

TIMELY WARNINGS PART 1 - 9 (GLEANINGS...)

"A weekly Devotional" by Gbile Akanni

TIMELY WARNING - 1

"A MAN 'S REQUEST...A WARNING FOR ME!"

The way the Lord Jesus Christ responded to one man's request in the scriptures has raised very serious issues for me as a person. I have had to ask several questions, but as I study again and again, I find that Jesus knew what He was doing and He never makes mistakes. There is no statement that the Lord Jesus Christ makes unadvisedly, or carelessly. When He says something, He says it with eternity in view. Just as this one.

"And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

Luke 12:16-21 KJV

People normally came to Jesus with different purposes and I don't think this man should be blame because any man who came to Jesus, with any need had his need met, no matter what the need was.

When the blind man came to Jesus, He said, "What do you want me to do for you?" The man said, "I want to see," and Jesus gave him sight. When the ten lepers met Jesus and pleaded for mercy, they received their healing. When the woman with the issue of blood came into the congregation and decided that if she could touch the hem of Jesus' garment, all her twelve years issue of blood would finish, she came and touched the hem of His garment and was healed.

But this particular man's problem was not leprosy, he was not sick. The problem which he had was legitimate to bring to Jesus. After all, Jesus says, "ask anything that you will and I will do it." So I do not think that his request was wrong. His late father left a lot of inheritance for them. He must have written a will but this man's elder brother refused to release what belong to him. Years must have passed but the situation remained the same.

Others could have gone to witch doctors to look for something to injure the elder brother and get the inheritance; but this man did not do that. He went to Jesus. Some others could have gone to a prophet or prophetess. I wish you know why some people go to white garment or spiritist churches. It is not necessary that they are sick. Some of them go there for help maybe because somebody is sitting on their father's land which belong to them; and when they requested saying, "Look, this is our father's land. Look at the beacon", the man says, "Go and do your worst! If you don't take time, we will bury you here." So such a person runs for help anywhere he could get it.

This man said, "I have Jesus, I will take my problem to Him. I will meet Jesus over the matter." Luckily for him Jesus was coming to town. He got himself ready and said, "Let me meet Jesus over this matter. I will tell Him, because the hearts of Kings are in the hands of the Lord. There is nobody God cannot control. God will speak to my elder brother." The man you cannot handle, the Yoruba proverb says, you could send God to him.

This is what this man decided to do. He came and said, "Master, speak to my brother. I know you are the One who speaks to a man and he obeys." God could go and wake a man in the night and say, "What are you doing sitting on the inheritance that belongs to your brother?" And he will wake up and do something about it.

When you take a case to court and the judges are bribed, you may not get justice. This man took the matter to Jesus, and that was where I was confused and it set me searching the scriptures because, I expected Jesus to always defend the defenseless. He will always fight for the lonely man. He will always stand up and fight for the underprivileged. So, I expected Jesus to have said, "Okay, I will speak to your brother." But to my surprise, the Lord Jesus Christ raised a very serious question which rather hit my heart with a serious note of warning and left me wondering why Jesus handled this man's matter this way.

"And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?"

Luke 12:14 KJV

It was as if Jesus was saying: "Who told you that what I came to give you, the treasure I came to administer to you was this kind of thing? Who made me judge and a divider over you?"

I so much wished that Jesus had kept quiet on that, I would have said, may be the man made his request at a wrong time. I would have relaxed and prayed to God, to teach me how to make my request at the right time, at the right place and in the right manner. But the Lord went forward and said more than what the man asked. Those are the issues burning my heart, which, you may also need to think about.

What are my requests? How will Jesus react to them? Are they looking so legitimate to me, but frightening to the Lord? Please dear Lord, give me light, as I wait on you over this matter; for:

"Sometimes what seems right is really a road to death."

Proverbs 16:25 – CEV

Amen

TIMELY WARNING - 2

"A MAN 'S REQUEST...AN ISSUE FOR ME TO TAKE HEED!"

"And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me."

Luke 12:13 KJV

Jesus' answer to this man's simple request did not appear to me as if He was merely advising him. He did not speak in a manner that would make us think He was just making a comment. Much more so, when He went ahead to say, "Take heed."

