

Pastor Poju Oyemade



**LONDON SUMMER WORD CAMP
2026 – AFTERNOON SESSION
(DAY 2)**

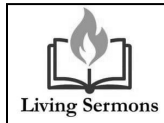
Transcribed and Published by [Livingsermons.com](https://www.livingsermons.com)

Source: London Summer Word Camp 2026 Afternoon Session (Day 2)

Preacher: Pastor Poju Oyemade

Publisher: LivingSermons.com

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Publisher: Livingsermons.com

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First Edition — 2026

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Foreword

There are messages that encourage us, messages that instruct us, and messages that fundamentally reshape the way we relate to God. This sermon belongs to the latter.

In this message, the preacher calls believers beyond a transactional understanding of prayer into a deeper Kingdom reality. Rather than viewing prayer merely as a means of changing circumstances, he presents it as the place where God communicates His thoughts to His children. The true answer to prayer, he teaches, begins when the believer receives God's mind concerning a situation, producing an inward peace that eventually manifests outwardly through obedient action.

Throughout these pages, you will notice a recurring biblical pattern: moments of pressure, disappointment, delay, offense, and uncertainty are often divine invitations to seek God's voice rather than react to changing circumstances. The sermon reminds us that thanksgiving over complaint, humility over self-assertion, and obedience over human reasoning position the believer to understand the ways of God.

One of the most compelling themes in this message is the relationship between the condition of the heart and spiritual perception. The preacher carefully demonstrates from Scripture that a hardened heart leads to blindness, while a heart softened by worship, gratitude, and surrender becomes capable of discerning God's thoughts. This insight challenges readers to examine not only what they pray for, but also how they respond while waiting for God's direction.

As editors, our responsibility at LivingSermons is not to rewrite the preacher's message but to preserve it faithfully while presenting it in a clear, readable, and professionally formatted edition. Every effort has been made to maintain the original voice, emphasis, illustrations, and spiritual flow of the sermon while correcting transcription errors, improving punctuation, and organizing the content for an enjoyable reading experience.

Our prayer is that this message will do more than increase your knowledge. May it cultivate a life of deeper fellowship with God, where prayer becomes a conversation that transforms the heart before it transforms circumstances. May you learn to recognize His voice, embrace His thoughts, and walk confidently in His purpose.

Thank you for allowing LivingSermons to accompany you on your journey through God's spoken Word. May this message strengthen your faith, deepen your communion with the Holy Spirit, and inspire wholehearted obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Grace and peace,

— Wisdom Epsi

Chief Editor, LivingSermons.com

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Publisher's Note

This book is a faithful transcript of a live sermon delivered by the preacher under the inspiration and unction of the Holy Spirit. Every effort has been made to preserve the preacher's exact words, tone, flow, and spiritual authority, while carefully proofreading and formatting the message into a clear and readable ebook format.

The message you are about to read was originally ministered in a live congregational setting. As such, it carries the weight, urgency, and atmosphere of that sacred gathering. Minor grammatical and structural adjustments have been made solely to enhance readability, without altering the substance, intent, or power of the original delivery.

Watch the live sermon from which this message was transcribed on YouTube, **at** [**Pastor Poju's Official YouTube Channel**](#)

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Our commitment is excellence without dilution.

Our standard is reverence for the Word of God.

Our daily goal is to transform powerful live sermons into polished PDF and ebook editions for the edification of the Body of Christ.

It is our prayer that as you read, the same grace, conviction, clarity, and impartation present in the live service will minister to you afresh.

— ***Livingsermons.com***

A Spirit-led Publishing Stewardship

Main Message

Begins Here



Introduction

Last year I used two Scriptures, and I want to quote those Scriptures again and take off from there.

Let's begin with **Luke 12:22–31** in **The Message Translation**.

Last night we were talking about prayer and about us praying rightly. This is what Jesus said after He taught, *"Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you."*

He continued that thought with His disciples:

"Don't fuss about what's on your table at mealtime or whether the clothes in your closet are in fashion.

There is far more to your inner life than the food you put in your stomach, and more to your outer appearance than the clothes that hang on your body.

Look at the ravens, free and unfettered, not tied down to a job description. Carefree in the care of God—and you count far more.

Has anyone by fussing before the mirror ever gotten taller by so much as an inch? If fussing can't even do that, why fuss at all?

Walk into the fields and look at the wildflowers. They don't fuss with their appearance—but have you ever seen color and design quite like it? The ten best-dressed men and women in the country look shabby alongside them.

If God gives such attention to the wildflowers, most of them never even lasting that long, don't you think He will attend to you, take pride in you, and do His best for you?

What I'm trying to do here is to get you to relax, not to be so preoccupied with getting, so you can respond to God's giving.

People who don't know God and the way He works fuss over these things. But you know both God and how He works.

Steep yourself in God-reality, God-initiative, God-provisions. You'll find all your everyday human concerns will be met."

That is the point. Jesus is literally saying:

"I'm trying to get you to relax, so you are not so preoccupied with getting that you cannot respond to what God is giving."

CHAPTER -ONE-

Prayer Is Responding to Heaven

We ended last night by saying that prayer is:

"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

(Matthew 6:10, KJV)

In other words, we want something to happen on the earth that has already been established in heaven. We are not in prayer trying to change God's opinion or persuade Him to act favorably toward us. God has already acted favorably toward us in Christ Jesus.

