



JUL - SEP 2020

WHEN THE NETS ARE EMPTY...

DON'T BE
PRESSURED,
BE THE
PRESSURE

Turning Financial Famine Around

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TURNING FINANCIAL FAMINE AROUND

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# Straight From My Heart

When I consider the various occurrences that we as a people and as a church have witnessed for the past couple of months and are still witnessing. What comes first to my mind is what the word of God says for this season, and I'll highlight just two of them:

"A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you." (Psalm 91:7)

'Fall' here refers to a depreciation from a position or standing, a decrease, a loss or a setback. What we need to understand is that none of these would come near us, all we need do is see the occurrences around us from the eyes of faith and divine revelation and then realize that whatever the case, God is actively working on our behalves. He is working out the loud cacophony that may be all around you and actively turning it to a melodious euphony of praise.

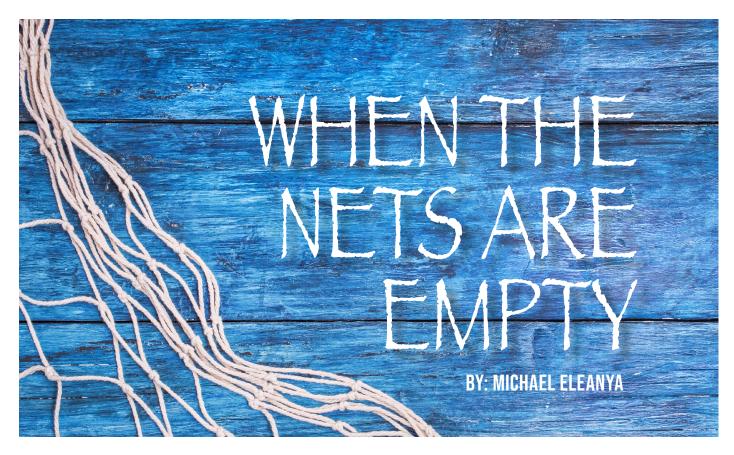
The second scripture that I'll highlight is this, "Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the Lord rises upon you and his glory appears over you. Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn." (Isaiah 60:1-3)

When others say there is a casting down, God has said concerning you that not only will you declare a lifting up, but in addition you will shine even brighter and brighter till people around you gather in amazement at what God has done and is still actively doing in your live.

God has been through this way before! Matter of fact, He already charted your course, He is ahead of you ensuring that you reap the blessings He has prepared for you in this season. All you need do is set your gaze on Him, sharpen your listening ability to hear Him whisper divine revelations on what you ought to do to appropriate all He has reserved for you and activate those gifts and talents that you have.

This is your season of rising!

Michael



ne day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, [a] the people were crowding around him and listening to the word of God. He saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat. When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch." Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets." When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. So, they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink.

When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people." So, they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.

Peter had encountered an unusually terrible night at fishing. A night wherein he caught not even a single fish after much toil and effort. For Peter that represented a huge disappointment, a discouragement and perhaps a loss of much needed income. Or perhaps, in more familiar terms – a loss of a job or an opportunity. On the one hand, Peter had toiled all night, literarily looking for even one fish that he could take home as consolation for an all-night work at sea. On the other hand, Jesus was getting ready to minister to the crowd at the side of the very lake that Peter was going to anchor his boat to perform the ritual of washing out his nets.

Was it a coincidence that Jesus identified and opted to utilize the boat belonging to Peter as a means to achieve His purpose? Kingdom purpose? I guess not. It was after this particular encounter that Peter got promoted from being a fisherman by profession to a fisher of men by calling. Could it be that God orchestrated this and called on the fishes that particular night giving them the instruction to go into hiding to ensure that Peter didn't catch any fish? To ensure that Peter came back to shore at the time he did? To ensure that his boat was stationed at that particular spot so that Jesus got into his boat to ultimately ensure that Peter became the rock, the one who would be the right-hand man of Jesus?

What Peter called a loss, Jesus called a gain. What Peter called a casting down, Jesus called an uplifting. If Peter did not encounter that loss, he wouldn't have entered into the space that God had ordained for him to operate in. Come to think of it, in this current clime, perhaps you have toiled all your life and are suddenly faced with a job loss or income reduction or a future that seems altogether uncertain. There is good news for you. God is using your current situation to usher you into that encounter that will birth your glorious destiny.

