

Responding to your assignment

Introduction: Last Sunday I spoke about the importance of knowing that we are “*in Christ*”, with a new assignment and a new identity. Today’s message is about responding to that assignment.

Text: Isaiah 41:6-7: *6 Everyone helped his neighbour, and said to his brother, "Be of good courage!" 7 So the craftsman encouraged the goldsmith; He who smooths with the hammer inspired him who strikes the anvil, Saying, "It is ready for the soldering"; Then he fastened it with pegs, that it might not totter.*

For the sake of what I want to share with you today, I won’t go into detail about the prophetic context of this passage but I just want to look at some universal principles we find in this text. These principles will position you and me, as God’s Church, to succeed in our corporate mission and assignment:

1. Unity

This passage describes a somewhat industrious group of people working together, united around a common purpose. Unity is one of those universal basic principles that cause any endeavour to succeed. When the people were building the tower of Babel, although their purpose was wrong, God acknowledged that nothing could stop them:

Genesis 11:6 - *6 And the Lord said, “Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them.”*

The early church embodied this principle well and that is why they succeeded in the purposes of God. At least 8 times, we read in the book of Acts that they were in “*one accord*”.

Acts 2:1 - *“When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.*

Jesus taught us that the kingdom divided will not stand:

Luke 11:17 - *But He, knowing their thoughts, said to them: “Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and a house divided against a house falls.*

2. Relationship

Verse 6 speaks of the ‘neighbour’ and the ‘brother’: there was proximity and there was relationship. Jesus never intended for us to leave isolated and disconnected. Christianity is a relationship with God and with one another. The church succeeds in its purpose when we do life together. That is why we meet in Connect Groups. We are stronger when we come together.

3. Complementary gifts

There were different gifts and different functions: we read about the craftsman, the goldsmith, the one who smooths with the hammer and one who strikes the anvil.

There were no spectators just people busying themselves with different aspects of their tasks. Verse 6 says "Everyone helped his neighbour" – everyone!

There were different tasks for each one of them. The Church is compared to a body with many members, united but with diverse functions.

1 Corinthians 12:12-27: ¹² *For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.*

Within the church there are different members with different gifts, working together for a common goal.

1 Peter 4:10 ¹⁰ *As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*

Ephesians 4:7-16 *But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. ⁸ Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men. **V.16** - ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.*

4. Mutual encouragement and inspiration

6 *Everyone helped his neighbour, and said to his brother, "Be of good courage!"*
7 *So the craftsman encouraged the goldsmith; He who smooths with the hammer inspired him who strikes the anvil,*

a) Everyone helped his neighbour (team work).

(I think of the scripture in **Romans 15:2 NLT:** ² *We should help others do what is right and build them up in the Lord*)

b) Everyone encouraged:

How important it is to use our words to inspire and encourage one another!

Hebrews 10:24-25 NLT ²⁴ *Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works.²⁵ And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.*

Proverbs 10:11 – "*the mouth of the righteous is a well of life*" Inspiration

"He who smooths with the hammer inspired him who strikes the anvil,"

We need inspiration to get the job done. We need to live inspired and we need to inspire others.

According to the dictionary, 'to inspire' means:

To stimulate to action, to influence, to energize, to guide by divine or supernatural inspiration, to exert an animating, enlivening, or invigorating influence on, to spur on.

We can live inspired lives and we should realise the importance of inspiring others.

God Himself inspires us:

Job 32:8 KJV - ⁸ *But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding*

Conclusion

We are the church of the living God. Our assignment is to proclaim God's good news to people who are far away from Him. We are called to demonstrate God's power, to be a place where miracles happen. We are called to impact nations and generations.

We need all hands-on deck, we need doers, we need industrious believers, we need the release of gifts and talents, we need encouragers and facilitators, united in one mind and motivated by the love of God. We need to live inspired lives and inspire others to live the purposes of God.