

IN HIS IMAGE

This is a message of encouragement.

A few weeks ago Pastor Erustus reached out and shared the following:

Pastor please pray with us today, this morning I lost one of my Bungoma church members, a disabled youth brother whom you have been seeing in many of my postings. He joined our church 6 years ago, after being rejected by some churches here. He comes from a very poor family, rejected by his family, been staying with his maternal grandmother. I took him as my spiritual son and been helping him in all his needs. Many times he has been spending at the church house with the help of our caretaker. He has been one of my key intercessors - he loved praying and fasting so much, wonderful teacher of the word and a wonderful encourager and also a youth leader. It has really pained my heart Pastor. Our churches really loved him, many are really heartbroken. Please pray with us Pastor for provision and God's comfort as we mourn our dear brother John who has rested in the Lord.



Brother John had muscular dystrophy. He was just 28 years old when he passed away.



Here he is at a church service sitting next to Pastor Erustus.

Continuing with what Pastor shared: It's really a big hit to many in the ministry Pastor. John has been a very big asset in intercessory prayers for many who always see results from his prayers. He doesn't look at his status - but always encourages many to trust in God for their situations. He has been one of my key prayer partners and a very strong encourager. But God will continue to comfort and strengthen us.

At first when he joined our church in 2019, he was worried we will reject him like other churches did. But I talked to the church to accept him as a son in Christ Jesus which they did, I thank God for that. He was very happy and one day he told me that I saved him from committing suicide. He had been contemplating committing suicide due to rejection. But when we accepted him and showed him love, that spirit of suicide was defeated. Though he has left us in the body but am happy Pastor that God used us to save this soul and now he is resting and one day we will join him in eternal glory as we celebrate. Many churches Pastor don't have love for people, it's so sad. They love people who they can benefit from but not people like John.

Me: His own family rejected him because of his disability, they did not want to care for him and just wanted him to go away. He went to different churches, and look at how cold hearted they were to him. They were not loving, they were not welcoming, they were not being Christ like. Shame on those churches. I praise

God He drew John to Pastor Erustus' church. He found acceptance, friendship, mentorship and love there.

I asked Pastor what happened to cause him to pass away.

He said, John just started complaining of chest pain and coughing. Pastor was called on Wednesday early morning and he took him to the hospital. When he was being attended to by Doctors suddenly he developed breathing problems and was put on oxygen breathing machine. We talked with him on Wednesday evening and he was very happy. He encouraged us to remain strong in the Lord. And he told Pastor Sarah to go warn his family of God's wrath if they don't turn and get saved especially his grandmother.

He had been staying with his maternal grandmother. Here he is on his death bed just hours before passing away and his heart is for his family to be saved in spite of how mean and hateful they have been to him.

Pastor went on: On that Wednesday midnight he went in a coma until his demise yesterday Friday morning. He died before they carried out all the necessary tests but doctors say he succumbed to pneumonia.

Now this was not the end of God using brother John's life – listen to this:

Pastor thank you for your prayers & support, the funeral & burial service of our late Bro. John was very powerful and God moved so powerfully many surrendering their lives to Christ including John's father.

Please pray with me John's dad has really pleaded with me that I go back and have good time of sharing with him. Him, together with many who gave their lives to Christ, really desire that I plant there a branch church and that was the greatest prayer of the late John, that his people may come to the light of Christ Jesus through our Holy Trinity Living Water Church branch planted there. They have requested I plan and go back. Please pray with me I want to rest for at least one week then go back and visit John's family.

Again another Aunt to John at his maternal side where he has been staying has also requested I plant a Holy Trinity branch church in the village where she was married. She says our ministry really touched her in funeral and burial service and how we conducted everything and more so the ministration of the Word. Pastor

many souls are hungry for the TRUTH outside our reach. People are not experiencing the true love, Word and power of God. Souls are dying and many servants of God are just for selfish gains. This is overwhelming, pray with us.