We do not enter prayer to move the will of God. We enter prayer so that God can bring us into perfect alignment with His will—causing us both to will and then enabling the performance of that will.

So we are responding to what God, in heaven, has already given concerning that particular situation.

This means that in every situation I find myself, God has already made provision. I simply enter prayer to receive what God has already done about it. As I pray, He interprets the situation to me. He shows me why He allowed it, or why it exists in my life. Then He reveals His purpose.

As I align with that purpose, people begin to see on the outside that the Kingdom of God has come into my life.

It becomes visible that the hand of God is upon a person because the trajectory of that person's life suddenly changes at the point of alignment.

When Alignment Changes Your Trajectory

Reverend Jonathan Shuttlesworth said something in passing, and I caught it.

He said he started ministry about twenty-five years ago.

Then he mentioned that eleven years ago he began preaching twice every single day.

Think about that.

For roughly fourteen years something was happening behind the scenes. Then the trajectory suddenly changed. After those years came the breakout.

He became visible.

Things began to happen. What changed?

He entered into something. He responded to what God was giving instead of trying to get what he personally thought was best.

A God Story, Not an Abraham Story

Now let's look at **Romans 4:1–3** in **The Message Translation**.

Paul says:

"So how do we fit what we know of Abraham, our first father in the faith, into this new way of looking at things?

If Abraham, by what he did for God, got God to approve him, he could certainly have taken credit for it.

But the story we're given is a God-story, not an Abraham-story."

This is the point. Abraham entered into what God was already doing for him.

That became the turning point of his life.

He moved away from trying to make God do something and instead entered into what God was already accomplishing.

CHAPTER -TWO-

Every Need Is an Open Door

Whenever we have a need, it is really an open door. It tells us that a gate has been opened for God to become involved in our lives concerning something much greater than we presently understand.

Very often, God is working toward something we never imagined or conceived. That is why moments of need are powerful moments. Peter toiled all night and caught nothing. He left disappointed.

Yet that disappointment became a powerful moment in his life. That is why Jesus reversed human thinking.

He said:

"Blessed are ye which do hunger now: for ye shall be filled."

(Luke 6:21, KJV)

He also said:

"Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company... and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake."

(Luke 6:22, KJV)

What we often consider negative, Jesus called blessed.

When unusual agitation comes into your natural circumstances, heaven may be opening a door.

Jesus even said:

"Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven."

(Luke 6:23, KJV)

What Do You Have on Your Heart, Lord?

That is why we enter prayer with open hearts before God.

We ask:

"Lord, what do You have on Your heart for me concerning this situation?"

This is why we have been given the Holy Spirit.

The Bible says:

"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him."

(1 Corinthians 2:14, KJV)

It also tells us:

"Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God."

(1 Corinthians 2:12, KJV)

Notice those words:

Freely given.

There are things God has already given.

When we come into alignment with those things, the river begins to flow.

Doors begin to open.

You suddenly find yourself in places you never imagined.

People look at your life and say,

"This is the Kingdom of God."

Something eternal emerges from your life—something after the order of Melchizedek.

It becomes something that even death cannot terminate.

After you have gone home to be with the Lord, that work continues on the earth.

That is a powerful expression of the Kingdom of God becoming visible.

People suddenly ask,

"Where did this person come from?"

The answer is simple.

They came into alignment with what God had on His heart.

Not with what they thought God should do.

When the Bush Is Burning

So I want us to look at how we practically enter into this. You must remain alert when unusual things begin to happen in your life. When you are facing tests—when the bush is burning and yet you are not consumed—you are standing on holy ground.

That is where God says,

"Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

(Exodus 3:5, KJV)

You no longer have control over your own steps. I believe that was what Apostle Stephanie was referring to. God is saying, *"I'm about to take you into something."*

When God Rearranges Your Path

Many years ago, there was a gentleman in our church who studied Theatre Arts at the university. He led our drama department. One day we were talking, and he mentioned that he was now in technology.

He was heading the Nigerian operation of a major European technology company.

I asked him,

"How does someone who studied Theatre Arts end up leading a technology company?"

He smiled and said,

"Pastor, you won't believe what happened."

He explained that he was at the airport waiting for a flight. While waiting, he saw one of his former classmates. He remembered the man as someone who talked endlessly.

So he deliberately avoided him. Every time the flight was delayed and passengers moved around, he moved somewhere else to avoid conversation.

Eventually he forgot about him.

Suddenly he felt a hand on his shoulder.

"My guy!"

The classmate had found him.

They began talking.

The flight kept getting delayed. Just before boarding, the man suddenly said, "I remember you. You were a very good guy in school. I play football in Europe now. There's a technology company looking for someone trustworthy to represent them in Nigeria. I can't recommend many people—but I can recommend you. Would you be willing to become their point of contact?"

He looked at me and said, "Pastor, that's how I moved from Theatre Arts into technology."

Do you understand what I'm saying?

The angel kept delaying that flight until the God-ordained meeting happened.

The delay was not an interruption. It was divine alignment.

Praying in the Spirit Aligns You with God's Purpose

That is why you must make praying in the Spirit a priority. Even if we cannot go deeply into it today, make it a discipline.

Find the time.

