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John 14:6

## **GOOD NEWS BAPTIST CHURCH**

**47/49, OLUFEMI ROAD, SURULERE, LAGOS**

### **PRAYER BULLETIN FOR 2021 PRAYER AND FASTING PROGRAMME**

(Monday, January 4 - Thursday, January 7, 2021)



**THEME FOR THE YEAR:**

# **LAYING UP TREASURES IN HEAVEN**

**THEME SCRIPTURE: MATT. 6: 19-21**



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**W**elcome to the New Year 2021. Our theme for this year is Laying Up Treasures in Heaven, and our theme Scripture is Matthew 6:19-21. The immediate context of the passage is Matthew 5-7 that is generally known as the Sermon on the Mount. Here, in Matthew 6:19-21, Jesus teaches us that you can't take treasures with you to heaven, but you can send them ahead of you. The passage can be divided into three parts: the folly of laying up earthly treasures (6:19); the wisdom of laying up heavenly treasures (6:20); and a wise motto about treasures (6:21).

First, the folly of laying up earthly treasures. Jesus commanded in Matthew 6:19, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal...." He spoke in terms that was easily understood by His hearers by referring to clothing, food, and money. First, clothing in the Middle East were considered part of one's wealth. Jesus reminded His hearers that clothing, no matter how fine they were, would eventually succumb to the moth. Second, the phrase "rust destroy" is interesting. Kent Hughes notes, "The word 'rust' is an approximate translation of a word that means 'eating' and refers to the spoiling action of worms upon food storage." Therefore, Jesus was saying to His hearers that their grain supplies would eventually be destroyed by rats, mice, worms, and vermin. And third, there were no such things as banks in the ancient world. People generally kept their money, silver, gold, and other precious metals in some place in their homes. It was, therefore, easy for thieves to break in and steal a person's money.

Jesus was simply telling His hearers something that was familiar to them: nothing was completely safe and they were all facing great loss at any time. Even with modern technology, things really have not changed. Jesus' command still stands. Treasures on earth may still be easily lost through mold, rot, fires, floods, market downturns, wars, accidents, major illnesses, and so on. But, exactly what was Jesus prohibiting when He told us not to lay up treasures for ourselves on earth?

We shall begin by listing what is not forbidden. First, Jesus does not forbid possessions in themselves. Nowhere in the Bible is there a prohibition against owning property. According to the Bible, God owns all things, and He calls us to manage His possessions. So, the fundamental issue is our attitude toward possessions. Do we see them as ours or as God's? Second, Jesus does not forbid providing for the future. Saving for a rainy day is in fact encouraged. Solomon says, "Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise. Without having any chief, officer, or ruler, she prepares her bread in summer and gathers her food in harvest" (Proverbs 6:6–8). Third, Jesus does not forbid enjoying God's good gifts. Paul wrote to Timothy and said, "As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy" (1 Timothy 6:17).

So, what is Jesus forbidding in this command? John Stott writes, "What Jesus forbids his followers is the selfish accumulation of goods ('Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth'); extravagant and luxurious living; the hardheartedness which does not feel the colossal need of the world's underprivileged people; the foolish fantasy that a person's life consists in the abundance of his possessions; and the materialism which tethers our hearts to the earth." Stott summarizes the point of Jesus' command, "In a word to 'lay up treasure on earth' does not mean being provident (making sensible provision for the future) but being covetous (like misers who hoard and materialists who always want more)."

Second, the wisdom of laying up heavenly treasures (6:20). Jesus commanded in verse Matthew 6:20, "...but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal." Jesus did not explain exactly what he meant by this command. But that does not mean that we don't know what His intention was. The treasures in heaven are incorruptible, which is to say that to lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven is "to do anything on earth whose effects last for eternity." We should be clear that Jesus was not talking about some kind of works-salvation in this command. That would deny the rest of His teaching and the teaching of the entire Bible. We are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.

So, what did Jesus mean when he commanded us to lay up treasures for ourselves in heaven? Doriani puts it this way, "We lay up treasures in heaven by investing in God's causes and God's people. The effects of such investments last forever. We store treasures in heaven by worshiping God, growing in knowledge and grace, and growing in love for God and neighbour. Financially, we store treasures in

heaven by using money for kingdom causes, by giving money to the church, to missions, to Christian schools, to the poor.” And Stott says that to lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven “seems rather to refer to such things as these: the development of Christlike character (since all we can take with us to heaven is ourselves); the increase of faith, hope and charity, all of which (Paul said) ‘abide’; growth in the knowledge of Christ whom one day we shall see face to face; the active endeavour (by prayer and witness) to introduce others to Christ, so that they too may inherit eternal life; and the use of our money for Christian causes, which is the only investment whose dividends are everlasting.”

The primary way to lay up treasures for ourselves in heaven is, as Doriani says, “by investing in God’s causes and God’s people.” It is using the money, wealth, and possessions that God has entrusted to us to advance God’s causes and God’s people. It is giving money to advance the gospel through local churches and missions. It is giving to advance the gospel through Christian schools and institutions, and giving to the poor.

