

Standing On Good Foundation To Finish Well

by Benjamin Kwashi

This sermon focuses on the book of Revelation, emphasizing the importance of faith, grace, and peace in the midst of tribulations. It highlights the need for believers to stand firm in their faith, knowing that Jesus is coming back, and to prioritize a genuine encounter with God. The speaker shares personal stories and challenges the congregation to reevaluate their commitment to God, urging them to fear God above all else and make sacrifices for the Kingdom.

Scripture: Revelation 1:1, Revelation 1:7, Revelation 1:8, Revelation 1:9, Revelation 1:10

Topics: "Faith in Tribulation", "Commitment to God"

Description

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Transcript

The passage I feel the Lord has asked me to share with you is in Revelation chapter 1 and I'll read the revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave him to show to his servants the things that most soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John who bore witness to the Word of God to the testimony of Jesus Christ even to all his soul. Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy and blessed are those who hear and who keep what is written in it for the time is near.

John, to the seven churches that are in Asia, grace to you and peace from him who is, who was, and who is to come and from the seven spirits who are before the throne and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, the ruler of the kings on earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, made us a kingdom priests to his God and Father. To him be glory and dominion forever and ever.

Amen. Behold he is coming with the clouds and every eye will see him. Even those who pierced him and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him.

Even so, Amen. I am the Alpha and the Omega, says the Lord, who is, who was, who is to come, the Almighty. I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance

that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos, on account of the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet saying, write what you see in the book, send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pagamon, to Sardis, to Philadelphia and to Laodicea. This is the Word of the Lord. Let us pray.

Father, we have come together at the close of the day and we want to ask that the purpose for which you brought us here together to come and rest a while with you. Lord, may that purpose be fulfilled in each one of our lives. We are receiving challenges from you as you speak through men in the words that we understand.

And we are begging, O God, that these words will not stand against us in judgment. Father, we have been asking for the time when the gospel, the precious gospel that you gave to our grandparents, now in our own hands. We are asking for the time, Lord, when the effect and the effectiveness of this gospel will take root in our land, so that the credibility of the gospel will permeate every part of the society, and that our gospel will be exportable to bring life to Jesus Christ all over the world, all over the world.

O God, may that time be now. With confidence we stand upon your word. Where it touches us, O God, help us to stand.

Even if it is one man, may we stand. The time has come, O Lord. The time has come.

We beg you for it. Please answer us. Yes, Lord, answer.

Because people like Pastor Yusuf in Iran are standing alone, facing the whole Ayatollahs. Lord, people like Bishop Muneer are standing alone, answering before great men in Egypt. Lord, people are standing.

May we not fail. Give grace even now by your word, that we will stand. And if for some of us this is a beginning, O God, may we stand on a good foundation and finish well.

And if for some of us we stood before, but we'll be wobbly, may we retake our position so that we may finish well. God, may your word speak even now. And the glory forever will be yours.

And we ask it in Jesus' name. Friends, when I look at this portion of scripture, I sometimes feel that we in Nigeria, like Bishop Okafor said, we just have taken a culture of grumblings and complaints and we've made it a part of the ministry. And with every little complaint, our problems are solved.

So we complain some more. A few weeks ago, actually a few days ago, where we were preaching, we were asking, we met a young bishop from Sudan. He's the bishop of the Abyei region where they're killing people.

But we were not so much worried for him because he's in the southern part. I know him, Bishop Abraham Nail. I was asking him about another bishop of Sudan.

About eight years ago, we led a retreat, my wife and I, for the whole bishops of Sudan. And this young bishop was just consecrated. After the one-week retreat, he held my wife and said, Mama, I want you to be my mother and tell Bishop Kwashi, two of you, to lay hands that God may give me his spirit.

I am walking in a dangerous place. Bishop El Niel Aldundu is the bishop of the Nuba Mountains. As I speak to you, they have massacred his staff and most people.

He happened to have fallen ill and traveled. He is now in America. But if he comes into Sudan, he'll be dead in the Nuba Mountains.

He's determined to go back. I asked Bishop Abraham, of course my wife was there asking him, how are you faring? And all Abraham could say is, your grace, the Lord is helping us. Bishop Abraham does not know his father nor his mother.

He was severed from his mother and father as a little boy. He was one of those lost children of Sudan, was taken and sold into slavery. They kept running for more than a thousand miles and found themselves in Ethiopia.

