

WORD AT WORK

VOLUME XXII NUMBER I
Embracing God's Call

TUESDAY, January 1

HAPPY NEW YEAR !

Scripture: First Corinthians 7:17

When the Church finds itself in a nation at war, as a result of carefully orchestrated devastating attacks seemingly from events that should not have happened, we must ask ourselves to reveal any personal spiritual culpability. Should we have arrested those responsible before their evil plans were ever consummated? We must review all the aspects of our call and whether or not as a Church we are fulfilling all God has placed on our plate. The call of God is very clear in Scripture. It is spiritual, relational vocational and historical. Each aspect of God's call is very important to understand and embrace. In First Corinthians 7:17 we're told, "But as God has distributed to each one, as the Lord has called each one, so let him walk. And so I ordain in all the churches." Paul made it very clear to the Corinthians that each member of that congregation had a specific God-given call. In addition it was incumbent on them to walk daily with that call in mind. This was a universal principle for every church. If any member allowed an aspect of his call to go unfulfilled it would hurt the purpose of the Body and possibly impact the city and nation in which they lived. Is it possible we have become so lax in one or more aspects of our call that the nation dramatically and suddenly now suffers? Was there a divine message in the date in which the attack occurred – 911?

WEDNESDAY, January 2

Scripture: First Corinthians 7:18-24

Verses 18-24 continue to amplify the principle outlined in verse 17 as Paul emphasizes the vocational foundation of a person's call. The Holy Spirit paints a broad stroke in verse 17 while narrowing the focus in verses 18-24 on the individual contribution within a specific chosen vocation. We must allow the Lord to choose our career. I remember when I was in conflict with God concerning my choice of vocation versus His choice. I had trained and very much wanted to be an airline pilot. I had volunteered for an extra tour of duty in Viet Nam in order that I might double my pilot-in-command flight hours and go to the top of the hiring list for most major airlines. While accomplishing that goal in a short period, I found myself in the valley of decision knowing God had called me to ministry. Laying down my love of flying and seeing the end of a twenty-year old dream was a looming mountain – hard to scale! In the process I attempted to negotiate with the Lord asking Him simply to allow me to punctuate the end of this period by taking one final test and getting the Ph.D in aviation, which at that time was entitled an ATR (Airline Transport Rating). In this one-way conversation, I seemed to be the only one doing any negotiating. The Lord was silent. When I went into the FAA office to take first the oral and then the flight test, it was like my mind stayed outside. I didn't know who I was, where I was or how to formulate a coherent answer to any question asked. After three "A.B.C." questions, the FAA representative in disgust said, "Get the hell out of here and don't come back until you learn the basics"! As soon as I walked outside totally and completely humiliated, my mind came back and the word of the Lord came to me saying, "Are you ready to obey now?" God has a vocational call for each of us and He expects us to answer and fulfill it!

THURSDAY, January 3

Scripture: Second Timothy 1:8, 9

Verses 8 and 9 state, “Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began,...” One of the first things we must come to grips with in God’s call is usually a looming mountain of impossibility. God calls us to accomplish things that are “...not according to our works,...” Heaven doesn’t count what we can normally accomplish in the natural. This brings us into an absolute dependency on the Father for His purposes to be birthed. How long can we continue to trust Him to manifest His calling when it is obviously beyond our ability or beyond the strength of our current ability? Abraham faced this issue with God. The promise of a son was well beyond Abraham’s age-appropriate behavior! It seems God enjoys giving promises and then waiting until we are too old to feel like we can contribute anything at all. Only God can transform a place of discouragement into a place of grace and fulfillment!

FRIDAY, January 4

Scripture: Hebrews 3:1

In Hebrews 3:1 we are told, “Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus,...” We learn from Hebrews 3:1 that our calling, in addition to having a vocational component, is considered holy and has been given before the foundations of the earth were ever laid. Our calling is not according to our works, but has a heavenly component which leads us to believe that it can only be discerned and embraced when one turns his heart toward heaven and looks beyond the things this world offers. Is it possible the Church today is missing a major aspect of our calling because we are caught up in the trap of pursuing and seeking what the world offers? Abraham grew into a place where all the world offered was meaningless! His assets continually increased but there was no one to enjoy what a father accumulated. While possessing the best, he still wrestled with the pain of an unfulfilled promise! His heart is revealed in an exchange with God in Genesis 15:2, “But Abram said, ‘Lord GOD, what will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?’” Abram seems to be saying, “Look, You can multiply what I have all day long until my bank account has more than I could ever spend, but it is meaningless unless I see my call fulfilled.” Through the process of deprivation and pain, God brings us into deliverance from being controlled by anything the world has to offer. Both Abraham and Joseph walked this path and in many ways it appears to be true of the generation that God is shaping to wind up the age.