Whatever you prioritize, you will always find time for. Pray in tongues for at least one hour every day.

Why one hour?

Because Jesus established it as the standard.

"What, could ye not watch with me one hour?"

(Matthew 26:40, KJV)

Some of you are in this country for reasons you do not yet understand.

You came here thinking one thing.

God brought you here for something entirely different.

There will never be complete peace inside you until you come into perfect alignment with what God truly wants to do in and through your life.

Why do we have the Holy Ghost and the ability to pray?

Because the Scriptures tell us:

"...we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."

(Romans 8:26, KJV)

The difference between your understanding and God's purpose is like the difference between your known language and your unknown tongue.

The very fact that you do not understand what you are praying in tongues is a reminder that you do not naturally understand God's full mind concerning your life.

But as you pray, you are speaking those mysteries.

And if you could understand everything you were praying, you would discover that God is bringing you into perfect alignment with His will.

Once you have prayed something out in the Spirit, things may appear to go wrong for a season.

But they are only going wrong so that, ultimately, they can become right in your life.

Once you have prayed something out in the Spirit, things may appear to go wrong so that, ultimately, they can become right in your life.

Think about it this way.

If we decided to renovate this building, and you came back two weeks into the renovation, you might say,

"Maybe you should have left the building the way it was."

Why?

Because renovation always begins with dismantling. Before something beautiful is built, something has to be pulled apart.

In the same way, certain things happen in our lives because God is rearranging them. He is saying,

"I want you to respond to what I am giving."

How do you respond?

With thanksgiving. Even when you do not understand what is happening, you say,

"Lord, I thank You. I don't understand this situation, but I know You are giving me something in the midst of it, and I choose to respond to it."

Don't murmur. Don't complain. Don't grumble. Respond with thanksgiving.

Prayer Is Receiving God's Thoughts

Turn to **Jeremiah 29:11–12 (KJV)**.

***"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.

Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you."

The essence of prayer is that God communicates His thoughts to you concerning your situation. Prayer is where God begins to speak. Prayer is not primarily about changing circumstances on the outside. That comes later.

The first purpose of prayer is to receive God's thoughts. If I am praying about my career, I want God's thoughts concerning that career so that I do not make costly mistakes. There are mistakes that nobody recognizes as mistakes until years later.

For example, there may be controversy in the office, and everyone says, "You should resign." But perhaps God is setting me up for something greater. If I act without hearing His thoughts, I may walk away from His purpose. That is why I must hear Him first.

God Wants to Reveal His Plans

If God could communicate with Abraham under an inferior covenant, why would He not communicate with us under a better covenant?

He told Abraham:

"Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs... and shall serve them... four hundred years... and afterward shall they come out with great substance."

(Genesis 15:13–14, KJV)

God revealed events that would happen four hundred years into the future.

He also wants to reveal His thoughts to you.

And notice what Jeremiah says.

They are **thoughts of peace**.

When you receive God's thoughts, peace fills your heart. That is the righteousness we discussed last night.

There is quietness. There is confidence. You know what God has said. His thoughts have entered your heart.

CHAPTER -THREE-

Prayer Is Answered Inside You First

Let's look at **Acts 27**.

I want to show you how this works. When we pray, God commits Himself to communicating His thoughts. Once those thoughts come, we act in alignment with them, and manifestations follow.

Take Peter, for example. He toiled all night and caught nothing. Suppose he goes to God in prayer. God answers by saying,

"Launch out into the deep."

Or,

"Cast your net on the right side."

That is the answer to prayer. If Peter refuses to obey those instructions, there will be no manifestation. Prayer is answered the moment God's thoughts enter your heart. The miracle follows obedience.

Paul Received God's Thoughts in the Storm

In **Acts 27**, Paul found himself in the middle of a violent storm.

The ship was driven helplessly by the wind.

They secured the lifeboat.

They strengthened the ship with ropes.

They threw cargo overboard.

The next day they threw out more equipment.

For many days they saw neither sun nor stars.

The storm continued with such intensity that all hope of survival disappeared.

Then, after a long period of fasting, Paul stood up and said,

"Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me..."

But notice what he said afterward:

"...there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship."

(Acts 27:22, KJV)

That was not positive confession.

That was God's thought concerning the situation.

God did not tell him,

"Nothing will be lost."

God specifically told him,

"The ship will be lost, but no lives will be lost."

There is a difference.

Today someone might say,

"The ship will be lost."

And another person replies,

"God forbid! There will be no loss in my life!"

But Paul wasn't speaking from human optimism.

He was speaking from divine revelation.

Paul explained where his confidence came from.

He said:

"For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve."

(Acts 27:23, KJV)

Paul did not simply quote promises.

He had an encounter.

That night, God's thoughts entered his heart.

The angel continued:

"Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee."

(Acts 27:24, KJV)

Notice something important.

"You must be brought before Caesar" was not a quotation from Scripture.

It was fresh direction from God.

This is how God leads.

He begins to give detailed thoughts concerning your life.

Paul then declared,

"Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me."

(Acts 27:25, KJV)

The prayer had already been answered.

Jesus had told him the outcome.

The external circumstances had not changed.

The storm was still raging.

But Paul now possessed something greater.

He had **the peace of God, which passeth all understanding** (*Philippians 4:7, KJV*).