What is the meaning of "take heed"? It means "be careful." Unless there is a danger, you don't use the word, take heed. If someone is reversing his car and is about to run into another vehicle, people will shout "take care!" Then he will march on the brake. So I wonder what is dangerous in this man's request that Jesus met him with a very sharp warning: "Take heed!" What is dangerous in someone collecting his father's inheritance that made Jesus Christ to meet this man with a very serious warning?

"Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."

Luke 12:15 KJV

What is covetousness in the thing that the man asked? My own traditional understanding of covetousness is, desiring what does not belong to you. This man was not asking for what does not belong to him. He was asking for his legitimate right. It was an inheritance. Inheritance is your right. It belongs to you. Nobody should cheat you out of it.

An inheritance is something that belongs to someone, by right; nobody should cheat him or her out of it. When Ahab confronted Naboth and said, "Naboth, give me your father's land." Naboth said, "How can I give you my father's heritage? God forbid it that I should give you the inheritance of my father." Only a useless, irresponsible person will allow his father's heritage to pass off without seeking to possess it,

because an inheritance is not only for your life time. It is for your children and your grand and great grandchildren.

This is my own understanding. However, when I realized that my understanding clashes and conflicts with that of my master, it made me to seek to understand what His definition of covetousness is. What I discovered bothers my mind and kept me thinking that the Lord Jesus is speaking to me, from this scripture, that there is a danger, a pit into which I may fall without knowing.

The question then is, could a simple, innocent looking request, coming from my heart as a need, be but a thing to treat with a sharp and pungent warning such as "TAKE HEED?!" Oh, how I need light in my heart to see and a discerning Spirit to know how easily deceivable a man's heart is. No wonder why the scripture has it that:

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"

Jeremiah 17:9 KJV

This calls for earnest fervent prayer, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto us the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him. The eyes of our understanding being enlightened; that we may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints is. For this man's request that has become a warning for me to take heed arose from a desire to receive the portion of inheritance due him. Yet, this seems far from the real inheritance of the saints in Christ Jesus. Else there would not have been a need for this warning from the Master. Everywhere this warning comes, "Take heed", it is always to forestall a fall.

"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

1Corinthians 10:12 KJV

Now that it has to do with what looks like a legitimate need, how much heed I need then to take.

Moreover, only one man made the request but Jesus' response addressed all,

“And He said unto them, Take heed...”

The matter is therefore beyond the exclusive problem of one man. It spans beyond one generation. In fact, it relate not only to issues of this nature but such like. Anybody, at any time and in whatever generation that choose to neglect and take this warning for granted will no doubt fall into this pit even before he knows it.

"Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it."

Matthew 7:24-27 KJV

We have a choice here to make!

TIMELY WARNING - 3

"A MAN 'S REQUEST...A QUIET COVETOUSNESS!"

"And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."

Luke 12:15 KJV

From the word "consist" the noun "constituent" is derived, and when you talk of constituent, you, are talking of the bits and pieces that you put together to make a whole.

Naturally, our own understanding is that there are certain things that make a good life. There are certain things that make one to say a man is comfortable. If any one comes now and congratulates you and says, "Thank God you have made it", what are the parameters? Normally, he must have looked at your house, your car, your children and your job opportunity. He must have looked at your name, your position, your connection. When he put all these constituents together, he arrives at the conclusion that you are not a drop out. By what parameters therefore have men or even you drawn the current conclusion you presently hold about yourself?

If people are going to give honor to any man, they do so base on these constituents. So every man was born, initiated or taught according to the world principles to gather material things: clothes, money, houses, degrees, and all kinds of award. When you put these together it is what makes a man great in the world's perspective. Yet, Jesus said, Beware of covetousness: for a man's life consist not in the abundance of things which he possesses.

So what is covetousness?

According to Jesus, covetousness is not just the desire to have what does not belong to you. But a desire to have and to hold what belongs to you, but which you do not need today. Covetousness is a quiet confidence in what a man can put together to forestall tomorrow. Covetousness is a quiet desire to possess today, all which tomorrow will need. Covetousness is a desire to keep something that is not actually a necessity today, for next year. Covetousness is a desire to possess tomorrow, today.