SATURDAY, January 5

Scripture: Philippians 3:10-14

In Philippians 3 Paul declares, “...that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” The upward call is a high call and in order to walk it out we must come to a point where we are willing to completely and totally forgive ourselves for the mistakes of the past declaring it to be behind. We must accept God’s grace and yield to the call realizing we probably can’t fulfill any of it in the natural and only by God’s grace will we ever see it. The mistakes of our past will not destroy the call on our lives and even though men may choose to attempt to disqualify us by their pharisaism and their judgments, God will not. God demands we embrace His purpose and walk it out because one day at the Judgment Seat of Christ we *will* give an account for what we did with it. Paul said he would press toward the mark and if there was ever anyone who attempted to destroy the Church and walk contrary to the call it was the man who wrote this passage. He lived the warfare over his call and now preaches it to others. He was forced to forget what was behind and to press toward God’s purpose. How many of us are on the sidelines because

we cannot forgive ourselves for lost years and mistakes of the past? This seems to be one of the primary ways the enemy sidelines God's servants. Stand up and declare that you refuse to be hindered by the mistakes and failures of the past and you will rise up and fulfill all that God has called you to do!

SUNDAY, January 6

HAPPY EPIPHANY

Scripture: Galatians 1:15-17

We are told in Galatians 1:15-17, "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus." What do we know about the call of God? This passage reveals that the call can only be accomplished through God's grace. It is accomplished by the purpose of being separated from everything that would hinder it. The Greek word translated "separated" here is **af-or-id-zo**. The first manifestation of **af-or-id-zo** for the apostle Paul, after coming to grips with God's purpose for him, was the issue of being discouraged or rejected by man. If there ever was anybody who stood to be rejected by the Church it was the man who attempted to destroy it for many years. He was the chief architect of the death of Stephen consequently scattering the whole congregation at Jerusalem leaving only the twelve to preach to themselves on Sunday morning. We can obviously understand how Paul would not be led to confer with flesh and blood when embracing his call. The probability is quite significant that most church leaders, in that time frame, would have done anything but encourage him in his call. Have we allowed men to discourage us from accomplishing what God has revealed to be our purpose? Have we refused to pursue a path prompted by the Holy Spirit because of those who are older in the Lord? Have we yielded to the opinions of man? What are we doing with God's call?

MONDAY, January 7

Scripture: Romans 11:25-29

Romans 11:25-29 says, "For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that hardening in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: 'The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins.' Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers. For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable." The spiritual call that came on us individually, vocationally, relationally and corporately is irrevocable. It is eternal. Personal failure does not destroy the call of God. One thing we must learn about how God operates is that His call demands our all. How much are we giving toward His call? God expects us to overcome all obstacles!

TUESDAY, January 8

Scripture: Psalm 78:1-7

In verses 4 through 6 of Psalm 78 we're told, "We will not hide them from their children, Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, And His strength and His wonderful works that He has done. For He established a testimony in Jacob, And appointed a law in Israel, Which He commanded our fathers, That they should make them known to their children; That the generation to come might know them, The children who would be born, That they may arise and declare them to their children,...." Psalm 78 demonstrates the generational call which we must embrace. Each generation has the obligation to disciple and implant what the Lord has made real in their children for the purpose that the coming generation might know the Lord and continue to walk with Him. This is one aspect of the call which is universal to every generation. When we look at the fruit of any doctrine which causes us to withdraw in even the slightest degree from disciplining the next generation, we know that doctrine needs some dramatic adjustment. Every generation where the rapture has been emphasized there has been a withdrawal in effort and commitment to disciplining the next generation demonstrating a fruit needing adjustment. We must come to grips with the universal aspect of our call, embrace it and walk it out.

