

The Widow's Wish:

**Power through persistent faith and intercession. Victory over death
and bitterness.**

Dedication

How contagious are thy aroma
Oh mother of faith,
Hours upon hours of thy agonizing
Though, I slumber by thy side
Groaning on your knees in holy fret,
See what you made of me

Emma N.J.Nwosu

This poem and book are dedicated to my mother; Janeth N.Nwosu,
(1934-2012) who taught me to pray and trust God.

Acknowledgement

I wish to thank my father who went out as a missionary and found
my mother, converted and baptized her 1956; that singular labor
resulted in my conversion and launching into the ministry.

Thanks to Chinyere Emeanyio for her efforts to publish this book.

My darling wife and all my ministry crew deserve thanks too.

God bless you all.

Author

Introduction

This should be my first book because I put down the first line sometime 1994 but for some reasons I cannot understand I could not tidy it up for publishing. When I started School for Deliverance and Spiritual Warfare in 2007, I used it for my students. One of my students, a Masters Degree theologian told me that he found grace to forgive his first son who had done so much to hurt him and bring his family shame. There were so many testimonies following it that my secretary then, Chinyere, tried in every way possible for us to put it in print, yet we couldn't. Money was not really the problem as we have since then published bigger books.

Once in a while I looked it up on my PC and soon began to see how the widow in this story resembled my mother. The only difference between me and David of the story was that she was able to pray me into God's hand while she lived. I saw how many parents can be helped with this book and how those struggling with hate and the fear of death can be aided to overcome. I was sorry for my neglect. So I turned to the book once again, this time determined to publish. There are some additions to the original manuscript and the work is enlarged.

In the process of writing, just before I could put down the last chapter, my mother was called home to her Lord, whom she had served faithfully through intercession for more than thirty years. In fact, her passing on gave intensity to my effort.

This book is practical and should be seen as such. Perhaps, it is God's will that I present it at her funeral and that is what I have done- a tribute to the midwife and pioneer mentor of Prayer Network for Universal Revival (PNUR).

My prayer is that you will catch the spirit of prayer and intercession after reading this book. We don't mourn her as those without hope. She too will have many surprises when she sees how many her prayers had brought to Christ. **May her soul continue to rest in the bosom of her Lord and Master.**

-----**Author**

Prologue

I opened a young printing company and on the notice board I asked for an office girl. So, many applicants came and I chose one. Two days after a girl in her late teens or there-about came into my office. She wanted the job for her sister who could not be free to come until 6.p.m. I explained to her that I could not stay till 6.pm as our closing time was 5 p.m.

What interested me about this girl was the fact that she felt she could persuade me, a manager of a company, to extend my working hours by one hour for her sister's sake in the midst of many other interested and present applicants. Another thing is that as at the time she was speaking to me, the place of an office girl had been wiped from the notice board and behind her, sitting on a bench, was the new office girl. Yet our friend did not notice and was asking me to wait for her beloved sister.

Something in me told me to minister to this girl but it was obvious she was not the kind you approach with a bible passage. I told her I could not stay up to 6 p.m. because I had a stubborn wife who would attack me if I did not return at the normal time I used to return. The Lord put a story in my mouth about a stubborn wife who, no matter what good I did for her, she returned badly.

She was touched by the story. She told me what she would do if she was in my place. She threatened thunder and brimstone. She would not take that rubbish. From everything she said, I deduced she actually would not tolerate my kind of wife. And she meant it.

I told her that everyone that sinned was behaving like my wife towards God. I said a lot to her concerning God's love. She had a repentant spirit alright. She sat glued to her seat for about ten minutes. When she eventually found her bearing she walked home with a heart full of repentance. I only hope it lasted.

Actually, I was not married as at the time of this encounter but I told the kind of story Nathan told to David (11 Sam 12:1-6) and she responded like David. When she left I started to wonder what it would be like if I had the kind of wife I described in my story. That is if I had a sinner wife. I mean if I have a sinner stuck to me for life. It's either he/she repents to my own way or I repent to his/her way or she will tempt me for life. That is I will die with him/ her tempting me by my sick bed. That will be terrible. Quite terrible!

That was what actually prompted me to write this book. The relationship between two persons:- one a believer, the other an unbeliever-stuck together for life. Till death do they part.

PART ONE

Chapter one

Reckless life ends the reckless way.