Finally, they were rescued by the United Nations and taken to America. He grew up there, went to Bible school there, went back to Sudan, got ordained, went back to do his master's degree, and now he's back there as a bishop. Friends, we have wonderful life.

Even those of us in Jaws, we are fortunate people. What is Jaws? I'm so thankful to the Lord when I saw my brothers and sisters from my degree because those of us for whom suffering in the gospel has become a long stretch of life. When you hear a little, your mind goes on.

My degree, the brethren there, they have sinned, but thanks be to God. This passage came to me because as I'm looking at starting and finishing, let me tell you the truth. If I didn't look at where I began from, I would have left.

Because I've asked concerning my own life too, what have I done wrong? What have I done wrong? There is no place, and when I say no place, I mean almost literally no place. Some 13 years back, I preached in the U.S. They invited me. After the first day of my preaching, they said, okay, the next one, somebody will take it.

Finally, they came back and said they could not even afford my ticket to come back to Nigeria. So I called my younger sister who had just begun her residency program. I said, give me a loan of \$800 in those days, and she did.

That was how I came back. So don't think that even though you go country because they are civilized, you will escape persecution. You will get it, as those who go there.

If you stand for the truth, even here, you will not escape. We are getting to the point where what happened to John is coming here, slowly but gradually. Of course, Nero had done his own and gone.

Now it is Emperor Domitian. And Emperor Domitian also has heard about these Christian people and all their sectarianism because the Christians were now spreading. Nero couldn't wipe them out.

They were spreading, and they were becoming like, you know, they had a different law. And because they didn't quite understand what the gospel meant, in fact, somebody went and told them in the parliament that these people, group of people, Christians, they have one invisible commander. That's the way they put it.

One invisible commander by the name of Christus. Whatever he tells them, suddenly they are here, suddenly they are there. So the emperor said, look, I don't want trouble in my empire.

There will be one religion, one God. And of course, the emperor is the son of the gods. So the worship must be to the emperor.

Whoever will not worship the emperor will be killed. So Christians were rounded up. Believers were rounded up and killed.

We are not getting too far from there now. And what I usually say as I plead with Christians is be a Bible-based Christian before you die for nothing. Because these killers, they don't even care whether you are a half Christian, you are a full Christian, or you are an attempted Christian.

Even if you are a church-goer, when the bomb blasts in church and you die, what a terrible thing if you are not standing on the rock. And as they were rounding Christians and killing them, now I say to people, for me, as Benjamin Kwashi, this is the time I hate the most to be a leader. This time is the most painful periods of my life.

And it would seem that for more than 25 years of my ordained life, this thing has gone on consistently. Consistently. Maybe what God was looking for, he finally found.

Because two years ago, when the killings began in Jaws, I heard very clearly, you are in this for a long haul. And so people kept calling, Ben, we are not hearing your voice, what are you saying? I said, what will I say? The Lord has already said we are in it for a long haul. So I said, okay Lord, if you don't help, the faith of many will melt.

And thank God, brethren and other brothers, we all went quiet and people were saying, ah, why in Jaws? People are not talking. It's not for talking, brethren. If God doesn't help us, we are gone.

We are still pressing on. And holding on. And we are standing shoulder to shoulder with the brethren in Maiduguri and Bauchi.

We are holding on. Because a leader in this time is not funny. You hear the gunshots and people are calling you, Bishop, what shall we do? Excuse me, what will I say? What will I say? I don't have an army, I don't have guns, I have nothing.

And I visit a village, they cry and cry and finish crying and there is no more cry to cry and they just look at you numb. What do you say to such people? And they are handing over to you dead bodies. And the people look to John and they said, Uncle John, you told us Jesus is coming.

Why all this? Look at where we are. John said, hold on, hold on. And they would say to him again, Uncle John, they have massacred everyone, they have roasted them and the other ones, liars, have eaten them.

And John said three things. Number one, he led them back to the foundation of what he told them. Look at verse one to four.

The revelation Jesus Christ which God gave him to show his servants the things that must take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John who bore witness to the word of God. Our seminaries and the products thereof are running into trouble because they are graduating without a witness.

The word of God. John lays it flat. But that is not all.

