

For our English Readers

Hope & Renewal

The air crackled with anticipation as I prepared to address the congregation. A profound sense of peace settled over me, and I knew the Lord was speaking to my heart. "Hold on just a second, Jim," I said to my colleague, "I need to bless this."

A Hebrew word, 'kavod', resonated deeply within me. It means "the glory of the Lord." I felt a surge of yearning in the room – a collective desire for His presence, His glory. "How many of you desire the Glory of the Lord?" I asked, my voice rising with the fervor. Hands shot up, a sea of faces turned towards the heavens. "We need Your kavod, Lord," we declared, our voices united in a fervent plea. "In this building, in our lives, in this nation, in our city – we need Your glory!"

As we welcomed the New Year, I felt a profound sense of anticipation. This was not just another year; it was a time of new beginnings. I had been studying the number 25 in the Bible, and it resonated with me deeply. It signifies new life, a fresh start. How many of you, I wondered, have been longing for a release – from financial burdens, from ill health, from the weight of past disappointments? This is the year to believe again, to rise above the ashes and embrace the dawn of a new era.

The Holy Spirit whispered to my heart: "This is a time of spiritual readiness." Not

just readiness to serve, but a deep inner preparedness – a spiritual responsibility, an authority to claim the promises of God. It's time to reclaim what the enemy has tried to steal from us.

A shift had occurred, a subtle yet powerful change in the spiritual atmosphere. I felt it, a sense of release, a loosening of the chains that had bound us. This year, we must believe for the impossible, for God declares, "All things are possible with Him."

I turned to Isaiah 58:6-12. God's fast, I realized, is not merely about abstaining from food. It's about breaking free from the bonds of wickedness, sharing our blessings with the needy, and seeking justice. It's about releasing the burdens that weigh us down and setting the oppressed free.

"Then your light shall break forth like the morning," the scripture proclaims. "Your healing shall spring forth speedily." Healing for our bodies, our minds, and our spirits. I felt a surge of hope, a renewed sense of possibility.

The passage speaks of a deep thirst, a spiritual drought that many of us experience. But God promises to satisfy our souls, to refresh us like a spring of water, to make us like a watered garden, bursting with life. He

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will restore us, renew us, and make us "repairers of the breach," mending the broken places in our lives and in the world around us.

The image of the ten virgins came to mind. Five were wise, prepared with enough oil for their lamps. But the others, though seemingly prepared, had only enough to get by. I wondered, "Do we have just enough to get by, or are we overflowing with the Spirit?" We must not settle for mediocrity. We must pursue an abundance of God's grace, a river of living water flowing from within.

"Release, restore, receive, repair," I urged the congregation. These are the cornerstones of our journey in 2025. Release the burdens that hold you back. Receive the power and authority God has bestowed upon you. Restore your faith, your hope, your relationship with Him. Repair the broken places in your heart, in your relationships, in your community.

The enemy seeks to steal our joy, to sow seeds of doubt and discouragement. But we must resist. We are made in the image of God, fearfully and wonderfully made. We are not defined by our weaknesses or our past failures. We are children of the Most High, and we have the authority to overcome.

As the music swelled, I felt the presence of the Lord filling the room. "I believe," we sang together, our voices rising in a chorus of faith and hope. "I believe." This is the year of new beginnings, a year of restoration, a year of encountering the glory of God in a deeper, more profound way.