Third, a wise motto about treasures (6:21). Jesus said in verse Matthew 6:21, “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” If you are laying up treasure on earth, your heart will be on earthly wealth. But, if you are laying up treasure in heaven, your heart will be on eternity. As Randy Alcorn says, “If we invest in the eternal instead of in the temporal, we store up treasures in Heaven that will never stop paying dividends. Whatever treasures we store up on Earth will be left behind when we leave. Whatever treasures we store up in Heaven will be waiting for us when we arrive.” You can’t take treasures with you to heaven, but you can send them ahead of you. Your joy in Christ will grow as you invest in eternity rather than spending it on yourself now.

Having analysed the concept of the treasures in Matthew 6:19-21, let us commit ourselves to storing up for ourselves treasures in heaven. This is not a call to a life of asceticism. We are to glorify God and to enjoy him fully. But we do not hold tightly to money, wealth, and possessions. They are not our focus. Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones put it this way: “I do not cling to these things. They do not become the centre of my life and existence. I do not live for them or dwell upon them constantly in my mind; they do not absorb my life. On the contrary, I hold them loosely.... I am not governed by them; rather do I govern them; and as I do this I am steadily securing, and safely laying up for myself, treasures in heaven.”



## DAY ONE: MONDAY, JANUARY 4, 2021

### Read James 4:13-17

**S**tarting in 1955 there was a game show on US television called This Is Your Life. Celebrity subjects were ambushed during their ordinary daily routines and brought into the studio to have a spotlight shined on their past. You and I will probably never be dragged into the spotlight on television, to have our lives examined, but we would be wise to face the question, “What is your Life?” James asked his readers, “What is your life?” to emphasize the brevity of life and the urgent need for the guidance and help of God if we are to make our lives meaningful and productive for God. So, as we begin a brand new year, let me ask you, “What is your life?” And then I will go one step further and tell you the answers, according to the Scriptures.

So, what is your life? First, life is a vapour. It is a vapour that appears for a little time. A vapour can be seen only briefly, before it evaporates and completely disappears. It vanishes away. The psalmist was grieved as he considered the brevity of the human life, but he rejoiced in the eternal nature of God’s mercy. Listen to the words of Psalm 103:15-18: “As for man, his days are like grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourishes. When the wind has passed over it, it is no more, and its place acknowledges it no longer. But the loving kindness of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, and His righteousness to children’s children, to those who keep His covenant and remember His precepts to do them.” Compared to eternity your life is just like a vapour.

Second, life is a mystery. Life has been defined as the absence of death. Death has been defined as the absence of life. People still stand in awe before the mystery of life. Doctors and scientist still cannot fully comprehend how life begins. Your life is a mystery that only God knows.

Third, life is the breath of God, according to Genesis 2:7 which reads, “Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.” Apart from the breath of God, a human is but a pile of dust and we all know what happens to dust. Life is God’s gift to us. God is the author and giver of life. Your life is the breath of God.

Fourth, life is a trust from God. We must all give an account of our stewardship of the gift of life one day. Listen to what Paul has to say about this in Romans 14:12, “So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God.” The writer of the book of Ecclesiastes, speaking from the viewpoint of common sense rather than from a heart filled with great faith, declared, “God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.” Your life has been entrusted to you by God and one day he will ask for an account of how you used it to glorify him.

Fifth, life is an opportunity to serve. Our Lord understood and defined life in terms of an opportunity to minister to the needs of others. In Mark 10:45 Jesus Christ himself says, “Even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.” Those who would follow Jesus must accept his attitude and his ambition concerning the purpose of being.

Your life is an opportunity to serve God. So, how are you planning to serve God in this New Year? If you have not trusted Jesus Christ as your Saviour, you do not have life. John 3:36 reads, “He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” You have the ability to receive the gift of everlasting life if you will just accept Christ. He is eager to give on you this gift if you will trust him as Saviour and Lord. Jesus gave us all the promise in John 10:10 when he said, “I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.” What is your life today? Is it abundant and free or headed for the wrath of God? The Lord is waiting; will you accept Him?

## **PRAISE & THANKSGIVING**

1. The writer of the hymn whose refrain is Count your blessings, name them one by one, knows the importance of being specific in identifying what God has done for us if we would praise and thank Him adequately. Take time, therefore, to write down what God did for you last year. Thereafter, praise Him for all the blessings you have received from Him—forgiveness for all your sins; healing for all your diseases; deliverance of your soul from death; divine care and loving-kindness; satisfaction of your desires with good things; deliverance from oppression; etc.
2. Last year was very challenging for people all over the world, including our nation. Several millions of people were infected with the Covid-19 virus, and more than a million died as a result of it. Yet, God saw you and your

family through all the dangers and perils that consumed many. Give thanks to God for the seeing you through the dangers and perils of last year and for supplying all your needs throughout the year.

3. God said, “For I know the plans I have for you; plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future” (Jer. 29:11). Thank God for bringing you into another year and for the wonderful plans that He has made for your thriving and prospering this year.
4. Thank God for all the blessings that He bestowed upon your family last year (Lam. 3:21-24).

