

*Sermon delivered on July 22, 2018 at EMK Augsburg and to be delivered again on
January 05, 2020 at Peace EMK Munich*

Theme: God's footprint in my or our live(s)

Text: Genesis 37: 5 – 20, II Timothy 4: 1 – 8

This is partly based on the **poem**: God's footprint in the sand

One night I dreamt/dreamed a dream,

As I was walking along the beach with my Lord.

Across the dark sky flashed scenes from my life.

For each scene, I noticed two sets of footprints in the sand;

One belonging to me and one to my God (my Lord).

After the last scene of my life flashed before me,

I looked back at the footprints in the sand.

I noticed that at many times along the path of my life,

Especially at the **very lowest and saddest times**,

There was **only one set of footprints**.

This really troubled me, so I asked the Lord about it.

“Lord, you said once I decided to follow you,

You'd walk with me all the way.

But I noticed that during the saddest

And most troublesome times of my life,

There was only one set of footprints.

I don't understand why, **When I needed You the most,**

You would leave me”.

He whispered, “My precious Child,

I love you and will never leave you.

Never, ever during your trials and testing.

When you saw **only one set of footprints**,

It was then that I carried you.

This poem sets the right tone and premise to my sermon today. To *closely observe the footprints* of God in one's life, one has to **look back (reflect, ponder)**, count the blessings, the testimonies, the numerous times or occasions God guided, intervened in our lives, the several times He shepherded us and brought about many uncountable breakthroughs.

He says in His word; "I will never leave you nor forsake (fail) you" – **Hebrews 13:5b**. He again says, "When thou passeth through the waters, I will be with thee: and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: When thou walketh through the fire, thou shall not be burned: neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." – **Isaiah 43:2**. We observe and infer from Scripture that the latter part of this prophecy was fulfilled in **Daniel 3:20-25**. Here, we notice king Nebuchadnezzar publicly confessing that he sees another man like the son of man/God walking in the fire with the three (3) other condemned men (Shadrach, Meshach & Abednego). The other parts are manifested in the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt to the Promised Land where and when they had to cross the Red Sea, etc – **Exodus 13:17, 18; 14:10-14, 21**. In another tale, we are told of Daniel been placed in the den full of extremely hungry Lions, albeit nothing untoward happened to him in there. Lions that hitherto would have devoured him, now became friends with him in the den – a clear sign of a hidden God or the footprint of Elohim being manifested in Daniel's life right there in the Lion's den. Thus, another vivid way to know the presence of God's footprint in our lives is through an intensive *combing of His word, the Holy Scriptures, meditating and depending on His word*.

Every believer can therefore **trace God's footprint in his/her life**. Something which continues to be a *wonder & mind boggling* at least in my opinion is how & why the Book of Esther finds itself as part of the Holy Scripture - One cannot find any mention of God in the entire book. There is therefore here, what I term as "a hidden God" – a God behind all the happenings or behind the scenes. The enormous favour we read of (bestowed on Esther, Mordecai and the Jews) all emanated from God – **Esther 5: 1-4**. Based on this and other stuff which usually occur in our lives and nature, one can confidently assume or say that one cannot sometimes observe the footprint of God in the moment. Nonetheless, a flashback will reveal the directions, guidance and shepherding of God especially as it also occurred here in the book of Esther. Such things also occur in our daily lives. We sometimes or usually or oftentimes don't see or realise the footprints or hand of God at all or immediately but by faith we know and believe He is walking with us and hence directing our paths even as His word assures and confirms same: ("For I know the **plans I have** for you, declares the Lord, plans of good and not

of evil to bring you to an expected end” – *Jeremiah 29:11*). Thus trusting God makes or allows Him to direct our path → His footprints in our lives!

God’s spirit guides and directs us as Christians. He speaks to us in a still quiet voice, telling us this is the right way, follow or pursue it. In *Psalms 77:19, 20* → We ultimately know for sure that God leads us but understanding how He leads us is key; He does speak or appear to us. However, we often don’t see His Footprints at all!