Suppose someone is diagnosed with a terminal illness and is told they have only eleven months to live.

You go before God—not merely repeating,

"By His stripes I am healed."

Rather, you take that Scripture to Jesus.

You ask Him how that healing will become manifest in your life.

Jesus Himself said:

***"Search the scriptures... they are they which testify of me.*

*And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life."***

(John 5:39–40, KJV)

The Scriptures testify about Christ.

Their purpose is to bring you to Him.

The Testimony Gives You Confidence to Approach

Think of a widow with no money. She has borrowed everything she can. Her children need school fees. She has no idea where help will come from. One day she overhears people talking about a wealthy couple in town.

Someone says,

"I asked them for one million, and they gave me one and a half million."

Another says,

"I needed help, and they generously provided it."

Now those testimonies do not guarantee that the widow will receive money. But they give her confidence to approach the couple.

She goes to meet them.

They invite her in.

They ask,

"What do you need?"

She explains her situation.

They reply,

"Don't worry. You need one million? We'll give you two million."

The moment those words leave their mouths, she walks out saying,

"I have it."

She has not yet received the money physically.

But she has the assurance because someone with both the ability and the willingness has spoken.

That is exactly what the Scriptures do.

The Bible gives you confidence that if you come to Jesus, He will receive you favorably.

So you take the Scriptures to Him in prayer. Finding a verse is not the same as hearing His voice. Those are two different things.

Paul knew **Psalm 91**.

Yet during the storm he did not simply quote Psalm 91. He received specific instructions from God.

That is what prayer produces. As God's thoughts begin to fill your heart, He starts explaining things to you.

He tells you,

"This is why this situation exists."

"This is what I am doing."

The outward circumstances may not change immediately. The wind may still be blowing. But something inside you changes forever. Imagine a woman diagnosed with a serious disease.

She spends time with God.

During prayer, God says,

"You cannot die now.

You are going to minister to children.

You are going to nations.

I still have work for you to do."

She rises from prayer with a peace that passes all understanding. Two months later she returns to the doctor. The medical report has not changed. But she has changed. No report can shake her now. No diagnosis can move her.

That is the reality of the Kingdom of God.

The Kingdom is not primarily external.

The Kingdom begins within.

It is the place where you come into alignment with God, and His peace and joy fill your heart.

That is why Paul kept saying,

"Be of good cheer."

When God's Word Changes Your Decisions

Fourteen days later, the storm was still raging.

Nothing had changed outwardly.

The sailors thought they had found an opportunity to escape.

They lowered the lifeboat, preparing to abandon the ship.

But Paul immediately spoke.

He said to the centurion and the soldiers:

"Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved."

(Acts 27:31, KJV)

That instruction came directly from the thoughts God had already given him.

By this point everyone knew Paul had heard from God.

So the soldiers cut away the lifeboats and let them drift away.

They burned every bridge of escape.

They committed themselves to staying in the ship because they trusted the word God had spoken through Paul.

Fast Until You Hear

As daylight approached, Paul urged everyone to eat.

He reminded them that they had been fasting for fourteen days.

There is an important principle here.

Once you have heard from heaven, continuing to fast out of unbelief is unnecessary.

When God has spoken, the prayer has been answered.

God does not need to be bribed with fasting.

Fast until you hear.

If it takes two days, then fast for two days.

Once you have heard His voice, you have your answer.

Anything beyond that may be sacrifice, but it is no longer obedience.

Many people spend twenty-one days thinking about the food they are not eating instead of listening to the God they are supposed to be hearing.

In other words, they think fasting is simply about shutting the refrigerator.

But the purpose of fasting is to position your heart to hear the thoughts of God.

Fasting Is Not a Bargaining Tool

Sometimes people approach fasting with this mindset:

"God, can't You see that I'm paying the price? I've shut the refrigerator. You must reward me now. You must change this situation because I've fasted."

That is not how fasting works.

You can shut the refrigerator, and nothing changes.

I once heard an old revivalist in Nigeria say something that was profoundly true.

He said,

"When revival broke out among us, we hardly fasted for more than three days."

Then he explained why many people now fast for such long periods.

He said people fill themselves with so much of the world—social media, distractions, endless information, and all kinds of contamination—that before they can hear God, they first have to clear out everything they have filled themselves with.

The issue is not the length of the fast.

The issue is hearing God.

CHAPTER -FOUR-

When God's Thoughts Enter Your Heart

The moment God reveals His thoughts concerning your situation, your prayer has been answered. Once His thoughts become clear within you, something changes.

You can now speak prophetically, just as Paul did when he repeatedly said,

"Be of good cheer."

Paul stood before everyone with boldness because his countenance had changed. He had heard from God. Faith is not something you struggle to manufacture in order to impress God. The Bible says:

"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

(Romans 10:17, KJV)

Once you hear God's thoughts, faith is imparted. No effort is required on your part. Your ears have been opened. Something has entered your heart. You now possess a quiet confidence.

As Isaiah says,

"...the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever."

(Isaiah 32:17, KJV)

That is why nothing can replace personal fellowship with God. Faith is not a formula. Faith begins with fellowship. You go before God and say,

"Lord, You have thoughts concerning this situation. I want to know what they are."

