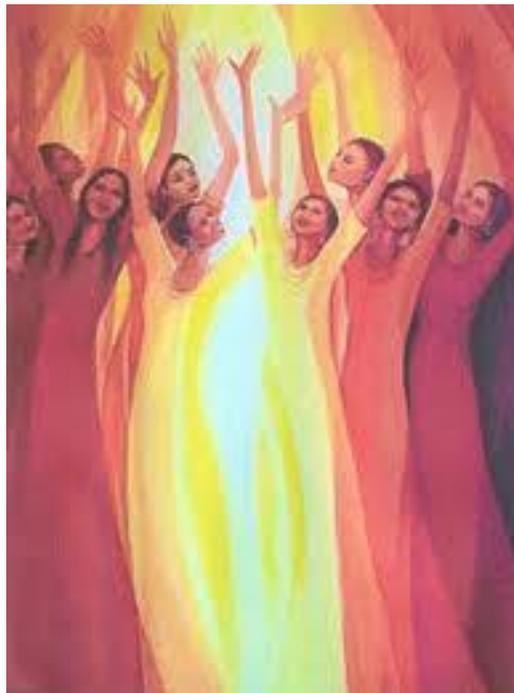


Reflections, Meditations, Examples of Ministries and Inspirational Readings

From,

Ministers of the

Women Together in Ministry of Greater Cleveland Network



Submitted to

Rev. Patricia Hernandez, Executive Director,

American Baptist Women in Ministry

In honor of

Women in Ministry Month,

March, 2013

Reflection: A Deeper Look into What Brings God Pleasure

By Rev Darcia L. Simpson, M.Div
Cleveland Ohio

Our society is a pleasure seeking society. The culture bombards us with messages to put ourselves first. Messages of pleasure inundate our minds through print, digital images, internet, advertisement, entertainment, Facebook, Tweets and texts. If we are not careful, the Body of Christ can get caught up in these messages of putting self first while seeking pleasure. We can get distorted views of happiness, joy, and pleasure in our lives if we are not careful. When our views of enjoyment and delight are distorted, our understanding of how to please God will be incomplete and distorted as well.

With this in mind, it might prove beneficial to reflect and delve a little deeper into Scripture for more insight and understanding into what brings pleasure to our God. Often Christians do not take the time to really find out what pleases God. We are familiar with the passage in Hebrews 11:6, "*But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*" However, it is important to make sure that we know as much as we can about what God has said about what brings Him pleasure. Studying the Scripture, and finding out more specifically what God has said, helps us grow in our faith and faithfulness.

Pleasure is a noun with various meanings. Pleasure is often understood as a pleased feeling. Simply stated, pleasure is interpreted as enjoyment, delight or satisfaction. Other meanings include one's wish, will, or choice. Given these meanings of pleasure, we can ask our Heavenly Father a question. Heavenly Father, what brings you pleasure, joy, delight, and satisfaction? God, what do you take pleasure in?

The Psalmist answers the question in this manner; "The Lord delights in those who fear him, who put their hope in his unfailing love" (Psalm 147:11, NIV). Additionally, we can look to the words of Jesus for insight into what pleases the Father. For when talking with his disciples he commented, "Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom (Luke 12:32). Although Jesus was speaking to them in the context of not worrying about having their needs met, his words verify something that brings pleasure to God. Specifically from this statement, we can see how our Father is not only an excellent provider, but one who receives pleasure from giving. Imagine how this type of pleasure is foreign to our society. Our culture shouts take, take take! Giving is not associated with pleasure in the world. For this reason, and others, as Christians, we must continually renew our understand of pleasure and what bring pleasure to the Father. Take time to reflect on not only our love for God and his love for us, but what He delights in.

REFLECTIONS FOR ABWTIM: CONQUORERS IN PURSUIT

Created by: Min. Dianthia Y. Gilmore,
D-Min Candidate Ashland Theological Seminary

Submitted: February 7, 2012
To Rev. Christine Smith, President
Greater Cleveland WTIM and to be Forwarded to Dr. Patricia Hernandez
CONQUORERS IN PURSUIT

"In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." (1 Thess. 5:18)

How often as women in ministry have we been disappointed by others and then ensnared with bitterness? How often have we fallen into dark pits of despondency? Too often! We forget that in *'everything'* we must give thanks. In the midst of our losses, disappointments, unfulfilled dreams, and unreliable hope in others, we become anxious which is contrary to the Word (Phil. 4:6). Do I understand the deep wounding from the pursuit? Absolutely! The double-standards are distasteful and unfair but all within the will of God concerning us. God navigates the sea of life. He validates and promotes.