A woman's husband died leaving her with a truant son at about his mid teens. She tried in everyway to make him turn to God but her son thought it was old fashioned to worship God. When his mother said her morning prayers he would play the stereo at the highest note. That is if he got tired of mimicking her with some words she said which he thought sounded funny. His mother while she prayed always had her bible and hymn book beside her. But he would take and hide them away until he felt satisfied to bring them back. There were some unspeakable things he did to his mother and yet, she prayed.

In her prayers she never forgot to plead with God to forgive her son. She interceded for his sins everyday, pleading with God to have mercy. Crying soon became part of her morning devotion. The feeling that the biblical prophecy on sinners' life after death would be fulfilled on a child from her own womb hurt her so much. She tried as much as possible to intercede for him. This only made her cry the more and her son laughed louder.

The fact that she cried seemed even funnier to David. He could not understand what his mother could be crying about. He could not understand what concerned him and a man his mother said died two thousand years ago on a far away land. (1 Cor.1:18). The only prayer his mother said that seemed to register in his brain is this: - ***God! Please, no matter what David does, don't let him go to hell. If for nothing else because I love him and you love him more.***

David grew into a criminal- ARMED ROBBER. Once his gang ambushed a luxurious bus and in the process David killed a man that was wasting his time or so he thought. That does not mean killing meant anything to him as he killed at least one person per operation. So, this wasn't anything extra-ordinary. Even if they are caught in the operation, they had top-ranking police officers who bribed them out. The slogan in such situations was normally- **“Na money e go chop!”** So, when he saw a team of anti-crime policemen appear, he felt it was the normal thing. The gang started exchanging bullets with them. At times the gang even had more sophisticated weapons than the police. But luck was actually against them because they soon ran short of ammunition. David ordered his gang to surrender hoping, ***NA MONEY E GO CHOP!***

When David and Co. discovered this wasn't going to be that easy was when one of the passengers of the ambushed luxurious bus introduced himself as an army sergeant and identified the man David shot as an army captain. David soaked his pant out of shock. He knew from that moment that this may take more than money.

They were arrested and after a week in police custody were arraigned before a court. All the members of the gang were convicted and sentenced to death by firing squad. Like a bombshell this verdict shattered what was left of David's hope and composure. He wished that he wakes up to discover he was dreaming but alas, it was reality.

At this point he remembered what his mother once told him-
“David, if you die in your sin you will go to hell. That fire that burns forever and ever”.

Could this be true? He thought. He knew one unique quality his mother possessed was that she never lied. No matter the odds. If actually his mother was telling the truth, does it imply he would go to that eternal torture when he is executed?

Chapter two

In the valley of the Shadow of Death

Death sentence was one thing but the torture of the prison officers was another. They seemed to take particular interest in him. As merciless as the warders appeared to him, one of them told him to his face, "By this time next month you would have died."

He recoiled into his cell and sat quietly which was very unusual of his nature. He did not know what to think or do. He sat like that maybe for two or three days. He asked for paper and envelopes and wrote his mother. His main reason for writing was to know if she was teasing him with those terrible things she said about hell fire.

Unfortunately the letter returned with the post-office "Back to Sender" stamp on it with a little note attached to it-ADDRESSEE DIED FOUR YEARS AGO.

"So, mother is dead? No one else in the world; nobody to explain, nobody to cry to, nobody to hope upon". He tried to hear if any member of his gang in the other cells was talking to anybody but no noise. They were as hopeless as he. He considered killing himself before the day but discovered that nothing in the cell could give him the service. Even if there were, mother had said that what mattered isn't this first death but the second death; that eternal condemnation in hell fire.

He thought of it again. Would he go to hell fire if he died now? It seemed most obvious. If only his mother was still alive, he thought, she would speak to God about him and God definitely would listen to her and have mercy upon him.

His memory went back to the things he did to his mother while she prayed to the God he so eagerly wished to pray to now. Though, his mother said God was full of love and mercy but David felt he had committed so much that if he ventured to talk to God he will increase his punishment. He saw his present situation as the retaliation from the God of his mother. He knew God was right to seek vengeance; nobody will not if pressed the way he did. Gloom and confusion enveloped his whole being. What can he do now?

The mischievous warder came to his cell again and from under the gate pushed in his food.

“By this time tomorrow, you would have paid for killing my cousin”, he said and walked away.

“No wonder”, thought David, “No wonder he has been torturing me”.

Looking around he saw scattered all over the cell several plates of food thrown in like manner, always reminding him of his imminent death. Some of them had formed fungi due to decay and so, stank. Only then did David notice the thick odor of rotting food in his cell.