Jesus said, take heed, as if to say, be careful, something dangerous is looming ahead of you. Beware of covetousness! It seems as if the people that were hearing Jesus were saying, "What do you mean? What is covetousness in this man's request?" Even you that is going through this now, what is your heart saying? What are the queries that your heart is already quietly posting to the Master's stand point and definition of covetousness here?

Jesus wanting to illustrate it for our simple minds to understand, said,

"The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully."

It is surely not a sin for somebody to plant and to work hard and to produce plentifully. No one desires to make a planting or an investment and does not plan to reap plentifully. Who would want to invest and would not want to have something good come out of it? The ground of that rich man brought forth plentifully. Note with me how the Bible puts it (particularly in the King James Version): the ground not the land. If it were just the land, it would have been easier to think may be the man was a farmer. But Jesus was talking of the ground. That ground in our case could be a business. That ground could be your intelligence, your job, your connection or your contact that produces contract. The ground of a certain rich man produced plentifully. I could be that certain man today. It could be you! What is that ground in your life that is presently bringing forth plentifully? What is your intelligence, job, position, connection, contact, opportunities producing for you right now?!

"And he thought within himself..."

What this man did here was not strange. You may get a contract for example, with a promise that in two weeks' time your payment will be ready. Then you would start thinking: "what will I do? When I go and pick that cheque of ten million which is just my take away, what do I do? Should I buy a house in London? Should I change my car? What do I do?"

Such thoughts usually come quietly and deep in your heart at night; you just suddenly wake up and start smiling. If your wife asks, what happened? You would say, "I am just happy. The struggle of ten years is going to end tomorrow." And as you are talking you'll say, "I just got a mail that our partners in U.S. have got through and they are sending that thing. It is going to land here very soon and you know what

that mean. That is in hard currency.” If you don’t have money you may not understand what I am talking about here. Wait until some money begins to roll into your hand; then you will have great difficulty, on how to spend it. It is because some people could not think well on how to spend it, you see them being foolish.

So, the ground of this man brought forth plentifully and he thought within himself. Please note that... “He thought within himself.” This is it. You don’t think it out because you are afraid. If you talk aloud now and say that ten million is coming, before you know it, some thieves are knocking at your door demanding for the money. So you don’t say it aloud.

Many rich people don’t even eat well because of fear. Ask them how things are and they will tell you that there’s no money; we are still looking up. But they are thinking within, “What do I do? Should I build an underground?” They would call an architect to bring them one of their best designs, an edifice, and the best in town.

Let’s not think that the Lord is speaking here to someone else. Allow this mirror of the word of God to reflect back to us our own lives. You may not be stingingly rich, but, are you free from covetousness in the light of what Jesus is saying here? What are your plans over the plentiful that your ground has brought forth? What you are acquiring and accumulating with these proceeds from the ground of your life, are they making you rich towards God?

Dear Lord, your word admonishes me that if riches increase I should not set my heart upon them (Psalms 62:10), teach me therefore to take heed to myself and beware of this inconspicuous pit fall where many have ended their pilgrim journey and their carcasses littered this side of eternity. Give me light that I may know the constituents of a man’s life that matters before you.

“LORD HELP ME JUDGE MYSELF EACH DAY
TO WALK THIS NEW AND LIVING WAY
I SEEK THY GRACE WITH ALL MY HEART
TO BE MADE PURE JUST AS THOU ART.

Amen.

TIMELY WARNING - 4

"GOD CALLED HIM A FOOL!"

When God calls a man a fool, it means he is actually a fool. I wonder what God calls me. What is God's assessment of my life? And you, what does God call you? People may call us many different names. They may call us an expert, a very shrewd businessman, a man who knows how to plan and execute. But what does God call us? It is worth looking very closely at what made God called this man a fool, because it was a certain man and it could be you or I.

"The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool..."

