

LESSON 5 (Isaiah 40:30-31 and Matthew 5:13-16)



Dinatu was a married with two children. Although with her husband she was surviving with her husband on their small farm, the famine in 1985 which continued for three years resulted in her husband leaving her. Carrying one child on her back and leading the other by the hand life became so dark. And survival is all that mattered. She moved into a government resettlement area for famine victims. Local people became angry of outsiders and used harsh means to drive them out Dinatu being once again thrown out. She moved to the city in hope of finding help.

But the situation was worse. She used scraps of cardboard and plastic to cover herself and her children from cold and rain . She was reduced to begging just to put something in her mouth and her children. Dinatu found another man living on the street and they began living together because she felt this man could provide some security. However this man left her for another woman. Life had become very difficult for Dinatu such that she thought if there was any God her certainly didn't care for her in anyway. Both she and her children were sick with TB and she was bitter with despair. She however still met another man called Garba who showed interest in her. In desperation Dinatu decided to live with Garba a 29 year old former soldier. Garba survived in the streets through stealing and was also a drug addict, chain smoker and violent. He made heavy demands of Dinatu and took all she got from begging without helping her and her children. He made Dinatu pregnant yet didn't support her. Worse still, in a government sponsored testing Dinatu discovered Garba had infected her with AIDS. Life was hell on earth. What hope was there for this woman? In 1993 it was the end of a civil war in Dinatu's country that saw a change in government. People were resettled in temporary shelters and some of those who found their way there were Dinatu and Garba. The condition was also very bad. God put a burden of compassion for these people into the hearts of a group of Christians living nearby. The Christians discussed possible ways of helping these 48 poor households. They started a project for them called "New Life". The Christians shared the word of God to the households. They also provided counselling on HIV/Aids as well as TB to those in the settlement and gave them training and skills of sustainability. However the "New Life" project directors could not tolerate Garba's behavior of violence and addiction such that he was dismissed after one year. Dinatu could take no more and they were separated with Garba. Garba passed through severe trials that finally broke him and brought him to genuine repentance and acceptance of Christ. He came back to the directors of "New Life" a broken man, his behavior revealing a changed character. He became a Mason who could provide for himself. They reunited with Dinatu and were able to sustain their family. Dinatu became a dedicated Christian serving God in the church together with Garba. She had acquired skills of making Jewelry. And added to the family income.

(Biblical Christianity in Modern Africa Pg.141-163 by Wilbur O' Donovan)

LESSON 5 Questions

1. What lessons can we learn about life from the story of Dinatu? _____

2. What do you understand about youths and young men growing tired, weary and stumbling from Isaiah 40:30? Give examples _____

3. Discuss how those who wait upon the Lord can renew their strength like an eagle (Isaiah 40:31)

4. Does waiting upon the Lord mean one has to be idle doing nothing for God and for himself/herself? Discuss _____

5. In the Dinatu story above discuss how these Christians were used by God to be salt and light of the world (Matthew 5:13-16) _____

6. How can you be salt and light to a tasteless, decaying and dark community? (Matthew 5:13-16) Discuss _____

7. Should good deeds be hidden? (Matthew 5:16) _____
