I want to share further with you on 'Receiving through servants of God'. And last week we talked about the reward of a servant of God, which Jesus mentions in Matthew 10. We said the reward of a servant of God has to do with the blessings that are associated with his ministry. But then, it is not the servant of God that will determine the blessings that are or that will be associated with his ministry. It is God who has sent him that will determine the blessings associated with his ministry. So, no servant of God can make available to you what God has not made available through his ministry.

This, of course, is why those of us who see ourselves as servants of God have to be careful about making promises to people. Today, especially when you listen to announcements about the programs of some servants of God, you will hear all kinds of promises being made to people: things that will happen to them when they come to their programs or when they come to visit them.

Of course, when God sends someone, He intends to communicate His blessings through that person and through his ministry. But it is not for the person to begin to speak as if he were the source of the blessings. You are not the source of the blessings. God is the source of the blessings. And so there are promises you are not warranted to make to people. You can tell people to trust God in your life, which is one of the things we are going to be talking about this morning. But the results of their trust in God through your ministry are up to God, not up to you.

Now think of the woman with the issue of blood. She told herself that if she could touch the hem of the garment of Jesus, she would be well. And when she did, she became well. Do you know Jesus wasn't expecting her to come and touch Him? And when she touched Jesus, Jesus could not even stop healing from being communicated to her. That shows that it is not about any of us. It is about God. Even our Lord Jesus Christ had to count on God for everything He did. He had to count on God for every miracle He performed, for every sign He performed.

But I'm saying this just to let us understand that, as servants of God, there are things we are not warranted to say to people. There are things we should not promise anybody, because we are not the ones to give them those things. It is God who will give them. And when you have made all kinds of promises to people about things that will happen to them when they come to you, and then they come to you and those things do not happen to them, how do you think they will feel? What would they think of you and of the God that you represent? You see why some people say all kinds of nonsense about God today. They talk like that because of their experiences with various ministers of the gospel.

Well, let's just keep it at that and move on. We are talking about receiving through servants of God, and we need to know how to receive what God seeks to make available to us through them. Those are the things we are going to talk about this morning. The first way to receive whatever it is that God has made available through a servant of God is to embrace the person as a servant of God. That's the first way to receive anything that God wants you to have through any of His servants.

Now, of course, I should also say this: there are a whole lot of things you can receive from God directly, without meeting any servant of God. I need to make that point clear because there are people who don't think they can receive anything from God until they meet a servant of God. There are a whole lot of things you can receive from God without meeting any servant of God, and that's because you have equal access to God. There is no servant of God who has more access to God than you.

I want you to keep that in mind. I know there are times that some so-called servants of God may give people the impression that they have more access to God than others. That is not true. Every child of God has equal access to him. Some of us may know how to take advantage of that access more than others, but all of us have equal access to him. As long as you embrace Jesus, you have abundant access to God.

In Ephesians chapter 3, verse 12, Paul says, ***"In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence."*** **(NIV)** In whom? In Christ Jesus! In Christ Jesus, we all may approach God with freedom and confidence. Notice that Paul does not say, "In him, pastors may approach God with freedom and confidence." Or is that what is in your Bible? Does he say, "In him, apostles may approach God with freedom and confidence"? Hello? Is that what is in your Bible? Or does he say, "In him, evangelists may approach God with freedom and confidence"? No, he said, "In him, we may approach God…" That is all of us. Every one of us may approach God with freedom and confidence in Christ Jesus.

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It does not matter your status. It does not matter your age. It doesn't matter your color. It does not matter your sex. It does not matter your marital status. It doesn't matter your social status. You can approach God with freedom and confidence. You can receive from God anything that he has provided, all by yourself, without anybody's help.

Servants of God are helpers. They are to help us where we lack understanding of the will of God. They are to help us where our faith is probably weak, so that we can receive what God has provided for us. But we do not need to wait until we see them before we approach God to receive from Him. That is because we all have equal access to God.

There is a similar Scripture in this same book of Ephesians, chapter 2, verse 18. It says, ***"For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.***" **(NIV)** Who is Paul talking about here? He is talking about the Lord Jesus Christ. And he is saying that through Him both Jews and Gentiles have access to God by the Holy Spirit. Do you have the Holy Spirit in you? If the answer is 'Yes', then you have access to God.