Luke 12:16-20 KJV

It appears to me as if at the end of a man's deep thought and consultation with himself, his conclusion and choice of action to be carried out usually determines what name he acquired for himself before God. Taking a deep thought and making consultations are not bad, but the question is: with whom are you consulting? Men who have gone ahead of us and have been successful in their pilgrim journey without making a shipwreck of it, were men whose first port of call was always God. They were men in whose hearts and on whose lips you will always find the question: "Lord what will you have me do?" They understood the danger and risk involve in thinking, deciding and executing your thoughts all by yourself. Their reasons were because God's counsel to all His children as touching any matter, great or small is:

"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

Proverbs 3:5-6 KJV

What do we do today? Like the man in the parable, we also always think within ourselves – "And he thought within himself..." Even when we ask questions, it is ourselves that we asked: "What shall I do..."

We analyzed our situations, checking what are available and what are not, what we need and what we need not, and discovered all by ourselves that our problem is “because I have no room to bestow my fruits”. At this point, there’s no way our conclusion will not be: “This is what I will do!” and the utterance from heaven, if anyone cares to find out, is nothing but:

“Thou fool...”

If we were to assess that man according to his status among his colleagues, classmates or competitors, what would we have called him? We would call him a genius, an economic genius. But God called him a fool. Think about it. Let us ask ourselves again, what does God call me?!

Perhaps you have a very wonderful reputation. People introduce you as Professor so and so and then list out all your achievements and that is actually all you spent your life doing. You spend all your life in the laboratory, just to be called a Professor; but outside the laboratory your life means nothing. What does God call you, Prof? God call that man a fool. Will He say concerning you..., “Look at this fool. I lent him sixty years. He spent fifty-nine of it pursuing paper, ordinary paper qualification and, pursuing fame with men; but he has no record with Me. What a fool! I gave this man intelligence; he has never sat down one day to ask, ‘God, what do I do with the ground of my intelligence that has brought forth plentifully?’ Rather he sat down to plan to possess the tomorrow that may never be his.”

Sister, what thought is going on in your heart now? Brother, what conclusion are you about to make? You are at the critical junction of marriage. The ground of your intelligence has landed you with what men interpret as a bright future. Or maybe the ground of your beauty, prospect, background or academic achievement has brought forth many suitors clamoring all around you and there are so many marriage proposals that you are presently sorting out within yourself. What and who is guiding the conclusion that you have or are almost arriving at? Under whose counsel are you zeroing in on that brother or that sister as the right partner for your Christian journey here on earth? Who told you that that is the will of God for your life? What will God call you by the reason of that choice?

May be for you, you are concluding on calling a quit to your marriage because you think (within yourself) you have tried all you could and it doesn’t seem as if it can ever work. On what strength are you standing to conclude and are ready to implement your decision? Hope it is not because of what the ground of your life seem to have brought forth? Hope it is not what you have laid up for many years that is making you to think and conclude within yourself that you can do without this man or this woman; after all, ‘What is he or she contributing to my life’, you said.

If any of us is still in the process of thinking or that of implementing your decision, this may indeed be a timely warning. Can you suspend your thought or decision and rather begin to consult with God in case you are almost earning for yourself the status of a fool before God? Don't mind who may be advising and encouraging you to go on. Even if that person is yourself; you will still end up as a fool before God in whose assessment our thoughts, decisions and conclusions matters so much. Much more, you will bring upon yourself a curse because:

“This is what the LORD says: Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who depends on flesh for his strength and whose heart turns away from the LORD.”

Jeremiah 17:5 NIV

Whatever you do after hearing these decides what name God will call you!!!

TIMELY WARNING - 5

"Whose Shall Those Things Be?"

"But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?"

Luke 12:20 KJV

God's question to this man is what many have not been able to answer yet. Frankly speaking, there are things which even when a man put together as a heap, none of his children can carry any of them and make use of it. Which of the academic certificates or honorary doctorate award conferred on a man can his child use to get a job? Your child cannot present one of those and say, "Please, my father actually got this professorial award, but ever before he enjoyed it he died. Please confer it on me on his behalf." It does not happen like that. Even in contemporary history, no body becomes really great only because of what his father left for him.

Many rich men spend their lives building houses; God keeps asking them, "Whose shall all these houses be?" Eventually, it will be for rats, reptiles and careless children. What you took serious care to build in your life time; careless children come into the same house and mess it up anyhow. I wished dead men were allowed to wake up and inspect their houses; they would have collapsed and died a second time.

