

Scripture References: Matthew 20:17-28 (NKJV)

Hello everybody. Welcome; thank you for joining me on this Sunday morning broadcast. As you know, we are not having a live Church service because I really felt in my heart that I needed to respond to a request from our President to be a responsible manager of indoor events. It was an opportunity for us at this time of the year to sow a seed into having influence and having an opportunity to speak into government based on responsibility, not based on confrontation. There may be some other ministers of the gospel that would have a different perspective on what I'm doing, but this is what the Lord showed me to do.

Before I get into my message, I just want to speak about that for a minute. There are times in our Christian walk when you are under assault; you're under assault, and you have to stand your ground spiritually, and you have to put on the Armour of God. You have to stand with all the armour of righteousness, truth, peace and with the sword of the spirit, shield of faith, helmet of salvation. You've got to stand your ground, and the Bible says, *having done all to stand, stand*.

Certainly, over the last almost two years, it's about twenty months now or twenty-one months; as a Church, we have had to stand because there has been an assault on the people's lives that have been in the ministry. There's been an assault on people's economics, their economic well-being, their health on many different levels, family life, relationships; there's been an assault.

I, thank God that as a Ministry, as a Church, we have stood strong. Not only have we stood strong, but we've taken the fight to the devil. The Bible says we don't wrestle against flesh and blood, but *we wrestle against principalities and powers and rulers of darkness*, and so the forces of darkness are what we are fighting against, not flesh and blood. So, my fight is not with the flesh and blood people that run our government; it's with the rulers of darkness that want to use the government to shut down the Church.

There is this whole question that has been very strong in the Church's mind; Do we comply with government orders, or do we not comply with the government orders? Do you have to get to a point where you make a stand because only the church is targeted or everybody else is targeted? So, we've been very consistent in the way that we've approached things. We've worked with the government; we've made sure that we've done as much social distancing and recording of data, and we've been able to have meetings we've done what we could.

We are now in an opportunity where no lockdown levels have changed, but the President has made a request that we act responsibly. So, this gives me an opportunity and gives us as a ministry an opportunity to no longer have to make a stand. Now we have an opportunity to sow a seed. In this particular instance, we are sowing a seed and saying, "We are going to close the ministry for three weeks under

his request, in a time when there is normally an escalation of people coming together—Christmas services, New Year’s services, gatherings, all kinds of things happening. We’re going to close that down and go digital.”

I’m trusting for a great harvest of influence with our local government. I’m trusting God for a harvest of the words that will get out, that will influence and impact other church leaders, that we don’t always have to be hostile to government, but that we can sow seed in partnering with government, looking for God’s solutions in our nation. That gives me an added bonus at this point in time, that as a ministry, we can reset some things. We can make sure that we are ready for *Big and Bold Version 2 in 22*. We can spiritually prepare for the *Open Hand of God* that is ministering to us right now, in a season when the world is failing, and the church is rising.

Certainly, in our ministry, we have experienced that through all of COVID, from two months, two-three months before COVID, God started speaking to us. He told us to get ready. We didn’t realise it was COVID, but to get ready for four times a day, ministering to people on a digital platform, we invested in cameras, we invested in studios, we invested in many things, and so when COVID came, we were ready.

So, praise God! He has led us, and He’s guided us all this way, and for this December, I believe this is a significant moment. Already, we are having breakthroughs in our local government, where we are able to get and achieve some things, to do things in our local government that would under normal circumstances seem impossible that we could have such favour with the local government, but just in this last week we’ve had the most amazing breakthroughs, and opportunities have come our way. I believe, already, it’s our seed working here in the eMalahleni area, and I believe the same is going to be happening in the Johannesburg campus.

So, praise the Lord! I’m delighted that you would join me on the digital platform, and you’ll join me with your faith that this seed that we are sowing goes a long way to increasing our influence. When you get back to church, and when we get together again, I will be sharing some things with you, and we would have already been experiencing the favour of God over the Christmas and New Year period, of the influence that we have with the local government. So, that’s just marvellous; it’s wonderful.

