

SERMON PREACHED

AT

**DEDICATION OF TAKORADI 7TH DAY PENTECOSTAL ASSEMBLY
CHURCH BUILDING PLUS MARRIAGE BLESSING**

VENUE: WHINDO, TAKORADI, W/R

DATE: SATURDAY, 26TH MAY, 2018

TITLE: YOUR MAKER IS YOUR HUSBAND

BY

**ELDER ENOCH OFORI JNR
(Senior Pastor)**

Tears of Joy

The feeling of the moment is profound; it's stirring. It is a feeling of joy, a feeling of nostalgia; a feeling of tearful gratitude. "This is the LORD's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes" (Ps. 118:23).

The Assembly in Takoradi has passed through trials and tribulations and has triumphed! It is an old Assembly with a new beginning - reborn in the crucible of persecution and trials. But the trial has ended in joy. We cannot but agree with Elder *Ya'acov*:

*"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;
"Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.
"But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (Jam. 1:2-4).*

So you lack nothing now; you are fabulously rich spiritually. As a result of your experience of God's faithfulness – in using you to raise this building from practically nothing – you have grown in faith and know the Lord better:

"Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy" (Jam. 5:11).

So today we praise and honour Him, the Mighty God of Jacob. Who would have thought that, today, we will be dedicating a new church building at Whindo when we were being driven out of Apremdo some years back?

But our God has made the unthinkable possible. His eyes have been on this Assembly perpetually. Halleluiah!

A Sure Foundation

The Assembly in Takoradi is one of the early fruits of the evangelistic work of the late Apostle-Elder Kanok Ofori in the 1980s. It was an Assembly whose wellbeing was a priority to him. Accordingly, as soon as the membership began to grow, he mobilized resources from the headquarters in Kumasi in record time, and the Aprembo Church plot was acquired. With equal zeal, a mission house was built and later a place of worship.

Pastor Duah was first posted here, then Pastor Stephen Mensah until the time of the appointment of local church elders as overseers. The church faced a number of difficulties during this time, but the church survived every time and remained unified and loyal to the spiritual leadership of the late Elder.

Then the rebellion happened. Accra was the main centre. But soon Takoradi became another stronghold of the opposition. Yet it would not be a pushover for the disloyal local leadership and their collaborators in Accra. The Lord had a faithful remnant in Takoradi who refused to “bow the knee” to the altar of worldly riches and monetary enticements. (See Rom. 11:1-5). Strong in faith and prayers, they would not be easily intimidated. They faced the oppressors squarely, in the face of brutalities and attacks on them with machetes, guns and other offensive weapons.

The local police force got involved ostensibly to ensure peace. But eventually, as we all know, some of the senior officers took sides with the moneyed camp!

In the midst of the crisis, when the late Apostle Ofori was about giving up on the Assembly, the Lord gave him a revelation which, I believe, has guaranteed the continual survival – and of the imminent blossoming – of the Assembly to this day.

What was the vision?

In the vision, Elder said, he was walking about in the city of Takoradi as if he was searching for something of his which had gone missing. Suddenly as he walked on, he came upon a piece of metal rod protruding from the ground. He then exclaimed, “ah, this rod is mine; it was planted here by me, and yet they are [falsely] claiming it isn’t mine.” Then he woke up to the realization that all was not lost in Takoradi, that the foundation laid by the Lord by his hand would not be uprooted try as the enemy would.

“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 3:11).

“But He answered and said, Every plant, which My heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up” (Matt. 15:13).

Thus the heavenly revelation assured the late Apostle that the work in Takoradi would not be destroyed but thrive in the city of Takoradi, because the foundation laid by the Father which is Christ Jesus Himself, who he preached (see 1 Cor. 1:23; 2 Cor. 4:5), cannot be rooted up!

“Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded.

“Unto you therefore which believe He is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner” (1 Pet. 2:6-7).

This is the true foundation of the Takoradi Assembly; this foundation transcends the physical foundation work of the late Elder. Although the Lord used him to lay His indestructible foundation, he was merely His instrument. The foundation is of God. Therefore, we have not been put to shame.

We sought refuge at Whindo, and God has preserved us and given us more than a place of refuge. The lone metal rod that would not be removed has expanded into a chapel which we are dedicating today!

Our great God of wonders has exceeded our expectations! We had “little strength”, but He set before us “an open door” (Rev. 3:7-8); we had barely anything to begin with, but the God who is “able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think” (Eph. 3:20), and who multiplies 5 loaves of bread and 2 small fish to feed thousands, multiplied our meagre resources countless times over to keep the work going. The opposers could not have foreseen this, because God’s ways are past finding out (Rom. 11:33).

