**SIGNPOSTS TO A DECLINING MINISTRY I**

Samson started ministry strong, anointed and almost invincible. However, refusal to listen to counsel, wrong marriages and fornication led to declining anointing until he became functionally powerless. His ministry, influence and relevance steadily declined until the enemy eventually overpowered him entirely.

Ministries don’t just decline and become irrelevant. There is a path that leads to this and the path is dotted with signposts which we can study in order to avoid similar disasters in ministry (Romans 15:4; 4:23; 1 Corinthians 9:10).

**INDIFFERENCE TO GOD’S VISION**

Habakkuk 2:2,3; Jonah 1:1-4; Matthew 9:36-38; Luke 10:17-20; Acts 5:41; 20:24; Luke 6:22,23; Romans 5:3; 2 Corinthians 11:28; 12:10,15

Vision impelled the prophets to action, compelled them to prophesy and empowered them to strive for God amidst great opposition. Quality vision is the bedrock of a quality and dynamic ministry. When the vision, although very plain on the table no longer moves us, talk less of making us run, then ministry is on the decline (Habakkuk 2:2,3; Jonah 1:1-4; Proverbs 29:18). Indifference to God’s vision is clear evidence of a declining ministry.

When the vision of the promised land has blurred, when the faith for conquest is no longer alive and kicking in our hearts, when we are prone to talk about and plan our going back to Egypt, it is evidence of a declining ministry (Numbers 14:1-28).

When we no longer count it joy to suffer for the sake of Christ, when the care of all the churches is no longer our sleeping dreams and waking vision, when our priority is no longer that of fulfilling the ministry that we once received with joy from God, then ministry is definitely on the decline (Acts 5:41; 20:24; Luke 6:22,23; Romans 5:3; 2 Corinthians 11:28; 12:10,15).

When the sight of the perishing multitude no longer moves us with compassion, when happenings in ministry no longer fill us with excitement and awe, ministry is on the decline (Matthew 9:36-38; Luke 10:17-20).

When whether the Great Commission is being fulfilled or not does not bother us, when whether the church is triumphing or is being downtrodden by the enemy gives us no concern, ministry is definitely on the decline.

**INSENSITIVITY TO GOD’S VOICE**

Numbers 22:12,18,19,32-35; 24:1; Isaiah 42:19: Jeremiah 6:10; Ezekiel 12:2; Zechariah 7:11; 2 Timothy 4:4; Judges 14:1-3; 16:1-28; Isaiah 50:4,5; Proverbs 8:34; 15:31; Luke 8:15

When like Balaam we are no longer sensitive to God’s voice and direction whether direct or implied, when despite God’s clear disapproval and opposing action we still go ahead to execute a particular project, ministry is definitely on the decline. We have then stepped out of the sanctuary and are headed in the direction of the mortuary. It is only a matter of time before we abandon divine prophecy in favour of satanic divination and enchantment (Numbers 22:12,18,19,32-35; 24:1; Isaiah 42:19: Jeremiah 6:10; Ezekiel 12:2; Zechariah 7:11; 2 Timothy 4:4).

When like Samson we disregard God’s voice coming directly or through godly associates, ministry is on the decline. It is only a matter of time before we end up in the Philistine dungeon grinding corn for the enemy (Judges 14:1-3; 16:1-28).

Is God still opening our ears morning by morning to hear (Isaiah 50:4,5; Proverbs 8:34; 15:31; Luke 8:15) or are we already dull of hearing? (Matthew 13:15; Acts 28:27; Hebrews 5:11).

**INDEPENDENCE FROM THE GREAT VINE**

John 15:1-8; 3:27; Isaiah 5:1-7; Jeremiah 2:21; 23:16,21,25,26,32; 10:23; 2 Corinthians 3:5; Psalm 127:1; 123:1,2; 2 Chronicles 20:12

Christ is the true vine and we are the branches. Ministry can only be fruitful and dynamic as we remain attached to the vine, submitting ourselves to the wise pruning of the Father, the husbandman. The moment we detach ourselves from the vine, we forfeit the supply of spiritual nutrients and sap from the main stem. This will lead to gradual drying up and fruitfulness (John 15:1-8; Jeremiah 2:21; Isaiah 5:1-7).

Dynamic ministry is exercised in the power of the Holy Spirit and in the grace of God. However when we detach ourselves from the great vine and try to exercise ministry in the energy of the flesh and according to human wisdom and organisation, ministry will definitely start to decline (2 Corinthians 3:5; John 3:27; Jeremiah 10:23; Psalm 127:1; 123:1,2; 2 Chronicles 20:12). Prophecy will still be coming out of our minds and mouth even when God has not spoken (Jeremiah 23:16,21,25,26,32).

**INSURBODINATION IN THE GREAT VOCATION**

Ecclesiastes 4:13; Jeremiah 32:33; 44:16; Psalm 78:8; Numbers 16:1-35; 1 Chronicles 21:1-30; 1 Peter 5:5,6; Hebrews 13:7,17; 6:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:12,13; Ezekiel 3:17

Our calling and election is a great vocation (Ephesians 4:1; 2 Peter 1:10). However there is no level of grace and anointing, knowledge and maturity that we will reach where we no longer need God’s counselling, advice or warning.

When we become like the old, foolish king who would not be admonished, ministry is definitely on the decline (Ecclesiastes 4:13; Psalm 32:9; 78:8; Exodus 32:9; 1 Samuel 8:19; 2 Chronicles 24:19; Jeremiah 32:33; 44:16; Zechariah 7:11; Acts 7:51).

When like Korah, Dathan and Abiram, we are no longer subject to leadership, when rebellion to authority, however mild and disguised, has taken over our lives, ministry is on the decline (Numbers 16:1-35).

When like David, we can’t be advised or alerted to danger by a Joab, ministry is declining. One disaster after another disaster, one wrong step after another is bound to be the order of the day (1 Chronicles 21:1-30).

There is the need to humble ourselves and submit to authority (1 Peter 5:5,6; Hebrews 13:7,17; 6:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:12,13; Ezekiel 3:17).

**Personal Notes**