The Difference Between Prayer Answered and Manifestation

Let me explain one final time what I mean. Suppose I want to buy a car worth **£40,000**.

In my bank account, I only have **£750**.

Now imagine there is a wealthy man worth **£50 million**.

I approach him for help.

He says,

"I'll buy you the car."

Then he deposits **£75,000** into my account.

The moment that money enters my account, I know the car is mine.

I have peace.

I have assurance.

Yet if someone looks at me from the outside, they still see me without the car. They assume nothing has changed.

Why?

Because the deposit is real to me, but invisible to everyone else.

That is exactly what happens when prayer is answered. God makes a deposit into your heart. You enter into the peace that passes all understanding.

Outwardly, nothing appears different. But inwardly, everything has changed.

How do you release what God has deposited?

Jesus answered that question.

He said:

"If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."

(John 7:37-38, KJV)

You release that inward deposit by speaking and by acting in obedience to what God has said.

The deposit is already inside you.

No one else may know about it.

It is private.

But now you can draw from it.

Using the illustration of the bank account, once the money has been deposited, I can write a cheque.

The cheque releases what has already been deposited. The dealership gives me the car because there were funds backing that cheque. Now suppose someone else watches me receive the car.

He thinks, *"The secret is simply writing a cheque."*

So he goes home, with only **£500** in his own account, writes a cheque for **£40,000**, and presents it.

The cheque bounces.

Why?

Because there is no deposit behind it. That is why some people say, *"I spoke, but nothing happened."*

Their words are bouncing because there is no divine deposit behind them.

Prayer is where God deposits within you what He intends to accomplish in that situation.

Now let me give this final thought.

How do we access God's thoughts?

Whenever you find yourself in a difficult or agitating situation, recognize that something may be happening beyond what you can presently see.

Instead of assuming everything is against you, stop and say,

"God wants to do something here."

Do not harden your heart.

Many people harden their hearts without realizing it.

Jesus says He stands at the door and knocks.

The problem is that we are often insisting on what we think God should do instead of opening ourselves to what He actually wants to do.

That is passive rebellion. Romans says:

"So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy."

(Romans 9:16, KJV)

Then it continues:

"...Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth."

(Romans 9:18, KJV)

In practical terms, every situation presents us with a choice. Either we obtain mercy by remaining open to God...

...or we harden our hearts.

If we refuse to harden our hearts, we position ourselves to receive mercy. Then it becomes evident that it is not human effort that brings breakthrough, but the mercy of God. Look at **Hebrews 3:7–10**. The writer says:

"To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts..."

(Hebrews 3:7–8, KJV)

For many years I wondered what that verse meant. Recently I studied it more carefully. The word *hear* carries the idea of understanding.

In other words,

"Today, if you will understand My voice, do not harden your heart."

That changes everything.

CHAPTER -FIVE-

Learning to Perceive

Think again about Paul's voyage. Before the storm ever began, Paul simply said,

"I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage..."

(Acts 27:10, KJV)

Notice what he did **not** say. He did not say, *"God spoke to me."* He simply said, *"I perceive."*

I have found that people who develop spiritual perception are often more accurate than those who constantly announce, *"I heard a voice."*

Someone may quietly say, *"I perceive something isn't right about this business relationship."*

Or,

"I perceive we should wait." Very often, those perceptions prove accurate. Think about it. The weather looked favourable. Everything on the outside suggested it was safe to sail. Yet Paul perceived otherwise. How?

There was no outward evidence. There was simply an inward knowing.

A Sensitive Heart Discerns

Jesus explained why some people never perceive spiritual realities. He said:

"Hearing they hear not, neither do they understand... seeing they see not..."

(Matthew 13:13–15, KJV)

Why?

Because their hearts had become hardened. When a heart becomes hard, spiritual perception becomes dull. But if you stop practising hardness of heart and continually open yourself to God, you will discover something remarkable.

You will begin to perceive things. Even in everyday life, your spirit will pick up impressions. You will simply know that something is not right.

Not because you heard an audible voice. But because your heart has become sensitive. I remember a mechanic working on one of our generators. I was standing nearby. For no obvious reason, I suddenly stepped to one side.

A heavy metal object flew through the exact spot where I had been standing. It would have struck me directly on the head. The mechanic looked at me and asked,

"You are intuitive. How did you know to move?"

I could have said,

"God spoke to me."

But it wasn't like that.

It was perception.

The Danger of a Hardened Heart

Hebrews continues:

"Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation..."

(Hebrews 3:8, KJV)

It goes on to say that Israel continually went astray because they never truly understood God's ways. They repeatedly entered difficult situations. Those situations became opportunities either to trust God or to harden their hearts.

Romans says of Christ:

"...a stumblingstone and rock of offence..."

(Romans 9:33, KJV)

In other words, there are moments when offence becomes the great temptation. Wherever offence arises, breakthrough is often very close. The issue is what you do with your heart.

If you become offended, you begin hardening your heart. I don't care what someone has done to you. The moment you begin nursing offence, your focus shifts to yourself. That self-centredness hardens the heart.

Hardness Produces Blindness

Romans 11:7 says:

"Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded."

(Romans 11:7, KJV)

The words **blinded** and **hardened** are closely connected. Those who hardened themselves became spiritually blind.

Those who refused to harden their hearts began to see. That is how they accessed God's thoughts. That is how they understood what God wanted to do.

