

SERMON HANDOUT for January 1, 2023



State of Ecclesia Address

ENGAGE!

Luke 14:23 NKJV

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THE STATE OF ECF

We have come through a Global Pandemic!

Since our return to In-Person Services in June 2021:

- We have adhered to all Covid Protocols (masks and social distancing)
- We have restricted ourselves from in-person contact (not passing offering plates, communion trays, not having altar calls, and not having altar invitations to accept Christ).
- We have been in this space for over a year and nine months.
- Our Purpose was to create a safe space to worship that showed we take our families' concerns to heart.
- Our Purpose was to give our families a sense of security regarding our care for them and to avoid making them feel pressured or pushed into do something they were not fully comfortable with.

The Pandemic has passed! It is going on 3 years, yet many have not returned to church for various reasons.

But NOW it is time!!!...The plan and mandate for 2023 is to **ENGAGE!**

We are to **ENGAGE** based on the command of God, through Jesus in the Word!

Luke 14:23 NKJV is a Command to **ENGAGE!!!**

ENGAGE means: *to attract and hold by influence or power.*

- *The idea is of positive confrontation.*
- *"Compel" (Greek: anankason, verb: aorist active imperative second person singular)*
- *To compel someone to act in a particular manner—'to compel, even to force, if necessary.'*
- *In English: 'compel' means to drive or urge forcefully or irresistibly: to cause to do or occur by overwhelming pressure (i.e., Public opinion compelled her to sign the bill).*

Philippians 2:13 NKJV

God's power is available to us, and it will do most of the work. But it is not fully engaged without us doing something to excess that power.

THREE AREAS OF ENGAGEMENT THAT GOD EXPECTS:

1. _____

Quote: "Home is Where the Heart Is!" is by Gaius Plinius Secundus, a Roman Naval Commander, known to historians as Pliny the Elder (a.d.79). Songs by this title were sung by:

- Elvis Presley on movie soundtrack for Kid Galahad, 1962
- Bobby Womack in 1976
- Gladys Knight and Pips in 1977

Meaning: Your home will always be the place for which you feel the deepest affection, no matter where you are.

- ✝ Mark 5:19 - Jesus told him, "GO HOME!"
- God has called us to GO HOME by focusing on our Oikos (our spiritual household) to Evangelize - Energize - Encourage!!

2. _____

a) To Engage Heaven, we need to remember what Heaven does:

- ✝ Psalm 19:1-4 NKJV
- ✝ Psalm 29:1-2 NKJV

b) We engage Heaven through WORSHIP!

Worship involves making time to spend alone with God.

- ✝ Psalm 5:1-3 KJV
- ✝ Psalm 55:1 KJV

c) Quiet time is the key to Engaging Heaven!

3. _____

We Engage Hell by Spiritual Warfare! —

- "Spiritual warfare is very real. There is a furious, fierce, and ferocious battle raging in the realm of the spirit between the forces of God and the forces of evil. Warfare happens every day, all the time. Whether you believe it or not, you are in a battlefield. You are in warfare." —Pedro Okoro

Consider:

- ✝ Matthews 16:18-19 KJV
- ✝ Luke 10:18-20 NKJV
- ✝ I John 4:4 NKJV
- ✝ Jude 20-23 KJV