

A NATION THAT CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD Isaiah 55:1-7

When some people lead us in singing or prayer during worship, there are some practices that I have a problem with. One such a practice is being told by the leader *'Now let us invite the presence of the Lord'*! I was recently telling young people that I find trouble with singing songs like *'welcome into this place...'* or *'Holy Spirit we welcome you...'* and *'This is your house, your home; we welcome you today.'* My dilemma is: who welcomes who? Is it us who welcome God or Him who welcomes us into His presence?

The word of God confirms that it is He who invites us: *And the LORD said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them.* Exodus 24:12

Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. Isaiah 1:18

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Matthew 11:28

Another such invitation is found in today's text, Isaiah 55:1. This invitation is going out to a nation that had been through several warnings of destruction and threats of exile in case they did not change their ways. God makes it clear through Isaiah that He rules all nations and would punish all rebellion against Him. God however would redeem His people and bring them back to their home land from captivity. This new hope is pronounced more starting in chapter 40 with words of comfort. With such confidence and comfort they are called to come.

The exile and captivity is a place where you are uncertain of basic needs of life like food and water. You are at the mercy of your captors and you are never sure of having good and enough food and drink. Therefore this invitation is an oasis in the desert. It is like being given a blank cheque or an open ended shopping invitation to the supermarket to pick anything you want at no cost. *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.* Isaiah 55:1. God is serious with His promises, He is our very source of all we need and He generously rewards all who trust in Him. He supplies all our needs out of His unlimited riches in glory! Will you come and in faith receive from Him?

God is not only inviting His people to His abundance. He is also asking them to get into deeper fellowship with Him in Verse 6. *Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near.* The Hebrew Word translated Seek is *daras* which connotes to inquire, consults, ponder or search. Isaiah is encouraging the people that have received an open invitation to access the Lord and His benefits to inquire of Him, consult with Him, ponder and search for revelation of His will.

When we ask we receive, and when we seek we find. God is not afraid of questions as we engage with Him. David and other psalmists learnt this secret of fellowship with God. Rebecca had received an answer to her husband's asking for fruitfulness. Her barrenness was gone and she conceived because Isaac asked God. They came to the God of abundance in prayer and received what they asked for. But Rebecca took it to another level: *And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to enquire of the LORD.* Genesis 25:22. The LORD began to reveal His will about these boys when she inquired.

There so many questions that we may have about personal life, family, business, ministry our church and the nation. God is waiting for someone that would inquire, consult, ponder or search in His presence for wisdom, direction and revelation. I have heard of some people who pray for the marriage of their children as soon as they are born! A young pastor friend of mine taught me to pray for our spouses while we were still at campus, and surely God answered; there would be no better wife for me than this wonderful woman Sarah! God is willing to reveal to us even His hand as we seek His face.

Don't therefore be afraid to consult with God what the future holds for that business deal you are about to strike. Ask 'which leader should I elect? Why I am in debt always and what can I do to get out? These children that you have given me as arrows in my quiver, which direction and at what target should I release them?' I know someone who inquired about elections of national leaders and God challenged him: 'as a church, which leaders have you prepared?' He has since been filled with a passion to prepare godly leaders for the nation. Many parents would be at ease if only they knew what the Lord's will for their children's career is. They would not confuse their children like the one I met recently who wants to become a lawyer for her father and a counsellor for herself!

As we start this month of prayer as a church shall we not stop at enjoying the invitation to God's abundance but also inquire, consult, ponder or search in His presence for wisdom, direction and revelation.