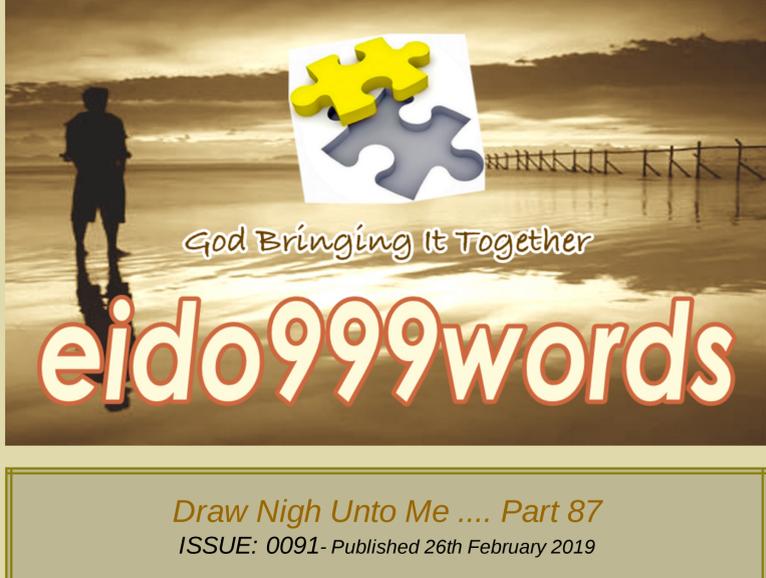


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Draw Nigh Unto Me Part 87

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Defaced - Week 79

God's Coming Spiritual Revolution - Part 26

So how do spiritual longings retard the growth of Spiritual Desire? (continued)

In the first three chapters the short Book of Jonah manages to tell a story:

of how one Man of God received a Divine Call,

of how he tried to run from it,

of how God 'arrested' him in the belly of a great fish,

of how he repented there in his confinement,

of how he subsequently went on to fulfil God's Call on his life regarding Nineveh.

Then in an equally short Chapter Four we first find Jonah exceedingly displeased & angry with God's Will to now relent from destroying Nineveh because of their repentance.

Jonah then approaches God in prayer to verbalise his reasoning for why he fled to Tarshish only to finish his prayer by earnestly requesting that God take his life stating it was now better for him to die than to live.

God's only reply, as any wise Father would do, is to ask him whether he thought his anger is doing him well in any way.

Jonah's reaction was then to leave the city to sit on the east side of it in the shade of a booth he made for his own protection until he might see what would become of the city.

Then, God by Grace prepared a climbing plant (gourd) & caused it to provide Divine protection over him for which Jonah was exceedingly glad.

God then prepared a worm that the very next morning rose to destroy the plant, removing all Jonah's protection from the sun.

As if that wasn't enough God also prepared an intense easterly wind to blow straight at the now fully exposed Jonah.

So forceful was the wind & fierce was the sun that Jonah fainted, wishing within himself to die.

Then God asked Jonah whether he thinks his anger for the gourd is doing him well.

To which Jonah answered it does him well even unto death, & again stated that it is better for him to die than to live

It is then in the final two verses of Chapter Four that God speaks to Jonah beyond the repeated question of whether his anger is doing him well.

He pointed out to Jonah that he could find it in himself to pity a plant for which he neither laboured nor made it grow, which came up quickly & went just as quickly.

In Light of this God then posed a question to Jonah.

Jonah 4:11 KJV

11 " And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle? "

So now, to me at least, the burning question is what did Jonah find so injurious to his person that he was declaring it better for him to die than to live?

What was the cause or seat of his anger & who or what was he so angry with?

We have seen that Jonah was truly a Man of God, Called to the Office of Prophet & one who knew the Heart of God well.

We also know he was a God Fearing Man living in Old Testament Times.

For under the Old Covenant men could only be visited upon by God's Spirit as & when required in Accordance with the Will & Purposes of God.

For these were the Jews, the Children of God, who were given The Law so that they would know what sin was & yet continually struggled with their flesh to try and obey it, only to eventually prove that man cannot fulfil The Law.

Jesus was sent to fulfil The Law & The Prophets for it was the disobedience of Adam & Eve [mankind] that had defaced the Obedience of Christ consisting in the Image of God dwelling within them.

This, as we know, brought about the death declared to befall them if they were to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good & Evil & were cast out from the Presence of God.

This simply means that Jonah was a man trying to obey & serve while lacking the indwelling Power & Presence of God's Spirit that is freely available to all today.

For just as we need to embrace the times & seasons of the New Dispensation under which we live, we must give equal recognition & respect to those existing during the time in question.

Lack of this, I believe, accounts for so much of the misinterpretation & mistaken meaning of The Truth today & goes some way to explain how at times Christians can be found deriding Men of God spoken of in the Bible.

At its very best, from my spiritual observations, it is largely upon the misconstruing of Old Testament Scripture that the soft gospel, name-it claim-it, prosperity messages of this Post Modern Era are founded.

Furthermore, at its very least, it can cause even the most well-meaning Christian to have their perception tinted to a barely detectable amount or degree that it only serves to diffuse & somewhat nullify the True Power of the Living Gospel for them.

Now, in getting back to Jonah, I believe the essence for the existence of the Book bearing his name lies more in giving us a short panoramic & insightful look or perspective into man's intrinsic & endless struggle with the True Ways of God.

Isaiah 55:8-9 (KJV)

8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.

9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

In Chapter 4 Verse 2 Jonah's prayer revealed that it was because of what he knew of God's Character that caused him to flee unto Tarshish following God's Call to him.

Some might wonder, how did Jonah ever think he could hide from God?

However, let us also remember that in a time when the Spirit of God came in visitation upon man rather than indwelling as he now does it might have been somewhat easier to imagine you could.

Whatever thoughts were prevailing in Jonah's mind at the time he soon discovered, there on the ship to Tarshish, that indeed God knew what he was doing.

But in all truth how many times do we, who declare God With Us, act as though The Lord cannot see, even though we know in our heart he can.

It's called disobedience or sin, the making of a willful decision to do what we know in God we should not, or go where we know we should not go.

We often lack an ability to look at something in Truth for the fear that we might just catch a glimpse of ourselves in it, a habit that can quickly develop a self-righteous perspective in us if we are not diligent.

Glory to God that through the Shed Blood of Christ forgiveness is ours, for surely we need it.

We need to know that in any way we may perceive Jonah as failing, we also fail & more!

In Verse 1, before Jonah turned to pray to God, it was revealed that he was so exceedingly displeased with what the Way of God, which he already knew, had brought about regarding Nineveh that for some reason he found himself very angry.

So can we assume that Jonah's anger was directed at God?

Some might say yes it is revealed in Verse 2 as Jonah reminded God of what he spoke of when in his own country which then caused him to flee to Tarshish.

Yet others might say, as I do, that Jonah never directed his anger at God but rather more that he was angry with himself.

Last week I shared an article that contained the following:

"Many of us feel guilty for being angry.

But as an emotion, anger in itself is neither bad nor good.

It is our instinctive reaction to whatever threatens something or someone we love.

Quoted from article shared last week & written by Fr. Rolando V. Dela Rosa, O.P.

Reference: <https://news.mb.com.ph/2018/03/03/anger-is-a-form-of-love/>

Now as we wait upon next weeks message let us meditate particularly upon a further quote Fr. Rolando had shared in his article:

"As Tim Keller writes,

Anger is a form of love; it is "love in motion.""

Love,

Mwesigwa

[Defaced - Week 80 follows next week]

Your prayers of unity with us for God's Provision are most welcome.

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