“Man is a merciless creature”, thought he. He had brutally killed fellow men without mercy and he was to be killed in the same manner; without mercy.

One obvious fact in David’s life now was that he had accepted to die because he had no other choice. But the second death; the eternal condemnation in hell fire that mother talked about, could it be avoided?

He just remembered that he had never prayed all his life except on those occasions he was too young to resist his mother. Even then he knew he never really prayed. But he remembers the way mother did it. Yes, because he had learnt it by mimicking her. But now whether he likes it or not, mimicking has to go, he just must pray and at least say something to the God of his mother. Who knows how he will respond?

Chapter three

Light in the Place of Darkness

He knelt down and tried to pray but tears filled his eyes, dribbled down his cheeks, his boney face being unable to hold the flood, they watered the floor of the cell. All efforts to make words come out of his mouth failed. Soon, he was weeping loudly and uncontrollably. He wept and wept. The only thing he could manage was a song his mother used to sing, which he felt was most appropriate for him at this point. Because she sang it so often the verses had been enshrined in his sub-conscious. More than just once he had heard his mind replaying it to him, maybe preparing him for this day. He started to sing.

Jesus, my Lord, to thee I cry;
Unless Thou help me, I must die:
Oh, bring Thy free salvation nigh,
And take me as I am!

And take me as I am! And take me as I am!
My only plea-Christ died for me!
Oh, take me as I am!

Helpless I am, and full of guilt;
But yet for me Thy blood was spilt,
And Thou canst make me what thou wilt
And take me as I am!

No preparation can I make,
My best resolves I only break,

Yet save me for thine own name's sake
And take me as I am!

Behold me, Saviour, at thy feet,
Deal with me as Thou seest meet:
Thy work begin, Thy work complete,
But take me as I am!

He wept and wept but there seemed to be no consolation. He kept weeping, pleading with the God his mother talked about his goodness and mercy to forgive. It was not until 12 midnight that he felt as if there were crowd of people in the cell. He tried to raise his face but could not. All of a sudden he felt something like a cooling stream flow in his heart. A gentle loving voice whispered to his spirit.

“I have forgiven you”.

“I have accepted you.”

“You are mine.”

A river of joy flooded his soul. He became changed inside immediately. He looked around the cell but he was alone. The message became clear to him. The voice he heard was from God and he has forgiven him. He just started to shout and jump all around the cell, even stepping on the rotting food.

Praise God! Thank you Jesus!!

Praise God! Thank you my Saviour!!

A familiar voice of one of his colleagues in another cell asked-
“David, what happened? What's that?”

“He has forgiven me!” he shouted back “Yes, Jesus has accepted me in his kingdom! Mother was right! James! Mother was right!”

David sang many more songs, shouted a lot more until it was near daybreak. He fell into a deep slumber.

Chapter four

Oh! Death, Where is Your Sting?

He was awakened by a soldier who came to take him to the execution ground. He bathed himself, asked for food and was well fed. He marched without a flimsy to the waiting Black Maria.

To the mischievous warder this was double defeat against him. He had expected David to show self pity but nothing of the sort was seen in David. Inside he developed a bigger wound when he noticed that death on the stake meant nothing to David. He had hoped that David's death would heal the wound the death of his cousin caused. He had expected David to cry but nothing of the nature was seen in him, David was unruffled and like his Saviour, Jesus Christ, marched onto the cross(stake).

Tied to the stake a priest came and told him to make a prayer request.

"No request at all" he said beaming a warm smile. "This morning I made peace with Jesus and he promised me heaven."

The reader may want to know if David actually went to heaven. His guess is as good as mine but if we read the bible we could solve the puzzle. Read these two passages:

***"Come now, let us reason together,"
says the Lord.***

***"Though your sins are like scarlet,
they shall be as white as snow;***

***though they are red as crimson,
they shall be like wool.***

***If you are willing and obedient,
you will eat the best from the land;***

Isa 1:18-19NIV

"But if a wicked man turns away from all the sins he has committed and keeps all my decrees and does what is just and right, he will surely live; he will not die. None of the offenses he has committed will be remembered against him. Because of the righteous things he has done, he will live. Ezek 18:21-22NIV

"I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.
John 5:24-25 NIV

All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. John 6:37NIV

Marshal music they call it and David faced it. His blood mixed with the sand. Like every other armed robber who died by public execution, he was buried in a mass grave. That was the end of the boy who would not listen to his mother. But that is as much as men can do, they can only kill the body but not the soul.

