

AINA OLAWALE MATTHEW

JESUS AND ME

...a series

'To death I will follow, no flinching'

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JESUS AND ME

INTRODUCTION

Do you care to know something new this moment? Do you care to understand a mystery? Do you wish to know what new things I just found out? If yes, come along with me as I show you a new message -- it is indeed new.

'I travelled alone upon this lonesome way,
my burdens were heavy, and dark way my day;
I looked for a friend,
Not knowing that He had all of the time been looking for me.
¹

'I have sung for kings and queens all around the world,
I have romanced millions with my guitar and a love song
Taj Mahal to Paris, Galveston to Hollywood
I thought I had done it all then I met you.²

'Now I'm singing a new song
making music for Jesus my King
He is my Hero
He has become my everything,
Now there is no other song,
No higher melody Under heaven;
The greatest Love Story, JESUS AND ME³

'When I've done all I can,
Just to help my fellow man,
And when my best is never good enough,
There have been times when I felt just like giving up
Trials come on every hand the more I try to do what He
wants me to do, Sometimes I just don't understand;
But Jesus reminds me everytime I pray; 'oh it won't be, it
won't be like this, it won't be like this always⁴

'The road may be long to heaven's pearly gate;
I know it's narrow;
I know it's straight;

But Jesus is there through eternity,
We'll travel along, just JESUS and ME.

Now its Jesus and Me
For each tomorrow, for every headache, and every sorrow;
I know that I can depend upon my new found friend
And so till the end, it's Jesus and Me¹⁵

'People call me a winner
But I know what it means to lose;
I've seen some high times
I've paid some dues
Paying dues isn't just enough
Nothing seemed to satisfy me
Until I met Jesus
I'll tell you He's alive
And I am free¹⁶

Just when I thought it was over He came to my aid,
Now I'm singing a new song,
making music for Jesus my King
He is my Hero
He has become my everything,
Now there is no other song,
No higher melody Under heaven;
The greatest Love Story, JESUS AND ME

I wish you go through the phrases again. It has a message for you.
You must have picked them up.

Many times I strive to understand certain things about God. I have always wondered why he said somethings, though I read the bible story but it would not just fit in the hollow part the questions have created, until I met with Him personally. So true is it when they say: 'questions not answers bring about knowledge', not little have acquired so far in this journey with Him- just Jesus and Me.

ONCE WITH HIM... till I got lost

Now it is dawn on me how much I've missed. Shameful and painful, though I accept the blame. What have I ever wanted that He never provided? Nothing actually, I was just not contented.

How do you feel when you lose something worth dying for or something that gives you unspeakable joy? You feel tattered and disastrous, isn't it? You feel so unhappy, sad, full of regret, and never wish talking about it. Same was how I felt when I was lost from Him.

Here is a man who was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in another village. He worked in a carpenter's shop until He was thirty. Three years He was an itinerant preacher.

He never owned a home. He never wrote about. He never held an office. He never had a family. He never went to the college other than being an apprentice at the carpenter's shop. He never put His foot inside a big city like New York or Washington. He never travelled 500 miles from the place He was born. He never did one of the things that usually accompany greatness. He had no credentials worth calling His, but Himself... so everytime He spoke I always thought He was inferior.

So true is the saying: 'you do not know what you've got until you've lost it'.

One faithful day, He approached me. He looked humble, gentle, meek, and seems humiliated. He looked to me as one whose right has been messed up with or abused by a bully. He actually looked stupid in appearance. It didn't took time before I concluded that He was a beggar, so I put my hand into my pocket and pointed a few cash at Him then He rejected it. 'What do you want Mr. man?' I

yelled at Him.

He seems too calm for my liking, so I got angry and walked out on Him, even before He said a word. After a little while, I looked behind me, behold He followed me. Then I approached Him, 'can I help you?' I asked. 'I only want to be a friend' He answered. A friend?' I laughed out. 'And what qualify you to make such a request? Who are you? What have you got? Where do you hail from? You don't seem to be in the right place. May be you should come back another time when I have the time for jokes' I continued. I was a bit embarrassed at such a request. I'm I the calibre He ought to ask such a question, I'm I that lenient to accommodate rags?

'He doesn't fit me. Why would He make such a request from me? Why not others?' I had a second thought. 'Let me find out' I concluded.

I returned to the same spot I left Him. He was sitted there helpless. 'Don't you have a friend?' I asked cautiously. 'It's a very long story' He replied, 'would you be my friend, please?' He asked pitifully. 'I will' I replied with pity. He was glad, He leaped for joy, like I just gave him a million bucks. He embraced me and said 'finally you have become my friend' He gave a deep breathe. I imagined how long He has been seeking a friend.