### **CONFESSION OF SINS**

1. Confess all the sins that the Spirit of God has convicted you of to God (Proverbs 28:13 and 1 John 1:8-10).
2. Pray that you may be empowered to resist temptations that you will face during this year.
3. Pray that God will restore to you the joy of your salvation and give you a heart that is willing to do His will at all times.

### **REQUESTS**

1. Pray that God will help you to have a fuller understanding of the salvation that He has given you through Jesus Christ. Pray that God will teach you how to walk with Him in order that you may reach the height for which He has destined you.
2. Pray for growth in the knowledge of the Word of God (John 16:12-15) and for power to live for God in accordance with His Word (Gal. 5:16-18). Pray for unusual capacity to apply the Word of God to your life this year.
3. Pray for strength in your inner man so that you may be able to cope with all the challenges that you will face this year (Ephesians 3:14-19). Pray for grace to resist all the pressures that will be mounted on you to conform to the standard of the world around you.
4. Pray for the supply of all your needs according to God’s riches in glory by



Christ Jesus (Phil. 4:19). Pray for the spirit of diligence and hard-work and grace to be successful in all areas of your life.

5. Pray for grace to be contented and to be free from the love of money (Hebrews 13:5-6).
6. Pray that you will be a good steward of all that God has entrusted into your care (1 Corinthians 4:1-7).
7. Pray that you will be clothed with the garment of praise throughout this year and that He will banish tears, grief and sorrow from your life (Isaiah 51:11; 61:3).
8. Pray that God will fulfill all His plans for your life and cancel all the plans that Satan has for you (Numbers 23:8, 23; Isaiah 54:15-17; Jeremiah 29:11). Pray that God will restore all that you have lost as a result of your sins against Him.
9. Pray that God's wall of protection will surround you and all that belongs to you (Job 1:10; Zechariah 2:5).
10. Pray that God will give in exchange for your life all those who have vowed that it will be over their dead bodies that you will prosper (Isaiah 43:3-4).
11. Pray for divine wisdom, knowledge and understanding in all your decision-making and undertakings this year; and that errors and mistakes will be far from you (1 Corinthians 12:10; Ephesians 1:16-18).
12. Pray that God will bless all that you laid your hands upon to do this year; pray that He will deliver you from all forms of fears, worries, and anxieties (Deuteronomy 28:6; Matthew 6:25-33).
13. Pray for grace to seek first the Kingdom of God and its righteousness this year. Pray that God will strengthen your hand in His service and use you for His glory.
14. Commit your family into the hand of God and pray for His divine presence, guidance and leadership. Pray that God will help your family to be obedient

to His divine guidance and leadership (Exodus 33:14; Psalm 32:8-9; 37:5-6).

15. Pray for God's abundant provision and divine protection for your family this year (Philippians 4:19). Pray that God will restore to your family all that Satan has stolen from you because of your sins.
16. Pray for grace to worship and serve God faithfully this year (Joshua 24:14-15; Mal. 3:10; John 4:24). Pray that your family will experience the goodness of the Lord in every area of your lives as you prepare for His return.
17. Pray that your family will experience God's peace, joy, grace, mercy and divine favour throughout this year (Isaiah 26:3).
18. Pray that your family will bring honour, praise and glory to God in all your endeavours this year (Gal. 1:24).



## DAY TWO: TUESDAY, JANUARY 5, 2021

### Read Luke 12:13-21

**B**oth before and after the parable of our text Jesus very clearly points out why He tells it. We read in verse 15: “a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.” In verse 21: “he that layeth up treasure for himself is not rich toward God.” These verses lay out clearly both the negative and the positive answer to the question, in what does life consist? Negatively, we are told that life in this present world does not consist in the abundance of the things that a man possesses. Now, we ought to be clear on this instruction Jesus gives us here. Jesus is not saying that life in this present world does not necessitate possessions. Neither does he intend to teach us here that if by means of our hard labours God blesses us with riches, that these riches are in themselves wrong and sinful.

What He is saying is that life does not consist in these earthly possessions—not true life—not true life to come or life in this world either. The life that is in us as God’s children is not mere earthly life. We possess eternal life. Christ dwells in us by His Spirit, and that Spirit imparts to us, even while we are in this present world, a life that will never end. That means that once we die, our life goes on—it goes on into all eternity! The spiritual life we have right now, therefore, does not really consist in how many earthly possessions a man can accumulate to himself. These earthly possessions will all be left behind when we die. Neither do these possessions in this world earn for us a place in heaven. We cannot buy our way into heaven with our earthly riches. For that reason, Jesus gives us the warning of verse 15: “Take heed, and beware of covetousness!”

Covetousness is a strong desire to have what another possesses. Covetousness is not being satisfied with life as God gives it to us, but wanting more. The rich man in the parable thought that eating and drinking and making merry with all this wealth is what life consisted of. He lived for today and gave no thought for the life hereafter. He did not care about heaven. He cared only about the things of this present world. In his greed and covetousness, he failed to lay up for himself treasures in heaven.