WEDNESDAY, January 9

Scripture: Psalm 78:8-25

We are told the generation which first came out of Egypt dramatically failed in their call. Verses 8-11 says, “And may not be like their fathers, A stubborn and rebellious generation, A generation that did not set its heart aright, And whose spirit was not faithful to God. The children of Ephraim, being armed and carrying bows, Turned back in the day of battle. They did not keep the covenant of God; They refused to walk in His law, And forgot His works And His wonders that He had shown them.” Psalm 78 outlines for us the fruit of not embracing the generational call. The fruit is an entire generation unprepared when God visits them and expects them to walk out His purpose fulfilling the divine plan. In Psalm 78:1-7 they were encouraged to train up the succeeding generation in order that Israel would never again see such all encompassing spiritual failure. When we fail to honor our generational call of discipling the succeeding generation, we help to promote faith failures. Let’s determine to walk a different path.

THURSDAY, January 10

Scripture: Joshua 8:24-27

In Joshua 8:24-27 we are told, “And it came to pass when Israel had made an end of slaying all the inhabitants of Ai in the field, in the wilderness where they pursued them, and when they all had fallen by the edge of the sword until they were consumed, that all the Israelites returned to Ai and struck it with the edge of the sword. So it was that all who fell that day, both men and women, were twelve thousand – all the people of Ai. For Joshua did not draw back his hand, with which he stretched out the spear, until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai. Only the livestock and the spoil of that city Israel took as booty for themselves, according to the word of the LORD which He had commanded Joshua.” This is living proof of the successful discipling of Joshua by Moses. One generation had to die in the wilderness and Moses watched many of his friends and acquaintances depart for eternity during his 40 years of leadership. But this passage also reveals Joshua’s absolute commitment to obeying the word of the Lord. The discipleship of Moses produced an obedience in Joshua that enabled him to successfully carry out the purpose and plan of God. Moses, I’m sure, had he lived to see it would have been greatly gratified by the success of Joshua. The time that we pour into discipling the next generation will undoubtedly reveal a tremendous harvest in eternity. Lets look for every opportunity and sow into the next generation.

FRIDAY, January 11

Scripture: Joshua 10:28-39

In Joshua 10:28-39 we find another example of how discipleship paid off in absolute obedience accomplishing God’s purpose for their generation. Where Moses’ generation failed, Joshua followed through and refused to make the same mistakes. Whatever God told him to do – he did. He did not flinch when encountering stronghold cities. His commitment was to absolute obedience. So in a way we find that Joshua in his generation brought, spiritually speaking, a redemption to the generation of Moses which failed to obey God in the face of the giants. Is it possible that our obedience can bring about redemption of past generational failure, accomplishing God’s purpose for several generations? Well, it was certainly true with Joshua. Surely it can be true for us also.

SATURDAY, January 12

Scripture: Matthew 12:38-42

One of the things we learn from Matthew 12 is that Jesus very much set an emphasis on adopting the generational call. He even warned His disciples about the judgment that would come if they were to neglect it. He said in verses 39-42, “An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will rise in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than

Jonah is here. The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon is here.” Jesus warned the generation He ministered to that those in previous generations, who had answered their call, would rise up and condemn them for not answering their generational purpose. Jesus made it very clear that we are not only held accountable for our personal call, but we will be held accountable for whether or not we embraced God’s generational goal. It is time we began to understand this issue and move toward understanding the divine purpose and plan.

SUNDAY, January 13

Scripture: Hebrews 3:1-6

Verses 1-5 tell us, “Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus, who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was faithful in all His house. For this One has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who built the house has more honor than the house. For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God. And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward,....” The encouragement we find in Hebrews 3 is that we have all been made partakers of the heavenly calling and we must consider Jesus Who was faithful even unto death, walking out His individual, corporate and generational calls. Even Moses was faithful in all his house as a servant, walking out his individual, corporate and generational call. God seems to be saying to us that if we will faithfully adopt our generational call, we will not only find God’s pleasure but we will also find a measure of fulfillment and probably make a greater contribution than we ever thought possible.

MONDAY, January 14

Scripture: Hebrews 3:7-11

In verses 7-11 we find out what it means spiritually when we fail to embrace God’s generational call. Verses 7-11 say, “Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: ‘Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, In the day of trial in the wilderness, Where your fathers tested Me, proved Me, And saw My works forty years. Therefore I was angry with that generation, And said, “They always go astray in their heart, And they have not known My ways.” So I swore in My wrath, “They shall not enter My rest.”’”. We are told in verse 10 that God was angry with that generation. The Greek word translated “angry” is **pros-ok-thid-zo** which means to be grieved or offended. The context indicates that what grieved or offended God was their failure to embrace their generational call and confront the enemy so that God could give them their Promised Land. The failure to embrace that generational call cost Israel 40 years. How much has been forfeited in what God wanted to do because we were not willing to discover and embrace our generational call. Is our nation experiencing the fruit of the Church’s failure?