Now I got a new friend. So who is He and why did He insist on being my friend? I was so curious to know. Is it to help me solve an academic problem, lead me to a pasture of gold, or just become a burden? I wanted to get o the end of it.

Day after day, He amazes me with different manner of things. Every minute He makes a visit in and out of my heart's very beat. He kept me in wonder. How caring He is! I was expecting Him make request and burdensome attitudes, but reverse was the

case. I was looking for the destination, I wanted to know His mission, yet the daily experience were unspeakable and remarkable.

I first noticed his footsteps in a lush, green pasture and decided to see where they headed. He then began to make promises. He promised me a whole territory, a big beautiful mansion, life and all sought at the end. They were all abstract to me, I wanted them immediately.

I once asked Him where we were heading to, but He said I should just follow, that very soon we would get there. He asked me to always consider three things about Him as we journey together: 'HIS WORDS', 'HIS WORKS', and 'HIS WAYS'. He says that those three things were His virtues. He made me promise to Him that I wouldn't disappoint Him, which I did reluctantly. Things were changing suddenly, I couldn't say exactly, but I am no longer what I used to be.

One very day, He said words like this: 'Promise me that you would do all I do, no turning to the right or to the left from the way I go, and you would not depart from whatever things I ask of you. Even when I say enter that pit, leave the gold, pick the sword, drop the diamond, or when I say abandon me and run; promise me you would not argue nor doubt.' I was out of words not knowing what to say. The next thought that ran across my mind was 'who is this Man?'

Then I noticed that the very reason for insisting on friendship was how much He loved me. But His cost seems expensive. Why would I leave the gold that I have ever longed for or jump into the pit, or run and abandon me? Is He a robber? I became skeptical, but I continued still. 'Let me get to the root of this' I thought. He always told me stories, lots of interesting ones about some kind of beings I have never imagined ever exist, beings He said have

wings, clean and powerful. 'How would He ever imagine such? It's absurd and impossible' I thought, though the stories were touching. I never knew that His absurdity surpasses my sagacity, and His debility is more energetic than my solidity. My journey with Him became sceptic. He was caring, loving, generous, clever, wise, and had all the good qualities I never expected He could possess, but it was just not enough, where are the riches, the gold, the money and the greatness/pride?

He never told me what was ahead, be it gold or silver or otherwise. It wasn't long before the trail made a sharp turn and headed up a steep path. The journey has continued across beautiful terrain, and some rather difficult places. Thankfully there have always been places along the way to rest beside refreshing waters.

He said to me as I journey along, 'you see my dear friend, the terrain is not all beautiful just as the clouds aren't all white, only the challenges along the way makes us fit. If you keep grazing in green pastures too long, you will become a bored, fat spectator rather than a strong, fit follower'. I followed silently like a child whose tear gland had ceased work, I kept enduring.

It was one of those places beside the refreshing waters I rested one faithful day to take a nap.

'Wake up, Wake up!' The voice said. I opened my eyes wide only to see a stranger. 'Who are you?' I asked. 'I am sent' the reply came, 'sent from who to who?' 'To you Of course' the conversation continued. 'I never remember Him describing you in any of His stories. He never even mentioned that He would send anyone. Besides where is He?' I asked. 'He continued alone as He saw that you were too weak and tired to move on with Him' the stranger answered.

I was just beginning to get along and fall in love with Him. How

could He do this to me? Is this an illusion? Numerous thoughts ran across my heart as I felt disappointed with the one I thought had loved me. But why did He do this to me? I never could explain.

I felt like dying. Is that all He could He has to do and just abandon me? I thought He was nice and honest. He couldn't wait a little while and bade goodbye, not even a note...to bad of Him. I thought He was a friend. 'Tragedy!!!' I exclaimed. It took a long time before I could recover from the thoughts of depression that overwhelmed me.

I almost forgot that the stranger was still around. 'shall we continue?' the stranger motioned, 'NO!!' an immediate reply from my heart through my mouth, 'it's of no essence' I continued, 'why should I continue, when the one I thought I could trust have failed me, how come I would trust you either? I concluded.

It was a trick, I was fooled, I never knew...

I turned back like making a U-turn. My silent inward desires for riches and greatness sprung up. I began to feel hatred and discontentment. I never knew the way but I kept moving. I've never felt like that before.

I began to see many cherishable things. Silver and brass were uncountable on that way, Gold and diamond were there as well though not as numerous as I wanted. No rules, no principle, no consideration, nor control, not even a step to follow. I pictured how glorious and full of wealth the end would be.

But the way that seems right to man, and the end thereof is death.

