



# NIGERIAN BAR ASSOCIATION

NATIONAL SECRETARIAT: Plot 1102, Muhammed Buhari Way, Cadastral Zone A00, Central Business District, Abuja Nigerian Tel: +234 800 333 1111  
[www.nigerianbar.org.ng](http://www.nigerianbar.org.ng)

## 2022 CHRISTMAS DAY MESSAGE BY MR. YAKUBU CHONOKO MAIKYAU, OON, SAN, PRESIDENT OF THE NIGERIAN BAR ASSOCIATION

Christmas is the season when we commemorate and celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. In doing so however, we must always remember that the birth of Jesus was a fulfilment of prophesy about 750 years earlier, and it was for the purpose clearly outlined in the prophesy; **to redeem mankind from the sinful nature and its consequences, occasioned by the fall through Adam which led to spiritual death – separation from God (Adam was separated from God).** By this, all men took on the nature of sin and suffered spiritual death.

*<sup>12</sup>Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: <sup>13</sup>(For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. <sup>14</sup>Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.”<sup>1</sup>*

*<sup>12</sup>When Adam sinned, the entire world was affected. Sin entered human experience, and death was the result. And so death followed this sin, casting its shadow over all humanity, because all have sinned. <sup>13</sup>Sin was in the world before Moses gave the written law, but it was not charged against them where no law existed. <sup>14</sup>Yet death reigned as king from Adam to Moses even though they hadn't broken a command the way Adam had. The first man, Adam, was a picture of the Messiah, who was to come.”<sup>2</sup>*

But God, through Jesus Christ, in His death, burial and resurrection accomplished the redemptive, reconciliatory work and by that, gave to all mankind the gift of eternal life.

This gift, when accepted establishes the reconciliation between divinity and humanity; transforms and translates one from the dominion of darkness to the kingdom of God's Dear Son, Jesus Christ. This gift of eternal life is primarily given for the purpose of bringing all men to Christ and to the knowledge of the **truth**, among other things. The gift of eternal life is given for the work of the kingdom of God as outlined in the scripture and/or as maybe directed by the Holy Spirit from time to time. Needless to say that it is the receipt of the gift by faith, that places one in position to be led or guided by the Holy Spirit for the general or specific work assigned by God to all of us.

It is the work we do with the gift that we have as demonstrated in Jesus' teaching themed the **'parable of the Talent'**, that will qualify us to be ushered into our Father's house when we return to Him, with a **"Well done"** and not a **"Welcome"**, indicating that we were and are all expected to use the gift we have received through Christ Jesus. It is the profit we make with our 'talent' - the gift of eternal life, through the grace of God made available to us that will elicit the reception **"Well done, thou good and faithful servant"** - but now the redeemed - sons and daughters. Therefore, while we celebrate the birth of Christ, this must be our ultimate focus - we should use the privilege of this season to remind ourselves of this truth.

<sup>1</sup> (Romans 5:12-14 King James Version)

<sup>2</sup> (Romans 5:12-14 The Passion Translation)

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We must graduate from our traditional celebration of Christmas, where we focus on the festivities, merriments and celebrations, to making the season a time of stock-taking; assessing the use to which we have put the gift of eternal life that we have in-Christ: ***“For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost”***. In-Christ, we are not limited in our capacity to undertake our God-given assignments. We have all things that pertain to life and godliness and we do have exceeding great and precious promises as partakers of the divine nature of God.<sup>3</sup> We need to deploy what we have!

I believe, it was the understanding of this **truth**, that made Apostle Paul, to declare that ***“I am a debtor to both Greeks and to Barbarians, both to wise and to unwise. So as much as is in me, I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also”***<sup>4</sup>. And having paid his debts (or as it were, settled his ‘creditors’) Apostle Paul went on to say, ***“And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the Kingdom of God, will see my face no more. Therefore, I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole Counsel of God”***<sup>5</sup> After demonstrating a life of focus and understanding of his assignment, Paul declared ***“But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.”***<sup>6</sup>

Paul then concluded with what, in my opinion, is one of the most confident declarations a believer can make when he said; ***“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: <sup>8</sup>Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”***<sup>7</sup> This means you and I can also assume our responsibilities and make such a bold declaration. We all can say, like Apostle Paul said: ***“... I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek”***<sup>8</sup>.

Apostle Paul used ‘**as much as is in him**’, to declare the Counsel of God. Apostle Peter told the lame at the gate called beautiful, ***“Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk”***<sup>9</sup>. The good news is; what Apostles Paul and Peter had and used, we also have; the exact same eternal life they carried, which was responsible for their exploits in ministry is exactly what we carry as well.