I’m going to read to you out of the scripture today. I’m going to read to you from Matthew chapter 20, verse 17. ¹⁷ **Now Jesus, going up to Jerusalem,** this is the New King James Version, **took the twelve disciples aside on the road and said to them,** ¹⁸ **“Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death,** ¹⁹ **and deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock and to scourge and to crucify. And the third day He will rise again.”** (Matthew 20: 17-19 NKJV).

This is part of my series that I’ve been ministering that the Lord has been placing on my heart. I’m just the vessel and a vehicle that God would minister this message through, and before I go any further, I just want to proclaim that your hearts are open and ready to receive the Word. You have ears to hear, and your mind is free of

distractions. Right now, where you are watching and receiving this message, I pray that it's not distractions that will keep taking you away from the message, that you will remain focused and listen to what God is saying because truly this is meat and drink for your life. These are the things that change your life.

It's an interesting thing that Jesus is walking on the road to Jerusalem, and He takes them on the side of the road, and He has this very significant conversation with them, and He says, "I'm going to die, and it's going to start with the Hebrew people. They're going to hand Me over to the gentiles to crucify Me, but on the third day, I will rise again." This is part of the resurrection, the *Power in the Resurrection Life of Jesus Christ*.

I want you to note something; that in this instance, He's already proclaiming, and He's speaking ahead of time, the thing that will happen. He will be put to death, but on the third day, He will rise again. That is a most incredible phenomenon in human history, ever in the universe. That God Himself would choose to have a human vessel to live in so that He can die, in the human vessel, illegally and that He could save all of mankind.

I want you to notice what happens and permit me to teach you on this for a moment. **²⁰ Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Him with her sons, kneeling down and asking something from Him. ²¹ And He said to her, "What do you wish?" She said to Him, "Grant that these two sons of mine may sit on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom." ²² But Jesus answered and said, "You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" They said to Him, "We are able." (Matthew 20:20-22 NKJV).**

Before I go into the rest of the scripture, I want you to notice what's happening here. Jesus is confiding in His disciples, and He's telling them about the most significant event that is about to happen in the history of mankind. I want to say in the universe since Adam gave up his authority on the earth. That Jesus is about to die and that He is about to be raised from the dead. It's interesting that in this most significant time, there are people who are very close to Jesus, and all they are concerned about is that they get the highest level of honour in the Kingdom. Not knowing what that kingdom is going to look like, presuming that that kingdom is going to be a kingdom on the earth.

So, this mother comes and asks if her sons can sit on His right hand and on His left hand, meaning they will occupy the highest honour. They will occupy those places of highest privilege and highest status in the kingdom of God that was about to be established through Jesus. She and they are thinking that the kingdom is about to overthrow the Roman empire—that the kingdom is about to be something that is natural and that they are about to have their opportunity at rulership in the earth.

We are confronted with everything that Jesus says. We are confronted, where you can look at words that He says and apply them to our lives. We can say, "I choose to see how I can benefit from His words naturally, and I can try and position myself to

get the most out of His words, as I understand them. To get most out of them naturally.”

God is not requiring that of us. He's not asking us to position ourselves. He's not asking us to promote ourselves. Neither is He asking us to try and have insight into what might be happening in the kingdom of God next. He answers them in a very spiritual way, and He says, “Are you able to drink this cup and be baptised into the baptism that I'm about to be” and they said, “We are able,” and notice His response. ²³ **So He said to them, “You will indeed drink My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but *it is for those for whom it is prepared by My Father.*” (Matthew 20:23 NKJV).**

I am going to keep reading this passage of scripture in a minute. Jesus answers them with an eternal response because He knows that eternally His Kingdom is going to be Him sitting on the right hand of the Father. There is no one that could sit on His left hand. Whatever is on His right hand and beyond that is always going to be up to the Father, not up to the Son. They think that it's a natural kingdom He is talking about—He's always talking about a spiritual kingdom.