In what, then, does life consist? In this: being rich toward God. But what is it to be rich toward God? First of all, to be rich toward God requires coming to Him and finding our life in Him. We are to turn away from the things of this present life and the temporary joy they might give us, and we are to turn to God and see Him as life and joy for us. Being rich toward God requires of us a proper understanding of what life consists of. It consists of life eternal—the life that is to come. That life to come must be of essence to you and me while in this life. It must be the main concern of our lives. Then we will begin to look at life in this world not as an end in itself, but as a means to achieve a higher end—that of life to come.

When we are rich toward God, this will affect the way we view our earthly possessions. We will not live to be rich. We will not obsess over getting more and more in the way of this world's possessions. On the contrary, the things of the kingdom of heaven will be our goal and will direct our activities. We will not allow the things of this present life to get in the way of our spiritual growth and development. We are not properly seeking God when we do not spend time with Him in fellowship and prayer. How much time do we take to pray, to study God's Word, and speak with our families of the things of the kingdom of heaven? How much time do we spend attending church and the functions of the church in order that we might be properly fed? Does our life centre in the things of this world and its pursuits, or do our lives centre in the kingdom of heaven and its pursuits? And this is where being rich toward God becomes so applicable to life. God gives us what we earn in order to fulfil two important functions in this life. First of all, to be able to live. We earn money in order to support ourselves and our family. The second is to help the poor and the needy—those who are unable to live as comfortable a life as we are. Having fulfilled those functions, if we are still wealthy beyond need, we yet use those riches to lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven.

### **PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

1. Thank Him for the opportunity given to you and members of your family to be gainfully engaged in academics, business, and ministry in His vineyard.
2. Give thanks and praise to God for past successes in academic endeavors, promotion in the workplace and progress/profit in business ventures.
3. Thank Him for not allowing the devourer to find anything to steal, kill or destroy in your life and the lives of members of your family.

## **CONFESSION OF SINS**

4. We commit many sins in our endeavours as students, workers, business persons, and workers in His vineyard. These sins serve as barriers to future achievements and successes. Therefore, confess every sin that you have committed against God as a student, a worker, a business man/woman, and a church worker (Psalm 103:8-13).
5. Pray for forgiveness if you did not acknowledge God's part in your academic success or success at work and in business last year through the giving of tithes and offering yourself for service in His vineyard.

## **PRAYER REQUESTS**

1. Pray for success in all your academic, work, business, and ministry endeavors this year. Pray that the environment in which you will operate this year will be advantageous to all your aspirations. Pray that God's will, and not Satan's or man's, will prevail in your life this year.
2. Pray for grace to be diligent in all your undertakings this year. Pray that God will prosper the work of your hands and bless all your other endeavours this year. Pray that God will help you to work like someone who knows that he is going to give account of his stewardship to Him when He returns.
3. Pray for wisdom to follow through every short and long-term plan for this year. Pray for grace to overcome every temptation to be anxious, fearful or worried by any challenge that you may face this year.
4. Pray for divine health as you engage in all that you have to do this year. Pray for a full and complete restoration of your health and that you will not be bedridden or suffer any form of handicap this year.
5. Pray for the creation of favorable social, economic, and political atmosphere for all you have to do this year. Pray that this year's elections will not negatively affect any of your endeavours this year. Pray that everything will work together for your good this year. Pray that God will direct you in the way that He has planned for your good this year.

6. Pray for grace to excel in all academic examinations, job interviews and business activities without resorting to any malpractice this year. Pray for divine elevation in your studies, work and/or business.
7. Destroy every manipulation such as evil and demonic sleep, satanic delay or distraction that may prevent you from experiencing God's blessings this year.
8. Pray that none of your endeavours will distract your attention from God or weaken your hands in His service this year. Pray that you will be diligent to be found in Christ without spot or blemish, and at peace with others throughout the year.
9. Pray for promotion, increase, the enlargement of your coasts, and the full and complete restoration of everything that you have lost or that the enemy has stolen from you over the years.
10. Pray that the source of your livelihood will not be cut off by any satanic machination or demonic plot in Jesus' name. Pray that you will not lack anything that is necessary for your sustenance this year. Pray that God will revamp the economy and keep the establishment that the breadwinner of your family works for in business throughout the year.
11. Pray for unity, openness, oneness and understanding in your family (Gen. 2:25; Psalm 133). Pray against the spirit of pride, hatred, strife, disunity, misunderstanding, quarrelling, discord, disaffection, rivalry, jealousy, envy and bitterness in your family this year (Gal. 5:19-21).
12. Pray for astounding successes and achievements for your family this year (Psalm 75:6-7). Pray that every expectation and desire of your family that are in line with the will of God, will be met by God this year (Proverbs 23:18).
13. Pray that God will resuscitate and bring to fruition every abandoned dream, project and vision in your family this year (Habakkuk 2:2-3).
14. Pray that will God bless the work of your hands and make your family a channel of His blessings to others this year (Isaiah 42:6-7 & Ephesians 1:12).