However, the questions are; Do we know what we have? If we do, what are we doing with what we have? How are we using what we have? When we look around us, who do we see? Do we see people who need to share in the gift that we have freely received - as those we are indebted to? If we do, how compassionate are we towards those we are so indebted to? Are we at all, concerned about ***“settling”*** our indebtedness to them, in the manner that we saw in the lives of Apostles Paul, Peter and the early Church, who discharged themselves of their ***“indebtedness”***? We must always remember that, in-Christ, we have all that it takes to settle our ***“debts”***, for we have been blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in-Christ Jesus<sup>10</sup>. That is all it takes! It is inexhaustible and we have Him – the Blessing!! And what is

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<sup>3</sup> (2 Peter 1: 3-4)

<sup>4</sup> (Romans 1:14-15)

<sup>5</sup> (Acts 20:25-27)

<sup>6</sup> (Acts 20:24)

<sup>7</sup> (2 Timothy 4:7-8)

<sup>8</sup> (Romans 1:16)

<sup>9</sup> (Acts 3:6)

<sup>10</sup> (Eph. 1:3)

more, we have been clearly told what we owe and it is in the use of what we owe that we pay our debt. ***“Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.”***<sup>11</sup> So, we owe all men to love them and it is in love that the debt is settled. What we saw in the lives of Paul and Peter were the expressions of Love to mankind and we have that Love in us because the Love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. It is this same Love that moved the Father to give His only begotten Son.

This is what Jesus Himself taught when as the anointed One, He went about doing good and healing all those that were oppressed by the devil, for the Lord was with Him.<sup>12</sup> That is why we are told not to be weary in doing good because the ability to do good is of God. We all must love one another, and this is expressed by doing good to all. Anytime you seem not to know what to do, only ask, what would Jesus do (WWJD) in the circumstance? And you will find that in all situations Jesus did and would do good out of love and compassion. We also can always love, show compassion, and do good. Yes, we can!

As we celebrate Christmas and ponder over these words with our hearts open to the help of the Holy Spirit, we will find grace to take up the responsibilities that come with our redemption through faith in the birth, death, burial, resurrection, ascension and the present ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ, as He sits on the right hand of God our Father. It will certainly gladden the Father’s Heart to see His sons and daughters, utilize the treasure deposited in them for the profiting of all mankind.

Our nation no doubt is passing through perilous times. The peace of the nation is greatly challenged. We must without abdicating our civic responsibilities and the need to apply ourselves fully from the human standpoint to the business of recovering, reforming and repositioning our nation, pay very close attention to the command in the scripture that we pray for our leaders without any qualification. That is one of the keys to our quiet and peaceful co-existence, and it pleases God when we do so. The combination of our honest, purposeful, and sincere work as a people, with the discharge of our divine obligation to pray for our leaders for wisdom, courage and discernment, will no doubt lead us to the productive nation that we all desire to build. I, therefore, call on us all to be guided by the scripture which says:

***“I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; <sup>2</sup>For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. <sup>3</sup>For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;”***<sup>13</sup>

***“First of all, I ask that you pray for all people. Ask God to bless them and give them what they need. And give thanks. 2 You should pray for rulers and for all who have authority. Pray for these leaders so that we can live quiet and peaceful lives—lives full of devotion to God and respect for him. 3 This is good and pleases God our Savior.”***<sup>14</sup>

***“Most of all, I’m writing to encourage you to pray with gratitude to God. Pray for all men with all forms of prayers and requests as you intercede with intense passion. And pray for every political leader and representative, so that we would be able to live tranquil, undisturbed lives, as we worship the awe-inspiring God with pure hearts. It is pleasing to our Savior-God to pray for them.”***<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> (Romans 13:8)

<sup>12</sup> (Acts 10:38).

<sup>13</sup> (1 Timothy 2:1-3 King James Version)

<sup>14</sup> (1 Timothy 2:1-3 Easy to Read Version)

<sup>15</sup> (1 Timothy 2:1-3 The Passion Translation)

When we pray, “*first of all*”, or “*most of all*”, for “*all men*”, or “*all people*”, and those who have authority; our political leaders and representatives without any qualification, then we shall remain focused to bring our individual supplies to the system and light up the polity. And when the eyes are focused, the body will be full of light.<sup>16</sup>

As we go into the New Year, 2023 and prepare for the forth coming general elections, let our conduct and participation in the exercise of our constitutional franchise in electing our leaders or representatives at all levels, be undergirded by honesty, sincerity, patriotism and the desire to build a nation that will be our pride.

Nigeria must succeed, Nigeria cannot fail under our watch, and I call on all Nigerians to brace up for the challenges ahead. Let us make the necessary sacrifices for the future of our nation

I wish you all a merry Christmas and a blessed New Year ahead.

Long Live the Nigerian Bar Association!

Long Live the Federal Republic of Nigeria!!

God Bless the Good and Hardworking People of Nigeria!!!



**Yakubu Chonoko Maikyau, OON, SAN**  
**PRESIDENT**

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<sup>16</sup> (Luke 11:34)