

THE CHARGE: ABIDING IN GOD'S STRENGTH

BY Pastor Fougere Gordon

INTRODUCTION: God is constantly recruiting for volunteers to serve as warriors in God's mighty army. The harvest is plentiful, but there are few workers willing to surrender to the will of the Lord to fulfill the great commission. When Jesus spoke about the harvest, He is talking about the multitude of people in the world who are lost and dying because they have not heard the Gospel message. God is asking who is willing to commit to sharing the gospel message to the multitude of people that are on a path leading them to destruction. We are blessed today because we have five individuals who have heard the clarion call of God upon their life and have told the Lord they are willing to submit to His will to do the work of the ministry. It is first and foremost important that all who enter the profession as a Minister of the gospel have had a genuine born-again experience by having personally recognized that they were sinners, have asked God to forgive and clean them, and most importantly, have asked Jesus to be Lord of their life. Those five individuals have affirmed to Pastor Maria and me in their written testimony that they have asked the Lord to forgive them, invited Jesus to come into their hearts and made a willful decision to follow Him all the days of their life. Why is this important? They would not be an effective witness about the power of God to forgive and save unless they themselves have had that experience. The Lord will place them in situations where they will have to lead people to Christ, and unless they themselves have had that personal conversion experience, they would not be effective nor able to fulfill this most critical role. While serving as a Police Chaplain, the Chief of Police contacted me and asked me to go to a local hospital to meet with a patient who was a retired police Captain. The Chief explained that this officer was his friend who had a

terminal illness and that to the best of his knowledge had never accepted Christ in his heart. I took Pastor Maria with me to that hospital and the man's entire family was present when we entered the room. I introduced myself as a Police Chaplain and explained to him the plan of salvation by letting him know that Christ had died and paid for his sins. I did ask him if he was willing to accept Christ in his heart and he told me yes. I then led him to the sinner's prayer and concluded by welcoming him into the family of God. That police officer died two days later.

All Christians, and especially ministers of the Gospel, must be available to be used by God as a vessel to do that same type of work of winning souls for Christ. The five individuals present before us are well-trained, equipped, and experienced to do just that because they are born-again Christians, have been called into ministry, and are willingly accepting the call of God on their life. The job of the senior pastor is to recognize the call of God on those five Christian warriors and to come into agreement with the Lord for their ordination. Present before us are Sisters Solange Bingwa and Rocsan Reyes, and Brothers Michael Thorpe, Vance Lopez, and Teddy Bingwa. Their faithfulness in ministry, active work in the church, and sacrifices made to advance the work of the Kingdom made them stand out as leaders. Those Christian warriors have demonstrated humbleness in spirit by submitting to the leadership authority of the two senior pastors. Their exceptional knowledge of the scriptures, love of God's people, and willingness to minister to the brokenhearted, those in distress, as well as those bound by the power of darkness are further character traits that are apparent in their lives. Lastly, their heart to serve, willingness to stay on the path, high-level Christian maturity, biblical qualifications, and their acceptance of their individual calling are the compelling reasons they are being ordained today. Before that happens, it is my intent to give them a charge by sharing some words of

wisdom given to me by God, that hopefully will serve as a guiding principle as they start to fulfill their calling in the capacity of a Deacon, Deaconess, or Assistant Pastor at Mt. Carmel Prayer Chapel.

SERMON TEXT: *2 Corinthians 12:9-10* “ But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”

The Apostle Paul was a giant when it comes to ministry because of his major contributions to advance the work of the Kingdom in spite of great oppositions, dangers, and personal afflictions that the bible never did reveal that buffeted him. The New Testament has 27 books, and Paul is credited with writing 13 of them. He had a sophisticated understanding of the Word of God and he had travelled extensively to plant churches, preach the gospel message, and to convert Gentiles to Christianity. He had faced all kinds of dangers, but Paul learned a most valuable lesson about the sustaining grace of God; a profound message that Minister Thorpe preached not too long ago. The message God has for each one of you is quite simple. You are uniquely gifted and anointed to fulfill a specific work for the kingdom of God. Some of you may have a pastor, an evangelist, or a godly individual who may have had a profound impact on your walk with Christ. What God wants you to know is that He did not call you to be like that individual. Your gifts, talents, abilities, leadership, and experiences are unique to you. I happen to love the preaching of Bishop T D Jakes and Dr. D James Kennedy. However, God did not call me to mirror my ministry after Bishop TD Jakes or Dr. D. James Kennedy. God’s message to all of

you is to be content with the way God is using and developing you. Don't try to compete with each other or try to emulate their ministry gift. God's grace and power have been poured on you in a completely different fashion than somebody else. This does not mean you are more or less important than your fellow ministry colleagues. But it does mean that God will use you in ways that will be completely different from others. Accept that and be comfortable with that. It is great that members of the congregation may appreciate you as a ministry gift, and they should. But do not allow the praises of men or even their insults to intimidate, manipulate, control, or influence what God wants to do in you. You are uniquely and wonderfully made and prepared for a season such as this. Trust God to do his part. Yes, you do have a responsibility to prepare, study, research, pray, and to seek God. Once you've done that, trust God for the results. The Lord will use you to uplift the brokenhearted, challenge and rebuke evil, and strengthen the weak. Just recognize that it is an honor, not a burden, to be used by God. In the process, do not neglect your family for the sake of ministry and don't take on more than you can chew. Your family is precious, and God wants your ministry, to be a blessing to your family, not an obstacle. So, balance is the key. The calling that God had placed in your life cannot be accomplished without the support of your spouse. You do need the emotional support, love, understanding, and encouragement of your spouse as you strive to serve God the best way you can. The encouragement, affirmation, and support of your spouse is important and will make your ministry more enjoyable and fulfilling. For the spouses present here, please hear what the heart of God has to say to you about your role. On a practical level, when your spouse is about to preach, do everything you can to prevent bad news from being delivered to them. That can wait until after the preaching is done. When the spouse is in the Amen corner, it does a great deal to