Everything a man essentially becomes in life is what he is in himself. If your child is not intelligent, all that your intelligent has put together in this world, (give it a few years) will spoil and finished. This is because, that child does not have that intelligent in himself and he does not have what it takes to maintain it. I wish it will be clear to everyone that you cannot live your life for the next generation. I marvelled when I see the magnificent residential house of a late prominent man. When he was alive, it was a shining and sparkling house with marble. In the early 1960's (in Nigeria), one could see light shining there all the time. Everywhere sparkled! The man never planned to die early. He hoped to live long; but one bloody afternoon, he died. He had not yet been buried when the family started fighting for his goods. Now years later, as I pass in front of that house, it is a painful sight to see grass growing on top of marble. As soon as he died, the wife parked out and none of the children could live there. I wonder what you will call such a man. And what does God call you with the way you are living now?

This question, must, need be answered: whose, shall those things be which thou hast provided? Who will possess them? Who are you sure will use them? Who has assured you that it is that same child you are labouring for that will possess them?

A calamity took place a few years ago and it gave me a serious thought about the emptiness of life. A man was travelling in his car with his wife and grown up children. Imagine a man whose children were already in their twenties. In one careless day all the children and wife perished! What do you say to that man? To start all over again? How do you comfort him? The biggest question that may confront this man remains, whose shall those things be that you have provided?

TIMELY WARNING - 6

"...Moth, Rust and Thieves?"

There's need for each of us to ask ourselves, "What am I living for? What is the real treasure that I am supposed to pursue in life at my present age, how much of that treasure have I actually got?" At an age when you are supposed to be resting, what exactly have you really got in terms of treasure that last forever?

Even if one would claim that he has laid down so much, the next question would be: where are you keeping these treasures?

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. "

Matt. 6:19-21 KJV

For anyone to understand why Jesus authoritatively declared that we lay not up for ourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, one needs to examine closely what moth is and what rust is.

In economic terms, what is moth, what is rust? In terms of agricultural devastation, what is moth, what is rust? In terms of social decadence, what is moth, what is rust? What are these agents that do corrupt every treasure that is kept on earth? There's no treasure kept here on earth that is not subject to these agents of decay – moth and rust, and thieves that breakthrough and steal.

Thieves have become a great threat that we cannot say, we don't know about. In order to keep ourselves from thieves we have become prisoners. Every rich man is a first class prisoner in his own house. It is prisoners that are said to be behind bars, but many people today are behind the bars of burglary proof. We are kept in prison in our own houses behind iron bars because of material treasures. If you have any good electronic equipment, you will normally keep it behind bars. Go to all the beautiful

houses we have now especially in developed countries, you will see burglary bars. Someone who has a very beautiful door, very beautiful carpentry edifice will still put Iron bars behind it. Some have to open three or four gates in order to enter their bedroom.

Lay not up for yourselves treasures on the earth. Every treasure laid on earth is a treasure subject to moth, to rust and to thieves. I am not just talking of termites and wood worms; but every imaginable thing that causes decay, everything that causes reduction in value, either value of life, such as diseases and accidents or value of quantity or quality is what we call moth, rust and thieves. Everything on earth is subject to them. I do not plan to put anything here on this earth; but I cannot tell you not to put anything on earth, however, let's get to know that anything one put on earth is subject to the moth, the rust and the thieves. This answers the question of 'whose shall those things be which thou hast provided! Moth, Rust and Thieves!

TIMELY WARNING - 7

"Where Am I Storing My Goods?"

"And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me."

Luke 12:13 KJV

Jesus' response to this man's simple request remains yet a matter on my heart to keep on chewing. That my Master did not just say to the man, "sorry I cannot interfere in your family conflict; but went ahead to call for caution: "Take Heed and Beware...", and to illustrate His response with a parable, makes the matter one that I cannot also easily dismissed.

"And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods."

Luke 12:16-18 KJV

"What shall I do? Because I have no room to bestow my fruits." The rich man's problem was where to store his goods. He thought and analyzed his difficulty: finally, he came to a conclusion. I wonder what my conclusion would have been. You too, what conclusion would you have reached in your case? It is this quiet conclusion that usually forms the basis of the outward manifestations of our action. This quiet conclusion normally determines our choice, our focus and our direction in life.