I want to address this other component of what He says here. He says, ²²**You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?”** And they say, “I am able. We are able.” And He says, ²³ **You will indeed drink My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; (Matthew 20:22-23 NKJV).**

Here is the point of our Christian being and the resurrection, the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. When you receive Jesus into your life and ask Him to become the Lord and Savior of your life, two things happen to you. First, you identify with Him as Lord, and then you identify with Him as Savior—when you identify with Him as Lord and Savior, you immediately drink the cup. You drink of the knowledge that He is the One that died, He is the One that has been raised again by God, the Father. You drink that, and that is why the Bible says when you take communion, you drink of My cup, and you eat of My flesh. You remember Me in the Lord's death until I come again.

That's why we have communion. We continue to remember that we are baptised into His body and receive life from His body. So, that's why people get baptised in water. I don't want to go into the whole teaching of baptism right now. The whole reason for us baptising people in water is because we identify with Him in His death as people go under the water. It's just a symbol, but it's a very powerful obedience. It's a symbol of baptism into His death and a baptism into the resurrection. As you come up out of the water, you recognise Him in resurrection life.

When He came into the resurrection life, He received a whole new status. He received a new body that He could live in. He received a new authority and new power. And so, it is when we get baptised in water. If you have the faith and you understand the power of that baptism, you can say, “I take all of my habits, all of my

patterns, all of the bad things that I've done in my life, and I bury them with Jesus. Then when I'm resurrected again, and I come up out of the water, and I'm resurrected, I identify with the freedom that death and all of the death patterns, and all of the things that were in my body no longer can control me. No longer do they own me. No longer do I have no power over them. In fact, I have all the power over all of the things that my body has tried to keep a hold on and keep me down."

It's a very powerful moment when we do this, and we are going to start off in the new year. We are going to start off by having a baptism service. We are going to set a date, and we are going to do some teaching in the leading and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. We are going to have a wonderful God-ordained supernatural opportunity for God to come in amongst us, and we are going to do a baptism service. We are going to find a way and an opportunity for people who have even been baptised before after we have done teaching on the death and resurrection and the power of the resurrected life of Christ. We are going to find a way that even people that have been baptised in water before may want to be baptised again as an identity and a symbol of saying, "I died with Christ, and I am resurrected with Him, and I live a new life, and I live in a new Kingdom and in a new authority."

I want to just bring it back to the human side of things. Verse 24, ²⁴ **And when the ten disciples heard it, they were greatly displeased with the two brothers.** ²⁵ **But Jesus called them to Himself - (Matt 20:24 NKJV).** So, obviously, there is a bit of politics on here now, in the twelve disciples, because two of them got their mother involved, and the mother came, and she asked Jesus a favour, can they sit at your right hand and the left hand? And there is politics.

Shocking. Politics in church? Listen, where there is more than one person anywhere in the world, there is going to be politics. It is just the way it is. One person wants to do one thing, and the other person wants to do another thing, and wherever their agendas don't meet, they are going to try and make their agenda work for themselves as best as possible. Otherwise known as politicking, and it is a very basic level. I have an agenda. I want you to listen and do my agenda. You want me to do your agenda. So, we have a debate. We have a conversation. We see if we can get a compromise - politics.

Jesus doesn't allow it. He calls all of the disciples to Himself, and He says, "**You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them,** the people, so governments, kings, all nations, Gentiles lord it over them, **and those who are great exercise authority over them.**" ²⁶ **Yet it shall not be so among you;** in other words, stop this nonsense of who is going to be the head, who is going to be the people with the highest status, with the most authority, with the best position. Stop this nonsense. It shall not be like that among you. ²⁶ **Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, do you want to be great? Let him be your servant.** In other words, if you want to be great in the Kingdom of God, be a servant.

Serving in the Kingdom of God makes you great, not position and status. ²⁷ **And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—**Right there and

then Jesus is doing two things. The two sons that came and said, “Can we be at your right or be at your left?” He is teaching them, and He is telling them, “If you want something from my Father. I can’t give you a position, but if you’re wanting from my Father, you must serve your brothers. These ten brothers that you tried to get the jump on, to say we want the best position, now I’m telling you, serve them. Be a slave to them. If you want that position so badly, be a slave to them. As it were, serve them so completely that you almost are like a slave to them.”