Those of you who pray with us over the prayer requests, please keep this great work in prayer. I continue to pray for more provision too so that we can plant more churches, schools and hostels. Those of you who support this ministry and pray over this ministry and the outreach ministries, you helped to provide the funds in order to lay brother John to rest. Coffin, transportation, food costs, funeral and burial at his home village. You also helped to pay his hospital bill. I thank you so much your prayers and support are so appreciated by us and the outreach ministries. You are part of the good works we do here and that our outreach ministries do. Together we are all working the way the body of Christ is supposed to.

I told Pastor that The Holy Spirit had spoken to me to do a sermon of encouragement inspired by John's life and we were talking about his life and all of this.

He said, you are right Pastor, many people feel rejected, intimidated, left out, useless and feel left out in serving God. The church is the only place many souls will be healed and feel worthy. Nobody is useless in God's hands and eyes. All of us are worthy in this life in Christ Jesus.

Pastor shared some of the ways the church there impacted John's life:

He joined our church beginning of 2019 and we accepted him with his disability. Through the guidance of the Holy Spirit we assisted him to grow in the faith and he served in the church as an intercessor, encourager and counseling people, teaching in Bible study times and appointed him as one of our Youth leaders. We supported him with his personal basic school needs before he dropped in his third year of high school. The church helped support him financially. We visited him in the hospital and bought medicine. We helped John also to start a business of selling some soft drinks to church members during Sunday services & other meetings. He used the profits to load his phone with air time, data in communication with people and to meet his other small needs. We always

helped John to attend church conference meetings & fellowships even if they were far, he was carried along with others in the vehicle.



Here is brother John relaxing on the church seat.

Shortly after John's passing Pastor Erustus shared another prayer request: Pastor, am requesting you pray for John's dear friend called Aron, who is really affected by the passing away of John. Aron is a young man who was employed by John's maternal Uncle as a worker in the home 2 years ago. John brought him to me and he surrendered his life to Christ. He joined our church and he is also an intercessor through John's guidance. Aron is the one who has been taking care of John ie cooking & feeding him, bathing & clothing him , transporting/pushing his wheelchair around, taking him to hospital, encourage & keeping him company, taking him to the washrooms etc. They loved each other so much. He's the one who nursed & attended to John in the hospital until his demise. John's death has really affected him but with much prayer and counseling he's picking up. After John's burial, Aron resigned from working in that home due to the frustrations he went through in serving John which the family many times resisted him. Aron is now in my hand residing at our church house as he is engaging in manual work to get some pay. We are also supporting him as God provides. He comes from a very poor background so I decided to retain him so that we don't loose him back to satan. Please remember him in your prayers. God bless you Pastor



This is Aron



Here he is with Brother John. They had a friendship love, not a perverted love. Please keep this young man in prayer. He was close with John being his friend and caretaker.

John's family and those worldly churches who rejected him treated him like he was useless. His family treated him like a huge burden and problem and just kicked him out and made him go away. Those churches did not want the burden of helping him because he was very poor, alone and disabled. His family is one thing because they were unbelievers but those churches who turned him away will answer for what they did.

James 2:1-9 - My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord* of glory, with respect of persons. For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts? Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats? Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called? If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.

This passage of Scripture is telling us we are not to show favoritism based on status, wealth, appearance or anything but to treat everyone equally because in God's eyes we are equal. He loves each one of us the same. When we show favoritism in the church it is a sin, we are working from a place of evil motives in what we are doing. God has seen what these churches did and all wrongs will be righted on judgement day. In the body of Christ, we should love and accept all without discrimination.

Prov.19:17 - He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will He pay him again.

When you help those who are truly poor, God counts it as lending to Him and He Himself will repay you! Another example of God paying attention to the things we do and us being repaid for it can be found in Matthew 25:31-46 – the pay off for looking after the poor and needy and helping others and showing love is eternal life!