If only David's mother lived to receive his letter, the reader would agree with me that she would have been wounded the more by the

thought that her own son had to die by public execution before the glaring eyes of her neighbours. Or on the contrary, the joy that David had come to recognize Jesus as his saviour would have overshadowed the sadness. The fact that God even granted her request would have taken away pain from her death. Though, we should be consoled that there is no pain in the grave-“Where ye go”. This leaves her with a chance of happy surprise. Oh, how excited and happy David’s mother would be to see her one and only son in heaven.

It is important to state here that it would have been better if David repented before he had a death sentence on his life. It would have been more glorious if he had listened to his mother and then invest his life time in something more purposeful. But as we see here he squandered it. Let us also note that it was not all who had praying parents, had the opportunity to repent. To some death was too swift to allow them chance to say the sinners’ prayer.

Let anyone reading this book now, who has not prayed the sinner’s prayer, hence have not made peace with God through Christ, stop at this point and do so now. Hurry! For you do not know what will follow after now. Ask the Lord Jesus Christ into your life. Pray with urgency like David and don’t give up until it is registered in your spirit that Jesus has accepted you. You may not hear a voice like David did, but there is the need that you must have awareness that God has heard you.

Dear Lord Jesus, I thank you for granting me this opportunity to make peace with you before death or judgment comes on me. Lord I hereby open my heart to receive you as the Lord over my life. I accept that the

death you died on Calvary tree was for me, I believe you are alive now at the right hand of God the father for my sake. I ask that you forgive all my sins and wipe out my name from the book of death, and write it in the book of life. Like the David of the story I have come to you and I know you will not turn me away but have accepted me. Thank you for making me your child. I receive the Holy Spirit by faith into my life. Thank you Jesus because I am born again and through the power of your Spirit I will stand firm in this my new faith in you. All this I pray in Jesus Name- Amen.

If you said the above prayer I suggest that you go to a living church around you and introduce yourself to the pastor. You can call any of the under-listed numbers for help. +234(0)8035724526, 08034351421, 08034674150, 08064160402

PART TWO

LESSON FROM THE STORY

Chapter five

Strengthened to Persist

Let's start here by saying that most women make very difficult requests. Imagine the mother of James and John asking Jesus to allow her sons to sit one on his left and one on his right when his kingdom comes. As if they were the only people in the world. A close study of the bible will tend to prove that she got her will partly fulfilled here on earth. Peter, who was to be the leader of the apostles and second in command to Jesus, had to depend on John to know who was to betray him (Jesus). (John 13:24-26).

Another woman so troubled a judge in his chamber-and I believe without paying the normal consultation fee-that the legal gentleman was forced to render her free service. Yet, another woman wanted her son raised from the dead. Though a difficult request it was but she got her wish. Let us not forget the Syro-phonician woman (Matt 15: 21-28) .The bible said that God is the husband of the widow (Isaiah 54:5). No wonder he treats their case special. Despite the fact that David of our story blasphemed the name of God, his mother's prayer did not allow him visit his anger on him. The reader will agree with me that that could be why David got a last minute repentance and forgiveness.

Some argue that repeating prayers is expression of lack of faith. The bible does not support such claim.

"Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. Matt 7:7-8 NLT

Keep on asking and it will be given you; keep on seeking and you will find; keep on knocking [reverently] and [the door] will be opened to you. For everyone who keeps on asking receives; and he who keeps on seeking finds; and to him who keeps on knocking, [the door] will be opened. Matt 7:7-8 AMP

The above scriptures suggest that persistence in prayer is what is called faith. To persist means to say to God, "Lord, I have reached my last bus stop. If you don't do something then there is no hope for me". Persistence glorifies God. Passivity denies his power. Some just do nothing claiming that when God wants to do something he will do it without our prayers. That was the position of European Christians before some missionaries understood that God has made it that he rarely does anything on earth without our cooperation.

This lesson we can learn from David's mother; persistence in prayer. She never stopped praying whether she had her bible or not, she prayed whether David boomed or the stereo blared, she prayed. It appeared that the more David jeered, the more she prayed. The insolence did not subdue her prayer life. This is what the bible means by ***strength in the inner being***; strength that is not subject to the environment.

I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being.

