

GOD'S KINGDOM SOCIETY

(The Church of the Living God)

Motto: TOWARDS GOD'S PERFECT GOVERNMENT.

Being the address of the Chairman of the Executive Board of God's Kingdom Society (GKS), the Church of the Living God, Brother Godwin O. Ifeacho, during the Freedom Day Celebration in Commemoration of Christ's Birth - in October, 2013

Dearly Beloved Celebrants,

HAIL JEHOVAH AND JESUS CHRIST!

To God Almighty Who created all things for His glory and pleasure and by Whose grace we have hope of eternal life in God's Kingdom fully established here on earth, be glory, honour and praises, through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.

I thank our heavenly Father for the grace we have to participate in this year's Freedom Day celebrations, thus affording us another opportunity to reflect on the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. The coming of Jesus Christ to the earth was a demonstration of the power of God and proof that He indeed is Almighty. It would be recalled that when Mary was wondering how she, a virgin, could conceive and bear a child, the angel told her, "The Holy Ghost (Holy Spirit) shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." (Luke 1:35) The angel went on to disclose to her that her cousin Elisabeth had also conceived a son in her old age and that it was then the sixth month of the pregnancy. He then added; "For with God nothing shall be impossible". (Luke 1:37) In other words, though Elizabeth had been written off as barren, she would still bear a child by the power of God.

It is from this statement of the angel that I have chosen the topic of my address to you in this year's Freedom Day Celebration entitled, "With God All Things Are Possible". In this age of perplexity and distress when men's hearts are failing them for fear and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth, they, more than ever before, need these words of exhortation and comfort by the grace of God. - Luke 21:25, 26,34-36.

God is Almighty

There is no circumstance from which God Almighty cannot save us. Indeed, He is the God of salvation. (Psalm 68:20) Jeremiah the prophet declared: "Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee:." (Jeremiah 32:17) In verse 27 God Himself declared: "Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me?" Because He is supreme in heaven and earth, He revealed Himself to Abraham as "the Almighty God". Moses the prophet, addressing the Jews, stated, "For the LORD your God is God of gods, and Lord

of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward." - Genesis 17:1; Deuteronomy 10:17.

In view of the fact that He is Almighty, He is able to bring His promises to fulfillment. He is therefore worthy of being trusted. He declared through Isaiah the prophet, "Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it." - Isaiah 46:9-11. See also Isaiah 14:24,26,27; Daniel 4:35.

Right from the time of old, God Almighty had been demonstrating that with Him all things are possible. Thus, the Bible abounds with declarative statements and examples to teach us vital lessons on faith, patience, obedience and other qualities that God requires from His worshippers. St. Paul stated: "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." - Romans 15:4. See also 1 Corinthians 10:6, 11.

Abraham and Sarah

Abraham and Sarah until they were old did not have a child. But God Almighty assured Abraham a number of times that he would have children. In one of such occasions, God told him that although he was childless, the time would come when it would be impossible to count all his children. The Bible states, "And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be." The Patriarch Abraham believed in the promise of God to him and it was counted to him for righteousness. - Genesis 15:5, 6.

On another occasion when God sent angels to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, the leader of the angels (who later came to the earth as Jesus Christ), on their way met Abraham and told him, "I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son". The promise sounded so unrealistic that Sarah, not knowing who was speaking, laughed from behind the tent from where she was hearing the conversation. Why did she disbelieve the promise? This was because she was "old and well stricken in age; and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women". The angel then said to Abraham "Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old? Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son." (Genesis 18:9-14) As the angel promised, so it was. Sarah became pregnant and bore Abraham a son when he was 100 years old "at the set time of which God had spoken to him." - Genesis 21:1-3.

St. Paul recounting the importance of what happened in those days commended Abraham for believing in “God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken”. He added, “And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.” St. Paul stated further that the faith, patience, steadfastness shown by Abraham and Sarah are examples we should copy. His words, “And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.” - Romans 4:17-25.

There was also the case of Zacharias whose wife, Elizabeth, conceived in her old age and had to hide herself for five months. (Luke 1:5-57) I hereby exhort couples who are yet to have children to draw inspiration from the examples of Abraham, Sarah, Zacharias and Elizabeth, among others in the Bible, who stayed with their husbands and remained steadfast in the service of God without running from pillar to post looking for miracle workers, witch doctors and visionaries, until it pleased God to bless them with children by His grace. We thank God that we have examples in the Church of members who have had children after waiting for upwards of ten to fifteen or even thirty years. The Bible says: “He (God Almighty) maketh the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children.” - Psalm 113:9.

The Natural Jews

While the children of Israel were travelling from Egypt to Canaan, they cried bitterly for meat to eat. Moses was grieved because of their impatience and faithlessness and complained about them to God saying, “Whence should I have flesh to give unto all this people? for they weep unto me, saying, Give us flesh, that we may eat. I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me.” (Numbers 11:13, 14) But God, with Whom all things are possible declared that though they were in the wilderness, they would have more than enough of meat to eat. “Ye shall not eat one day, nor two days, nor five days, neither ten days, nor twenty days; But even a whole month, until it come out at your nostrils, and it be loathsome unto you: because that ye have despised the LORD which is among you, and have wept before him, saying, Why came we forth out of Egypt?” - Numbers 11:19, 20.