TUESDAY, January 15

Scripture: First Peter 2:1-10

Verses 7-9 state, “Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, ‘The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone,’ and ‘A stone of stumbling And a rock of offense.’ They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed. But you are a chosen generation a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;....” First Peter 2 demonstrates God’s attitude and blessing on a generation who answers the call. They are dubbed “...a chosen generation a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special (or peculiar) people....” What a blessing for those who say “yes” to their generational call. It may be as traditional as discipling the next generation or as prophetic as what David embraced and walked out. Every generation has a biblical assignment of discipling the succeeding generation as well as a prophetic assignment usually contributing to God’s restoration as we move toward the winding up of the age. As we become aware of the fact that we not only have a personal call but a generational call and choose to embrace both, we are

moving toward a blessing proclaimed in First Peter chapter 2. Let's find that blessing and walk in it in the days ahead.

WEDNESDAY, January 16

Scripture: Mark 10:17-22

The rich young ruler is a picture of one who is called and then encounters warfare over accepting, embracing and walking out the call. He knows God has more for him than he is currently experiencing. That prompts him to run to Jesus and say, "Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" Jesus proceeds to outline the basic fundamental stepping stones of a righteous lifestyle. The young man's reply was, "...all these I have observed from my youth." In verse 21 Jesus issues the call, "One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and **come**, take up the cross, and follow Me." Immediately upon receiving the call the conflict begins. The initial encounter with God identifying the call almost always results in conflict forcing a choice. I've experienced the encounter, I've heard the sound of the call, I know the depth of the conflict and I've walked through the agony of choice. This is a pattern that seems to come universally when we're dealing with the issue of our call. The sad part of the rich young ruler's story is in verse 22, "But he was sad at this word, and went away grieved, for he had great possessions." The choice always involves embracing the cross.

THURSDAY, January 17

Scripture: Mark 10:23-27

When the rich young ruler walked away, Jesus used this opportunity to teach concerning the spirit of mammon – an issue He had mentioned a number of times before. This subject occupied a central place in His sermon on the mount and once again comes into view as a primary stronghold of man. His comment to the disciples is straightforward, "'How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!'" The disciples registered somewhat of an adverse reaction to this statement probably based on the fact that a number of them had substantial resources and were wondering if they would have to forfeit everything they owned. Verse 24 records their response, "And the disciples were astonished at His words." When Jesus saw this response He began to elaborate on the principle, "Children, how hard it is for those who **trust** in riches to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." Far from laying this issue to rest among His disciples, Jesus managed to kick it up a level. Their response is recorded in verse 26, "And they were astonished beyond measure saying among themselves, 'Who then can be saved?'" Jesus attempted to finally lay the issue to rest by saying, "With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible." The encouragement for us is that when the call comes God has a grace to empower us to choose His call and then walk it out. That's a promise. This promise is eternal. Is it possible the Church today is not experiencing the grace they expect because they have not accepted the depth of the call God desires.

FRIDAY, January 18

Scripture: Mark 10:28-31

Jesus fully expected that His comments would have brought peace to this issue of the call, but instead Peter gets fearful of personal loss and responds. They need to know if the choices they have already made are going to result in some form of eternal fulfillment and possibly a restoration of what was left behind. Peter responds in an animated pleading fashion, "See, we have left all and followed You." Jesus' answer is one we need to embrace. He said in verses 29-31, "'Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time – houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions – and in the age to come, eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first.'" There can be no doubt about the magnitude of the promise Jesus laid down concerning the call. Whatever they left in responding to God's call is now promised to be multiply back to them now in this lifetime. We may find that we walk out our call in stages. The first stage may result in much deprivation and lack when the enemy, often through the church, attempts to

discourage us from our chosen path. But God promises He will bring those assaults to an end and that He will before our life ends multiply back to us everything which we have left. Construct a balance sheet and add up everything that you have forfeited by walking out your call then hold it before the Lord and ask Him to restore and multiply according to His word.