DISABILITY

I want to talk about John's disability for a moment. It is a very hard thing to have the knowledge and understand that Jesus has the power and could heal you in an instant but doesn't. It takes great perseverance to keep standing in faith even when it is not part of God's plan for your life, to heal your physical body. Jesus

spoke of this very thing when He said blessed is he who is not offended in Me. **(Matt.11:6)** We are to love Jesus and trust Him completely no matter how things go for us in this life. The things that look like unanswered prayers to us are either God didn't do it because it would ultimately be bad for us or it just wasn't part of His plan for us. The painful and hard things in this life, when we lift it up to God and He doesn't move, then trust that He is using it for His glory and for our ultimate good and **(Romans 8:28)** go on in faith. You can keep asking, knocking and seeking as Jesus told us to do **(Matt.7:7-8)** but keep a good attitude and just trust Jesus no matter what. Let John's faith and life minister to you. He didn't get healed but that did not deter him from serving Christ or from praying for others and seeing them get healed.

John's life wasn't for nothing. Once he surrendered to Christ, God began to do a great work in his life and He began to use Him for His glory. Brother John did not run his race in vain. He accomplished what God had for him to do even in the short life and short time he lived as a Christian.

So often God uses those who are not healed themselves, like John, to pray for others and answer their prayers. It seems strange to us but God's ways are not our ways. **(Isaiah 55:8-9)** John became a great intercessor and asset to the church because he fasted and prayed and carried a burden for others. God was moving in answering his prayers on behalf of others.

God can use anyone and even if you think you have nothing to offer there is always something you can do to bring God glory if you will just put your life in His hands. Brother John became a valuable intercessor there and God used him and even in death look how on his deathbed he was yearning for his family to be saved and God touched their hearts. So powerful. John was not junk, he was not useless, he was a human being and God loved him as much as He loves any one of us. In the face of complete rejection, God reached out to him through Pastor Erustus and the church. God never gives up on us. His life had value as does each one of us because God has made us in His own image.

CLOSING

Pastor also shared: Yes Pastor, John's life and testimony after his demise has amazed us. Indeed God can use anyone for His own glory even those many don't value. God really glorified Himself in the funeral. We also thank God for the souls that got saved. As you have said, God never fails His servants. God will follow His word in John's life while still in body and even out of body to perform it. Have a good day Pastor.

He was speaking about John hoping and praying for Pastor Erustus to be able to plant a church where his family lives in hopes that they would get saved. God is moving on those prayers now.

Genesis 1:26 - And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

This world and the people in it can really beat you up and push you to the brink just the way it was doing to John. He was so rejected, broken hearted, feeling worthless and useless that he was ready to take his own life.



Brother John Sifuna was made in God's image. Even with muscular dystrophy, he was made in God's image. We have a spirit, a soul and a body like The Trinity. However, we have been born into a fallen world where we are affected by the fallout of sin and face things like debilitating diseases, sickness, imperfections and all sorts of pain even sometimes from birth like John did. He was made in God's image and you are made in God's image too.

God did not leave him in a disabled state to just exist and live a miserable life on this earth being shunned by all. God had good plans for his life all along.

(Jeremiah 29:11-13) God can take all the bad things that happened in your life before you came to Him and He can turn it and use it for His glory and plan in your life. **(Genesis 50:20)** John's family hurt him severely by rejecting him and pushing him out. He searched for love and acceptance in several churches but they only added to his hurt by rejecting him and pushing him out too. Look where all of that ultimately led him. He wound up at Pastor Erustus' church where he found Jesus, a church family, friendship, a spiritual mentor and father and so much more.

Just like brother John, you matter. No matter what your situation is, you were created for a purpose and God has good plans for your life. He loves you and He has never stopped drawing you to Himself. You are not listening to this sermon by accident, The Holy Spirit brought you here. Come to Jesus while there is still time. He loves you.

PRAYER