The popular poem *Invictus*, a scribble-of-pain by William Ernest Henley, suggests that we disregard *"how strait the gate [and] how charged with punishments the scroll"*, and that we become *"masters of [our own] fate and captains of [our own] souls."* My sisters, let us not be as arrogant and self-confident in thought. On this journey, let us secure our trust in Jesus and in Him alone. Let us daily meditate on His affirmations: *"If I be for you, who can possibly be against you (Rom. 8:31, NKJ)? What I have begun in you, I am more than able to see it to completion (Phil.1:6).* And my favorite (Jer. 29:11), *"I have plans for you and they are so good!" (Emphasis is mine.)*

Qualifying women of God understand that we are conquerors. Walk boldly in love in the midst of sneers and skepticisms which challenges God's call of excellence upon our lives. These challenges will strengthen and empower us. It will take us beyond our own expectations and abilities and position us for greatness in Him. Understand the journey. It will bring life. We will no longer waver under false beliefs, insecurities, and unfair practices. We will be strong and give thanks in everything. Through challenges, we will know Jesus in the power of His resurrection and in the fellowship of His suffering. Then, we can be like Christ unto death—*Conquerors in Pursuit*—concerning the will of God.

Luke 14: 7-11

When he noticed how the guests picked the places of honor at the table, he told them this parable: “When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor, for a person more distinguished than you may have been invited. If so, the host who invited both of you will come and say to you, ‘Give this person your seat.’ Then, humiliated, you will have to take the least important place. But when you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, ‘Friend, move up to a better place.’ Then you will be honored in the presence of all the other guests. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

I had the opportunity to pay my respects this weekend, along with other sisters in the ministry, to Rev. Dr. Margaret J. Mitchell at her home going celebration. I’m sure many of you knew Rev. Margaret, as I called her. I’m sure a lot of you knew her on a personal level also, as I did. I could write a book about all of the wonderful times Rev. Margaret and I shared. When I remember Rev. Margaret I remember how she could walk into a room and you could feel her spirit. This woman of God possessed a smile that, even on your darkest day, would make you smile right with her. She showed such grace and mercy to everyone she came in contact with, even if not necessarily deserved (Lord help me now!).

Rev. Margaret, with all of her educational and ministry accolades, was surely one that should sit at the head table of honor. But if I call it correctly, I believe Rev. Margaret would sit right next to someone like me, and willfully sit even at the last table in the back of the room. She was not one who needed to advertise her status, even though from what I saw on Saturday, she surely deserved and held such a high honor. Rev. Margaret was always looking for where she could serve. She was always looking to lift someone up higher. She was the host who would come to you and say, “***Friend, move up to a better place.***”

Rev. Margaret carried humility as a breastplate. **Philippians 2:3-5**: Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. Yes, this scripture is who Rev. Margaret was as all times.

I, as well as many others, can attest to Rev. Margaret “moving us up to a better place.” I know this because I heard from many other women, some I’ve never seen before Saturday, the very same story as mine. Jesus was always teaching, even without standing in the front of the room, just as Rev. Margaret always did. ***I thank God for knowing her.*** I thank God for meeting other women who knew her as well. Let us all remember that service and humility are much more important to God than status. Just take example from Rev. Margaret’s life example. I’m sure on the day she passed over God spoke to her saying, “***Come my daughter, move up to a better place and be honored in the presence of all the other guests. For you have not exalted yourself but you were humble.***”

Humbly submitted by Evangelist Terrikay Brown
Emmanuel Temple, Church of Jesus Christ
Rev. Robert L. Brown, Sr., Pastor

We Are Zelophehad's Daughters, Upgraded

By Rev. Shelia Maria Wilson, 14 February 2013

(Responsive Reading version)

We are Zelophehad's Daughters,
Upgraded by The Holy Spirit

Sisters, NOT rivals

-We are Zelophehad's Daughters, upgraded by The Holy Spirit

We have His charge to keep, the Only God, Jesus, to glorify

-We are Zelophehad's Daughters, upgraded by The Holy Spirit

By His stripes, we stay healed

-We are Zelophehad's Daughters, upgraded by The Holy Spirit

By His report, we stay sustained

-We are Zelophehad's Daughters, upgraded by The Holy Spirit

By His finished work, we stay redeemed

-We are Zelophehad's Daughters, upgraded by The Holy Spirit

By His authority, we do as He directs

-We are Zelophehad's Daughters, upgraded by The Holy Spirit

We are God's new thing

-We are Zelophehad's Daughters, upgraded by The Holy Spirit

We are God's great company

!We are Zelophehad's daughters, sisters NOT rivals, upgraded by His Holy Spirit!

