

Lessons From the Sermon of Jesus on the Mountain Part 13

“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled:” (Matthew 5:6 KJV)

We continue in this message to study on how we hunger and thirst for righteousness from the life of Zecharias the son Barachias and how he rebuked the people of God at His time because they sinned in leaving the temple of God and went to their idols and their other wrong doings, and how he persevered the persecution that came up against him.

Let us read what Jesus said about Zacharias:

“32 Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. 33 Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? 34 Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: 35 That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.” (Matthew 23:32-35 KJV)

“47 Woe unto you! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. 48 Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers: for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchres. 49 Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute: 50 That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; 51 From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation.” (Luke 11:47:51 KJV)

Let us read also what the Scriptures of the Old Testament testified about Zechariah:

“15 But Jehoiada waxed old, and was full of days when he died; an hundred and thirty years old was he when he died. 16 And they buried him in the city of David among the kings, because he had done good in Israel, both toward God, and toward his house. 17 Now after the death of Jehoiada came the princes of Judah, and made obeisance to the king. Then the king hearkened unto them. 18 And they left the house of the LORD God of their fathers, and served groves and idols: and wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this their trespass. 19 Yet he sent prophets to them, to bring them again unto the LORD; and they testified against them: but they would not give ear. 20 And the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, which stood above the people, and said unto them, Thus saith God, Why transgress ye the commandments of the LORD, that ye cannot prosper? because ye have forsaken the LORD, he hath also forsaken you. 21 And they conspired against him, and stoned him with stones at the commandment of the king in the court of the house of the LORD. 22 Thus Joash the king remembered not the kindness which Jehoiada his father had done to him, but slew his son. And when he died, he said, The LORD look upon it, and require it. 23 And it came to pass at the end of the year, that the host of Syria came up against him: and they came to Judah and Jerusalem, and destroyed all the princes of

the people from among the people, and sent all the spoil of them unto the king of Damascus. 24 For the army of the Syrians came with a small company of men, and the LORD delivered a very great host into their hand, because they had forsaken the LORD God of their fathers. So they executed judgment against Joash.” (2 Chronicles 24:15-24 KJV)

We will continue now to expound the people’s sins and to complete what we had started in the previous part in speaking about their idols that made them leave God and God’s church. We had discussed the following sins

1. ***They left the house of God.***
2. ***They served groves.***
3. ***They served idols.*** We mentioned the following idols:
 - A. ***The idol of the educational standardization.***
 - B. ***The idol of sexual immorality.***
 - C. ***The idol of unlawful marriages.***
 - D. ***The idol of greed, the love of money, and covetousness.***
 - E. ***The idol of gluttony and the love of food.***

F. Food sacrificed for Idols: “20 But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. 21 Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils. 22 Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?” (1 Corinthians 10:20-22 KJV) Here Paul is telling them not to go and intermingle with non believers and take part of their idol celebration and eat from such food that they sacrifice to idols. But now the Christians churches they brought such idols and celebrating events in the world into the house of God. ***“Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.” (1 John 5:21) “But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.” (Revelation 2:14) “20 Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. 21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. 22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. 23 And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.” (Revelation 2:20-23 KJV)*** Here the food sacrificed for idols is accompanied and is introducing sexual immoralities. Here the Lord causes death in His wrath to the false prophets and to the disciples who follow the false teaching. The effect of COVID 19 is affecting mainly the elderly, and if we look into Revelation 2:23-23, we can see the elderly failed to discipline their children and grand children and failed to stop them of doing immorality and offering food sacrificed for idols. The Church is invaded by large numbers of feasts and food parties that no more you can speak about fasting. That is why God’s wrath came upon us because of all these evil. God with COVID 19 pandemic closed all the churches. Further let us read Scriptures that condemns idol worship and condemn introducing idols into God’s churches. Stephen told

the Jewish about how God was displeased with idol worship: ***“42 Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices by the space of forty years in the wilderness? 43 Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them: and I will carry you away beyond Babylon.” (Acts 7:42-43 KJV)*** The Jewish stoned Stephen when he rebuked them for their sins and when He outlined to them the idols of their fathers. King Josiah cleansed God’s Temples from all the idols that were introduced by the kings before him. It is righteousness to clean God’s churches from these idols: ***“4 And the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest, and the priests of the second order, and the keepers of the door, to bring forth out of the temple of the LORD all the vessels that were made for Baal, and for the grove, and for all the host of heaven: and he burned them without Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron, and carried the ashes of them unto Bethel 5 And he put down the idolatrous priests, whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places in the cities of Judah, and in the places round about Jerusalem; them also that burned incense unto Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, and to the planets, and to all the host of heaven. 6 And he brought out the grove from the house of the LORD, without Jerusalem, unto the brook Kidron, and burned it at the brook Kidron, and stamped it small to powder, and cast the powder thereof upon the graves of the children of the people. 7 And he brake down the houses of the sodomites, that were by the house of the LORD, where the women wove hangings for the grove.” (2 Kings 23:4-7)*** As king Josiah cleansed the Temple of God in the Old Testament, we need to clean God’s church today in the New Testament. Further to what we spoke about the idols in the previous part of the message, the following idols needs to be taken out from God’s churches.