Eph 3:16-17 NIV

Note the high point in that scripture; the strength does not just come by repeated words or exercise, it does not come by fleshly agony, nor does it come by natural stubbornness but by the empowerment of the Spirit of God dwelling in us. It is obvious that David's mother was a Spirit filled Christian. It was the presence of the inner power provided by the Holy Spirit which the outward pressure of satan and her son could not break.

This is the only way we can obey the command of Christ in such situations. No carnal Christian can stand such pressure. He will obviously breakdown, he will quit, and he will resort to physical weapons. I heard of a parent who threw his son into the prison. The lad came out worse. An American clergyman shot his son on his birthday because he was hosting his friends with an immoral song captioned SEXUAL HEALING (Marvin Gay). When he killed the boy, he lost out to the devil who had taken him captive to do his will.

and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will. 2 Tim 2:26 NIV

We are involved in a fierce but technical battle and we cannot stay long on it if we don't collaborate with the Holy Spirit.

Chapter six

Who is a Sinner?

There is something many Christians today find difficult to do. How many Christians of today will go on praying for the well being of somebody who had so insulted them? Christ, while he was still hanging on the cross prayed for the forgiveness of those who hung him (Luke 23:34). Stephen while he was being stoned pleaded with God not to hold this sin against them. (Acts 7:56-60). Who knows, that could be why God did not kill Saul but led him to repentance. Instead, God changed his name to Paul (Acts 9:3-6)

I and my colleague in the prayer ministry once visited a certain woman at her request. She explained all her problems in detail. While counseling her we told her she had to forgive all those she believed wronged her. She told us to our face that she could grant any other request but the question of forgiving should be done away with. She cited to us some bible passages some prayer houses had given to her. They were Psalm 35 and psalm 68. The details about these passages and such prayer houses I leave for subsequent works. I only wish to state here that this woman's problem will never get solution from God unless she learns to forgive and love her opponent and pray for their well being. Always pray for those that persecute you. Love them, for that's what Christ commands.

"But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. Luke 6:27-28 NIV

If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect. Matt 5:46-48 NIV

The way we treat sinners determine whether they will repent or not. In a family that had a dispute that had lasted for more than four years and had earned them eight court cases, I was talking to one of the parties who claimed to be Born-again Christian. He would not accept to pray with or talk to his brother-his opponent, he could not enter his house and when I asked that we have a prayer meeting in the family, refused on the ground that his brother represented darkness to him. He would rather pray with me. I explained to him that if my ministry was for the holy and righteous, then I am wasting my time because Christ did not come for the righteous. (Luke. 5:32)

The reader should be able to understand the fact that sinners are living in utter ignorance and the bible says so-

The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

NIV (1 Cor. 2:14).

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 1 Cor 1:18-19 NIV

This says it all. Because they don't understand they see it as foolishness when you tell them that a certain man died some two thousand years ago for their sins. Maybe at the time you are talking to him, the man is only thirty years old. Even to his disciples, Christ said that when the Holy Spirit comes he will explain to them (John 16:7). The reader will agree with me that the madman walking naked on the street does not see anything wrong with that until his sanity is restored. Trying to explain to him that he is insane may invoke his wrath.

To help us further, let's look at these scriptures.

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Rom 5:8NIV

All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions — it is by grace you have been saved. Eph 2:3-5 NIV

This place explains it all. We all were in that hopeless position when Christ died for our sins. David knew the widow was his mother but we could not even recognize Christ if we saw him on the way. If David were not an armed robber he could per chance walk into any church, hear the message and repent but we all were living in eternal condemnation and far from the glory of our maker. (Rom 3:23)

Chapter seven

Break that Grip before It Breaks You!

David's life took the part the life of every sinner takes. The devil will lead him into more and more sins. From the life of disrespect and blasphemy, the devil led him into the life of armed robbery and then murder. Once the devil starts leading you he will never leave you till he destroys you.

There was the story of this Reverend father who defiled a virgin in his church. Before he knew it, the girl came to tell him she was pregnant. It was clear to him that as a Roman Catholic priest he was not allowed to marry. He knew that it will make bad news to hear that "FATHER" committed fornication. Worse news to say he impregnated the girl. Our friend moved swiftly. He disguised himself and went to arrange for abortion. The abortion was successful but the girl started bleeding and it went on for a week. "FATHER" was invited by the girl's innocent parents to pray for their daughter. When he came he would ask to be alone with her. When they are alone, he would ask the girl how she was feeling and wanting to know if she will speak up. After encouraging her to hold fort, he would tell the parents not to send her to the hospital, telling them that the Holy Spirit will heal her, fearing in his mind that the doctors may expose him. He would go secretly to the abortionist (doctor), who would give him drugs that he secretly passed to the girl. When the girl could take it no more she asked to go to the hospital but her parents refused hoping-according to the priest-the Holy Spirit will heal her. The girl eventually died. "FATHER" was

invited to give her last sacrament. He buried her and started living in spiritual torture. The devil who led him into the sin came back to accuse him until he could take it no more. He dropped a note that exposed his wickedness and committed suicide.