If wishes were horses, even beggars would have a ride.

After a while, I saw a big city down my path. The outskirts of the city was a wilderness. I thought: 'the city must be full of gold than the path'. I entered into the city without hesitating.

To my surprise, the first person I met in the city was 'the stranger' that broke the bad news to me earlier. 'Here you are? How come you got here before me?' I asked. 'Well, I know the way you didn't and besides my master already provided a better a way for my journey when he sent me to you' the stranger replied.

'So where is he? Where is your master? I want to see him and at least thank him for all the treasures I picked up on the way and at least ask for a little more' I asked as I thought I was going to meet my old friend there.

'No problem about that' he replied. He took me to his master. What I saw there was not what I expected. I didn't see anyone like the old friend I knew. No kind welcome, instead horrible accusation.

'You stole my treasures!' the bold voice of the master yelled, 'Open your hands and bag' he ordered. I became speechless like a dumb fowl. The size of his guards is all enough to scare me off. I wished all I had taken would disappear all at once before the mighty guards come any closer, but that never happened. They saw I had taken on the way; the gold, the diamond, the silver, and all the treasure I had taken, even the little things I had received from my old friend were all taken from me. I had no word of defence. It was the beginning of anguish and suffering. As the African adage says 'Eni nwa ifa nwa ofo' which means 'He who seeks inordinate gain seeks loss'.

Wish I could just reverse time!!!

Suddenly he pronounced his judgement: 'Take this stranger to the wilderness of death and must be killed the next market day, which is seven days from now'. *'Let the ground swallow me up now'* I pleaded in my heart.

tears roll down my eyes profusely non-stopping till I was left in the wilderness. 'What next now?' I asked myself, and the reply was

'death!' ... 'where could my friend be?' I thought. I knew it was already late to plead innocent. I got dawn on me that I had been deceived by the stranger. Had I know, I would have waited a minute more before taking the U-turn. I lost it all. I lost Him. I lost the gold. I lost the silver. I lost the brass and diamond. And finally, I had lost the precious virtues.

LOST IN THE WILDERNESS

From the time we were Children, most of us have been preoccupied with the desire to feed, bath, cloth, pamper, prosper, and protect ourselves. We ran to the things that made us feel good and ran from those that makes us uncomfortable. We always wanted to be happy. Eventually when we outgrew our childish ways and realize that there is more to life, we pursued education, career, family and make name for ourselves. But we realized that there was still somethings more that we needed to satisfy us. We have always had an unquenchable desire to experience more. Even when we have enough, yet it was always never enough.

Alone here in the desert I began to remember my good old friend. I remember all of His very words right from the first time we met. Tears never stopped rolling down my eyes as I fell into deep thoughts of hoe we have been together. I remember when He first approached Him and how I embarrassed Him and yet calm and gently patiently seek my love. I kept remembering all day long till I fell asleep.

I woke up into the thought again. I was overwhelmed by how mush He cared for me. I wondered where He could be at that tie that I left His path. 'Where could He be now?' I thought. No other though came to my mind but the thought of Him. Accepting fate was next to my mind. Giving up, I thought was the next thing to do. It was clear to me that there is no going out of the wilderness of death.

No escape route!

They were so sure that there is no escape to the extent that they kept no guard to secure me.

I kept wandering in the wilderness. One thing kept telling me, He would come, but I doubt it, how would He come, from where? certainly impossible. Would He send those creatures in His stories? Certainly not! It's just like fleas in a closed jar and would not come out. I couldn't figure out what next. I was just waiting to give up for death to come.

I recalled all the good things I have experienced in life, and how many things He had taught me just to console myself, but it was making me more sad.

There was no one to feed me. I was like a sheep without shepherd, whose food is no more served, and needs to care for itself; become dirty, feel worthless, endures hatred, feel disappointed and just trying to shy away from death.

Two days past, no food, I'm starving, drying up and felt abandoned. Even the stranger did not say hello to me (of course what help will that offer). It was as if I had left the world. New friends started appearing - Ravens, black birds of the sky. I think they are here to sing a funeral song, preparing me for my demise.

'This was not the type of death I ever hoped for. I have always wished to die old, placed in an expensive coffin, and celebrated with a very befitting burial, but I don't just understand, what has suddenly gone wrong? I guess I just got to the wrong hands.' I thought all day.