Now I'm not saying this to give you the impression that you have to seclude yourself or separate yourself from other people of God and say, "Well, since I have direct access to God and I don't need anybody to access God or need to fellowship with other people of God." That would be a mistake. It would be a mistake because you are a part of a body, and you cannot exist in isolation. There are things that you can only access or that you can only receive from God, as you fellowship with other members of the body of Christ. But the point I'm making is that you do not need to wait until you see anybody before you approach God about any matter of your life.

Think about Hannah, for example. Who did Hannah wait for? Perhaps she had been waiting for somebody who would go and pray for her to deal with her barrenness. But a day came when she approached God by herself. She prayed to God by herself, without anybody's assistance. She did not even go to meet Eli about her situation. She just went to pray herself. Did God answer her prayer or not? He did. **(Cf. 1 Samuel 1:1-20)**

Well, what I am saying is that because of our lack of understanding of the will of God in certain areas of our lives or because of the weakness of our faith in certain areas, there are times that we may only be able to receive what God has provided through certain individuals He has sent to us. And we have to learn how to take advantage of their presence in our lives. God sent them for us. God equipped them for us. God has gifted them for us. So, it only makes sense for us to take advantage of their presence in our lives.

Every servant of God has been gifted for the people of God, not for himself. Hello, are you with me? If someone has prophetic gifts, for instance, those prophetic gifts were given to him by God for others, not for himself. If someone has evangelistic gifts, those gifts have been given to him by God for others, not for himself. The same applies to any spiritual gift. It has not been given for the benefit of that person alone but for the benefit of others as well. And it will be up to others to take advantage of the presence of that gift in that person's life. Otherwise, there are certain things that God wants them to have that they may never have.

Well then, how do we receive what God has provided through His servants that He has sent to us? I said, first, we must see them as servants of God. We must see them as people who have been sent by God to us. If we do not see them in that light, then we will not be able to trust God in their lives to deliver to us whatever He wants us to have through them.

Again, you must understand that God is at work in the ministry of every servant of His for our benefit. That's why we must see them as God sees them. God sees them as His servants. We too must see them as His servants. Otherwise, it does not matter how anointed they are, it doesn't matter how gifted they are, their gifts may not benefit us.

St. Mark's Gospel, chapter 6. Let's quickly read from there. Are you with me? Yes, Lord. I say you should turn to St. Mark's Gospel, chapter 6. Reading from verse 1, it says:

"Jesus left there and went to his hometown, accompanied by his disciples. When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were amazed. 'Where did this man get these things?' they asked. 'What is this wisdom that has been given him? What are these remarkable miracles he is performing? Isn't this the carpenter? Isn't this Mary's son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas, and Simon? Aren't his sisters here with us?' And they took offense at him. Jesus said to them, 'A prophet is not without honor except in his own town, among his relatives, and in his own home.' He

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could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. He was amazed at their lack of faith." **(Mark 6:1-5 NIV)**

We're given a brief account here of something that happened once when Jesus went to His hometown. That, of course, was not His first time there. But this time, He went there as a servant of God. He went there for the sole purpose of ministering to them. Unfortunately, they took offense at Him. Why? Familiarity! They thought that they knew Him because He grew up among them. They knew His house. They knew His father. They knew His mother. They knew His brothers. They knew His sisters. He grew up among them. He used to be a carpenter. He made tables for them. He had made chairs for some. He had probably roofed the houses of some people for them.

So, when He came back and began to teach the word of God in their synagogue, they were, first of all, amazed at the wisdom with which He was speaking. They could not relate. If Jesus all along had been manifesting unusual wisdom among them, they would have been able to relate. That's not to say that Jesus was not filled with wisdom when He was born. He was filled with wisdom when He was born, but, as we are also told in Scripture, He increased in wisdom, right?

Then, when He was growing up, He wasn't going around preaching, because it wasn't yet time for Him to begin to preach. So, He lived like a normal child. He grew up like a normal child among them. There was nothing spectacular about Him that would draw attention to Him. If there had been spectacular things about Him, they would have said, "Oh, we're not surprised. It's always been like this. We've always known that He's going to be outstanding." But there was nothing spectacular about Him to draw their attention to Him.

So, when He came back and began to teach the word of God in their synagogue, they were like, "What? Where did this guy get His wisdom? When did He become as wise as this? Is that not Joseph's son? Isn't that the carpenter? Isn't that the brother of James? Where is all this coming from?" They were supposed to be happy that one of their own was being used by God, but they were not happy.