Even Moses the prophet could not but wonder how the quantity of meat that would be enough for such a large number of people could be gotten in the dry and desolate land they were in. He said: “The people, among whom I am, are six hundred thousand footmen; and thou hast said, I will give them flesh, that they

may eat a whole month. Shall the flocks and the herds be slain for them, to suffice them? or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, to suffice them?" In asking questions about how the multitude could be provided with meat in the wilderness, Moses was speaking as a human being. But God told him, "Is the LORD'S hand waxed short? thou shalt see now whether my word shall come to pass unto thee or not." (Numbers 11:21-23) This teaches us that we should believe the promises of God Almighty and not worry about how He would bring them to pass. We should commit our causes to Him Who "doeth great things and unsearchable; marvellous things without number". (Job 5:8, 9) What happened was that God Almighty caused a wind to blow from the sea, bringing quails close to the camp, about two cubits (two feet) above the ground. The people gathered as much as they wanted, as there was more than enough for everybody. But God punished them later for their blasphemous words and faithlessness and are recorded to teach us vital lessons on knowledge, understanding, faith, patience, use of the tongue, etc. - Numbers 11:33, 34.

Lazarus, The Brother Of Mary

It was our Lord Jesus Christ who stated, "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God." (Luke 18:27; See also Matthew 19:26) He demonstrated this when he brought back to life, Lazarus who had been buried four days earlier. According to the account of St. John, when Martha saw Jesus Christ, she said that her brother would not have died if he were around. She then expressed faith in the power of God through Christ saying, "But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee." When Jesus told her that her brother would rise again she thought he was referring to the resurrection in the last day. But Christ told her, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." (John 11:21- 26) So unrealistic did the idea of bringing back to life of Lazarus seem to Martha that when Jesus Christ asked them to remove the stone covering the cave, she reminded him that Lazarus had been in the grave for four days and that the body would have started decomposing. It was then Jesus told her, "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" (John 11:40) Jesus then proceeded to make a short prayer to God Almighty, after which he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth". "And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin: Jesus then told the people, "Loose him, and let him go". (John 11:44) This miracle done by Jesus Christ by the power of God Almighty convinced many people that he was indeed the Messiah. As Jesus Christ told his disciples, "With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible." - Mark 10:27.

Faith

We should always have strong, unwavering faith that God Almighty is able to deliver us from the devil's onslaughts, no matter how hopeless the situation may seem. When the three faithful Jews refused to bow to the image

Nebuchadnezzar had set up, the king threatened to throw them into a fiery furnace and asked them impudently, "and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?" (Daniel 3:15) But when they were bound hands and feet and thrown into the fiery furnace, the fire did not hurt them in any way. Rather, he saw them walking about with a fourth man among them, who, in appearance looked like the Son of God. Indeed, he was the Angel of His Presence (Isaiah 63:9), Jesus Christ in his pre-human days. On seeing the wonder that had occurred, Nebuchadnezzar asked them to come out of the fire and went on to make a decree that no one should utter any word against the God of the Jews "because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort". (Daniel 3:26-30) There is no doubt that God Almighty demonstrates His power at critical moments in the life of the Christian, as He did for the three faithful Jews. This is a clear warning to people in authority not to allow themselves to be carried away by power as to challenge God Almighty and oppose righteousness or persecute the people of God. Such ones will certainly lick the dust and they will be put to shame. - See Psalm 72:9; Micah 7:17; Matthew 21:44. Please consider also 2 Kings 7:17-20; Matthew 14:25-33; John 20:26-29.

Many people today want to see signs and wonders first before they believe in the power of God. But St. Paul says "we walk by faith, not by sight". (2 Corinthians 5:7) Therefore whatever may be our problems we should believe that God will solve them for us in His time. We should not ask with doubt. Faithlessness is a big hindrance to prayer. Apostle James stated: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. (James 1:5-7) And Christ said: "...Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall ... also ... say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done. And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." (Matthew 21:21, 22) Furthermore, the Bible says: "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." - Hebrews 11:6.

Job the prophet said, "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble." (Job 14:1) Truly, the problems facing people in the world today are varied. They range from spiritual and material problems to political and socio-economic difficulties. The problems could be those of getting the basic necessities of life, good health, education, life skills or employment. Other issues include those of getting suitable partners for marriage, or solving marital problems, including that of childlessness. For some other people, their major problem could include how to be freed from the hands of their oppressors, demons, witches and wizards. These problems may look impossible to solve but with steadfastness, determination, patience, and above all, trust in God. He will solve them for us in His own time according to His will by His grace.

However, no one should take desperate, even suicidal steps, just because he believes that the situation is hopeless. Rather than embarking on dangerous schemes to climb up the ladder, people should acquire the knowledge of God, have faith in His promises, watch and pray and work earnestly towards their desired goals by the grace of God. We should also know that all problems of man cannot be solved in this world but in God's perfect Kingdom. It is therefore an illusion to be looking for a place in this world where everything will be smooth and easy. Human beings can only improve their lot through faith in God, hard work, sincerity and unity of purpose as God is able "to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us". - Ephesians 3:20.

I exhort all those who are in one form of trouble or another to draw inspiration from the word of God, knowing that although the devil has plagued mankind with so many problems, God will protect us and save us from the devil's assaults. St. Peter stated: "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world." - 1 Peter 5:6-9.

Moreover the Bible exhorts: "Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass." - Psalm 37:3-5.

We pray God Almighty, the Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to continue to endow us with His holy spirit so that we might have the knowledge and understanding to exercise strong faith in Him at all times believing firmly that with Him nothing shall be impossible by His grace through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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