We Are Zelophehad's Daughters, Upgraded

By Rev. Shelia Maria Wilson, 14 February 2013

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We have His charge to keep, the Only God, Jesus, to glorify

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We are God's great company

We are Zelophehad's daughters, sisters NOT rivals, upgraded by His Holy Spirit.

We Are Zelophehad's Daughters, Upgraded

By Rev. Shelia Maria Wilson, 14 February 2013

(Personal Devotion)

I am a daughter of Zelophehad,
Upgraded by The Holy Spirit

I have sisters, NOT rivals
-I am a daughter of Zelophehad, upgraded by The Holy Spirit

I have His charge to keep, the Only God, Jesus, to glorify
-I am a daughter of Zelophehad, upgraded by The Holy Spirit

By His stripes, I stay healed
-I am a daughter of Zelophehad, upgraded by The Holy Spirit

By His report, I am sustained
-I am a daughter of Zelophehad, upgraded by The Holy Spirit

By His finished work, I stay redeemed
-I am a daughter of Zelophehad, upgraded by The Holy Spirit

By His authority, I do as He directs
-I am a daughter Zelophehad, upgraded by The Holy Spirit

I am a part of God's new thing
-I am a daughter of Zelophehad, upgraded by The Holy Spirit

I am a member of God's great company

I am a daughter of Zelophehad, I have sisters NOT rivals, upgraded by His Holy Spirit!



The New Church without Walls In Rubber Boots

by Pastora Ramona Guadalupe

One day on my way home after worshiping and preaching Sunday's service, I saw a group of young seasonal farmers working. I decided to stop and watch these workers; I asked myself "did these workers receive the spiritual word from God today?" I parked my car on a dirt road in front of a country farm in Starsboro, Vermont. When I got out of the car; the ground was wet from an early spring rain. But on this day it was Sunday early noon and the sun was out. I came out of the car and put on a pair of *Rubber Boots*, which I carry in my car. They were uncomfortable on my feet, as rain water from the wet ground slashed water inside my boots as I was walking. The ground was muddy. Mind you; I had just arrived from church service. I am wearing a dress suit, with hosiery, lip stick; my hair is in place and I am wearing *Country Rubber Boots*. A thought came to mind, I looked up to a clear blue sky and I believe I said "Father God show me how to minister to these farmers and give me a word to say to them".

As I walked closer to the farm, the barn was in front of me, I heard voices behind the barn from the seasonal farm workers preparing to go out into the fields. At this time of day, they had just returned from their break. The farm machines were at a short distance. With my voice I said *God Bless You* to a group of Jamaicans and Haitians that were farming the land in Vermont.

They turned around and came toward me. I introduced myself as Pastora Ramona Guadalupe and that I am the Interim Pastor, (the only country Baptist Church) down the street. I haven't seen you at church. The workers were unaware that there was a woman pastor or any pastor in the area. The owner of the farm was aware of my presence. He heard that I was in town. He came out from his farmhouse with a smile that's said, it is Ok to be here. The farm workers were pleased to hear the words "God Bless You". They were happy to hear these blessings and for the pastor to take time to visit.

These seasonal farmers have not been to church in nine months or ministered to since they left their home in the islands. They asked me to preach to them out in the open field, the words of God. I preached to them in front of the owner's farmhouse, the Word. They received the word of God and one received Jesus as Lord and Savior. I gave them each a new Bible and visited them a few times. Since then, the Lord God has moved me on to continue His ministry to other people elsewhere. Today, I minister to women that are incarcerated in *Prison Ministry* and pastor young adults. I also have a Television Ministry called the *Las Promesas de Dios/The Promises of God* in English and in Spanish. But I still carry my ministry *Rubber Boots* in my car, just in case, in Vermont.

Vitae (Sketch) of Rev. Dr. Alicia J. Malone,

Founder & Director of Bondage Breakers, Inc. (*A Prison Re-entry Agency*)

Bondage Breakers, Inc. was founded in 1991 as a nonprofit organization. It's primary goal and purpose was, and is to assist, those caught in the vortex of the state prisons and detention centers. Its secondary purpose has been to help those who are suffering through the systemic malaise of disenfranchisement, dispossessed and disenfranchised due to lack of economics, social and cultural skills.