encourage, bolster confidence, and boost morale. Most importantly, please pray for them before they go into the pulpit and continue to pray while they are preaching. When they make a mistake in the pulpit, they will know it before you say anything. Be gentle, be positive, and be encouraging in your feedback of the message. It is not easy to do the work of the ministry, and your support will make a world of difference in motivating them to go forward. No matter how long a person has been in ministry, mistakes will be made. As part of my training in Hermeneutics, it is my habit to introduce the message, read a supporting scripture to lay the foundation for the message God wants me to deliver, and then to preach the word. Hermeneutics is a Greek Word that helps you to be an effective preacher by having deep insights and understanding of the Word of God so that it can be conveyed in the right context to the congregation. God had given me a message to share with His people and I did prepare like always. I gave the introduction and went right into the heart of the message. When Pastor Maria was alone with me after the service, she told me that it was a very powerful message, but she added, what happened to the foundational scripture? It was then that I realized that I had forgotten to read the foundational verse. Notice she was not negative, she affirmed me, was gentle in making a point of correction, and she did not do it with malice or arrogance. Yes, fellow ministers, mistakes will happen. Learn to forgive yourself, brush it off, and don't dwell on it. As long as you have the affirmation of God, that is all that matters. Some may appreciate the message and let you know how much it had blessed them. Please don't let that go to your head by inflating your ego. Some may feel it is their obligation to criticize you. Do not allow that criticism to impact your work for God or entertain any doubt about your call to ministry. Your job is done when you have preached what God had placed in your heart. Those in the

congregation can choose to benefit from the message and therefore be blessed, or reject the word, and therefore, go away empty in their soul. You can't control that. But do not let the congregation dictate the message you are to preach. Instead, allow God to inspire you and let the Holy Spirit speak through you. The calling of God is a lifelong assignment, and quitting is not an option. You will have mountain-top experiences and periods of disappointment and discouragement. But your commitment to fulfill your calling by spreading the gospel message does not go away.

Sister Solange, Brother Teddy, Sister Nadine, and Brother Manny, will you render your support, prayer, cooperation, encouragement, and godly counsel to your spouse as they endeavor to serve God in their calling? And now to the congregation, will you open your heart to receive these ministry gifts that God had planted at Mt. Carmel Prayer Chapel for the purpose of helping you to grow and mature in your faith? Will you pray for these spiritual leaders, endeavor to encourage them, cooperate with them, and honor their leadership role? By voluntarily agreeing to do this, God will bless you in a special way. The Bible says in Matthew 10:41 those who receive a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward. You see, those who are called into ministry are duty-bound to look out for your soul so that you are kept in the path of righteousness and truth. When you actively support those called out by God by respecting, honoring, and supporting them, the Lord will reward you in a special way. If you resist, challenge, defy, and fight those called by God, the opposite will be true. There will not be a corresponding blessing that will rest upon you. When you bless the men and women of God, you are setting yourself up for victory, success, favor, and blessings. Make it a point to support these leaders so that they will pray for God's favor, support, deliverance, financial blessings, and

health to be poured over you. If these prayer warriors have to go to God to ask for deliverance because you represent a threat to them, God will not be pleased with that type of defiance on your part.

CONCLUSION: Brother Michael, having heard the challenges that await you, are you still willing to accept the calling of God to work as an ordained assistant pastor? Sister Solange, are you still willing to accept the call of God to serve as an ordained assistant pastor? Brother Vance, will you accept the call to serve as an assistant pastor at Mt. Carmel Prayer Chapel? Brother Teddy, will you accept the challenge of serving as an ordained deacon at Mt. Carmel Prayer Chapel? Sister Rocsan, are you also willing to accept the calling to serve as a Deaconess at Mt. Carmel Prayer Chapel?

Michael Thorpe, Solange Bingwa, Vance Lopez, Teddy Bingwa, and Rocsan Reyes, as a result of your decision to accept the calling of God upon your life, Pastor Maria and I will now lay hands upon each of you in our petition to ask God to impart upon you the Spirit of wisdom, knowledge, and understanding, as well as the supernatural strength needed to fulfill your calling. Please kneel at the altar as a submission to God's will as we surround you in a spirit of unity, love and acceptance of God's will.

Brothers and Sisters, I now present to you, Assistant Pastor Michael Thorpe who will be serving as the Youth Pastor; Assistant Pastor Solange Bingwa who will be in charge of Pastoral Care; Assistant Pastor Vance Lopez who will take the helm of all church Logistics and security; Deacon Teddy Bingwa who will take on the challenge of the Men's ministry program and fund

raising; and Deaconess Rocsan Reyes who will be in charge of women's ministry and various church administrative events. Please give them a round of applause.