And he says unto the testimony of Jesus Christ, the knowledge of who Jesus is, Jesus Christos, the knowledge, the encounter, so that you are not confused about who you are following. Because when the days become dangerous, you should not be confused about who you are following. You are not following man.

You are not doing a religion to please anybody. You are not doing it to please anyone. You are following Jesus, the Lord.

He appeared to you. He saved you. Look brethren, I was saved in Lagos.

That is my testimony. I cannot tell you otherwise. I was saved in the streets of Lagos.

I know Jesus saved me. Whatever you say, I don't understand. But that is what happened to me.

You have to encounter the Lord. Know your salvation. Handle it and follow through.

It is Jesus who saved you. And this Jesus, John says, is the one who was, who is, who is to come. Hallelujah! Hallelujah! If he was and he is now, your condition is immaterial because he will still save you.

If they kill me now, excuse me, as soon as my eyes close, I am opening it that same minute and I will be seeing my Savior. If they leave me, the devil is in trouble. Either way, I lose nothing because I know the one who was, the one who is, and the one who is to come.

The foundation of our faith. John did not joke with that. But the second thing John puts across to them is the substance of our faith.

And he says this, grace to you and peace from him who was and who is and who is to come. Now, grace and peace in difficult times. What else do you need? Those are the two things.

And from the days when my house was burnt in Zaria, my church was burnt, up till today, if there is anything I need ever in terms of need, it is the grace of God to continue and the peace of God just to keep me quiet. I remember when I came back, I had to rush back home, they wanted to kill me, they didn't meet me, they met my wife, beat her, left her half dead, they finally found her somewhere, took her to the hospital, and I took the next flight, I came immediately, I was so furious, I was so angry, I couldn't talk, I couldn't pray, and the security in my house was now covered everywhere, and they would not let me even go into the house. I said, no, no, no, no, this is my house, this is Bishop's house, I am sleeping there alone, nobody.

And you know, human courage, you think you can make it. I couldn't sleep. I was pacing up and down, I said, God, what have I done? What is this trouble now? All my life, all my life, what is this now? And you know, God does speak.

When he gets you in a tight corner, you will hear him correctly. Nobody likes tight corners, but it's useful sometimes. And the Lord said to me, did you get letters? I said, yes.

He said, from where? I said, emails from Archbishop of Canterbury, from South Africa, from Ghana, from Kenya, from Singapore, from everywhere. Then he said, okay, what about phone calls? I said, I got phone calls, I mean, I could not pick the calls anymore, I was just giving them, my chaplain, I said, don't take any

calls, just tell them I'll call, write down their names. There were hundreds of, every day, hundreds of names I went through.

That's apart from prayer meetings that were going on. And the Lord said to me, do you know what trouble you are giving me? 24-7, when the ones in Kenya have finished praying and are going to sleep, the ones in Australia wake up, they start praying, Bishop Kwashi, Bishop Kwashi. The ones in Zaria are praying, the ones in Kano have started, Bishop Kwashi, Bishop Kwashi.

Man, I felt like a prince, I said, Lord, if that is how it is, let the problems increase. The substance of our faith is in knowing Jesus, and receiving from Him grace, and I was at peace. After 2 o'clock I slept, I woke up, went to the hospital, and she was, by this time, awake again, but could not see anymore.

By the miracle of God, she now sees. The substance of our faith is real. This thing happened, it really happened, in the empire of Rome.

I said to them, we didn't make a fake belief, we have a genuine belief, and you will notice, where you are, what you are going through, there is grace and there is peace. Nobody is remembering car, nobody is remembering clothes, or which bishop's coat is bigger or smaller. Why don't we handle the substance, so that we may know grace and peace.

You can have a big mansion, you can have all the cars you want, if there is no grace accompanying your life, if there is no peace accompanying your life, excuse me, you are in trouble. Persecution has already started, without anybody even beating you. And we have this assurance in our substance, He is coming.

John says, as you receive this grace and peace, be assured, He is coming. It is the substance of the faith, and when you know He is coming, you will live in His fear and reverence. One of the things that is dying out, dying out, like this, in the church.

I have watched the church, I mean, I joined the ministry at 21, I have seen things, man. People no longer fear God. I had a young man who wrote to me, because anytime for me, if you are coming for ministry, write your testimony.

What do you want to do in this world? What can you contribute? If you see this letter, you cannot, and if he talks, you cannot throw him out. Very convincing. He had a conversion experience.