The rich man in the Bible said, "This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods." In barns and not in people; not in heaven but in barns. That barn could mean anything. For some, civilization will not allow them to start building barns so they keep their goods in banks. Some would however say, Bank? No, I don't like banks. Their interest is too small and there could be inflation. I want to put my goods in shares, so that even in ten years' time, when I would have retired, when the economy would have changed, that is the solid quiet money that would be coming in. I would just relax, sit down and cross my legs and enjoy myself while money comes in. So, the

barns could be shares, banks or property development or it could be investing in solid minerals. Some will look for asset that appreciates with years. Some will say, "Let's invest in a name. Let's buy that company off the market, so that we can collect their name." That name could be a barn.

Where am I investing my life? Where am I investing my intelligent and my ability? I need to find out what the pursuit of my life is. Do I quietly desire to possess all that I will need tomorrow, today so that I can secure my future?

Look at what the man said,

"I will say to my soul, Soul..."

When we read it, it appears as if it is not real. Excuse me; don't you think it is real? Don't you think these are the kinds of thoughts that have crossed our minds many times? Several things that many of us have done are along this line. That is why you will hear some people say, "...if the government decides to be foolish, I will never be poor again." The reason is because they believed they have secured their future and so nothing can shake them.

"I will say to my soul: enough of running around. Thou hast much goods laid up for many years," the man seem to say. Let's face this fact frankly; how many people are not working in order to have something laid up for many years? What actually is the issue pushing many people up and down? Is it not the desire to have some certain things laid up for many years? As I say this you may be tempted to think that it applies to businessmen only; so you may excuse yourself because you are not a business man. Even you that is a civil servant, what is the reason why you have not resigned despite your complains against how the government is treating workers? What is your thought? Are you not probably saying, quietly in your heart, "Let me just clock thirty years in service so that my gratuity – the reward of working for many years - will increase?"

Why do even Pastors sit tight over their churches, inscribing their names, the names of their wives and their children on the properties- the corporate properties of the church? It is because of the fear of tomorrow. They are quietly thinking, how can I lay my life down in a ministry like this and somebody will just come tomorrow and push me out and my children will have nothing. No! Let's entrench my name in it. This is the same conclusion, they are but goods laid up for many years.

It is for this reason that Jesus said, "beware of covetousness". It is capable of killing one. It can make one lose one soul and end up in hell where you never planned. The weight of these instructions is enough to again cause my heart to bow in God's presence, seeking His divine enablement to escape this hidden pit that may have swallowed many who went ahead of me. None of them ever hoped to end their pilgrim journey where and how they ended but covetousness, who never always come as such, overtook them when they least expected.

Oh dear Lord, please give me light that I may correctly evaluate where I conclude to bestow my fruits. Save me from the deceptiveness of today's barns. Cause me to know that the fruits coming out of the ground of my life are not really mine but yours, and that I am but a mere steward over all that comes into my hands.

Lives are better place to bestow my fruits than in barns, no matter what such barns may be! This is my conclusion!

TIMELY WARNING - 8

"A WOMAN 'S MISTAKE...A WARNING FOR ME!"

The conclusion of the matter of this Timely Warning is:

"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

Matt. 6:21 KJV

This is where the trouble is. If it were possible to keep your treasure in a place and carry your heart somewhere else, it would have been different. But no man has been able to do this. Your treasure and your heart are closely tied. It is not wrong for a man's heart to be with his treasure. If my treasure therefore determines where my heart is, then I need to be careful where that treasure is because wherever I put it, there my heart will be.

Now Jesus said something again that jolted me so much. I had never looked at it that way before until the Holy Spirit began to show it to me that it was for this same reason that Mrs Lot could not make it to heaven.

Lot lifted up his heart and choose Sodom and Gomorrah and left his uncle Abraham in the dry land. He saw built-up cities and went for them. As if to tell Lot that he had made a mistake, God passed him through an experience at a point. Some kings came and carried away everything in Sodom and Gomorrah including Lot, his wife and children. Lot was left empty handed over night. He cried and cried. Abraham was the one who went and fought and brought him, his children, his wife and his properties back. Lot did not learn his lesson from this. He did not know that where he was staying was a dangerous ground, a place that was already marked out for destruction. It looks to me as if it was his wife that counsel him and said, "Look let's settle here. Though God has used your uncle to rescue us, yet we cannot afford to go back and settle with him. Besides, your uncle is always going from one place to another; we can't be going here and there because I am not cut for that." So they settled back in Sodom and Gomorrah.