To the other ten that were most displeased and unhappy with what this politicking had done, He’s putting them in the proper order too. Okay, you don’t want them to get the position, be a servant to them, and be a slave as it were to each other because the world will never operate that way. The world, the gentiles, the rulers, those who exercise authority, their whole deal is to make the most out of every advantage and use whatever power you can get. Whatever authority you have, use people’s resources to make you wealthy, govern people and lord it over them and use your power over them.

Now, finally, I close with this last verse that says, in verse 28. ²⁸ ***just as the Son of Man did not come to be served***, disciples, I did not come here for you to serve me. I came here, and you have come to be My disciples so that I can teach you. I did not ask you to come and serve Me. I invited you so that I can come and teach you ²⁸ ***just as the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve***, so He came to show His disciples, and all of humanity, the will of the Father. He loved them. He came to heal them. He came to feed them. He came to give them life. He came to teach them and show them the true way of the Father, which is not to be found in church buildings, in synagogues and ceremonial things. It’s in relationship. It’s in personal deep, intimate relationship. That’s what He came to serve them with. And so, He says ²⁸ ***just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.***” (Matt 20:24-28 NKJV).

That is the ultimate you can give, to give your life. In the case of Jesus, He gave His life, He gave His human life so that He could pay the ransom, that all humanity could be free from the control of all of the forces, all of the darkness, all of the evil forces that want to dominate mankind, control mankind through governments, through ideologies, through economics, through abuse. Through many, many things that are unfortunately there for us to see in our modern-day society through all kinds of networks, devices and television. We see images, and we hear stories all day of governmental abuses, economic abuses, substance abuses, just brutal violent, cruel things that happen to people. That is not the will of God. Jesus did not come to make that happen on the earth; He came to save the earth from that.

Here is the key thing; We as the church are the ones that need to bring salvation to those people. How? We need to serve like Jesus served. We need to come and bring the *Resurrected Power*, the life of Christ that is in us. We need to bring it to people. We need to be prepared to die to ourselves and become servants, slaves as it were, to everyone around us so that we can bring life to the many that require life.

Well, I trust that as we go into the new year and after the new year service, I will be teaching more about the baptism of water, and then we will do a baptismal service. I believe that as we go and we do a baptism service in the month of January, hopefully, we can get it done in the month of January.

If we do that, whenever that time is, I am going to call for a time of fasting and praying right before we do that because I'm expecting a miracle. I'm expecting healing miracles. I'm expecting deliverance miracles. I'm expecting the resurrected life and the power of Christ that raised Jesus from the dead, that resurrection life of the Father, that raised Jesus from the dead, that as people come up out of the water, they will be touched by the presence of the most high God. The anointing of God will come upon them, and great things are going to happen as God manifests Himself amongst us in the great and wonderful, amazing God that He is, personally to you and me.

I just want to pray for you as I close this service today. I pray that whatever you are doing, you go in peace. If you're travelling somewhere, you're going on leave; I pray that you are protected and that no weapon formed against you shall prosper. I pray that even as you are listening to this message today and the rest of your week, you will meditate, consider and do your own studies; go to the Book of Romans. It's the best place to go and read about baptism.

I ask you, meditate on it. Consider what the Lord would have you to do. I pray that this message that I've preached finds a root in your heart and grows, and your mind doesn't come filled with many questions that you don't have answers for, that those things are quiet and that you just have peace, rest, and joy in God. That as you come back into your normal life, let's say, your normal life that you will pick up momentum spiritually. You won't leave your spiritual momentum behind in favour of a boat ride, a run, a cycle, lying in the sun, reading a novel. Whatever it is you want to do over this time. You won't leave your spirituality behind, but you will keep your spirit man strong.

Yes, by all means, enjoy yourself and take a rest and be productive in your rest, but at the same time keep your spirit man strong. Thank you for joining me this Sunday. Enjoy the *Sound and Song* blessing that we have for you. Thank you, and God bless you.