When Offence Is a Divine Knock

Let me tell you something.

Whenever God begins drawing near to your life, there will often be an opportunity to become offended.

Something will happen that could easily provoke you.

But if you recognize what is happening, you will understand that God is knocking on the door of your life.

He is about to introduce something completely new.

James reminds us not to hold grudges against one another because the Judge stands at the door.

God is knocking because His Kingdom agenda is about to unfold in your life.

He wants to lead you into something you were not even thinking about before that moment. Again, Romans says:

Israel did not obtain what it sought.

The remnant obtained it. The rest became hardened.

The Bitter Waters Before Elim

Finally, let us look at **Exodus 15:23–27**.

Israel came to Marah.

The water was bitter.

They could not drink it.

Immediately, the people murmured against Moses.

They asked,

"What shall we drink?"

Moses cried to the Lord.

The Lord showed him a tree.

When Moses cast the tree into the waters, the bitter waters became sweet.

Then God declared:

"If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God..."

(Exodus 15:26, KJV)

Notice what God was proving. When the waters become bitter, will you still listen to My voice?

Will you seek My thoughts?

Or will you murmur?

Then the next verse says something remarkable. After Marah came Elim. There were **twelve wells of water** and **seventy palm trees**. Before Elim, there was Marah. Before the place of abundance came the place of bitter waters.

Before flourishing came the test. The bitter waters were not the end of the journey. They were the doorway to the next season of God's purpose.

Every Trial Is an Invitation to Hear God

Before Israel arrived at Elim, they first encountered the bitter waters of Marah. That is the pattern of God. Before Elim, there is often Marah. Before abundance, there is usually a test. The question in every test is not, *"How do I get out of this?"*

The real question is,

"Lord, what are You saying to me?"

Throughout the wilderness journey, this was the lesson God kept teaching Israel.

He said:

"And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger... that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live."

(Deuteronomy 8:3, KJV)

In other words, whenever you find yourself in any situation, your way out is found in hearing what God is saying about it.

The Pattern of Deliverance

When Israel arrived at the Red Sea, they believed they had reached the end of the road.

Their hearts became hardened. They murmured. They complained. Moses, however, went to God. God spoke.

He said,

"Lift up your rod... and tell the children of Israel to go forward."

The Red Sea parted.

Later they arrived at the bitter waters of Marah.

Again they complained.

Again Moses went to God.

God showed him a tree.

He cast it into the waters, and the waters became sweet.

Then they reached a place where there was no water.

Again God spoke. He instructed Moses to strike the rock. No one knew there was water inside the rock until God revealed it. The water flowed.

The pattern never changed.

They did not escape their situations by telling God what to do. They came out because they heard His voice and obeyed His instructions.

Whatever He Says to You, Do It

The first miracle of Jesus at Cana reveals the same principle. When the wine ran out, Mary simply said:

"...Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it."

(John 2:5, KJV)

She did not tell Jesus what to do. She told the servants to obey whatever He said. That is still the principle today. Suppose you lose your job. Our natural instinct is to pray,

"Lord, give me another job exactly like this one."

But perhaps God is saying,

"Come to Me first.

Let Me tell you what to do."

When you begin doing what He tells you, you may discover an abundance that far exceeds what you lost.

Eventually you may even thank God that you lost that job because it became the doorway into His greater purpose.

Purpose Is Greater Than Provision

When God reveals His thoughts, He also reveals His purpose. Look at Peter. He caught an extraordinary number of fish. Yet once he understood God's purpose, he left the fish behind and followed Jesus. The blessing was no longer the destination.

Purpose was.

If you do not know God's purpose, the blessing of God itself can pull you away from His purpose.

I hope you are hearing what I am saying.

I believe the Church is moving into what Scripture typifies as the **third feast**.

There were three major feasts in the Jewish calendar, and each has a spiritual parallel.

The first was the **Feast of Passover**.

Paul said:

"Christ our passover is sacrificed for us."

(1 Corinthians 5:7, KJV)

That feast represents salvation. Around that truth, God raised what we know as the evangelical movement. The second was the **Feast of Pentecost**, celebrated fifty days later. It marked the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Around that experience came the Pentecostal movement. But there is a third feast—the **Feast of Ingathering**.

Jesus referred to it when He said:

"If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

He that believeth on me... out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." (*John 7:37-38, KJV*)

This is different.

At Pentecost, many believers focused on asking God for what they wanted. But the season of ingathering is different. It is a season of complete surrender. It is a season where we listen to Him. It is a season that will produce explosive growth.

We will see churches gathering hundreds of thousands of people. Cities and nations will be reached. But the key will not be human strategy. The key will be hearing God and surrendering to His will. Whenever a need appears in your life, don't merely ask God to remove it. Ask Him what it means.

Say,

"Lord, if this need exists, then something is moving in my life. What are You saying to me?"

If someone suddenly begins treating you differently, don't immediately react. Recognize that something may be shifting in the spirit. That was exactly what happened with Jacob. The moment Laban's attitude changed toward him, Jacob sought God. God interpreted the situation for him.

He said,

"Laban's countenance has changed because it is now time for you to leave."

Jacob did not act merely because he felt offended. He sought God's interpretation. Then he obeyed. That obedience brought him into God's next season.