Nehemiah found himself leading the rebuilding of the walls and the church in Jerusalem. He went through some difficult opposition, ridicule among others. He however, succeeded because he always knew God was directing his footsteps though at some time he wasn’t certain if God was still with him or not – *Nehemiah 8:10*. Regardless, he continued to encourage himself and by extension the entire population of Israel since he believed God was solidly behind them in their enterprise.

In the story of Joseph (the first reading), as most of us are aware of, we observe God’s divine presence in Joseph’s life especially when he was seventeen years old and was having many great and good dreams from God. We might be tempted to say that God wasn’t with him when He allowed his brothers to succeed in selling him into slavery. We would however, of course completely change our story when we finally see at the end of the tale that he rose to become the second in command, the Prime Minister so to speak in a foreign Land. I believe Joseph himself would have wondered if God’s footprint was absent in his life the moment he was captured into slavery. He would have thought for a moment that God’s presence, power and direction had disappeared from him. Albeit, the moment he began excelling in Potiphar’s house, he would have certainly reflected on his path to that success story and would have for sure concluded that God had never ever departed from him/left him and that His footprints has directed him to his present position. In fact, Jacob while running away from his brother Esau encountered God at where we now know as Bethel. Indeed he reflected, recounted and inferred that God’s footprint was ever present in his life especially as that period was a challenging time in his life. Definitely, Joseph while in prison would have sometimes thought that he was suffering alone and that all the footprints he sees at those difficult and challenging moments were only his own. Obviously, his release and subsequent reinstatement into a position of much prominence would have made him rethink his previous position of God neglecting him. On that basis, I urge us all to always take a deep flash back and look at God’s interventions in various aspects of our daily endeavours.

In the second reading, Paul urges and appeals to us all as believers to always herald, preach and uphold our stance as Christians. Paul had encountered some difficult situations and circumstances that appeared and seemed that he was solely on his own. Regardless, he continued to soldier on and fought to the very end. As such, we should also learn from him and do same even as we continue our journey in this life as believers especially when it appears God is not moving with us. Paul tells and encourages us that we would also have a crown of righteousness as a reward someday. Certainly, when we also pose the same questions to God as in - whether or not He was walking with us in our trials, tribulations and the likes? The answer will be definitely in the affirmative. In fact, Scripture tells us that “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness” – *II Corinthians 12: 9*, As such we believe and know that God allows certain things to come our way because He has equipped us with all the capacity and the arsenal to soldier on.

A true testimony of the footprints of God in the life of a friend of mine known as Kodwo Odum. He got injured while playing football during a crucial time in his master thesis. One would say that God’s hand was completely off him but God works in mysterious ways as the saying goes. Some days following his injury, the main equipment which he uses for his investigations and measurements also broke down. And it was fixed some days before his complete recovery. During those days he sat home nursing his wounds, he also gathered momentum and some enthusiasm and energy to start applying for a PhD. Alas! He finished his master thesis and graduated and awaiting him was a PhD position. That’s a typical precept of the footprints of God in our lives.

For me, I can tell you of numerous examples and ways I have experienced and encountered the awesome and magnificent footprints of God in my life. In my education, traveling to Germany, my marriage, the birth of my son, in my finances, etc. the list is actually endless. This I observed based on a deep reflection at all my past events.

I would like to end my sermon with these remarks: **You will never walk alone!! – God will always be in the picture and will come through for us all!**
Amen!!

Benediction

May the Lord let His face shine upon you and give you peace. May He exalt your horn like that of a unicorn (wild ox). May He pour fine oils on [anoint] you and cause you to flourish like a palm tree and grow like a cedar in Lebanon. May He let or still cause you to bear fruit even in old age and blossom in the courts of our God so as to stay fresh and green always. May the Lord reveal and direct your path all the days of your life. Amen!!