It's not a new thing, then, if you find people who are unhappy that you are becoming successful. There are people who never thought you would become successful, and now they see you successful. People who never thought you would even make it out of primary school, and now you are a graduate. You think it's every one of them who will be happy? No, it's not everyone who will say, "Wow, thank God for your life." Some are going to despise you. They are going to look at you like you are nothing. "Okay, so what has he accomplished? What has he accomplished that no one else has accomplished?" It's not a new thing. Jesus was treated to the same thing when He went to His hometown.

Now, because of that, Mark says Jesus could not do any miracles there. Jesus could not. Maybe I should draw your attention to that verse again. Look at it, verse 5: ***"He could not do any miracles there."*** He could not. Do you know what that means? It means that He tried. But it did not work. Can you say someone cannot do something if you have not given him the opportunity to try? You can't. The only way to conclude that someone cannot do something is if you have given the person the opportunity to try to do it and the person couldn't. So, Jesus actually wanted to do miracles there, but He could not. Why? Their lack of faith! They saw Him as the son of Joseph, not as the Son of God. They didn't see Him as a servant of God. They saw Him as the son of Joseph, as the son of Mary, as the carpenter.

So, you may have known a servant of God as a carpenter. You may have known him as a bricklayer. But when he stands before you, you had better not see the bricklayer or the carpenter. You had better see the servant of God. Otherwise, his ministry will not bless you. That will not be because that ministry is not supposed to bless you. It will be because your attitude towards it is wrong.

Again, think about Jesus. He could not do any miracles in His hometown. By the way, that's why you should not bother yourself if you lay hands on someone and pray for the person and the person doesn't get well. Just go your way. It's not your problem, because you won't be the first person who will do that and it will not work. Even Jesus did it. He told those who were blind to see, and they did not see. He told those who were deaf to hear, and they did not hear. He asked the lame to walk, and they did not get up. And the Bible says He was amazed at their lack of faith. Do you know what that means? He said, "What? What is this?" Everywhere He turned, He met unbelief. So His ministry could not bless them.

I'm saying that to let you know that Jesus' ministry did not automatically bless people. People had to respond appropriately to His ministry for them to be blessed. Those who responded appropriately to His ministry were blessed. When I started, I mentioned

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the case of the woman with the issue of blood. This woman did not even want Jesus to touch her. She did not want Jesus to pray for her. She just said, "All I need to do is to touch the hem of his garment and I will be fine." And she did, and she was fine. Some others just wanted to be where Jesus was, because they knew that power would be coming out of Him. Just by standing in close proximity to Jesus, people got well, because power was coming out of Him to heal them. **(Cf. Luke 6:19)**

That has to do with attitude: the right attitude. You have to have the right attitude towards the ministry of any servant of God for their ministry to bless you. Otherwise, it won't bless you. The servant of God who is ministering to you may have been your classmate in school, but at the point that he is ministering to you, do not see your former classmate. See God's servant. That servant of God may be your younger brother or sister, but at the point that he or she is ministering to you, do not see your younger brother or sister. See God's servant. Otherwise, his or her ministry will not be a blessing to you.

Even in our meetings, someone who is not known among us may stand in front of us to share the word of God with us. That person is not known as a pastor, but that person is given the opportunity to stand before us and share the word of God with us. At the point that he is sharing the word of God with us, we have to see beyond the person, the brother we used to play together with or the sister we used to laugh and joke with. You have to see God's servant at that time. Otherwise, whatever the person is doing at that time will not be a blessing to you. Can you see what I'm talking about? So, if you want to fully participate in the blessings of the ministry of any servant of God, you have to, first of all, receive that person as a servant of God.

You know, we read last week from Matthew's Gospel, chapter 10: ***"Whoever receives a prophet as a prophet will receive a prophet's reward."*** You have to receive him the way God sees him. You have to see him the way God sees him. Otherwise, the blessings associated with His ministry will not be yours.