When the Angels that God sent to Sodom got there and told Lot saying, "We are going to destroy this place tomorrow. Pack whatever you have in this city; because everything that is in this city, everything that was developed in this city, all the civilization of this city, all the investment of this city, all the factories of this city will be destroyed tomorrow. Whatever you have in this city, carry it."

They gave him a slim opportunity to escape and a difficult task to perform. He was told to climb a hill and he was to climb it not leisurely but in haste and there was no lift. He was told to pick whatever he had in that city and escape for his life. He must have looked for things he buried under the ground. He probably needed caterpillars to uproot some of them. Lot, as a man, may have just picked one dress and one bag which he was able to carry and told his two daughters to move. He must have called the wife also and said, "Let's go." Meanwhile the Angels were waiting for him. I imagine his wife saying, "What do we pick? Let's pick this, let's pick that." Then the husband said, "How can we carry this? It is heavy; have you forgotten that we are going to climb a mountain?" the wife said, "But excuse me, when we get there, what shall we use to cook if we don't carry this?"

Do you remember what happens whenever you are to travel with your wife? She will say, "We have not taken this, we have to carry that." It is natural with many women. Lot's wife must have picked many things. When they were about to carry them, they were too heavy. Lot said, "Look madam, let's leave this thing. Is life not better than property?" She said, "Well, life is better than property but I need these things there." The reason is: where your treasure is, there your heart will be. Mrs Lot couldn't look up to heaven because she had nothing to look forward to there. There are some people who won't go to heaven because they don't have anything there. Those who will go to heaven, the Bible say they look forward to it. If there is nothing to look up to in heaven, what is the excitement about going there? Let me tell you something. There is an attraction that takes someone to heaven and when there is nothing that you are looking up to there, sorry, you won't make it, even if you are a believer. Some Christians will not make it. I am telling you this frankly because the word of God remains forever.

While Lot was climbing and running, the Bible say (in Genesis 19:26) that his wife looked back from behind him. It pains me so much that the husband thought she was following him, not knowing that she had looked back from behind him. Some pastors think that their members are following them to heaven, not knowing that their key members have looked back from behind them. When people look back, you are not likely to know. Many wives have looked back from behind their husband. Many children have looked back from behind their parent. You thought they are going to heaven with you, but they have looked back from behind you.

As soon as Lot's wife looked back, she became a pillar of salt. The way the Bible describes it, made me to be so afraid that Lot did not discover that his wife had looked back until they got to their destination. The instruction was, "move, don't look back." Lot was going, his daughters were also going. They believed that Mummy was also following. It was when they got to the place and settled down that they asked, "Where is Mummy? Where is my wife?" What a pity! She had looked back from behind them. She missed the final destination. She was saved from the fire of Sodom but she never got to the final destination. Brother, have you looked back from behind your leaders? Madam, have you looked back from behind your husband? This was how Lot's wife became a pillar of salt.

"In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back. Remember Lot's wife."

Luke 17:31-32 KJV

What made Lot's wife to become a pillar of salt is most likely that she remembered her stuff that she left behind in Sodom. Where your treasure is there will your heart be also. Remember Lot's wife. If your treasure is in resale or business, your heart is there also even now. Nothing else moves you except that. If this is the case, how will one invest his life to possess the eternal treasure in heaven? First and foremost, your heart must go over there. Your heart, focus and emphasis must go over there so that you can send treasures there.

Dear Lord, I have but only one opportunity to live here on earth. Help me to give heed to what you are saying here to me. Don't let me make an experiment with my life, it is too costly. I have only one life to live and once it is over, there's no opportunity to remedy even my mistakes! Help my heart always to remember Lot's wife

TIMELY WARNING - 9

"HOW RICH AM I TOWARDS GOD?!"

