

## THE CRIMINALIZATION OF VALENTINE'S DAY

THIS IS YOUR RADIO FRIEND, PASTOR AMARA UWAEZIOZI, BRINGING YOU: **"HEALING WORDS FROM THE MASTER"**, A RADIO PROGRAM OF THE MASTER'S VESSEL MINISTRY WHOSE AIM IS TO LET YOU KNOW THE LORD JESUS CHRIST AND GOD'S UNSEARCHABLE RICHES AVAILABLE TO YOU.

I welcome you to this special broadcast...in JESUS' Name. Amen! Today's message is dedicated to The Youths of Nigeria. Why we are addressing every person, our special audience is the youths: teenagers inclusive. Yes – they are the victims of the bastardization of the Valentine's Day. Only GOD will reveal the number of youths who have been ruined by what a godly and innocent priest instituted.

Those of us whose birthday falls on 14<sup>th</sup> February have watched people ruin our day. However, we praise GOD that there is restoration. Many churches and Christian Organizations are making efforts to reverse the criminalization of the Saint Valentine's Day.

Today's topic is **The Criminalization of Valentine's Day.**

We will take our reading from 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

<sup>4</sup> Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; <sup>5</sup> does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, love is not provoked, and thinks no evil; <sup>6</sup> does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; <sup>7</sup> bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Let us pray.

## PRAYER

*Heavenly FATHER, we thank YOU for today. We thank YOU for our listeners. Thank YOU for our teenagers and youths, in general. We pray, Mighty FATHER, that the Word of today will appeal to their hearts and deliver them from every evil that is confronting them in this their age. LORD, we pray that this message will bring deliverance to many and keep them focused on the right things to do...in JESUS' Might Name we pray. Amen!*

Let's define criminalization. The Vocabulary.com dictionary defines it as, the act of making something criminal or making it against the law.

The word can also apply more generally to not just the outlawed activity but people or practices associated with it.

Let us consider the historical fact about Valentine's Day. According to Wikipedia, "Valentine's Day or The Feast of Saint Valentine is a holiday celebrated on February 14<sup>th</sup> annually. It originated as a Western Christian Feast Day honoring one or more early saints named *Valentinus*."

Valentine's Day is now recognized as a significant, cultural religious and commercial celebration of romance in many regions around the world. Although it is not a public holiday in any country, including Nigeria. The day is popularly associated with Saint Valentine of Rome, who was a priest. He was imprisoned and martyred in 269AD by The Emperor Cladius The second for performing weddings for soldiers who were forbidden to marry, and for ministering to Christians who were persecuted under The Roman Empire.

According to Legend, during his imprisonment, Saint Valentine, who was a priest, healed the daughter of his jailer called Asterus. And before his execution he wrote her a letter which he signed thus, *your valentine* as a farewell. This was the origin of the romantic love which is celebrated and powered by Goeffrey Chaucer in 14<sup>th</sup> century when the tradition of courting flourished especially in England. It evolved

into an occasion in which lovers expressed their love for each other, presenting flowers, or offering confectionaries, like cakes; and sending greeting cards.

Contemporary celebration of Valentine's Day has escalated into merchandise and promotion of immorality. Pretenders may label me judgmental – But we all live and work in Nigeria. First, the day is not a public holiday; yet you will find students, especially female ones, deserting their hostels or dormitory or classrooms, and roaming along the road and streets.

Most Nigerian cities become agog with attractive brands. And hotel rooms are fully booked during this period. Our passage says, *love is patient, love is kind; it does not envy; it does not boast; it is not proud; it is not rude; it is not self-seeking; it is not easily angered. It keeps no record of wrongs.* Of particular interest is verse 6: *Love does not delight in evil. Love does not delight in evil; and rejoices with the truth.* Verse 7 says, *it always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.* This is the outwork of love. But that is far from what we see during Valentine's Day Celebration. I admit that some folks may be getting it right. However, majority of adults lay siege on young girls and attempt to destroy their future.

Stories of abortions fill the air after 3 to 4 months after Valentine's Day celebration. I ask myself, why the young people submitting themselves to destruction and a mess of their future? The effect of this criminalization of the Valentine's Day is unprecedented in future.

Do you wonder why there is so much visit to prayer houses by newly married ladies because of infertility? While we must admit that infertility may not be directly associated with the activities arising from wild celebration of Saint Valentine's Day, it is important to draw the attention of young girls to the danger associated to the destruction of their wombs designed by GOD and reserved to be put into function after marriage.

Apostle Paul, writing to The Corinthians, in 1 Corinthians 6:12, and I read,

## 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

<sup>12</sup> *All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.* <sup>13</sup> *Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God will destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord [is] for the body.* <sup>14</sup> *And God both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power.*

<sup>15</sup> *Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? Certainly not!* <sup>16</sup> *Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? For “the two,” He says, “shall become one flesh.”* <sup>17</sup> *But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him.*

<sup>18</sup> *Flee sexual immorality...*

Hear me again. The bible says,

<sup>18</sup> *Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body.* <sup>19</sup> *Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?* <sup>20</sup> *For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.*

The bible says there that everything is permissible but not everything is beneficial. ***The pressure on young people is much; and no youth can adequately flee from these pressures unless powered by GOD. While we plead with the adults to spare young people from all these their indulgences and pretenses of love, the young people should escape for their lives. They are most vulnerable. They are the ones who will carry guilty consciences all their lives. They are the ones who may get pregnant and seek abortion from genuine and quack medical personnel.***

Take heed to the Word of GOD. *Flee immorality* is the advice of the Word of GOD. Friends, our LORD JESUS is your greatest valentine. HE gave HIS life for you with so much love that drove HIM to the cross where HE died and shed HIS blood. Today, if you invite HIM into your life, HE will deliver you from these pretenders of love.

Pray along with me.

#### PRAYER

*LORD JESUS, thank YOU for loving me. In reciprocity, I turn my life unto YOU. I repent of my sins and forsake them. I accept you as LORD, and will always serve YOU. Save my soul from eternal destruction...in JESUS Mighty Name.*

*Let me pray for you.*

*Heavenly FATHER, as many as have called upon YOU and repented genuinely of their sins, please save them by YOUR grace. Forgive their sins, and help them grow in righteousness...in JESUS Mighty NAME.*

*Why we invite you to join the Master's Vessel Purity Club, a group of young boys and girls who have entered into a covenant with GOD to remain sexually pure until marriage. GOD bless you.*

*Let's pray.*

*Heavenly FATHER, we thank YOU for this message today, and pray that it will appeal to the minds of our hearers, especially the targeted audience: even the youths. Deliver them from all these celebrations that lure them into sinful lifestyle...in JESUS' Mighty Name we have prayed. Amen!*