When the devil started leading Judas Iscariot in the bible, he started by helping himself to the public money, and then he planted an accusing spirit in him. So, that when Mary was oiling Jesus, he started imagining what he could do with so much money spent on expensive oil (John 12:4), then he tried to get even richer even if it meant selling his Lord and master. When he had done this, the devil came back to accuse him and he could not bear it. He committed suicide.

In the same manner the devil led David. He led him right into cell and was going to lead him to hell if not for his mother's prayer and God's mercy. A sinner is in trouble and only by prayers can we who call ourselves believers save him.

The author does not mean to tell us we can sin as long as we wish, for as long as somebody was praying for us we won't go to hell. It can not be over emphasized that some people who started the life of armed robbery died in their first operation. Some died in their second. Yet some died while planning to do it. All these go to hell. The bible says in 2 Cor. 6: 2. This is the day of salvation. This is the time God can have mercy upon you. Once you are dead, there is no helping it. What awaits you is judgment Heb. 9:27.

God is merciful alright; that's why he gave his son to die on the cross for our sins (John 3:16) but the reader should understand

that the same merciful God watched as his only son, was crucified on the cross and He did not melt away. He will not melt when you go to hell fire. The sacrifice has been made with so great a Lamb and none other is awaited. If we ignore it, the next thing is punishment.

If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know him who said, "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," and again, "The Lord will judge his people." It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.
Heb 10:26-31NIV

Two lessons are available to us here; one for those who find themselves in the place of the widow of our story. Persist in your prayers. No one can with honesty say that this will be easy. At times it could be a wayward wife or husband. Some hurriedly sort divorce only to hear that the person has repented after few years. Sad enough the believer has found herself in an ungodly relationship. I have a case where the woman is having an extramarital relationship with another man because she had left home for her sinner husband. Heaping-sins-upon-sins is not the way to resolve issues.

Another lesson is for any of my readers whom the devil may be leading now. The reverend father might have deceived himself that he knew how to handle things, Judas could have told himself that nobody can find out. In both cases nobody found out, but their sins dragged them out. I have tested the life of secret sin while staying in the church as a believer. It is a very sad life to live. When any preacher quotes a scripture from the pulpit you are already aware of where he is going, you begin to quarrel with him for preaching from the same scripture every time. Each time you hear the gospel message from anywhere they seem to be pointing at one thing. The tendency is to look for a church where the pastor is also living in secret sin. Yes, that is the only place where sins are not called by their names. He will not call them by name because he lives in the same sin and his sin partners are present in his church. But remember that Jesus said that if the blind leads the blind they will all land in a pit.

I want to encourage you to break his grip from you, break the grip of satan and sin from your life and soul now. You have to be radical and urgent about this. He is leading you into eternal destruction; snatch your soul from his grip now so you can walk in victory and joy as a believer. With secret sin in your life your prayer life will be down, your Christian testimony will be gone, your life of faith will drag, and you will be a contradiction. People hear you say one thing but your life is something else. Year in and year out you will not have a testimony of God's goodness. People around you will not know why there is no testimony in your life. They will begin to accuse God for not fulfilling his promises in your life. They do this because they do not know your secret life. So you lead them into the

sin of accusing God unjustly and a number of them leave the church because of you. Beloved, that makes your judgment even more.

Can you see why I say that you should rise up now and break his grip from your life? At times you have to call somebody's attention; I mean your sin partner and make him understand the implication of the life of secret sin among believers.

Why not bow your head in prayer now and talk to the Lord?