15. Pray that God will strengthen the hearts of every member of your family for great exploits and fruitful service to God and men this year (Daniel 11:32). Pray that many will be won to Jesus Christ through the ministry of your family this year.
16. Pray that no weapon fashioned against your family this year shall prosper in Jesus name (Isaiah 54:17). Pray that there will not be any premature death in your family this year. Being an election year, pray that your lives will be spared from every evil attack-be it through terrorism or political violence.
17. Pray that all members of your family will experience divine elevation and have breakthrough and landmark achievements in all their endeavours.
18. Pray for the salvation of members of your extended family and for God's direction and leadership in your relationship with them.



## DAY THREE: WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 6, 2021

### Read 1Thessalonians 2:13-20

**P**aul had a great affection for the Christians in Thessalonica. They were a young Church, who were growing in grace, maturing in the faith and making steady progress in their Christian walk. And although there were a few dissenters who tried to undermine Paul's authority and others who had regressed in their spiritual growth, their enthusiastic response to the gospel of Christ was a great joy and encouragement to Paul, and his fellow-labourers in Christ.

Paul's letters were designed to strengthen their faith, encourage them towards holy living, correct any false doctrine, remind them of his apostolic authority, and further instruct them in Church-age doctrines and principles of godly conduct. Sadly, Paul and his companions had to leave Thessalonica before the Church was fully established, because they were met with strong opposition from the Jewish community, and the apostle did not want the fledgling believers to be persecuted, because of him.

There were certain teachings that needed to be more firmly established in Thessalonica when Paul had to leave. His letters needed to reaffirm certain doctrinal issues. We see him re-establishing his teaching about the return of the Lord Jesus for His Church-age saints, together with the circumstances surrounding the Rapture of the Church.

Paul and his companions were obviously pleased with the spiritual development of these believers, and referred to them as 'OUR hope; OUR joy; and OUR crown of rejoicing.' "For who is our hope or joy or crown of exultation?" was his rhetorical question. His immediate answer was, "Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming? For YOU are our glory and joy."

Paul not only taught these new believers about the return of the Lord in the clouds for His Church, at the Rapture, but also mentioned the spiritual rewards that will be given to believers at His coming. Paul described these believers, who had been born again through his ministry as his hope, his joy and the "Crown of Rejoicing" he would receive at Christ's return.



"The Crown of Rejoicing", is one of five 'crowns' that are mentioned in the New Testament. Each crown is given for a particular reason. They are tributes that are awarded to steadfast servants for a task that was carried out faithfully. They are rewards, given to saints, after we have been raptured into Christ's presence. Gold, silver, precious stones and crowns are identified as the rewards which are given to celebrate the work of faith, the labour of love or the steadfastness of a believer's hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, and each crown is received in the presence of God the Father.

In Corinthians, we read of "the Imperishable Crown", which is given to those who have run the race of life and obtained this award because of their obedience to God's Word, as they looked to JESUS the Author and Finisher of their faith. Unlike a wreath of leaves that is given to athletes in an earthly race, this crown is incorruptible, and will never fade or pass away. "The Crown of Righteousness", is given to all those who long for the soon return of the Lord Jesus, and cry out 'Maranatha' - COME Lord Jesus. It is given to those who do not rely on their own righteous covering but on the righteousness of Christ Jesus our Lord.

Jesus came to give us life and to give it more abundantly, and "The Crown of Life", is awarded to those who have patiently endured persecution, and undergone unjustified sufferings and trials, during their life, while "the Crown of Glory", is given to pastors and teachers who have been faithful in shepherding the flock of God. They are ones that acted as under-shepherds, who teach the truth and adhere to the authority of Scripture and the commands of Christ - the Chief Shepherd of the flock and Good Shepherd of the sheep.

Here in 1 Thessalonians, Paul writes about the "Crown of Rejoicing." He identifies the Christian men and women to whom he and his fellow-labourers had brought the gospel, as THEIR Crown of Rejoicing. "YOU are our crown of Rejoicing!" Those who were saved through Paul's preaching are identified as his Crown of Rejoicing. Not only is there rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents, but there will be rejoicing in heaven when the pastors or evangelists, who faithfully preached the whole counsel of God, rejoice when they see the people that have been saved, because of their faithful witness. Paul rejoiced greatly when a lost sinner heard the gospel, and turned from sin to Christ for salvation. It seems that the Crown of Rejoicing, is the reward for the soul-winner - the one who wins souls for Jesus.

It is not only Christ's apostles who will receive this amazing Crown of Rejoicing, but all who have been instrumental in pointing a lost sinner to Christ. Those who

faithfully ministered to US will rejoice at our salvation and we will be part of their Crown of Rejoicing. Together we will be part of a great company in heaven that are rejoicing because of our salvation and the salvation of others. We will also rejoice, with exceeding great joy, when we see men and women, boys and girls, who responded to our ministry, standing in that heavenly throng of rejoicing saints.

Today is the day of salvation. Today is the day that we can minister to lost souls and point people to Christ. Throughout this year, may we be diligent to tell others of the good news of the gospel of grace and rejoice with them in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, as we cast our crowns before HIS feet.

**PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING:**

1. Thank God for this Church and for all that He has done over the past 37 years.  
Thank God for all that He did last year in and through the ministries, departments, and committees of the Church.
2. Thank God for the Pastor, other Ministers and members of the Diaconate, Church officers, Church workers, and every Church member for their lives and the service that God helped them to render to Him last year.
3. Thank God for the Media Ministry of the Church and those who helped to keep the Church together through the live streaming of our Sunday school and worship services throughout last year, particularly during the periods of lockdown of churches.
4. Thank God for leading us to call the Rev. Solomon Olufemi Ayokunle as the new Minister of Missions & Evangelism of the Church.
5. Thank God for His blessings upon individuals and families in the Church last year—for weddings, birth of children, and healing of all forms of diseases.
6. Thank God for the souls won to Christ and those who joined the membership of the Church last year.
7. Thank God for helping us to develop a Missions & Evangelism Policy for the Church and to accomplish a complete restructuring of our Mission and Evangelism ministries.

8. Thank God for the safety of our premises and properties. Thank God His watch-care over our children, both of the Church, the school and Day Care.
9. Thank God for our Mission Partners, Mission Pastors, their families and their Churches.
10. Thank God for the comfort that He gave to those who were bereaved of their loved ones and for the success of the burial programmes that members of the Church were involved in.

### **CONFESSION OF SIN**

1. Confess the failure of the Church to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth that God called us to be. Confess also our failures as individuals, families, and congregation to lay up treasures in heaven and to live as those in earnest expectation of His return.
2. Pray for forgiveness for all our sins as a Church and for a new and closer walk with the Lord for every member of the church.

### **PRAYER REQUESTS:**

1. Pray for a complete restoration of all that we have lost because of our sins last year. Pray for divine wisdom in the fulfilment of the plans of God for the church this year.
2. Pray for a heart of genuine and willing obedience for all the members of this Church this year.
3. Pray for increase in our capacity to love God and His word this year.
4. Pray for God's direction and leadership in every ministry, department and committee of the church.
5. Pray for Rev. Solomon Olufemi Ayokunle as he resumes as the new Minister of Missions & Evangelism of the Church on April 1, 2021. Pray for his family as they relocate to Lagos from Abeokuta, Ogun State.
6. Pray for Rev. Mukaila Jesutomisin Salami, the Coordinator of our Mission work in the Republic of Benin, as he retires from the service of the Church,

having attained the mandatory retirement age of 65 years. Pray for the success of his retirement service being planned for March 2021.

7. Pray for the Widow (Mrs. Rebecca Kehinde Adedeji) and Children (Ayomide, Olamide, Olumide) of late Rev. Emmanuel Gbolagade Adedeji (the Pastor of GNBC, Porto Novo) who went to be with the Lord on September 25, 2020 that God will continue to perfect all that concerns them.
8. Pray for a new Pastor for Good News Baptist Church, Porto Novo, Republic of Benin, and for Rev. M.J. Salami, who is currently serving as Interim Pastor of the Church.
9. Pray for the translation and production of discipleship training materials in the French Language for the spiritual growth of the churches in French-speaking West African countries.
10. Pray for Pastor Mrs. Juliet Ekwegh, the Coordinator of our Mission work in the South East, whose contract is being renewed for another year. Pray that God will our plan to facilitate the production of discipleship and other Christian literature in the Igbo Language will materialize this year.
11. Pray for the success of the 2021 Mission Conferences: Lagos (February 20); North (March 26-27); South East (October).
12. Pray for grace to execute all the plans and programmes designed for the all-round growth of the church this year. Pray for God's provision for and successful completion of work on the Educational & Administrative Blocks of the Church.
13. Pray for an adequate supply of workers for all our ministries. Pray that all the spiritual gifts with which God has endowed all members of the church will be discovered, developed, and fully deployed in His service this year.
14. Pray for God's blessings upon the members of the church and for greater faithfulness on the part of members in giving to God through the church. Pray for the unemployed and those facing business challenges because of the current economic recession that they will experience divine visitation

and restoration of their businesses this year.

15. Pray for God's protection and deliverance of all members of the church from armed robbers, hire killers, burglars, kidnappers, fire accidents, road or air accidents and untimely death.
16. Pray for the outpouring of His Holy Spirit upon the officiating ministers and the entire church in all the worship services for this year.
17. Pray for celebration of marriages and establishment of families in our Church this year. Pray that those planning to get married this year will be guided by God in all the steps they take and will be successfully married this year.
18. Pray that all waiting families will be divinely visited by God this year and we shall celebrate the birth of children in such homes. Pray that all our pregnant women will carry their pregnancy to full term and deliver safely (Isaiah 54:1-6).
19. Pray for the material and physical blessing of all our mission churches so that they can become self-supporting, self-governing and ripe for organization in the shortest possible time. Pray that the members and their pastors will work together this year than they did in previous years. Pray for journey mercies in all the mission trips we shall be undertaking this year.
20. Pray for the successful completion of all church building projects that are still ongoing or about to commence. Pray that God will provide the resources for the execution of these projects.
21. Pray for the spiritual and numerical growth of all our mission churches. Pray that God will grant all their Pastors the wisdom, knowledge and understanding needed to lead them to fulfill God's purpose for establishing them.
22. Pray for Churches and their leaders in Nigeria for God's direction and leadership and for an end to the moral and spiritual corruption that are bringing reproach upon the name of our Lord.