Let me give you one more scripture this morning before we close. Matthew's Gospel, chapter 23, from verse 37. This is Jesus talking:

"Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing. Your house is left to you desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'" **(Matthew 23:37-39 NIV)**

The Lord is addressing the city of Jerusalem and drawing their attention to their wrong attitude towards all the servants of God that had been sent to them. Instead of embracing those servants of God, they treated them shamefully. They even killed some. Last of all, God sent His Son to them: one who is more than a prophet, more than an evangelist, more than an apostle, more than a Bible teacher. God sent Him to them, and He says, ***"Look, I have longed to gather you as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing."*** But they were unwilling to embrace Him. They were unwilling to accept Him as one sent to them by God to deliver them. So He says, ***"Your house is left to you desolate."*** In other words, there will be no improvement in your condition. His ministry did not leave their condition changed.

All this explains why people can be attending church meetings week after week and their conditions will not change. People can be hearing the word of God week after week and their conditions will not change. Their attitude is wrong. Most of the time, it is about your attitude. If there are things that God wants you to have that you do not have, you need, first of all, to check your attitude. If your attitude is wrong, there are things that will never be yours. If your attitude is right, there are things you will not struggle to have. You will not struggle to receive them from God if your attitude is right.

Why is it that, most of the time, when people go to prayer mountains, they receive easily? One of the reasons is that they go to those prayer mountains with the right attitude. They go there prepared. They prepare their minds. Some of them will have been praying for hours before the program starts, because they are determined to receive and eager to receive. And so, before whoever is there as the prophet begins to pray for them, things are already happening. Then they say, "Look at that prayer mountain. Things are happening there. But in our church nothing is happening." The problem is not with your church. The problem is with your attitude. And that is why you need to keep going to mountains for things that you can receive where you are.

"Your house is left to you desolate." Your condition will not change until you say, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." The moment you say, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord," or "you are blessed for coming to me from the Lord," you are already receiving. Things will begin to happen in your life without anybody praying for you. Things will begin to happen in your life because your attitude is right.

And this, again, is why sometimes you find people whom we do not consider spiritual moving forward in life faster than many of us. We have become so familiar with the things of God that there are things that don't move us. But one whom you regard as unserious, or as an unbeliever, will show up at the church meeting ready to receive. And before anybody prays for the person,

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the person has received. That person will go back with testimonies and say, "Ah, I went to that church just once, and everything changed about my life." But the ones who have been attending the same church for years, their conditions have remained permanent. Their attitude is wrong.

So, the point I am making all along is that if you are going to be blessed by anybody's ministry, your attitude towards that person's ministry must be right. You must receive the person as a servant of God. Is that clear this morning? Let's spend some time and talk to the Lord about the things we have heard.

Key Notes

1. **God determines the blessings.** The blessings tied to a ministry are decided by God, not by the servant. Servants of God must be careful not to promise what only God can give.
2. **Every believer has direct access to God.** In Christ, all may approach God with freedom and confidence (Ephesians 3:12), whatever their status, age, color, sex, or marital or social standing. Hannah went to God herself.
3. **Direct access is not a reason for isolation.** We are part of a body, and some things can only be received through fellowship with other members of the body of Christ.
4. **God sends servants for our benefit.** Because of limited understanding or weak faith, there are times we can receive what God has provided only through the servants he has sent. Their gifts are given for others, so we must take advantage of their presence.
5. **The first way to receive is to embrace the person as a servant of God.** See them as God sees them, as people sent by God to us. Otherwise, their gifts may not benefit us, however anointed or gifted they are.
6. **Familiarity can block the blessing.** In his hometown, people saw only the carpenter, Mary's son, and "he could not do any miracles there" **(Mark 6:5)**. When a classmate, a younger sibling, or an old friend ministers, we must see God's servant.
7. **Ministry does not bless automatically.** People must respond rightly. The woman with the issue of blood received because of her attitude, while unbelief limited what Jesus could do among his own townspeople.
8. **Attitude is decisive.** Jerusalem rejected the servants God sent and was left desolate **(Matthew 23:37–39)**. People can attend church for years with no change, while someone who comes prepared and eager to receive can be blessed at once.
9. **Receive the one who comes in the Lord's name.** When your attitude toward a servant of God is right, things begin to happen in your life, even before anybody prays for you.

Scriptures Referenced

- **Ephesians 3:12** (approaching God with freedom and confidence)
- **1 Samuel 1** (Hannah praying for herself)
- **Mark 5:25–34** (the woman with the issue of blood)
- **Mark 6:1–6** (Jesus in his hometown)
- **Matthew 10:41** (receiving a prophet as a prophet)
- **Matthew 23:37–39** (Jerusalem's unwillingness)

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