a man to go this place and this place and he will make a profit in a year. Two things, one is to have an objective. As a leader of a group, where do you want that group to be in a year? This is what the wise do, this is why God gives leadership abilities to somebody. They don't just react to the minute, they have a plan of where they want to be and they have a strategy to get there. They always recognize that man plans his steps, but the result is from the Lord. A leader strategizes and determines how they are going to get where they want to get, but it starts with a vision of where you want to go and that has to be based on the word of God. Nobody can deal with all the problems at once so we always have to say, 'This is my part of the wall.' I have traveled many places preaching, but the last couple years it's almost always been in Nigeria. Not because the problems in the rest of the world have changed, but for this season, God has said my wall is here. You need to look at the situation around you and ask what opportunities God has given you, what's the most obvious thing you need to deal with and then figure out a strategy to deal with it. That's one of the ways a leader leads.
4. **In some churches, the elders and deacons and deaconesses..could not make out the rest of the question.** There's a whole bunch of sin there. Most people that say there should be women deaconesses go to Romans 16:1, "I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea." That word 'servant' in the Greek is actually 'deaconess', but the issue is that a deacon in a church is different than just being a servant of the church. The rules that qualify a deacon as a position is found in 1 Timothy 3, and it says they must be reverent, not double tongued, then it says their wives must be reverent. So the implication is that deacons have wives. In verse 12, it says, "Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well." Which means a one woman man. The Scripture is actually clear that a deaconess is not a position in the church, which doesn't mean that women aren't wonderful servants in the church, but they're not supposed to have authority. When they are given authority because the men won't serve as they're supposed to serve, the men

are in sin, the deaconess is in sin, and the church is in sin for appointing them. That's why I said there was all kinds of sin.

5. **Usually there is a women's day where the women preach.** Let me read the verse again Zingak! It doesn't matter what our opinion is. 1 Corinthians 14:34, "Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says." They're not permitted to speak. It doesn't leave any wiggle room. Paul has commanded it, inspired by the Holy Spirit, he says this is what an ordered church looks like. It's a shame on the woman, it's a shame on the man, and it's a shame on the church. There is definitely a place for women to teach other women, but even in Titus 2, where the authority for a woman to teach another woman comes from, it's not the word for preach. It's not even the word for teach, it's really the word 'to mentor'. Women are supposed to mentor other children and they're supposed to stay silent in church, thus saith the Scripture, not me. This gets me in trouble all the time, it's Christ that said it, Christ who is the perfect husband said it. Christ who loves women to the point that He says the picture of those who will be saved is a woman, He said it. Understand what happens when you let women speak in church because the picture of a marriage is Jesus Christ and the church. Why is a woman supposed to stay silent in church and ask her husband at home? It's so the church doesn't say they have a great idea, they are going to speak differently than Christ would speak. She's not supposed to do that, she's supposed to go ask her husband at home and who is the husband of the church? Jesus Christ. When women speak in church, the church says it has authority over Christ rather than Christ having authority over the church. The pictures matter, that's why God ordered the world the way He did. It's Christ that says it.
6. **During the teaching, it was brought up that women should not bother the pastor. What does that mean?** It has nothing to do with bothering the pastor, it has to do with unity between the husband and wife. One thing to understand is what God is doing with these commands. If I ask the wives in this meeting how many are satisfied with their husband's knowledge of God and their theology, how many would raise their hands? Most of you probably think your husband doesn't understand the Bible as well as they should. Do you know you have a responsibility to make your husbands know their Bible as well as they should? Do you realize you sin against your husband when you go to ask the pastor instead of your husband? Sometimes he says, 'I don't know' and sometimes he goes and figures it out. Maybe he goes and asks the pastor, it has nothing to do with bothering the pastor, it has to do with maturing the husbands and unifying the husband and wife.
7. **There is a head over all the agencies, should women talk to the head of the different agencies or stay silent?** We need to define the term 'church' because the 'Ecclesia' as he is talking here isn't the people, it's the meeting of the church that is the context. So it's in the public meeting of the church that women are not to speak. If you have a question of 'should we talk about this in women's fellowship', it's not about the study of God's word, which is the context of this verse because it's about the unity of the husband and wife and who God is, not in the practical working out of things which would be more to the relationship of the agency.

- 8. The husband is supposed to teach the children and the woman and then in the house when they wake up in the morning the husband is sleeping, what should she do?** Go appeal to your husband, wake him up. What a wife should do is appeal to her husband since he probably wants to go back to sleep; he will probably tell the wife to go ahead and teach the children. That way you are honoring your husband and your children still get the teaching.
- 9. They say we should help the widows, but what if they are wealthy?** The short answer to the question is, should you help a wealthy widow? You look at what God commands us to do for widows. The word commands us to open our doors wide to them, to give them food. If they're wealthy they don't need food or a place to stay. What help do they need? We don't have a responsibility to help them if they don't have a need.
- 10. What about a widow who goes after some married men and are immoral. Do we still consider them widows and give them help?** First, we don't treat them as Christian widows for no adulterer will enter the kingdom of heaven. Another question that you have to ask, are they only doing it out of desperation? If they are, it's because the church sinned against them. If they have to go after married men in order to eat, then we sinned against them. It doesn't excuse their sin. Now, the woman you helped and then went to chase after married men, will probably find her provision elsewhere and won't want any help from the church.

Oh Lord, I do pray that You bless the people here. I pray that You give them Your wisdom and Your understanding as we have discussed some difficult subjects. We pray that they have a heart and desire to understand Your wisdom in these matters. I pray that anything I said that is aligned with Your word goes deep in their heart and minds and anything that doesn't align with Your will is quickly forgotten. We pray that You have poured out Your Spirit, the Spirit of truth on Your church. We pray that You guide them to all truth, in Jesus Christ's name we pray, amen.