Beautifully, at our dedication today, we are also having our first wedding in our new church building! With more to follow soon! It’s a sign of a fruitful Assembly which is the chaste bride of Christ.

May the Lord bless you all for your commitment and show of faith. To the Deacons, brothers and sisters and all who sacrificed and contributed to the building of the church, I say the Lord bountifully reward you. May He reimburse you hundredfold to give even more. I highly commend your zeal and team spirit.

God is not unrighteous to forget your “labour of love”; He will abundantly reward you all (1 Cor. 15:58; Heb. 6:10).

Your Husband is the Lord of Hosts

Never again will the Assembly in Takoradi suffer the crisis and persecution of the past. The Word of the Mighty One to us on this glorious occasion today is,

“Fear not, for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more.

⁵ For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is His name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall He be called.

⁶ For the LORD hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God.

⁷ For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee.

⁸ In a little wrath I hid My face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer.

⁹ For this is as the waters of Noah unto Me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee.

¹⁰ For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee.

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¹⁴ In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression; for thou shalt not fear: and from terror; for it shall not come near thee.

¹⁵ Behold, they shall surely gather together, but not by Me: whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall for thy sake.

¹⁶ Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work; and I have created the waster to destroy.

¹⁷ No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of Me, saith the LORD” (Isa. 54:4-10, 14-17).

Against the backdrop of a marriage blessing, the Lord has married us anew by His words of comfort. We shall not remember the reproach of widowhood (the bitterness of the recent past) any more. He has pledged to us His “everlasting kindness” – and that pledge is His unbreakable bond, as strong and inviolable as the covenant with Noah in which He vowed never to allow the earth to be flooded again!

We are rooted in His righteousness which has made us immune to every weapon of the enemy. And it’s a possession bequeathed to us by YHWH who also vindicates us!

Dedication

Today’s ceremony marks a milestone in the history of the church here. We lost a place we used to call our own and now we have acquired another. The heavenly Father has wiped away our tears. On this glorious occasion, we dedicate the building solely to His eternal glory and honour. “Ebenezer, thus far has the Lord helped us” (1 Sam. 7:12).

As in the days of Ezra, the priest, we are, in our own small way, dedicating our second temple (after we lost the first one at Aprembo), and it’s all joy.

“And the children of Israel, the priests, and the Levites, and the rest of the children of the captivity, kept the dedication of this house of God with joy” (Ezra 6:16).

In this manner, we dedicate this house of God and pray, as Solomon prayed at the dedication of the first temple, that His “eyes may be open toward this house” (1 Kings 8:29) and fill it with His presence.

And so I pray, and you (the congregation) say “Amen” after me, after every invocation and prayer point:

Minister: Yahweh, God Almighty, we glorify your Holy Name today.

Congregation: Amen.

Minister: We thank you again and again for fulfilling your word of promise.

Congregation: Amen.

Minister: Your word of promise to your Servant, the late Apostle Ofori, has been fulfilled.

Congregation: Amen.

Minister: You assured him that this Assembly, Your Church built on the Rock, cannot be uprooted, and it has not been uprooted.

Congregation: Amen.

Minister: Instead, the root has sprouted a beautiful plant and budded and fruited.

Congregation: Amen.

Minister: This is testament to your amazing power to make the impossible possible.

Congregation: Amen.

Minister: As we stand before You, You have given us joy in our hearts – joy no one would take away from us.

Congregation: Amen.

Minister: Although You do not dwell in a temple made by man's hands (Acts 7:48), so long as You are in our midst when we are gathered together in Your Name (Matt. 18:20), do please look towards this place with favour and hear the prayers and supplications and cries that will be made from here.

Congregation: Amen.

Minister: You are a prayer-answering God.

Congregation: Amen.

Minister: Let Your glorious presence abide in this house.

Congregation: Amen.

Minister: Let it be a sanctuary of hope and salvation for the perishing, the lost, the hopeless and the oppressed.

Congregation: Amen.

Minister: Let its walls resonate with Your words of righteousness, life and truth.

Congregation: Amen.

Minister: Let the sick receive healing here and the anguished soul peace.

Congregation: Amen.

Minister: Empower your servants who will minister here to guide the wayward into the paths of righteousness and of peace.

Congregation: Amen.

Minister: Make this place worthy of Your Name in every way.

Congregation: Amen.

Minister: May Your will be done in this house as we consecrate and dedicate it to Your glory through the Name of Thy only begotten Son, Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Congregation: Amen.