- The celebration of New Year and Christmas after the sun god of the heathen, is a pagans’ feast Christianized by the Catholic Church and called Christmas. With its Santa Claus, Christmas tree, long holidays of 2-3 weeks, gift exchanges, feasts, lavish spending, and all practices of pagans for their sun god in their celebrations.
- The celebration of birthdays and wedding anniversaries, death anniversaries, Father’s Day and Mother’s Day, these events and celebrations glorifying men and not God. Again such celebrations have taken their roots from the world and not from the Scriptures.
- Halloween (Harvest), All Saints Day, Valentine’s Day, Pastor’s Month, and much more, for almost every culture and ethnic group have added certain idols and days for celebration, without any Biblical reasons, into the life of the church.

4. They went to high places: The Word of God also speaks about high places that needed to be removed. The high places are collateral places that the people were prohibited to worship God in them. ***“5 Also he took away out of all the cities of Judah the high places and the images: and the kingdom was quiet before him.” (2 Chronicles 14:5 KJV)*** The people of God in the Old Testament were having a centralized form of worship where they needed to do inside the temple of God in Jerusalem under the supervision of the priests and not in other places. But the people were going to the high places where they can do their own and what they like without the scrutinizing of the priests of the temple. On the high places they spent and they put their treasures in these collateral places. They put their treasures on things that are not of the will of God. We need to avoid going to places where we are spending unnecessary on things that are out of the will of God. We

need also to teach our families and children to avoid spending on wrong and unnecessary things. As well as we need to train ourselves and our families not to go and move doing our own, but instead doing the whole will of God.

We as Church of God constantly persecuted because we are preaching against all these idols and these detestable figures. But we need to continue and not to give up. It is hunger and thirst of righteousness when we endure persecution when we teach against idols and high places.

5. They did not give ear to the prophets: ***“Yet he sent prophets to them, to bring them again unto the LORD; and they testified against them: but they would not give ear.” (2 Chronicles 24:19 KJV)*** They refused all the teachings that they received. They pretended that they can teach themselves. Many they say no need for somebody to teach me, ‘I know the Word of God’. Or they say, we have the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit will teach us, they say that not because they forgot that the Holy Spirit had put teachers in the church to teach them, they say that because they don’t want to listen to the teaching that condemn their sins and their wrong ways of life.

6. They moved toward authorities to strengthen their conspiracy: ***“Now after the death of Jehoiada came the princes of Judah, and made obeisance to the king. Then the king hearkened unto them.” (2 Chronicles 24:17 KJV)*** People will always look to strong figures in order to support their stand against those who preach to them the Word of God and discipline them with God’s Word. Authorities are always used by the people in order to pressurize and to harm the righteous who speak the truth. So it is not the authority is the culprit but the people of God who uses them against the righteous one.

7. They blasphemed the message of God given to them by the Holy Spirit through Zachariah the son of Jehoiada: ***“And the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, which stood above the people, and said unto them, Thus saith God, Why transgress ye the commandments of the LORD, that ye cannot prosper? because ye have forsaken the LORD, he hath also forsaken you.” (2 Chronicles 24:20 KJV)*** Zachariah preached to them what he received from the Holy Spirit, but they blasphemed the message of God. Zachariah stood with the authority that God had given to him to preach. He stood above the people and said to them what God wanted him to say to them. Zachariah stood with the authority that God had given to him to preach. He stood above the people and said to them the thing that they hate to hear. He rebuked them to their faces, when he told them, ***“Why transgress ye the commandments of the LORD, that ye cannot prosper? because ye have forsaken the LORD, he hath also forsaken you.”*** In the same way, we need to stand above the people with the authority God had given to us and tell them what God wants us to tell them.

People will get very angry when you tell them that because you forsaken God, the Lord will forsake you and you will not prosper. Listen now, *‘Those who transgress the command of God and left His church, I am telling it to you that you will not be prosper.’*

I need to tell it and everyone of us who is faithful worker of God needs to tell it to those who left God’s church: ‘You will not be prosper because you left God’s church.’