When Your Will Is Laid Down

We are coming into a season where our own agendas must be surrendered. Our wills must be laid aside. But what God will accomplish in the life of a surrendered person is almost unbelievable. That is what we heard earlier.

Twenty-five years in ministry. Then suddenly, after fourteen years, something shifted. The trajectory completely changed. When those moments come, what should you do?

Psalm 95 tells us. It says:

"O come, let us sing unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.

Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms."

(Psalm 95:1–2, KJV)

It continues:

"O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker."

(Psalm 95:6, KJV)

Why?

Because:

"...he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand."

(Psalm 95:7, KJV)

Then comes the familiar statement:

"To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart..."

(Psalm 95:7–8, KJV)

Notice the sequence.

Before hearing His voice comes thanksgiving. Before understanding comes worship. Instead of hardening your heart, come before your Maker. Enter His presence with thanksgiving. Bow before Him. Worship Him.

As you do, you begin to understand His voice. God is already speaking. The issue is not His willingness to speak. The issue is our ability to understand what He is saying.

Learning to Recognize God's Voice

As your heart becomes sensitive, you will begin to recognize God's voice in unexpected places.

You may turn on the television. You may hear something completely ordinary. Suddenly, you realize God is speaking directly to you through it. I believe Reverend Jonathan mentioned Pastor Matthew Ashimolowo.

For about fourteen years, his church experienced very little growth. Then, at a conference, he picked up a very small book. Later, while flying back to London, he watched a secular film—*Sister Act*.

As he watched, God spoke to him. The Lord showed him the importance of praise and joyful worship in the life of the church. That single insight transformed the trajectory of his ministry. Notice what we have heard repeatedly throughout this conference.

The emphasis keeps returning to praise. Derek Prince said something similar many years ago. He observed that one of the distinguishing characteristics of Pentecostal believers was their sound of praise. He recognized that praise carried a spiritual key. Once praise begins to disappear from a person's life, something vital is lost.

That is why Psalm 95 says, "**Come before your Maker.**" Let joyful praise replace murmuring. Replace complaints with thanksgiving.

When you complain, "*Why has this happened to me?*"

you begin hardening your heart. But when you respond with thanksgiving, your spiritual eyes begin to open. Hardness produces blindness. Thanksgiving restores sight. Suppose a friend, colleague, or contemporary experiences a remarkable breakthrough. You have two choices.

You can harden your heart toward that person. Or you can genuinely thank God for what He has done in their life. If you choose thanksgiving, something remarkable happens. Your inner eyes begin to open. God starts revealing principles. He begins showing you what you should do. It may not be the exact same blessing.

But He will lead you into something of equal significance within His own purpose for your life.

I once heard someone say this after seeing another person receive a brand-new car. He simply remarked,

"If you are truly joyful from your heart for this person's blessing, yours is on the way."

Many people appear joyful outwardly. But inwardly, the joy is not genuine. Another wise man once said,

"If giving causes you pain, keep giving until you are healed of that pain."

The same principle applies here. If someone else's advancement hurts you, keep thanking God for them. Keep praying for them.

Continue until your heart is healed. That response is not natural. It is supernatural. But once your heart refuses to harden, your eyes begin to see. You remember that you are one of the sheep in God's pasture. He is directing your life.

Then something beautiful begins to happen. You obtain mercy. That is why the Scriptures invite us to come boldly to the throne of grace:

"...that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

(Hebrews 4:16, KJV)

Notice the contrast throughout this message.

It is either mercy...

...or hardness.

If you refuse to harden your heart, mercy comes.

When mercy comes, your life begins to look exactly like Romans says:

**"So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth,
but of God that sheweth mercy."**

(Romans 9:16, KJV)

God's Plan Is Greater Than Yours

I came to tell you something. God's plan for your life is not what you are presently imagining. The Lord says:

**"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your
ways my ways..."**

(Isaiah 55:8, KJV)

In other words, if God asked you to guess His plan a thousand times, you would never arrive at it on your own. His Kingdom's purpose is beyond human imagination. But once that Kingdom purpose enters your life, everyone around you begins to notice.

Something changes dramatically. You step into a kingly anointing because you have entered into God's Kingdom agenda.

God Trusts Those Who Trust Him

It is true that:

"God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son..."

(John 3:16, KJV)

It is also true that Jesus taught us to imitate the Father,

"...for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."

(Matthew 5:45, KJV)

Yet the same Jesus also said:

"Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine..."

(Matthew 7:6, KJV)

God may send rain upon everyone. But He does not entrust His precious things to everyone. Paul did not write:

"Eye hath not seen... the things which God hath prepared for those whom He loves."

Rather, he wrote:

"...the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

(1 Corinthians 2:9, KJV)

There is a difference in response. There are different dimensions of faith. There is believing that God is trustworthy. There is faith itself. And there is faithfulness.

Faithfulness means that God can trust you. There are things God desires to entrust to His people. But before He entrusts them, He must first know that He can trust the one who receives them.

And so, through the things you go through, as you bow before God, worship Him, give Him thanks, and refuse to become offended, I am telling you this: the very hand that humbles you today is the same hand that will exalt you.

The Bible says:

"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time." (1 Peter 5:6, KJV)

Even Jesus Himself did not consider it robbery to be equal with God. Instead, He humbled Himself.