## **DAY FOUR: THURSDAY, JANUARY 7, 2021**

### **Read Philippians 4:10-20**

Jesus put a high premium on saying thank you. It is one of the character qualities of the redeemed heart and one of the clear indicators of genuine salvation (Luke 17:15-18). Giving thanks is glorifying God. The church in Philippi had sent Paul another gift through Epaphroditus. And Paul, under house arrest in Rome, writes them a thank you note in verses 10 to 20 of Philippians 4. In verses 14 to 17, Paul thanks them for being so generous. And Paul said, in verses 18 to 20, that because they have given so sacrificially, God will take care of their needs.

One of the things that Paul wrote to the Philippians about giving generously is that it is an eternal investment (Verse 17). Giving is an investment in eternity, in Heaven's bank, in forever rewards. The only way to lay up treasure in Heaven is to give it away while on Earth. Paul rejoiced over their gift, but was still content in God's provident provision for him because Paul was selfless. That selflessness led him to write verse 17, "Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account." Paul said, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, "I am not continually seeking a gift at all, but I am continually seeking your reward in Heaven."

Using the language of commerce, Paul was telling the church in Philippi he wanted the credit side of their eternal ledger to grow as large as possible. Paul wanted the reward from their giving to grow like fruit, as big as possible eternally. He wanted their giving to pay big heavenly dividends. There is coming a heavenly payback for services rendered on Earth. And Paul was interested in their earthly gift because of the heavenly payback. There are earthly blessings now for giving generously now. And there are also awesome heavenly rewards for giving generously now (Mark 10:29-30).

We are blessed now by giving. The New Testament actually says that the fruits harvested by giving are a good conscience, assurance of salvation, enriched fellowship with believers, increased joy and love (both imparted and received), a higher ability to reflect God's glory in Heaven, and the ability to praise on Judgment Day. And God pays interest—Paul says giving "increases to your account." Jesus said one hundred fold will be returned to him who gives up for the

Gospel's sake. That is 10,000% interest. No bank on Earth gives that rate! Paul reminded the Philippians, you'll receive heavenly reward with interest for your giving—verse 17, “the profit which increases to your account.”

In Heaven, God keeps track of everything you give in the power of the Spirit and for God's glory. Every time you give, it's recorded in Heaven (Matthew 10:42). If you give a cup of cold water in Jesus' name, God knows. Every time you give, and every time you're generous, it's recorded and will be rewarded. It is an investment with incredible interest. Sadly, most Christians don't live by faith. They really don't believe in laying up treasure in Heaven. They are like the man who goes to a bank and asks, “How much interest have I accumulated?” The teller lady asks him, “How much have you deposited?” “Well, let me see—hmm, nothing.” She says, “Mister, let me help you. The rule is, you don't get any interest if you don't make any investment.” That is true for you in Heaven as you live for Christ now. How do you store up treasure in Heaven? By giving. By investing in Heaven. And one day you'll face Christ and He will settle up accounts (Matthew 25:19).

The Bible teaches that those who give generously will be blessed in this life and will be rewarded greatly in the next (Proverbs 11:24-25; 2 Cor. 9:6). Giving in the power of the Spirit and giving for the glory of God will bless you in this life and will be rewarded in eternity. Paul is saying the same thing Jesus told the rich young ruler in Matthew 19:21, “Go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” Jesus made this clear in Matthew 6:19 to 20, “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.” The only way to lay up treasure in Heaven is to give it away while on Earth. The only money you will see again is the money you give away. It is literally true—we only save what we give.

## **A. PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

1. Thank God for the preservation of Nigeria as a nation in spite of all machinations of the devil and his agents against its continued existence. Thank God for the victory of the Nigerian military over the Boko Haram, Mitetti Allah, and other terrorists who have been terrorizing the whole country for many years.
2. Thank God for the human resources and natural endowments bestowed upon the nation. Thank God for all that He is using the governments at the

state and federal levels to do in alleviating the sufferings of Nigerians. Thank God for the progress made so far in diversifying the nation's economy and fighting corruption.

3. The freedom given by God for the preaching of the Gospel and the turning of people from darkness into light.
4. The deliverance of the nation from natural and man-made disasters that would have wiped out a significant portion of the population. Thank God for the huge loss of lives, due to Covid-19, that He averted.
5. The relative peace that exists within the southern part of the nation which has afforded the citizenry of the opportunity to live their lives without much fear. Thank God for bringing the #ENDSARS protests and the riots that followed under control.