I cleared a part of the forest where I wandered, to write a piece of treatise to console my dying soul and thank my old friend whom I was never able to appreciate all the time we spent together. My treatise went thus:

'If you would ever be able to see this, please read. I don't know you too well, but you do know me than I do myself. I was on a quest for riches when you met me. I

felt embarrassed at your quest to be a friend. I thought of it but never knew what good you would be to me, but now I know. You have taught me a lot. To endure, to love, to be generous, to be caring, and to be impartial. If there is one thing I love about our being together, it is **'following you'**. I noticed your footstep in a lush, green pasture and I decided to see where they headed. I thought I was just going to a destination to be reached soon, I never knew that it is a journey that will continue over an entire lifetime. You asked me to consider **your words** which where; 'leave gold, pick the sword, abandon me and run' though I pursued gold and landed in the wilderness. You also asked me to consider **your works and ways**- they are wondrous and unspeakable. But I have one request, Please; let those your stories come true. That is my last wish. One thing I was never able to tell you when we were together is what I will say now: I LOVE YOU. Thank you for your love, because you loved me first, even before I loved you. I love you for your love.'

Now six days past, I have lost all strength, I can't stand nor walk, I was just laying there half-dead. All life was almost gone out of me. Just as I was singing my goodbye song to a world of hate and backstabbers, then I experienced a wonder. I did not believe my eyes. Is it a consequence of my almost gone soul, that I am seeing sky visions?

He touched me, the one I have been thinking of all day long. The last strength came up in me, I gave a hug. He has been searching for me all day long. 'How did you get here...' I began to weep as I broke the silence. 'Where have you been? I've missed you' I did not stop talking till He spoke a word. 'You will leave soon' He said. 'To where and how? With you?' I asked. 'You will go Home now, leave

me here' He replied. 'Not without you! I've done nothing but to get into trouble without you. Please do not let me go without you' I wept. I took Him to the place I had cleared, where I wrote with my hands on the floor all I want to let Him know. He read it and wept. Then I repeated 'I LOVE YOU' and He embraced me and said 'I LOVE YOU TOO, and that is why you must leave and I must stay. I am come here to pay ransom for your lost soul'. You have to leave here tomorrow dear.

Over the night I placed my head on His shoulders as He told me some cogent things I would never forget. The night passed like a minute. It was best spent with Him. Not too long the executioner came. I was wet in tears. His kindness could not be compared to any kind. He loved me so dearly, that He gave His life for me. He said His last words;

'Through many dangers, toils and snares, you have come, though you have raced through the wrong paths, and now about to start afresh the right path, but be rest assured grace will lead you home. Now you are free from the law, tell all you shall find on the way, and when you get home tell the father how far you have come. Give account of all that have happened. Now abandon me and Run!!! Remember those words, and remember; I LOVE YOU!'

He was eventually executed. He died for my sake.

On my way back home as He has told me, I saw gold, saw silver, saw all riches all calling on to me 'pick me!', but I acted blind to them all. All that filled my heart was the death of my friend that gave me life. 'How will I pay Him back?' I had asked earlier, and all He replied was '**get home safely**'. I that all He wanted from me?

He is such a wonder. He is the wonder that I have seen, no such

has ever happened. He brought my life to its knees and lifted me up. He would forever remain in my heart.

How sweet He is. He was so dearing that He saved a wretch like me. He trained me. I was lost He found me. Held bound for my freedom. Who am I without me? He made me who I am. Seeing Him at home again is what I ever long for. He is an encourager, a lover, the joy of my very heart, the peace in the storm, the word, way and work that made me whole. I no longer need gold, all I want to be is to be like Him. So caring that He noted my faults and straitened me up. He noted every tear and fear I had felt. So I am resolved no longer to linger, charmed by the world's delight. Things that are higher, things that are nobler, these have allured my sight, I am resolved to go home, I will hasten to Him, I will hasten so Glad and free to that friend that gave His life for me. I LOVE HIM, HE LOVED ME FIRST. Now I'm singing a new song, making music for my FRIEND, He is my Hero, He has become my everything.

THE STORY

FANNY J. CROSBY was right when she composed 'Tell me the story of Jesus';

'Tell me the story of Jesus,
Write on my heart every word;
Tell me the story most precious,
Sweetest that ever was heard.'

The first question I asked; 'Please tell me the meaning of all that has happened. I don't understand '.

He replied, 'I am Jesus Christ. You are man, and your soul has been in the journey. The stranger is the agent of darkness'.

After the little introduction, He taught me a lot of lessons, of which I would discuss a bit.

Steve Adebowale was right on point when he said that 'the absurdity of the Omnipotent surpasses the sagacity of man, and the debility of the most High is more energetic than the solidity of man.

Behind the Genesis.

At the beginning of things, I mean creation, GOD - the mysterious trinity [so to say] - created man as sin in the Genesis.

The Scripture says:

'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 every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.' Gen. 1:26 [KJV]

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