While casting your net and not catching any fish, you need to keep asking yourself, 'what if God is all this while positioning me for His greater move through this current experience?' this mind set will keep you alert to the directions of the Holy Spirit

Be diligent at what you do

"He saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets." (Verse 2)

Moses could have easily let his frustrations becloud his sense of judgement, he could have easily left his nets without washing them, after all what use was washing a net that caught no fish, however he

diligently stayed back and still went through the same routine that even those who were successful in catching fish did – he washed his net, getting himself ready for the next time at sea, if he didn't stay diligent he wouldn't have partook of the miracle that was about to take place in his life. "Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men". (*Proverbs 22:29*) Whatever the case, stay diligent at what God has asked you to do and He will meet you right there in the most miraculous of ways. Get up every day and show up every day, do not let your situation influence your diligence, rather let your diligence influence your situation.

Allow your boat to be used for Kingdom purposes.

"He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat." (*Verse 3*)

Imagine you are sitting on the bonnet of your car in a parking lot and someone you have never met before gets into your car and asks you to drive him off to some destination that is unknown to you? This is exactly what happened to Simon Peter – he didn't know who Christ was, he didn't expect anything in return by giving a helping hand to Jesus, neither did he even know that he had just encountered the very human expression of divinity. He just heard the master make a request to utilize his boat for a soul winning effort and he obliged immediately.

You need to willingly take that thing that you thought was a vehicle for your breakthrough and use it for the advancement of the Kingdom of God even if you are still in the midst of a huge loss, or something that you didn't expect to happen. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. (Matt 6:33) is God's command and promise. Whether it is convenient or not, whether it is painful or not, whether it is your very last hope or not, give all of that over to Jesus and he will and watch him turn things around for you!

Let God know how you feel, if you may but obey.

"Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets." (verse 5)

If you need to, let go and tell God how you feel, tell Him about your frustration, about your failures, when He asks you to carry out a command remind Him of the toil and pain you have been through. However, finally obey him in total submission out of your trust in His unfailing love and the knowledge that we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet he did not sin". (Hebrews 4:15). When it comes to obeying God's instructions, do not look at the things you are going through, do not consider your present condition, rather consider the truth that they that put their trust in God can never be put to shame. Realize that your condition is not what matters, but rather what matters is your position - and your position is one who is seated together with Jesus, in the heavenly places, far above all principalities and power (Eph 1:21). It is your obedience that will activate a convergence between your condition and your position and move you to the realm where you are able to contemplate God's glory and get transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory (2 Cor 3:18). It was never lost "When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break." (verse 6)

Have you ever thought you had lost or misplaced something only to find it at a time that it was more opportune? When you walk with God, nothing is really lost. Whatever thing you think might have been lost is going to be regained in multiple folds if you will activate the lessons from Peter's encounter.

However, notice one key thing contained in the statement, "when they had done so." Peter didn't only hear what Jesus had told him to do. Despite the fact that he was highly experienced in the fishing business, despite the fact that his own experiential and professional judgement said otherwise, he went ahead and practically executed what Jesus had commanded him to do. Be on the lookout for those instructions that the Holy Spirit will be bringing your way, some of them may sound impractical, bothering on absurd, but obey all the same and leave the rest to God to handle. One thing you must convince yourself of by faith is that with God, "there shall be no loss" (Acts 27:22)

Submission and worship come before the lifting

"When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" (verse 8)

Falling at one's feet in the bible signifies total submission, worship and surrender. As God takes you to the next level of abundance, one thing you must always remember and commit to do is to keep yourself totally submitted to Him and remain in a constant state of worship.

Surrender and worship opens great doors with God that a multitude of prayers might not open. A submitted heart recognizes and hands over the process and outcome to God, a heart of worship recognizes that without God, we can do nothing.

Submission is equivalent to you saying, "Lord, I cannot see my way through, so I rely on you to see on my behalf and take me to that place where you have planned for me" You must actively submit your all to God in total surrender especially in the current season of world turmoil.

"Acquaint now yourself with Him [agree with God and show yourself to be conformed to His will] and be at peace; by that [you shall prosper and great] good shall come to you." (*Job 22:21*)

It will end in your upliftment

Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people. (*verse 10*)

God has passed through this way that you are passing through, He is using your everyday experience to train and prepare you for your glorious future. Nothing is a coincidence for those you are sold out to God and have actively submitted to Him. Every seemingly inconsequential experience has God's hands in it to bring you to an expected end. Even if that experience is not palatable now, even if it is one that you will rather not go through, you need to realize that it's all working together for your good.

Those empty nets that have engaged you in a stare out is actually God priming you for His next glorious move in your life, you are on the cusp of your emergence.

Hold on to God and activate the lessons learned here and see God move in an unprecedented way in your life! ①



#### It doesn't have to be this way.

An unexpected layoff, a hit to your small business as a result of COVID-19, or hourly work eliminated has left you wondering how you'll pay the bills and if things will return to normal.