8. **They not only forsaken the church but they forsaken the Lord Himself:** “because ye have forsaken the LORD, he hath also forsaken you.” (2 Chronicles 24:20 KJV) Those who leave the church they forsake the Lord.

9. **They silence the leader of the church by killing him:** “And they conspired against him, and stoned him with stones at the commandment of the king in the court of the house of the LORD.” (2 Chronicles 24:21 KJV) They killed him as a prophet, as a judge, as a righteous man, as a priest who was on service on the Sabbath, ministering to the people and receiving their sacrifices and bringing them near to God. They killed him and shed his blood in defiance to God, in defiance to the Holy Spirit and in defiance to the Church of God. They killed him to silence the message of God. But it did not work. His message is still preached today and will continue forever, like the message of Abel and like the message of Jesus our Lord.

10. **The king was ungrateful to the priest and to the family of God that helped him:** “Thus Joash the king remembered not the kindness which Jehoiada his father had done to him, but slew his son. And when he died, he said, The LORD look upon it, and require it.” (2 Chronicles 24:22 KJV) Those who repay evil for good, evil will not depart from their homes. Ungratefulness is sin and nothing worse than it. The King Joash was ungrateful to God by his ungratefulness toward the person who helped him and stood at his side. Therefore the Lord on His perfect time and will shall require it from the evil doers who oppose His Word and His will.

Before the death of Zechariah he told those who stoned him, “**The LORD look upon it, and require it.**” He told them the Lord required it, Jesus also said to the Jewish who were opposing him, that God will required from this generation the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zecharias: “**From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation.**” (Luke 11:51 KJV) So Jesus agreed with what Zecharias said, that his blood will be required from them by the Lord. Truly the Lord required it from them. As well as listen to the prayer of Zecharias, when he said, “**The LORD look upon it**”, truly the Lord looked upon it and he required it from them. The Lord looked to the wickedness that they did against the person who delivered to them the Word of God.

Even, we, the Church of God today, are persecuted by the people whom we serve and bring near to God. Their love to idols and their worldliness and the love for the flesh will drive them to conspire against us and do all what they can to silence us. Therefore we as Church of God should commit ourselves to continue to do the righteousness of God; to speak the Word of God and even when it is heavy message, we need to send it to them, because God is going to fulfill it. So, not out of revenge, but out of mercy we need to send them the warning message.

Therefore, to live a righteous life, we need to be willing to do what is good, to help and to save people from the hand of the enemy, the Devil, therefore, we need to be willing to be persecuted, to pass through it and bear with God. Our lives are not better than our Lord Jesus Christ who willingly offered Himself to die on the cross to save us. We need to be willing to offer our lives to Him, to be persecuted in doing what is right and just in the

eyes of God and what is beneficial to the people who would not even appreciate the good that had been done to them.

The Lord shall have respect to the righteous life that we are living. The Lord shall accept it and the Lord shall reward us and the Lord will let our lives message be range out further, even beyond our time. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself mentioned the life of Zechariah son of Johaiada the priest and his death, 800 years after the incident of persecution and death. The people at the time of Jesus may not remember that event, but the Lord did not forget it. The life of that righteous man and his story needed to be mentioned and recalled to be a good example even for us today to learn how to hunger and thirst for righteous. Jesus Himself recalled his story for perpetual remembrance.

The Lord also revenge of those who killed Zechariah son of Jehoiada, “**23 And it came to pass at the end of the year, that the host of Syria came up against him: and they came to Judah and Jerusalem, and destroyed all the princes of the people from among the people, and sent all the spoil of them unto the king of Damascus. 24 For the army of the Syrians came with a small company of men, and the LORD delivered a very great host into their hand, because they had forsaken the LORD God of their fathers. So they executed judgment against Joash.**” (2 Chronicles 24:23-24 KJV) **The Lord shall also deal with those who persecute us and such kind of people who do all such evil things as it is described in God’s Word; one day they will find themselves facing God, and His judgment as had happened to those who killed Zechariah. And we need to tell them as warning about the following vengeance of God on them so we will be free from their blood before the Lord:**

A. “**23 And it came to pass at the end of the year.**” (2 Chronicles 24:23 KJV) God’s judgment came speedily upon them. **We need to be sure to tell the people who harm us that God judgment will come soon and will reach them.**

B. “**That the host of Syria came up against him: and they came to Judah and Jerusalem, and destroyed all the princes of the people from among the people, and sent all the spoil of them unto the king of Damascus.**” (2 Chronicles 24:23 KJV) God sent army to destroy the king, the princes and the city of the people who supported their evil doing. God allowed the army of the enemy to come and spoil. **We need to tell the people that God will send them His army and they will get destroyed and their things will get spoiled.**

C. “**24 For the army of the Syrians came with a small company of men, and the LORD delivered a very great host into their hand, because they had forsaken the LORD God of their fathers. So they executed judgment against Joash.**” (2 Chronicles 24:23-24 KJV) Small army and small threat overpowered them because they had forsaken the Lord, therefore God sent His judgment on them.