The stories were fantastic, and he leads a group in the church. He handles the Bible fantastic. Then again, admission to TCNN, and I simply called him.

A priest of mine died, so I said, well, could you just defer your admission by one year, so that you can cover up for this priest, you are a catechist yet, but just cover up, and then you continue, I'll find somebody to cover for you. It became a tribal war. It became war, literally.

My name was peddled in some tribes. Let me tell you a story I was told. I was chaplain to Bishop Ogonyomi, and by virtue of that, I became close to Bishop Afonya in Aba.

I was told by another senior bishop that a humble man like Afonya was rare to find. He was in year two in school in the university in England. When Patterson called him to come back, he never finished his degree.

He packed his things, came back, and continued ministry. Later on, he was made assistant bishop. Later on, bishop.

Such men are rare. People who don't fear God. If you fear God, certain things you are doing in secret, you won't do it.

If you fear God, some of the decisions we make as leaders, we will not do it. You hear one story about somebody, without finding out, you crucify the person. If you fear God, you won't do it because that young cat is a pastor that you crucified.

One day, if they crucify your own child somewhere, what will you say? Or you think the young pastor is not somebody's child? If you fear God, what you don't want done for your son or for anybody that you have position, you will not do it for another person. Listen. Even if you don't fear God, he is coming back.

That's the other thing. Blatant lies in church. Blatant.

So he is coming. The other week, I was talking to Americans. I heard some of their testimonies.

They said, you know, I told God, I was very angry. I said, ah, you have courage to be angry with God. Enter airplane like I do.

Then there is turbulence in the air. Tell God then you are angry. And see whether you won't come down through the window.

Angry with God. If God had made you a monkey, will you talk? You would be in the zoo somewhere in Kruger Park in South Africa or somewhere like that or Kenya. But in order that we may continue, John gives a lead.

The first one is he quotes God directly. Verse 8, I am the Alpha and Omega. Bear that in mind.

The second one is, verse 9, I, John, your brother and partner, in the tribulation and the kingdom, they go together. The cross and the eternal glory, they go together. Can we start bracing up? Right now.

Let's start bracing up. And we can start very simply by giving up some of our things. Right now.

Because in case you do not know, if you belong to the younger generation, listen. It was the sacrifice of one old Baba riding bicycle. One old pastor riding bicycle to go and teach in a primary school.

That was how we got education. It's not that they didn't have any other thing. They sacrificed also.

They knew. They knew that if they didn't do it, the tribulation will be more. They had to sacrifice.

There are 20 million street orphans in Nigeria. 20 million confirmed. If every church member takes one, they'll be off the streets.

Then if every church member leads one orphan to the Lord, imagine what the world will look like. But where the gospel has become so selfish, self-centered, and more about what we get or who we are. When tribulation comes, will we be ready? And if we are not ready for the tribulation, don't worry about the kingdom either.

Because the kingdom is a kingdom of sacrifice. That's where God rules. And he confirmed by himself.

I was in the island of Patmos. But he concludes this way. And I want to conclude the same way.

Verse 10. I was in the spirit in the Lord's day. And I heard behind me a voice like a trumpet saying, Brethren, he did not hear the voice of an emperor.

He did not hear the voice of any king. He heard the voice of the one who was, who is, and who is to come. John was in a cubicle, hands and feet tied.

Nobody could see him except through the little hole where food could be sent to him. But John was released in his spirit. He was tied physically, but his spirit was free.

He saw the Lord, he heard the Lord, and he followed the Lord. Let us pray. Let us pray.

These are days of definite encounter with God so that we may hear, see, and follow. Let us pray. I don't know where you are at in this faith.

But it's no time to take our faith carelessly anymore. It's no time to play with this faith. It's time to fear God, not man.

Not even a bishop, not primate, not pope. It's time to fear God and follow God. It's time to make concrete decisions about this faith.

Check again your foundation that we may finish well. Father, take our hearts together, including mine. Lord, the privilege that I should speak is only a privilege.

But I'm begging you, Lord, don't let even me. As having spoken, God, may this word also speak to my life. Please, Lord, in these difficult times, for those of us who have to go back to difficult places, God, strengthen us again that we may finish well.

Jesus, help us. We are gathered here not to come and be entertained. We want something spectacular.

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