Financial famine can leave you drained mentally, emotionally and even spiritually.....but you don't have to accept it.

As a believer in Christ Jesus, you must remember one thing:

#### You are not subject to the times—the times are subject to you.

That's a bit of wisdom from Pastor George Pearsons on taking dominion during difficult times. To turn financial famine around, you have to stand your ground in your victorious position in Christ Jesus.

No matter what is going on in the world around us, there is a path to prosperity that is guaranteed to Christians who dare to believe.

Turning financial famine around begins with knowing this:

God made a covenant (a promise) with you that ensures your financial success—no matter what is happening around you.

Covenant prosperity is available to you. It's in the bank. But you've got to unlock it.

It's time to "remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant"

(Deuteronomy 8:18, NKJV).

If you're facing a financial famine, here is how you can begin to turn it around and take back what the devil has stolen.

First things first...

#### 1. Choose a Belief System

The first key to turning financial famine around is to choose a belief system. Just like walking into a bakery filled with all different types of muffins, donuts and fritters, you have a host of options in front of you when it comes to what you believe—only not all of them are equally sweet.

In other words, to avoid going on autopilot (which usually means going with the most recent flow of society), you have the opportunity to DECIDE which belief system you want to base your life on.

Your best choice?

#### Choose to believe the covenant between you and God.

It's very personal, if you think about it. God sealed His promises to you in blood—the blood of His precious Son, Jesus. That covenant includes deliverance from sin, sickness, disease, depression, poverty and lack. Most people are quick to take God up on His offer of salvation, but then leave everything else on the table.

Have you been thrown into a financial famine as a result of what's going on in our world today?

You can change the course of your year by doing one thing—choose God's system for wealth. Don't rely on your job, the government, credit cards or a future inheritance. Believe that God is the One who gives you the power to get wealth—and don't budge!

Stick with the system.

Then, you'll be ready to...

#### 2. Own Your End of the Bargain

If you've overlooked this guaranteed path to prosperity thus far, it's not too late! It's the most certain path to turning financial famine around.

God has already done His part. Now all you have to do is own your end of the bargain.

What bargain?

Well, a covenant is an agreement between TWO parties. God, in His goodness, has already delivered on His promise. All you have to do to receive it is this:

- 1. Love Him above anything and anyone else in your life.
- 2. Love others (forgive, don't judge or criticize, refuse to gossip, be a blessing!).
- 3. Honor God with your finances by tithing. Remember: Isaac sowed in famine and reaped one hundredfold in the same year! A famine can't stop THE BLESSING of God!
- 4. Make a sincere effort to obey ALL His commands. (Find a list of "Ifs" in the Bible that could be standing between you and prosperity.)
- 5. If you think about it, all God's commands are for our own good. When we obey, life gets better and the door to prosperity swings wide open!

Now that you're on the path to financial prosperity, be sure to...

#### 3. Raise Your Vision

Have you ever heard people say, "How much is enough?" As in, people should limit themselves in prosperity to what certain people feel is "enough" to live comfortably, but not too abundantly.

A pastor once said, "That's the most selfish thing a person can say." Why?

Because it doesn't consider the needs of anyone else. If people only have "enough" for themselves, how are they supposed to help anyone else? How can we, as Christians, minister to people the way Jesus did if we only have just enough to meet our own needs?

God's reason for prospering His people is simple—to establish His covenant on the earth and allow us to give to those in need: Those are God's purposes for prosperity!

To increase in God's covenant of prosperity, we must be trustworthy with His blessings. (Can God trust you with wealth?) A good steward stays humble, never forgets God and is a generous giver. (Those are important keys to getting wealth, as well!)

How we handle covenant prosperity is key. If we'll start giving, if we'll start taking care of the needs in people's pocketbooks, we'll be far more likely to win their hearts. Don't ever let anyone tell you it's wrong to want to prosper. It's wrong for you not to want to prosper when that prosperity can mean the difference between heaven and hell for millions of people.



#### Let's Get Prospering!

As you believe God to turn your financial famine around, be expecting increase and set your mind on giving to meet the needs of others, too. Then, stand fast in faith and get ready to enjoy the greatest prosperity you've ever known!

Don't let your current circumstances or the uncertainty of the world today cause you to miss out on God's perfect plan for you. It's been said *success is achieved through inches of progress, not miles*. It's the small changes you make in your life that will change the larger circumstances. So, start making changes and let's get prospering!



In our world and in our day, people get pressured time and again by many different things, factors and people. Pressures come from within; internal factors and from outside; external factors but the information we have is what determines our response to any kind of pressure; within or without.

