



THE COMING DAYS OF FAMINE

a sermon note

ABRAHAM OSHOKO

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

**Tel: 08033483058, 08081338536,
08187282363, 07062408095**

Email: admin@reformationplatform.com

Website: www.reformationplaform.com

THE COMING DAYS OF FAMINE

Amos 8:11-12; Gen.47:13-26

PROPHECIES ON THE COMING FAMINE

1. The witness of Amos

“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD: And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find *it*.” Amos 8:11-12 (KJV)

Famine is a dreadful thing. Economies are destroyed and people die when there is famine. Yet the Lord is saying, **“Behold, the days come...”** this clearly implies that the famine the Lord is speaking about has not yet occurred...for that I am afraid...

Today in the church of God, there is barely revelation of the Word of God anywhere...the little we have are mere handfuls...the food available cannot be compared with the number of people who needs to be fed, yet the Lord is saying, **“Behold, the days come...”**

“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord.”

More surprising is the source of this coming famine... God’s Word says, **“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land...”**

Why the Lord is sending a famine...

When I got to this I point I fearfully asked, Lord, You who will have all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth, why Lord, why will you seemingly sabotage our efforts at spreading the gospel by causing a famine? Lord why will you send

a famine of the Word of God upon us when even the little we have is not enough to feed the entire church worldwide?

God's response is even more fearful, for He said:

“These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, and every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground.” Gen.2:4-5 (KJV)

“For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's.”
Philip. 2:20-21 (KJV)

Famine will cover the whole church because there are no men who are genuinely interested in the affairs of Jesus Christ and in expanding the kingdom of God...if rain of revival and refreshing must come,

there must be men who will be ready to labour in the fields... [Lk.9:57-62 TLB]. If there are no labourers, heaven will not send rain so that the harvests of souls will not be mismanaged and wasted again as we have mismanaged and wasted the great harvests of the past...

Some other translations shed so much light on God's Word in Phil.2:20-21 that even portrays more grimly how bleak the future really is...

“For not even one do I have who is like-souled, one of such a character who would genuinely and with no secondary regard for himself be concerned about your circumstances. For one and all without exception are constantly seeking their own things, not the things of Christ Jesus.”
(Wuest NT)

This becomes a challenge to my spirit... am I also like-minded? Am I genuinely interested in the welfare of the spiritual state of brethren or am I just after my own personal gain? Am I truly concerned

about the father's business or am I just a hireling interested in nothing else but my own profit?

“...For one and all without exception are constantly seeking their own things.”

“Other people are interested only in their own lives. They are not interested in the work of Christ Jesus.” (ICB)

It is fearful to know that the *other people* Paul was referring to here are fellow Christians who were supposedly labouring with him! Men who are supposedly in ministry! Am I an exception? What do I constantly seek? Am I after my own interests? Am I interested in the work of Jesus Christ? If yes, to what extent? Has it consumed me the way it consumed my Master? This is the issue ...

How to know if I am minding the interests of Christ

Jesus expressly commands us to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. My

understanding of and attitude to this instruction in Matt.6:33 are the things that will help me to know whether or not I am minding the interests of Christ...

“I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith...” 2 Timothy 4:7 (KJV)

To seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness [i.e. knowing whether or not I am minding the interests of Jesus] means three things:

- i. Fighting the good fight of faith
- ii. Running my race with my eyes fixed on the finish line
- iii. Being and remaining faithful

I will now take some time to look closely at these three points in order to know clearly where I am...

i. Fighting the good fight of faith

“Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.” 1 Timothy 6:12 (NKJV)

“Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.” Jude 1:3 (NKJV)

To fight the good fight of faith is to expand the kingdom of God by engaging in offensive and defensive spiritual warfare.

If I am focused primarily on the interests of the Lord Jesus, I will understand that He is at war with an opposing kingdom and as an enlisted soldier and officer in His army; this work must completely consume me as a person. There is no other way to fight. 2Tim.2:3-5, Eph.6:11-13.

My personal focus must be that I am contributing my quota to the war efforts of my Father’s kingdom,

carefully making sure that I am standing in my duty post while absolutely interested in every other theatre of operations where our army is fighting to gain more ground from the enemy.

So, first of all, is this my consuming passion? Above all else, am I focusing all my efforts, energy, time, talents and resources into making sure that God's kingdom forcefully progress in my time? As a soldier, have I gotten to that point where I am no longer counting my life dear unto myself, only that I am fully involved in matters of the kingdom, battle ready and actually fighting daily for its cause, whether it costs my life or my death? Those who don't fight like this will not win. Phil.1:20-21, 27; Acts 20:24 [TLB, ERV, CEV], Acts 21:13, Lk.14:26, Matt.16:25, Mk.8:35-36, Jn.12:25 [AMP]

Offensive spiritual warfare

This is expanding the kingdom of God, damaging Satan's kingdom as much as possible by personally preaching, praying or doing other forms of Christian service that leads to the salvation of the souls of men

[individually, in a family, a community, a state or a nation.] and/or their edification. Matt.4:16, Matt.28:19-20, Jude 1:23.

The key word is *personal involvement*. Beyond what our ministry is doing, my personal work is what I am doing in person to ensure that my Father's kingdom expands. Many of us hide under what a ministry is doing. Even the portion of work given to me in the ministry, while it is an opportunity to become busy with the business of the Lord, often, it is viewed as what a brother or a leader asks me to do instead of doing all things as unto the Lord. Eccl.9:10, Jn.9:4 AMP, TLB; Col.3:22-24.

