

Joy Comes In The Morning

Today our nation stands at a crossroad and it is left for us to decide which path we choose to take. Do we take the path of despair and dishonour and give up on our country? Or do we rise above it all and latch on to the promises of God for our land and for our people? With biting poverty, mounting hopelessness, a bleeding economy, youth restiveness, unprecedented violence, brazen acts of terror and all manner of vices and evil thriving in the land one wonders how things got so bad. The foundation for our current situation was laid many years ago and since that time we have seen so much suffering and failure at virtually all levels. We were plagued with leaders who lacked vision, who lacked intellect, who lacked sincerity of purpose and who were antagonistic to those that dared to challenge their visionless and purposeless policies. Our country is currently bedevilled with so much negativity that it is easy to look around and just give up. Yet I say that we must never give up because "hope springs eternal". The bible says though the night may be dark yet "joy comes in the morning". The wise ones say you cannot have a message without a mess. You cannot have a testimony without a test. You cannot get to the top of the mountain without first going to the bottom of the valley. This is true. And out of Nigeria's "mess" shall surely come her "message". Out of Nigeria's "test" shall surely come her "testimony". We have been to the "bottom of the valley" and therefore we shall get to the "top of the mountain". Our dream for a better Nigeria shall never die and neither can our collective prayers be in vain. I refuse to give up because I know that the God that I serve never fails. He alone rules in the affairs of men. He alone forges the destiny of nations. Out of a deep void and formlessness He ordered the creation of the world. He established it by the power of His word and He gave us dominion over it.

In the same way He created Nigeria for His purpose and for His glory and that purpose and glory shall surely be established. It shall come to pass and it will be manifest to the entire world. We shall see it and we shall be established in it as a nation and as a people. If God can do it for others, He can do it for us too. We can be great and, by the grace of God, we shall be great. This is my dream and this is what I see. And believe me when I tell you that it is prophetic. A Nigeria where every man and woman, regardless of faith, ethnicity, status or political persuasion finds a common cause and relishes in our collective humanity. A Nigeria where the rich have a conscience and the poor have hope. A Nigeria where joy and peace reign supreme and where bombings and killings are a thing of the past. A Nigeria where the descendants of Ishmael and Isaac and the adherents of the two great Abrahamic faiths of islam and christianity live together in peace, harmony and mutual respect. A Nigeria where the secularity of the state is respected yet where God is revered and honoured by all. A Nigeria where the knowledge and fear of the Living God reigns in the hearts and minds of the people. A Nigeria where every man is His brother's keeper, where leaders show compassion to those that they lead, where justice is done to all and where political persecution has no place. A Nigeria where decency is rewarded, where dissent is tolerated, where non-conformity is encouraged and where equity is enthroned. That is the Nigeria of my dream. A Nigeria where youth unemployment is low and where every

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Written by Chief Femi-Fani Kayode
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individual, no matter how high or low, can aspire to any position and live his or her dream. That is the Nigeria of my dream. A Nigeria where human life and human dignity is sacrosanct and where fairness is the watchword of every soul. That is the Nigeria of my dream.

I have no fears about the future of this great nation because the God that I serve never fails. The bible says the nations are "as a drop of water before Him". He sits above the circles of the earth and He counts the earth as His footstool. Yet despite His sheer awesomeness and majesty, with Him lies great compassion and mercy. Once we return to Him, acknowledge Him, honour Him and are led and guided by Him, He will restore us and shower us with His blessings. The Lord awaits us to make the right choice. We either continue to wallow in self-delusion, wickedness, greed, murder, the persecution of perceived enemies, the abuse of power, evil and insensitivity or we desist from our wicked ways and turn to Him. I am persuaded that once we make the right choice our date with destiny, as a people and as a nation, will come far sooner than we can possibly imagine. In his book titled "The Wretched of the Earth" Frantz Fanon said the following- "each generation must, out of relative obscurity, discover its mission and fulfill it or betray it." Past generations in Nigeria have not lived up to expectation. This is the bitter truth.

Yet there is still hope as long as we have faith. That hope and faith is our blessed assurance and it lives in our minds and hearts. We know that the Lord will fix it. We know that He is "more than able". We know that He is a man of war whom none can resist and we know that He restores, redeems and rebuilds even the most broken and wretched walls. Dr. Martin Luther King jnr., after delivering his celebrated and inspiring "I have a dream" speech, was felled by an assassin's bullet on April 4 1968. To those that killed him, his dream died with him. Yet they were wrong. They did not know that great dreams, once birthed, never die. That is why the Word of God said "if the princes of this world had known they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory". If those that murdered Jesus, and the devil that inspired them to do it, had known that He would honour His word and rise up three days later they would not have crucified him. They persecuted Him, they humiliated Him, they beat Him, they tortured Him, they spat on Him and they killed Him yet they could not kill His dream or abort His mission. His dream lived on and became a reality for all mankind to see. It was the same with Martin Luther King. They killed him but his mission had already been achieved and his vision came to pass 45 years after his sacrificial and selfless death. This is indeed the stuff of which dreams are made. Great things are birthed in great dreams and if you dare to dream nothing is impossible.

I have a dream for Nigeria. I have a dream that one day Nigerians will see themselves as Nigerians before anything else and they will not regard their country and its people as a collection of strange bed-fellows that do not love or trust one another. Yet this dream can only be fulfilled when those amongst us that call ourselves leaders preach, practice and display discipline, temperance, holiness, morality, restraint, tolerance, mercy and the fear of God in the conduct of our affairs. It can only be made manifest when we stand up and fight against evil, tyranny, injustice, indecency, bad governance, the abuse of power, political persecution and sheer wickedness. Our dream can only be brought to reality when love is the motivating factor

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in all that we do. The Lord commands us to love our neighbour as we do ourselves. That is the cornerstone and the foundation of our faith and it is in that faith and that resolve that our hope for a better and greater Nigeria lies. I have a dream that Nigeria will be what God wants her to be, a great and powerful nation that is dedicated to the Living God and that will act as a shining example and a beacon of light for all to see.

I assure you that despite the dashed hopes and unbearable suffering of millions of our people over the last 52 years, our dream still lives and the Lord shall not forsake us. Our land and our people may seem blighted, in despair, depressed, repressed and confused. It may appear as if there is no hope for a better tomorrow and that nothing will ever change. It may seem as if the Lord has forgotten us and it may appear that our story is one of recurrent failure and shattered dreams. Yet this is not so. I have come here today to tell you that, despite all we see and hear, it is not over for us as a people and as a nation. I have come here today to tell you that we as a people have a date with destiny. I have come here today to tell you that Nigeria and the Nigerian dream lives on and that it shall be made manifest for all to see in the fullness of time. I therefore urge you to be strong, to hold your heads up high, to be proud of who and what you are and to stand firm. The vision is for an appointed time. Though it may tarry it shall not prove false. Just hold on.

God bless you and God bless Nigeria.