The conclusion of the matter of this Timely Warning is:

“But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

Luke 12:20-21 KJV

Stock taking is a crucial part of every business that must thrive. So is it with the Christian life. Even if you choose not to be a Christian, this does not exempt you from taking stock of how you have been living your life daily within the short time we are to spend on this side of eternity. How rich am I towards God? And you, how rich are you towards God?

One day I was driving behind an army truck. I wanted to overtake it but the Holy Spirit said I should wait. I had followed this vehicle for more than ten kilometers. It was carrying a corpse. Soldiers were inside with the late man's wife and children. I was following that truck like that, wanting to overtake but the Lord said, “wait.” Then one man came from behind at high speed and overtook me. But as he wanted to overtake the truck, he saw a Road Safety Corps vehicle (a Nigerian Road traffic law enforcement agency) coming about 300 meters away. He wanted to dodge; and had he tried to enter between my car and the truck, he would have hit my car (that would have been trouble for me). So instead, he went and hit the truck. The front part of the car went under the truck's tire, lifted it up and the truck started to somersault. I have never seen such a thing.

Imagine what happen to that woman whose husband had died. The corpse was inside the truck and they were on their way to his village to bury him. There and then she lost three of her children, her younger brother and another person who was escorting the dead also died. Seven people died. As I was looking at them, the Holy Spirit said, “It could have been you. The devil aimed at you. But I gave the lives of men for your ransom.” I just pulled my car aside and parked, with no scratch, nothing. Then all of us inside came out. People, who were talking, chatting and laughing in that truck a few minutes before, were all gone. It was such a horrible sight and tragedy.

The question I asked myself was that if I had died what of all the plans for revival meetings I was having? What would have happened? On that day I was coming from a village where we went to do a crusade. We were seven in the car. Seven of us were exchange for seven others. God said it could have been us. My life could have been over. I would have been one of ‘the late’ now. Then I took stock and said, “Lord, what could I have missed?” Nothing! No fat bank account. The only thing I could have missed was preaching.

As we were pulling those dead people out, the woman was wailing and saying, “You this wicked husband, why did you treat me like this? If you wanted to die you should have died alone. Why did you carry all my children away? What am I living for?” Yes, what was she living for? What is life? Are you not a fool that you are spending all your life on the peripherals? You have no connection with heaven. You have never thought, “Where should I invest my life? Where will I spend eternity? What am I sending to heaven? What am I sending to eternity?”

Can you also take stock of your life even now? May be you are sixty years or forty-five or even thirty years. How much of those thirty years have you invested for heaven? Just think about it. Thirty years, you have always been a student, collecting papers and because of this, you have no time to be useful to God. When anybody calls you for Bible Study or Soul-winning, you refuse. Your excuse has always been that you are busy. You say you are doing something so that you will be comfortable tomorrow. Are you not a fool? This past forty-five years that you have been alive, you are yet to spend even one year to do anything for Jesus. You have money both in the bank and at home. Some people may even be so careless that their wives don't know their bank account. If you are like that, if you die now other people will collect your money and your children will suffer. Aren't you a fool? The reason why I am raising this matter is because Jesus raised it, and it has delivered me from being foolish. Whatever decision must be made should be made now. If you do not invest in people, in salvation of souls and in eternity, what are you investing your life on? The many houses that some of us have built, how many of them do we sleep in at the same time?

Lord, I know how many years I am today. I don't even know how many years are remaining for me here on earth. I want to invest whatever is remaining in eternal things. Please give me opportunity, open an account for me in heaven, and let my life not be a waste. Help me to do all I could, while I am yet able, to be rich towards you. I don't want to live my life serving money and other interests. I would not want to spend my life on ordinary politics if it is not to establish God's kingdom here on earth.

Has God blessed you? Are you very intelligent? Has God allow this ground in your life to bring forth plentifully? How rich are you even in this towards God? You may even be one of the top men in your profession; what will you do with it? How much are you achieving for Jesus out of this, thereby making yourself rich towards God? A man's life does not consist in the abundance of those things which he possesses. The owner of this life we are presently living may request for it any time. So shall it be for anyone who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich towards God. This is yet another chance for me to change my state towards God. Even for what God will call me at the end of my race here on earth, depends on what will be my response to this promptings from this His sayings!

'Wise and rich towards God' or 'A fool and wretched', as far as eternity is concern; choose yours!!!