Chapter eight

Unforgiveness and Bitterness

The prison warder was described as mischievous in the story but let's study him as a character to see if the adjective rightly fits him. Somebody killed his cousin. It is possible that his cousin got him his job as a prison warder. In the soldier's position a lot of people in his extended family maybe dependent on him, among who could be the prison warder. His eventual death brought many people's source of income to a standstill. These people, if they should have their way, would have roasted David alive but the law had to be obeyed and the law ruled public execution. Yet, the warder would like it to happen soonest. When this was not to be, he decided to subject David to additional psychological torture. When David's time to die came he discovered that death on the stake wasn't such a big deal. The loss he felt for his cousin left a wound that he hoped or perhaps believed that if David cried and wept to the stake and eventually died, would be healed but it was not to be. David had received Jesus in his life. Even if he didn't, there is every doubt that his death would heal those wounds. The soldier while he was alive solved problems whereas David's death was a total loss.

What do we learn from the warder's life? Some people when wronged wish that those who wronged them should suffer in order that they maybe happy. Some go to the length of hiring thugs to kill people, blackmailing, back-biting, mudslinging and when they can't do anything to avenge themselves they just don't talk to their enemy. This eventually leaves more wounds in their hearts. Medical reports

have proved that when people are bitter they are likely to have cancer and other heart problems. Bitterness is like taking poison and expecting your enemy to die as a result. We all know that is not possible.

You have been wronged and as you take offence and wish your enemy evil, you are wronging. Hence, the saying-two wrongs don't make a right. You should forgive to be on the right side. Let's take bible instances. Somebody owed the bigger master a larger amount. When the master asked for his money, he cried and explained that he hadn't the money to pay back. He was forgiven his debt. On reaching home he found it difficult to forgive somebody that owed him a smaller amount. Maybe he thought his master forgave him because he was too rich. When the bigger master heard, he made him pay back what he owed even with his own children and wife (Matt.18: 21- 35). This is exactly what happens in many a Christian life today. They forget that they wrong God almost every minute and find it difficult to forgive those who wrong them. Some when they wrong people think it is biblical that they be forgiven but when they are wronged believe also that it is biblical that they don't forgive. To such people, misinterpreting the bible isn't a big deal. If they should have their way, everybody should have his or her own bible translation. It worries me that the difficulty I encounter in converting an unbeliever is largely caused by some so-called believers. One woman I was talking to, said she'd rather be an idol worshipper, than answer a Christian and commit the kind of sin her neighbours commit. You go preaching to them but a fellow believer in their neighborhood has made a statement by his conduct that far outshouts your message. A missionary magazine I once read said that Muslims in the Middle East are not willing to be called

Christian because of how they see so-called Christians on TV. To such people I say that God on the judgment day will not compare you to brother A or sister C but to his holiness as stated in the bible.

In Matt 6:12, Christ said we should pray that God forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. I quite agree with a brother who said that most Christians are avoiding the Lord's Prayer because of this verse. When they get to this verse, the Holy Spirit immediately accuses them for all their neighbours they feel they should not forgive one trespass or the other. This has hindered prayer in many fellowships. For as long as we find it difficult to forgive other people, God will find it difficult to forgive us. And if he does not forgive us he will not listen to our prayer.

***If I had cherished sin in my heart,
the Lord would not have listened; Ps 66:18 NIV***

***Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save,
nor his ear too dull to hear.***

***But your iniquities have separated
you from your God;
your sins have hidden his face from you,
so that he will not hear. Isa 59:1-2 NIV***

More over, there is only one way to heal the wound created by an offence; that is by forgiving such offence. Believe me, immediately you forgive a spark of joy comes into your heart. The devil is an accuser. He keeps reminding you of what wrong was done to you. He keeps telling you why you should revenge. All he wants to do is to lead you into more sin and further away from God. (John10: 10;

1 John 3:8, 10). Never believe the devil (John 8: 44), there cannot be made a truth out of a lie.

The reader may ask; would you forgive somebody who killed your mother? In reply I ask, what does one do to somebody who kills ones' mother? The true and more proper answer is, forgive and forget. If you kill him, the authorities will hang you or you will live in blood guilt. If you sue him to court, you will be wasting your time and hard earned money. At the end of which, you cannot regain your mother. But if you forgive, God will heal your wound and avenge the death. I am not saying one should overlook every offence but let's overlook many offences. All the same, if we can overlook all, God will take care of all.

Chapter nine

You can still have it.

David returned like the prodigal son (Luke 16: 11- 32). In his prayer he discovered what the prodigal son discovered. Haven lost his place in the family he discovered he could not or rather had no right to talk to the father like free-born does. He understood how low he has fallen and so was not praying to go to heaven but that he would not face eternal condemnation. He would accept anything slightly different from hell-fire but to his surprise, he was accepted. He did not need to be told where he was heading to this time.

