



RIVERS OF JOY MINISTRIES

NEWSLETTER
1 April 2014

Dear Pastor

Greetings in the wonderful name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. I thank God for your life and commitment to this ministry and above all to God's service. Here is my latest pastoral letter for you all. Please share it with your people. It is very important that your people can be blessed with these great teachings.

SPECIAL NOTE

You will see that from this month we are adopting a new style to communicate with you all. From this month expect to receive (and so please check your email inbox regularly!):

- a monthly Pastoral letter containing a Biblical message from Bishop Alex and a leadership lesson from Bishop or other writers;
- a monthly Rojlm Updates containing information of Bishop's travels, news from our churches and other important information that we need to share with you;
- a monthly Prayer requests containing requests for prayer or testimonials from our churches worldwide.

These great developments are the fruit of your suggestions and I thank all those who have expressed their views on this issue. My personal commitment is to keep you in touch with me and the whole ministry as much as possible and this is a great step forward in this direction. I hope that you will enjoy the changes.

The Word of God

Your position in Christ is the key to victory.

In a well known passage of Scripture the Apostle Paul makes an incredible statement. In Rom 8: 31-33 Paul says, "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. " In other words your victory in life, your provisions, your healing, your peace and joy, your marriage and family.... all things rest upon one thing and one thing only; that is your position in Christ. You see God loves us very much and wants to bless us. But.... there is a problem, our sinfulness! And though God loves us His love cannot come through to us unless and until we are ready to acknowledge our sins and repent of them.

You see, there is no way that you or I could get ourselves right with God. That's why Jesus had to come to earth, take human form, die on the cross and defeat sin by paying on Himself the price of our unrighteousness. But this is what Paul is talking about: IF we are truly in Christ, IF we have died on the cross with Jesus then we are totally and completely justified because no one can do that apart from God. Now, because we are justified and therefore we are God's children that means that we are part of God's own family, we are brothers and sisters of Jesus and because of that.... no one

will come against us! Because coming against us will mean coming against God Himself! Which means that as long as we are with God and in God we are invincible, overcomers, victorious!

School of leadership

What are warning flags to watch out for when considering a man as a potential elder?

In general, a church should not affirm any man as an elder who does not meet the biblical qualifications laid out in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. Here are several warning flags which a church should heed:

- 1) A contrarian spirit. If you say "black" he'll say "white". An elder must build unity, not stir up division.
- 2) A lack of spiritual fruit. If a man is not already shepherding the flock he won't begin to do so just because you give him a title. An elder should be a man who is already hard at work building up the body.
- 3) An unsupportive wife. Eldering done well is a demanding task. It takes time to teach and disciple and exercise hospitality. Is the man's wife happy to further her husband's ministry even when that requires a considerable sacrifice on her part? If not, it would be unwise to appoint this man as an elder.
- 4) A record of broken relationships behind him.
- 5) A "me" focus. Every time he opens his mouth, whether in a Sunday school classroom or at a restaurant table, he seems to have his own interest in mind and not everyone else's. An elder must be a man who's always looking out for the good of the body.
- 6) An inability to encourage others.
- 7) An inability to show compassion and tenderness. A man may be rigorously strong and biblical, but if he can't be tender and compassionate he'll make a poor shepherd.
- 8) A tendency to exaggerate and embellish. An elder should be a man whose word is utterly trustworthy.
- 9) A tendency to prize creativity and innovation over biblical faithfulness. This is not to say that creativity and innovation are bad things, but they must always be servants to faithfulness to God's Word.
- 10) An inability to admit he's wrong.
- 11) An inability to submit to other leaders.
- 12) A refusal to be inconvenienced or make sacrifices in order to serve others.
- 13) A feeling of entitlement to the office.

God bless you all!

Bishop Alex Tana

General Overseer