This will be one of the basis by which I will be judged at the judgment seat of Christ. 2Cor.5:10 AMP

Defensive spiritual warfare

This is primarily a fight against errors and false doctrines that creep into the church secretly. It is defending the kingdom of God by contending for

the faith, ensuring that I am rightly dividing the Word of truth and protecting those under my charge from the seductive grip of error and false doctrines. Jude 1:3-4, Acts 6:9-10, Acts 9:22.

“Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.” Jude 1:3 (NKJV)

“Dear friends, while I was making every effort to write you about the salvation we have in common, I found it necessary to write you an appeal, that you vigorously defend the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” (MLB)

“Dear friends, I've dropped everything to write you about this life of salvation that we have in common. I have to write insisting—begging!—that you fight with everything you have in you for

this faith entrusted to us as a gift to guard and cherish.” (MSG)

The tone of Bro. Jude here is desperate... his choice of words confounding. His words are such that if I don't somehow rise up in defense of the faith today, something terrible will happen. False preachers and imposters who are already inside the church will swamp everything with their error, until the genuine faith itself is lost in a flood of error.

All the men who labored faithfully for this kingdom were equally concerned about this defensive aspect of fighting the good fight of faith and they were all united in their response to false doctrine and its peddlers... Acts 15:1-2, 4-11, 13-22; Acts 17:1-4, Acts 18:4-6, 28.

How to fight the good fight of faith

“Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.” 1Timothy 6:12 (NKJV)

If the fight of faith means expanding and defending the kingdom of God, then I ought to know how to fight. It is by laying hold on eternal life. Phil.3:7-14

“Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.” 1Timothy 6:12 (NKJV)

“Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.” Phil 3:12 (KJV)

So what then is eternal life and how can I lay hold of it such that I will fight a good fight of faith?

Eternal Life means three things:

- i. Knowing God personally, intimately and experientially. Jn.17:2-3, Isa.43:10, 1Jn.2:25.
- ii. Having a new life or nature. Becoming glorified [or immortal in body] the way the Lord Jesus looks

like right now. 1Cor.15:42-44, 48-53, Phil.3:21, Rom.8:29-30.

iii. Being a part of and having a part in the kingdom of God. [This means that we will become citizens of an eternal kingdom & we will be kings and priests in that kingdom.] Lk.22:29-30 [*ICB, ERV, Mace, CEV], 1Jn.2:25, Tit.1:2-3, Tit.2:13, Rev.1:6, Rev.5:10; Dan.7:18, 22, 27.

Thus, *laying hold of eternal life* principally means understanding it and having it as my primary focus. Once that happens, I will labour selflessly for I will know what is at stake and what is to be won... 1Cor.9:24-27.

ii. Running my race with my eyes fixed on the finish line

Before I begin to expound the scriptures, it is wise to first define what my race is... ***my race is my call. It is my purpose for living. It is my personal and primary assignment. It is the portion of the work of God***

assigned to me. 2Tim.1:9, Rom.8:28, Eph.1:11-12 [AMP, MSG], Eph.2:10 [AMP, MSG].

Thus, having understood what *my race* is, I now need to learn how to run with my eyes on the finished line.

“And also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules.” 2Timothy 2:5 (NKJV)

“Follow the Lord's rules for doing his work, just as an athlete either follows the rules or is disqualified and wins no prize.” (NLT)

If I will finish my course like Paul, if I will win crowns like all the fathers of old, if I will finish strong, the most important thing I need to learn about my race is this: THERE ARE RULES.

All the brothers that have been rejected by God today, all the men who were formerly men of God but have all been laid aside today, the principal

reason why God is bringing a famine while they are still alive is this: **THEY IGNORED THE RULES.**

Long is the tragic list of those who failed in Bible times. Longer still is the list of those who are failing and have failed today...if a man will mind the business of Jesus Christ, **THERE ARE RULES** he **MUST** follow. I will trust the Holy Spirit to expound these things to me further...

Rules that govern every man's race:

i. It is a race against time [Jn.9:4 TLB, Josh.13:1]

“We must work the works of Him who sent Me and be busy with His business while it is daylight; night is coming on, when no man can work.”
John 9:4 [AMP]

“All of us must quickly carry out the tasks assigned us by the one who sent me, for there is little time left before the night falls and all work comes to an end.” [TLB]

God has His own specific work and business as far as this present world is concerned. That work is the ministry of reconciliation as expressed in making disciples of every nation. I need to understand that this is the general call of the entire church [2Cor.5:18, Matt.28:19-20].

However, there is also a specific call. This is the personal assignment I am given within the great commission. For instance, Paul was sent to preach to the gentiles, Peter was sent to the Jews [2Tim.1:11, Gal.2:8-9 ERV]. Aquila, Priscilla, Silas and Timothy were called into a ministry of helps, to help Paul in different ways [Rom.16:3-4, Acts 15:40-41, 1Tim.1:1-4], just like Aaron and Hur who held up the hands of Moses in the wilderness [Ex.17:10-13].

“All of us must quickly carry out the tasks assigned us by the one who sent me, for there is little time left before the night falls and all work comes to an end.” [TLB]

My own specific call is to edify the church of Jesus [Isa.58:12, Eph.4:12-15]. The dangerous thing about a specific call is the fact that there is a time limit.

ii. My eyes must be permanently fixed on Jesus [to end well]. [Heb.12:2, Matt.14:28-31]

iii. It must be according to the pattern. [Jn.6:38, Heb.8:5]

The life of Jesus is the pattern. 1Pet 2:21, 1Jn.2:6.

iv. It will cost me everything. Lk.14:33, [1Cor.9:24-27, it requires absolute consecration- Ezra 7:10]

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