D. “**9 And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: 10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? 11 And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.**” (Revelation 6:9-11 KJV) We are called to forgive, because vengeance belong to God who will not let the wicked go unpunished. This Scripture from

the New Testament stated the cry of the saints who were slain for the Word of God and for their testimony about Jesus. They cried to God as the blood of Abel was crying from the ground, ***“The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.”*** (Genesis 4:10 KJV) They cried to God saying, ***“How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?”*** (Revelation 6:10 KJV) This is the cry longing to see not the vengeance of God but the justice of God. They were given to them white robes, the robes of righteousness, ***“And white robes were given unto every one of them.”*** (Revelation 6:11 KJV) and they were assured about the judgment of God on those who persecuted them, ***“And it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.”*** (Revelation 6:11 KJV) ***We really need to assure those who left the church and harm us that God sure will judge them and will bring upon their heads the evil that they had done.***

How about if they will get upset and they will get mad on us and persecute us further? We need to bear it as we endeavour to hunger and thirst for righteousness.

My dear and beloved: The painful story that we had read and the reason for the people to do are still repeated into our days. Therefore we are called today to repent of all such sins and worldliness, and lack of faithfulness toward God, toward His Word, and toward His faithful people who admonish us with the Word of God. We are called today to stand with God and be willing to do all what God wanting us to do.

If we want to be righteous before God, and if we want to hunger and thirst for righteousness and to be called righteous people, we should persevere to do is what right and just even if the people will hate us and persecute us. We need to persevere in doing what is right just as Jehoiada and his son did, just as abel did, and just as Jesus Christ our Lord did. We need to continue to admonish the people with the Word of God and rebuke them for their idols and their worldliness whenever that deem mandatory and needed for them to be brought back to the right way of God. We should not revenge when the people trouble us and harm us, knowing that God shall deal with them and will vindicate us and reward us for our service unto Him.

My Prayer: Father God I come before you in the name of Jesus, who died on the cross for my sins and rose from the death on the third day to give me eternal life.

Let us confess and renounce our sins to the Lord. Let us confess and renounce all our idols and our traditional practices that contradict the Word of God. Let us confess and renounce all our pride, anger, impatient, unforgiveness, jealousy, envy, lust, fighting, quarrels, and the rest of our wrong ways of life and our non willingness to follow the ways of God because of our wrong priorities and practices.

Let us ask God to give us courage and boldness to face the people around us, those whom we are reaching out and those who are under our spiritual care with the truth of God's Word and to rebuke them for their sins, for their idols and for their wrong priorities that made them left God's church and the ministries of the Lord to prostitute themselves after their own idols and their high places and their dreams that contradict the plan of God for

their lives. Let us pray to God to give us courage and boldness to stand firm in doing His will in full.

Lord I ask you this day to fill me with the Holy Spirit to go and face the following people _____ with their sins _____. Lord I am willing to do that to fulfill your will in my life, and that my ministry and my service unto you will give you glory and honor and bring the fruit that you desire to see in my life and in the life your church and your people.

Lord I commit my life to be willing to suffer for you and even to be persecuted and suffer for your name sake. Lord I commit my life to be set a good example to others, that they may see you through my life. Lord gives me more fruit of the Holy Spirit so that I can persevere more in obeying your Word. Lord fills me with the Holy Spirit and gives to me the spiritual gifts that I need to go and evangelize and to make new disciples. Lord protects me and provides all my needs so I can continue to go on and serve you.

Lord I pray for my Brothers and Sisters who had humbled themselves before you to reach out others, and to hunger and thirst for righteousness. Lord protects them from persecution and provides all their needs. Lord give them boldness to go and do the work of yours in the way it should be done. Lord fills them once again with the Holy Spirit and makes their lives testimony attractive to others so that people will believe in you and start to follow you and live according to your Word and your righteousness.

Lord I pray for us as a church to help us to go on in serving you and do your work and your will in the midst of people who are opposing the truth and living in worldliness. Lord we commit ourselves to do what is right and just in your eyes. Lord helps us to bear suffering, rejection and persecution, and fills us once again with the Holy Spirit and enables us to evangelize and to reach new people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and with the Word of God. Lord we pray that you will enable us to plant new Bible studies and new congregations for the church. Lord bless us, enlarge our territory, let your hand be with us and free us from harm so that we will not feel pain. May the grace of the Lord Jesus and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all in Jesus name, Amen.

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