Pressures come at different times of our lives and they come in all shapes and sizes. What you do with pressure or how you deal with it is what matters and determines your outcome. But one thing is sure, the way you respond to pressure is a choice. Let's look at some common examples of pressure:

At work you're being pressured to change some figures after all no one will know. Or you're being pressured to work at the times you should be in church, so you can earn some extra pay. You're being pressured to be disloyal to your boss or tell tales about another colleague because WE all don't like her or him.

As a lady or a man, you're being pressured into a relationship. Time is running out on you. Or as a married man or woman you are being pressured to have an affair outside of marriage, the girl or guy is too hot and besides your wife or husband isn't available.

These are just a minuscule example of pressures. They vary, and the list can go on forever, but as a Christian what should be your response to pressure?

The Word says in Isaiah 26:3 (AmpC), "You will guard him and keep him in perfect and constant peace whose mind [both its inclination and its character] is stayed on You, because he commits himself to You, leans on You, and hopes confidently in You".

The Lord doesn't need you fretting and worrying over many different things. If you will only search His word and meditate on God's provisions for you in Christ Jesus concerning every and any aspect of your life, you will find that there is no need to worry.

The problem is too many Christians believe that they have two lives; their Christian life and their "real life". NO. A thousand times NO. you have one life and God has made provision for you whether it's about your work, business, health, finance, you name it. All you need do is take God at His word. The word of God contained in the bible is the instruction manual for our lives. And if you would only consult it, you would find yourself being the pressure and not the pressured. That's the correct order.

I can confidently say that in my life I decided many years ago to be the pressure and not to be pressured. I have so many examples.

For many years I was asked about my marital status, with questions like, "won't you get married"? "You're the only one not married amongst your siblings, are there no suitors for a beautiful lady like you"? My response was always laughter, I always had a response; jokingly or seriously. But I would always brush off the matter because it was a NON-ISSUE. I wasn't going to be pressured. I saw others giving in to pressure and I always told and still tell people you're pressured because you want to be. Your RESPONSE TO PRESSURE IS A CHOICE.

Again, I remember when I was working at a company several years ago, my colleagues were happy when I stuck with doing customer service and when I directed clients to them; however, I soon taught myself what needed to be done and soon enough I started doing sales and was very good at it in addition to my customer service role this elicited unfriendly disconcerted reactions from my colleagues. But I refused to cower until they backed down.

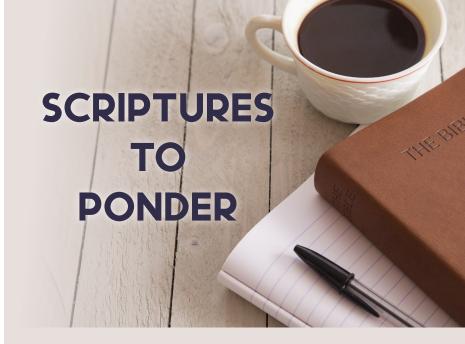
I've also seen people not give in to pressure, they stood their ground and spoke up for what was right. There's a joy and a peace that you enjoy when you take your stand for what is right. The bible says, do not follow the crowd in doing wrong... (Exodus 23:2).

The fact that "so many people" are doing it doesn't make it right or okay, do not go against your better judgement based on infallible Christian standards? What will it profit you if you do otherwise?

What am I saying to you? You can take a stand and not allow yourself to be pressured especially into doing the wrong things or compromising on your faith. There are good pressures though, give in to those ones. Be challenged to read your bible daily, be challenged to be involved in church in a greater capacity, be challenged to win souls. Notice that I no longer said pressure, because that's what it becomes; a challenge to be a better you all the time, while still feeling good about yourself. You are who God says you are. You can be the pressure, by being an epitome of perfection, an icon of what is right, always speaking and doing right. Always encouraging others to not fall below God's standards for their lives.

Be that perfect being, made in the image and likeness of God.

#### **BE THE PRESSURE!!!**



2 Corinthians 5:7 "For we live by faith, not by sight."

Mark 10:27 "Jesus looked at them and said, 'With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God."

Psalm 37:23-24 "The LORD makes firm the steps of the one who delights in him; though he may stumble, he will not fall, for the LORD upholds him with his hand.

1 Peter 3:13 "And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?"

Isaiah 54:17 "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord."

Philippians 1:6 "...being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

Isaiah 14:1 "For the Lord will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land: and the strangers shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob."

Psalm 20:7,8 "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the Lord our God. They are brought down and fallen: but we are risen and stand upright."

Psalm 105:13 – 15 "When they went from one nation to another, from one kingdom to another people; He suffered no man to do them wrong: yea, he reproved kings for their sakes; Saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm."

