

EPISODE 03 — *Late to Church, Early for Trouble*

Sunday morning arrived quietly, but Precious did not. She was deep in sleep, wrapped in her blanket as though she had signed a long-term agreement with her bed. The room was calm, her phone lay face down beside her, and nothing suggested that

"Do not let unnecessary pride or unseriousness delay your destiny."

it was already well into the morning.

— THE PASTOR'S SERMON

Then came a sharp knock on the door. "*Precious! Precious!*" She turned slightly but did not open her eyes. Another knock followed, louder this time. "*Are you not going to church today?*" That voice was familiar. It was Mama Bisi, her neighbour — a woman who had made it her personal ministry to monitor the spiritual lives of everyone on the compound.

Precious groaned and finally opened one eye. "*What time is it?*" she murmured. "*Na 8:30 already o!*" Mama Bisi shouted from outside. Precious jumped up immediately. "*Jesus!*" She grabbed her phone and checked the time. 8:32 a.m. Church started by 8:00 a.m.

"*Aunty Precious, if you like, sleep and enter afternoon service,*" Mama Bisi added. "*I'm coming!*" Precious replied, already scrambling out of bed.

As she rushed around the room, she picked up her phone again and noticed a WhatsApp notification. Peter. She opened it quickly. "*Good morning, my dear. I love you.*" Precious paused. Then she hissed loudly. "*Which day this one start?*" She shook her head and dropped the phone. "*No be today.*"

. . .

She hurried into the bathroom, took the fastest bath of her life, and dressed in record time. Her outfit was simple but neat, and she barely had time to properly arrange her hair before rushing out. "*Thank you, Mama Bisi!*" she shouted while locking her door. "*Next time, wake up early!*" the woman replied. Precious waved hurriedly and rushed toward the road.

. . .

THE SERMON

By the time she reached church, the service was already in progress. The choir had finished singing, and the pastor was already preaching. She slipped into a seat quietly, trying not to draw attention to herself.

"*Marriage is not something you delay carelessly,*" the pastor was saying. Precious froze slightly. "*Many young people today think they have time,*" he continued. "*But wisdom demands that you build your*

family while you still have strength to raise your children." Precious shifted in her seat. "*Hmm.*"

She tried to focus, but the message felt too direct. "*Do not let unnecessary pride or unseriousness delay your destiny,*" the pastor added. She looked down at her hands. Something about the message unsettled her.

. . .

THE BEACH HANGOUT

At the end of the sermon, the pastor smiled warmly. "*And for our singles,*" he announced, "*we have a special hangout this evening by 5 p.m. It will be held at the beach. It will be a time to relax, connect, and build godly relationships.*" There was a ripple of excitement across the hall. "*Hmm... beach hangout?*" Precious whispered to herself. She was already interested.

After the service, people gathered in small groups, exchanging greetings and laughter. "*Precious! Long time!*" a lady called out. "*Na today you remember church?*" another teased. Precious laughed. "*Abeg, no start.*" But her mind was already on the evening.

By 5 p.m., the beach was alive with activity. The cool breeze from the water balanced the warmth of the setting sun. Music played softly in the background, and groups of young people laughed, talked, and took pictures. Precious arrived looking refreshed and confident. "*This one sweet,*" she said quietly, smiling. She joined a group and quickly blended in with her usual lively personality.

. . .

SOMEONE NOTICED

But someone had already noticed her. Ade. He had seen her from a distance the moment she arrived. And just like always, he kept stealing glances at her. Precious noticed. At first, she ignored it. But after the third or fourth time, she became uncomfortable. "*Why this boy dey look me like this?*" she muttered.

Finally, she stood up and walked toward him. "*Ade, abeg,*" she said directly, folding her arms slightly. "*Why you dey always look me like say I owe you money?*" Ade was caught off guard. He smiled awkwardly. "*No be like that.*" "*Then how be am?*" He took a breath. "*I just... I like*

you."

Precious blinked. She did not expect that. "*For real?*" He nodded. "*Yes. I like your vibe. You are always lively.*" Her expression softened slightly. "*Hmm.*" They began to talk. What started as a simple question turned into a long conversation. They laughed, shared stories, and discovered things about each other. For the first time in a while, Precious felt at ease.

. . .

THE GAME

Later, a game was introduced. "*Pair up!*" someone shouted. Before Precious could react, Ade stepped forward. "*I go play with her,*" he said confidently. Precious looked at him and laughed. "*You don already choose me?*" "*Of course.*" The game required teamwork, quick thinking, and a bit of physical coordination. It was chaotic and funny at the same time.

At one point, Precious nearly fell again. "*Ah! Not again!*" she shouted, grabbing Ade for support. "*Careful!*" he laughed. Their team did not win, but they had the most fun.

. . .

THE PHONE CALL

As the evening progressed, the atmosphere grew more relaxed. They sat closer now, still talking. Then Precious's phone rang. She checked it. Peter. She frowned slightly. Ade noticed. "*You no go pick?*" he asked. Precious hesitated. She did not want to explain. "*It's my brother,*" she said quickly.

Then she picked the call and stepped aside. "*Hello,*" she said in a low voice. "*Precious, you no dey reply person again?*" Peter's voice came through, slightly irritated. "*I'm outside. I go call you later,*" she replied quickly and ended the call. When she returned, Ade looked at her quietly. "*That your brother dey call with plenty pressure,*" he said. Precious forced a small laugh. "*You know family.*" But Ade was not entirely convinced.

The hangout eventually came to an end. People began to leave in groups. Precious and Ade walked together for a short distance. "*I had a good time,*" he said. "*Me too,*" she replied. There was a brief pause. "*I*

will call you," he added. "*Okay,*" she said softly.

. . .

THE ULTIMATUM

When Precious got home, she sat on her bed and picked up her phone. She sighed, then called Peter. He picked immediately. "*So you finally remember me,*" he said coldly. "*Peter, I'm sorry. I was late for church this morning and I had to rush out again in the evening.*" There was a brief silence. Then his tone changed. "*Where you dey now?*" "*I'm at home.*" "*Good. Come and meet me at the hotel by 9 p.m.*"

Precious frowned. "*Hotel? For what?*" "*Don't ask me questions. Just come.*" She sat up. "*I can't come out this night.*" Her voice hardened."*Then return all the money I have been sending to you.*" The words landed heavily. Precious went quiet. "*You think say all those things na free?*" he continued. She swallowed. "*Peter...*" "*I'm serious. If you nocome, return everything.*" The call ended.

Precious sat still for a long moment. Her mind raced. On one side was pressure. On the other side was something new — something different. She thought about Ade. Then she looked at her phone again. For the first time, the choices before her did not feel simple anymore.

> "*What kind of life was she really building?*"

WATCH OUT FOR THE NEXT EPISODE