Think of it like a seating arrangement. Suppose you attend an event where people are seated according to rank. You believe you are equal to someone seated at the front, but you are assigned a seat in the sixth row. If you become angry, stand up, and walk away because you feel disrespected, you may have walked away from your own season of exaltation.

The Scripture says to humble yourself under the mighty hand of God.

That same mighty hand may keep you low for a season.

Do you understand what I am saying?

When others are promoted ahead of you, and you feel overlooked, God is watching your response. Instead of hardening your heart, go to Him with thanksgiving. As you do, you begin to understand His ways.

Sometimes God simply says, "Suffer it to be so—for now."

Because of what is coming, certain things must be removed from your life. As you spend time with Him, you begin to understand His thoughts. Paul understood this. When he experienced a demonic attack, he eventually understood God's purpose. He said:

"Lest I should be exalted above measure..."

In other words, the abundance of revelation had begun to affect him, and God allowed a circumstance that would keep him humble before Him. Paul understood what was happening.

He realized that God would exalt him—but only in due season. So this is not about throwing your weight around, forcing your own will, or proving your strength. Recently, a major door opened for me.

I knew exactly where that door came from.

Someone had treated me in a way I felt was disrespectful.

God spoke to my heart and said,

"Suffer it to be so."

He reminded me of the Scriptures.

He said,

"Take it."

When that door eventually opened, I knew beyond any doubt that it is God who exalts a man.

Do you understand what I am saying?

Everyone wants exaltation.

Very few people want to be humbled.

Remain under His mighty hand.

Do not harden your heart.

As you begin thanking Him, light will come.

You will understand why you had to go through what you experienced.

It will become clear that it is far better to make mistakes in obscurity than to make them after you have been placed on a throne.

Do you understand?

You can make mistakes among friends, and they will overlook them.

Make those same mistakes where God is taking you, and the consequences could be devastating.

You may say something carelessly in private, and nothing happens.

Say the same thing publicly from a position of influence, and it could destroy everything.

So God says,

"We must remove these things from you before placing you in that position."

When you begin to understand His thoughts, you discover that although the chastening of the Lord is grievous, it is for your own good, that you might become a partaker of His holiness.

So if there is anything happening around your life and you are tempted to say,

"You don't understand how they treated me..."

We understand. Do you understand what I am saying today?

There is nothing you are crying over today, if you obey God, that you will not one day look back on and laugh. You will say,

"How did that ever have such an effect on me?"

I remember when I was in school. There was a birthday celebration in one of the school halls, and they invited us to preach. Three of us were scheduled to minister.

The first person preached. The second person preached. Then they began discussing among themselves. I immediately knew what had happened. They had removed my slot. A good friend came over and apologized. He said, "We're sorry. They said there's no more time."

At that moment, I could have become offended and walked out. But if I had walked out of that birthday celebration, I would have walked out of my ministry.

Do you understand?

Today, I cannot even remember who the first two people were who preached that day.

But I understand now.

God was not denying me an opportunity.

He was training me for today.

Do you understand what I am saying?

Do not sell your birthright for a morsel of meat.

When you compare what people are willing to trade away because of offense with what God intends to accomplish through their lives, there is simply no comparison.

Never allow something small to produce offense, bitterness, or anger.

Humble yourself before God.

Your reward will be the ability to discern.

You will begin to perceive what is happening in the realm of the Spirit. You will understand God's voice. You will know what He is saying. You will have conversations with people and immediately discern what the Spirit of God is communicating. You will recognize spiritual patterns. The blessings are beyond measure. Remember this:

The same word translated **blindness** is also translated **hardness**. If you refuse to harden your heart, you are rewarded with prophetic insight. You begin to see. You open the Scriptures, and they speak directly to you. You understand what God is saying. You enter into His thoughts concerning your life.

Quietly, you begin arranging your life according to those thoughts.

You will predict events.

You will declare things, and they will be established.

You will decree things, and they will come to pass because you have clearly heard the voice of God.

Closing Prayer

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we ask that this truth would take deep root within us. Let it bring forth abundant fruit in our lives. In Jesus' name, Amen.



About The Potter's House

Pastor Poju Oyemade is the Senior Pastor of Covenant Christian Centre (CCC), Lagos, Nigeria, a church he has served since 1994. Over the years, his ministry has been marked by a consistent emphasis on sound doctrine, disciplined Christian living, leadership development, and the practical application of biblical truth to everyday life.

He is widely recognised for his clear, analytical teaching style and his ability to handle Scripture with depth, balance, and intellectual honesty. His messages are known for confronting spiritual ignorance, challenging emotional Christianity, and calling believers to maturity, responsibility, and alignment with Kingdom principles.

Beyond the local church, Pastor Oyemade is the convener of the **Word of Faith Believers' Convention (WOFBEC)**, an annual gathering that brings together believers, leaders, and ministers from across denominations for teaching, prayer, and spiritual renewal. Through this platform, he has helped shape conversations around faith, leadership, national development, and Christian responsibility in contemporary society.

Pastor Poju Oyemade is also a trained lawyer and a public thinker who engages issues of culture, governance, and ethics from a biblical worldview. His ministry reflects a strong conviction that faith must be intelligent, principled, and lived out with integrity in the public square.

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