## **B. CONFESSION OF SINS**

Confess to God the following sins of Nigeria:

1. The worship of false gods, idols, and demons under the guise of cultural revival; the practice of occultism at every level within the nation.
2. Oppression of the poor masses of the nation by the rich and powerful in the land.
3. The embezzlement of government fund by a few individuals with the attendant collapse of infrastructure that would have alleviated the sufferings of the people.
4. The shedding of innocent blood through ethnic, religious, and political riots and armed attacks on defenseless people.
5. The killing of unborn babies through abortion; the kidnapping of people; child slavery and trafficking in human beings, particularly women.
6. Indulgence in all forms of sexual sins including pornography; nudity; prostitution; adultery; fornication; homosexuality; and rape of women, young ladies and children.



7. Unrighteousness and Injustice; selling of fake medicines; drug trafficking; and refusal or late payment of workers' salary and pension funds.

### **C. PRAYER REQUESTS**

1. Pray for an end to all forms of idolatry and occultism. Pray for the destruction of all powers of darkness opposed to the nation's peace, progress and prosperity. Pray for the full restoration of all that we have lost as a nation because of God's judgment upon our sins.
2. Pray for the peaceful coexistence of the different religious and ethnic groups in the nation. Pray that God will give wisdom to the government in managing the secessionist threats by many disgruntled groups within the nation. Pray for an end to the killing of innocent persons, particularly farmers, all over the country by Fulani herdsmen.
3. Pray for the maintenance of peace in the Niger Delta. Pray that the destruction of the pipelines by the militants will not be restarted. Pray for the complete destruction of the source of funding of all terrorist groups and their sponsors both within Nigeria and abroad. Pray for the deliverance of all kidnapped persons in the custody of this terrorist group, particularly the remaining Chibok girls; Leah Sharibu, who was abducted from Dapchi; and the remaining boys abducted from Kankara
4. Pray for those persons displaced from their homes by different terrorist groups who are living in refugee camps and other places all over Nigeria, Niger, and Chad. Pray that God will comfort them and provide for their needs. Pray for the rebuilding of their homes that were destroyed by the terrorists so that they return to normal life.
5. Pray that all efforts to destroy Christianity in different parts of Nigeria will fail. Pray that all plans being made for the islamization of Nigeria will fail. Pray that God will continue to aid the spread of the gospel to all nooks and corners of the nation leading to the conversion of more souls to Christ (Matt. 28:18-21; Psalm 2:8).
6. Pray for an end to the ongoing strike action by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU). Pray that a lasting solution will be found by Government to these incessant strike action by the lecturers.

7. Pray for God's intervention in the Elections that will take place this year. Pray that God will give us leaders who will govern this nation well and fulfill the plans of God for establishing it. Pray that God will give divine wisdom to all in position of leadership in the nation and make His fear to rule their hearts (Psalm 72:1-2; 78:70-72). Pray that the charged political atmosphere will not degenerate into full-blown orgy of violence and social unrest before, during, and after the elections.
8. Pray for the salvation of all our leaders. Pray for their deliverance from greed, covetousness, corruption, and bondages to occult groups and powers (Acts 13:5-13). Pray that God will remove from office any leader that is opposed to God's plan for this nation.
9. Pray that God will give us leaders that will be committed to alleviating the sufferings of the people and the adoption of right policies that will address age-long injustices in the nation. Pray that God will give us leaders who understand that they will give account of their stewardship when the Lord Jesus returns.
10. The frustration, reversal, or total cancellation of government policies, programmes, and activities that are designed to frustrate the peaceful coexistence of different ethnic groups or cause religious crisis in the nation. Pray that every effort of one ethnic or religious group to dominate others, including Christianity, will fail.
11. Pray for good working relationship and cooperation among the three tiers of government – the executive, the judiciary and the legislature. Pray for the successful prosecution of all corruption cases.
12. Pray for the establishment of better crime-fighting structures that will curtail the activities of hoodlums all over our nation.
13. Pray for the enlargement of the economic space through the establishment of more industries that will provide gainful employments for Nigerians.
14. Pray for the eradication of unlawful and accidental killing of people by military and police personnel.

15. Pray for improvement in power generation and distribution; for more seriousness on the part of government in addressing the many problems facing the nation.
16. Pray for improved capacity on the part of government for budget implementation so that the sufferings of people can be alleviated.
17. Pray for a better education system that will be adequately funded and provide solution to the many problems facing the nation.
18. Pray that cure may be found for Covid-19, Ebola Virus Disease, AIDS, Sickle-cell anemia and other incurable diseases; pray for a better health-care delivery system. Pray for early access by Nigerians and other African countries to the Covid-19 vaccines that are currently being given to people in Europe and the USA.
19. Pray for the enthronement of the rule of law and the removal of corrupt judges from the bench. Pray for the eradication of all forms of corruption from our country.
20. Pray that God will prevent another civil war and ethnic and religious riots that the enemy may be planning for this year. (Psalm 46:9; 76:3).





## SUNDAY PROGRAMME

Yoruba Worship Service	7:30am
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English Worship Service	9:00am
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Bible Study	11:00am
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Discipleship Training Programmes	11:00am
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