Dr. Malone is a visionary who heard the call twenty-one years ago, to develop a paradigm that would eventually become a model for Prison Ministry anywhere. Today, 2013, her ministry, which is the Lord's, has been declared national through the American Baptist Home Mission Society, of which she has been a devout member for over 35 years.

Her passion is stimulated by a tragic event that occurred nearly 33 years ago. Left for dead, eight days after the birth of her one and only son, Aaron, with a cranial aneurysm and four successive strokes, to the glory of God she lives (Gal. 2:20). . Between 1980 and 2013, she has passionately pursued the Lord's calling upon her life. She graduated from Moody Bible School in 1987; went on to McCreary Theological School for African American Studies (1994), Graduated from Ashland Theological Seminary with a Masters in Pastoral Care, a M.Div. and a Doctor of Ministry (2005) all in the *karios time* of 11 years! She has written and published two pieces: Bondage Breakers, Inc. (A paradigm for doing prison ministry, after incarceration), and her testimony: "What God can't do, just can't be done," Multicultural Publications, 1996.

Two years ago, 2009-2012, she served as the 1st African American Woman Moderator for the Akron Association of American Baptist Churches. When no one else would take the job, she served for an additional two years. Dr. Alicia J. Malone has received many awards, accolades and commendations, she blessed God for them all, and however, she prides herself in being *a servant of the Most High God*.

As of 2009, she is the Vice President of Student Affairs and an Instructor for the Tri-State Bible College North, where her specialties are Survey of Missions, Principles of Bible Study, Principles of Counseling I and II (wherein she wrote the curriculum) and Church History. Quoting from Dr. James Cone, "*Where do we go from here, if we don't know where we have been, we do not know where we are going.*"

Dr. Alicia J. Malone, praises God for the journey, exclaiming "the best is yet to come!"

Excerpt from, *Beyond the Stained Glass Ceiling: Equipping and Encouraging Female Pastors...*

By Rev. Christine A. Smith, Author

Pastor, Covenant Baptist Church, Wickliffe, Ohio

Chapter 1

Whom Shall We Send?

And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her. (Luke 1:38, KJV)

As we explore the question, “Whom shall we send?” the example of Mary, the mother of Jesus, can provide great insight. Poor, young, unwed, and ordinary, Mary would not have been on the short list of most people to become the mother of the Messiah. Yet the Lord chose her. Readers of the text are left to speculate why the Lord chose Mary. We are given only the angel’s words that she was “highly favored” and that the Lord was with her (Luke 1:28). Later, Mary expresses her own beliefs and words of praise regarding why she was chosen (Luke 1:46-55, KJV):

*And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord,
And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior.
For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all
generations shall call me blessed.
For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name.
And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation.
He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their
hearts.
He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree.
He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away.
He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy;
As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed forever.*

Clearly, Mary believed that God regarded her “low estate” and did “great things” to her. Mary praised God for exalting her and using her as an anointed vessel. Mary was chosen by God and sent forward to carry the Word that became flesh in the person of Jesus Christ. Understandably, upon receiving the message that God had chosen her, Mary had a question: “How can this be?” The angel provided a supernatural response to a natural question: “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:35, KJV).

As women have heard and grappled with God’s call upon their lives, many, like Mary, have asked, “How can this be?” Women are not supposed to preach and pastor. How can this be? I don’t know any man who would license or ordain me. How can this be? I don’t know what steps to take next. How can this be? I don’t even know how to begin to explain what I am feeling. I don’t have a lot, my name is not prominent, frequently I am overlooked, I’m not in the in-crowd, I’m not popular, people have even shunned me. Lord, how can this be?

At the appointed time, God sends angels to declare, “The Holy Ghost shall come upon you, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow you.” God has many Marys to send. Will we recognize

them? God's sending process is different from ours. Often we look for the best, the brightest, the most beautiful, the most popular, and that which is highly esteemed among people. God, however, uses a different barometer. God discerns the heart. The questions are, Will our hearts be open to the heart of God as God seeks to use us in the sending process? Will we allow ourselves to be the angels to help to clarify the call, provide reassurance, tell them that they are "highly favored" and held by God, and then send them forth to carry the gospel? We must believe that we are the angels—the women and men who affirm that God calls and chooses whomever God wills. Whom shall we send? We should send those who express and exhibit a willingness to say, like Mary, "be it unto me according to thy word."

Those who are called have to be open to the path that God places before them. Those who are sent must be realistic about the challenges ahead. It is important for those who do the sending to assist in the preparation process for those who are going and for those who will be on the receiving end. It is critical for the senders to teach those who are being sent that ministry is not for the faint of heart, whether male or female...

End of Excerpt