Deuteronomy 31:6 "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you."

Psalm 23: 5-6 "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever."



# Nigeria, let the Righteous Arise

# Righteous Prayer Points of Action

".... Father, grant me grace to revere and worship you in spirit and in truth, let all that I do come forth from that place of worship and intimacy with you, grant me grace upon grace to become a worshipper and an ardent follower and practitioner of your grace."

".... Father as a nation, teach us to worship you and focus our gaze upon you till we become your very own image and are transformed in ever increasing splendor and from one degree of glory to another."

".... Father break down the walls of division in our nation, we stand against any spirit of violence seeking to tear our nation apart. Enthrone righteousness in our nation by your mercy."

".... Father, release the Sun of Righteousness upon our nation with healing in His wings and His beams upon our nation, let the rays of healing search out every disease and plague and effect a miraculous healing upon every one that so requires it, let the sound of rejoicing break forth in homes that the nations of the earth might glorify your name."

".... Father, as you heal our bodies, also heal our nation, let the Spirit of conviction overshadow our nation, that we might see an unprecedented revival breakout in our nation."

"...Father we lift up our voice collectively in praise for what you are set to do in our nation."

It's our moment for healing!!



"BUT UNTO YOU WHO REVERE AND WORSHIPFULLY FEAR MY NAME SHALL THE SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS ARISE WITH HEALING IN HIS WINGS AND HIS BEAMS, AND YOU SHALL GO FORTH AND GAMBOL LIKE CALVES [RELEASED] FROM THE STALL AND LEAP FOR JOY". (MALACHI 4:2)

This is the most opportune time for us as individuals and as a nation to activate the benefits of the Sun of Righteousness, we will do this by fulfilling our part of the bargain which is to revere and worshipfully fear the Most High God.

More than ever we need the healing power of God at work, not just in our bodies and unique situations, but also in the very fabrics of our nation as we beseech God to stay the hand of the plague.



### WISDOM NUGGETS FOR OUTPOURING

1. "In returning and rest you shall be saved; In quietness and confidence shall be your strength." (Isaiah 30:15).

One key thing for this season is the need to be quiet and return to the original intent of God for your life, which is to consistently hear and rely on God for counsel and direction.

The scripture above is clear – there is a strength that alights upon those who activate divine quietness and confidence in God. Take out time to revive your quiet place and build your confidence in God's unfailing love and mercy.

2. "I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved. And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it." (Habakkuk 2:1-2)

Of utmost importance in this season where God will be speaking to you in the midst of your quiet place concerning those things you must do to activate His hand upon your life is the act of taking notes and keeping records of God's instructions. Diligently write them out as God makes His thoughts known

Prayerfully ask God for a retentive mind to remember to record all His instructions.

3. "This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare;" (1 Tim 1:18)

The word from God to you in your quiet place are actually His prophecies concerning you and your family. Prophecies require your active participation just like we have seen in the scriptures above. Take the record of what God has spoken to you and wage a good warfare in prayer, worship and supplication.

Lift them up to God and secure their speedy manifestation, it is your duty to expedite the fulfillment of what God has said concerning you.

"The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valor." (Judges 6:12)



All of us at Living for Christ are standing in faith with you today, together we are strong in the Lord and in the Power of His might. Despite the things happening all around us, Psalm 91:1 should encourage us all: "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty."

Also remember that Joseph was alive all the while that Jacob thought he was dead, it was the famine that brought the revelation to Jacob that what he thought was dead and lost was actually alive and well and was the very source of his provision in the famine.

In this season, as you hearken unto the voice of God, may all those things which you thought was lost make their sudden appearance in your life and provoke God's provision for you.

By faith, you will emerge from this season, flourishing like the tree planted by streams of water, but you must seek and obtain divine guidance for this season.

Thanks to our Team ReachOut, we have been able to reach out to those in need during this unprecedented period and will continue to do so as the Lord provides the direction.

Because of the lockdowns and restricted movements, the hard copies of the Living for Christ magazine will not be issued this quarter, please visit our website and download a copy and access other resources that has been made available.

Please take a moment to visit our website at <a href="https://www.livingforchristfoundation.org">www.livingforchristfoundation.org</a> or scan the QR code to go directly. Visit our social media platforms and drop us note, not forgetting to help spread the gospel by sharing content that can be a blessing to your family, friends and people in your sphere of influence.



Do not be left out, go ahead and be the express manifestation of God's love to all around you, let your world see Jesus alive in and through you!!

SPREADING THE GOSPEL BY SPREADING THE LOVE OF CHRIST!!