This was exactly what happened to the tax collector in Jesus' story (Luke 18:9-14). The Pharisee believed he had done enough good works to earn him a place in the kingdom of God. Whereas, the tax collector discovered he had no work at all. So, pleaded for mercy by humbling himself. What God values in human being is humbleness of heart. The scriptures says,

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;

a broken and contrite heart,

O God, you will not despise. Ps 51:17 NIV

David of our story humbled himself. He rejected his person and recognized his emptiness.

One other virtue David might have borrowed from his mother is persistence in prayer. It is possible that David cried for six hours or more before he was heard. Had he just cried for ten minutes and given up, his request might not have been granted. Some Christians find it difficult to pray for ten minutes for a problem that has been

eating on them for years. Some pray for ten minutes and sin for ten hours. How can God answer such prayer? (Isaiah 59:1-2).

If we really need something from God, we must prove it is really important to us. We can only do so through persistent prayer. Though, God is all sufficient and the kingdom of heaven is never lacking, He can not afford to waste valuable things on people who can not appreciate values. (Matt. 15:26)

Let me cite an example here. A man in my ministry asked me to pray for a woman that said she had been suffering from what she called demonic attack for about six months. she used to sleep away from her home because the demon attacked her in the night. She always felt some invisible ants creeping all over her body; worms all over her stomach and her feet pained that she found it difficult to walk. I visited her with my team; she was healed after a third day of prayer. We told her to come to the fellowship and give testimony. So others who still have such problem will be encouraged. She said she was not chanced because she had to go to the office now and do some things she could not do due to her illness. Up to the time of writing this book, she has still not done so. These are the people the bible talked about in Luke 16:31. Even if angels come from heaven or the dead rise to minister to them they will not believe.

So, God has to be sure you know the value of what you are asking for. That maybe why he has not granted what you are asking for at this time.

Rev. Stanley Awuzie told me the story of a university lecturer whom he prayed for. The man was in several secret cults and it was his time to die according to their covenant. Rev. Awuzie prayed for him

and he was delivered. The man confessed openly to the Reverend that what he preached was true but his only regret was that they are cheap. Some people, who bother the brethren about prayer for one problem or the other, do not actually know what they are asking for and their values. I hereby, advice the prayer warrior to educate them on appreciating God's favor and also teach them the importance of persistency in prayer.

Lastly, we have learnt from this story that no prayer said from a pure heart is wasted. To David's mother all her prayers returned unanswered, but to the reader, we've seen the result. So, let's pray on.

Chapter ten

Seeds Die Hard

We cannot ignore the most powerful effect in our story. As David's mother prayed and talked to him and her God, he listened only as a mocker. He despised her and her religion but deep in his subconscious the Holy Spirit was working on him and engraving the things he despised into his being.

There are two lessons here; we should not give up just because the person we are trying to reach is snobbish or rude. The atmosphere of godliness is doing its work. David never knew he had learnt his mother's favorite song off-hand. He thought he had nothing to do with the song, the singer and the God for whom it was meant. But only time proved he was fooling himself. Let every person or believer in the position of the widow of our story not despair because the Holy Spirit is doing more than the physical eyes can see.

The second lesson is for those who think that they can still keep an unholy environment and raise godly children. Some parents live in sin and advice their children not to follow their example. Some sell beer parlors, cigarette and endorse negative lives of other people, while hoping that their children will not involve in the same negative lifestyles. This is self-deceit. History and scripture has proved that it is easier to learn the negative than the positive. Children learn more from what they see than what they hear.

We are encouraged therefore to fill the atmosphere of our homes and environment with godliness, to continue to sow good seeds whether we see the harvest or not. The Lord has promised that seed time and harvest time will not fail. (Gen. 8:22). Like David's mother we must continue in faith.

Please bow your head in prayer!

Lord I pray for this your child whom you have helped to the last line of this little book; Lord only you know why you have led him thus far. I pray that the work which the Holy Spirit had in mind to do, for which you have brought him thus far be brought to perfection. Lord you know we are weak. Many times we have made some resolutions but our flesh have made us go back. I pray that whatever is the resolution which this your child have made by reading this book shall see perfection. I pray that the power of your Spirit shall give the desired grace that your will shall be done in this life in such a way that, you our gracious Lord will be glorified in every way.

I pray this in the powerful name of Christ our Lord. Amen

You can reach me for your testimony, questions or other comments. Please let me hear from you.

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