SATURDAY, January 19

Scripture: Matthew 19:16-30

In Matthew's account Jesus does not stop with, "But many who are first will be last, and the last first." He continues on in a teaching about the kingdom. So we understand that the disciples' response has provoked a serious teaching about how God's kingdom operates in relation to the call that comes on each of our lives. The first principle concerning the call is suffering loss. When we say "yes" to God's call we make a choice to turn away from what the world offers and to follow Him. That invariably entails loss. This is the stumbling block for the rich young ruler. He is not willing to walk through the loss of all he has gained and consequently he never reaches the promise that God would multiply and give it back to him. The only ones who get that promise are those who choose to embrace the loss and follow the call. The rich young ruler departs before that promise can be given. He obviously spends the rest of his life in an attempt to maintain his assets. Surely in today's economy we have the revelation that assets are exceedingly difficult to maintain. If most of our money is in real estate and a 7.0 hits our area – what value is our real estate? We know earthquakes are going to increase as we approach the final days, so assets are becoming dramatically more difficult to maintain as we approach the winding up of the age. Many of us will live to see a season where believers cannot afford to walk away from God's call.

SUNDAY, January 20

Scripture: Matthew 19:27-20:5

Jesus begins to deal with the disciples concerning the issues of their call in the aftermath of extending one to the rich young ruler where the call is rejected when the price is revealed. A number of individuals in the group of disciples had already walked through that process. This resulted in Peter's dramatic question stating, "See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?" In answer to that question, Jesus begins a teaching on the kingdom concerning the unfolding and embracing of our call. In verse 30, of chapter 19, He says concerning Peter versus the rich young ruler, "But many who are first will be last, and the last first." When this encounter develops, Peter has already walked away from his business to embrace the call and he is living now in the faith of what is provided by association with Jesus. The rich young ruler is now issued the same call that Peter previously received, but unlike Peter says, "No, I cannot walk away from my wealth and my business." It is obvious when Jesus says, "...many who are first..." He is speaking of the rich young ruler. But His statement also says they will be last and those who are now last, from obeying the call and having walked away from their wealth, will be first. We find a two edged sword of a promise issued to all those who answer the call. Number one: God says I will multiply and return to you what you left when you answered the call. Number two: you will live to see the day when those who refused to answer the call lose what they spent a lifetime attempting to maintain. Can you imagine the dramatic impact of such a season on a nation like America in which every generation has heard many a preacher issuing God's call? Where do we stand on God's call? Have we answered or are we attempting to maintain everything we have accumulated? Will the Church repent and get serious with God?

MONDAY, January 21

Scripture: Matthew 20:1-16

In the parable of the laborers, Jesus begins to educate the disciples concerning issues surrounding their call. Number one: many of them were called at different stages and different levels. Peter is probably one of the first of the group that was called and consequently he is the one who is asking the question, "Look, we left everything, what do we get?" Jesus responds to that in two ways. Number one: He promises God will multiply and restore all from which they have walked away! Second: He also issues a warning. The warning is don't assume because you

came at the beginning of the 3 ½ year ministry that you are going to wind up with more than somebody who came at the end. That is why we find verses 11 and 12, ““And when they had received it [each received a denarius], they murmured against the landowner, saying “These last men have worked only one hour, and you made them equal to us who have borne the burden and the heat of the day.””” Jesus is making it very clear to the disciples that God chooses the dimension and magnitude of what He gives us when it comes to resources and we should not assume that because we have faithfully walked out our call for 20 years that we are necessarily going to have the joy of distributing more than somebody who has walked it out for only 10. All those issues remain in God’s hand for Him to dispense and disperse as He chooses. One phrase that Jesus adds to the equation in Matthew 20 is ““For many are called, but few are chosen.”” He adds this phrase to the principle He enumerates in Matthew 19:30, ““...the first will be last, and the last first.”” These two principles are now connected. They work together. They have become one. Concerning God’s call we need to understand how they have been merged together.

TUESDAY, January 22

Scripture: Matthew 22:1-8

In Matthew 22:1-8 we notice the lord has arranged a marriage supper for his son and in verse 3 he begins to call his citizens to attendance, ““[he] sent out his servants to **call** those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come.”” The sad thing about the first call is that many make light of it. They can’t bring themselves to answer and because God is a God of grace and mercy He almost invariably sends them a second opportunity. Verse 4 proclaims, ““Again, he sent out other servants, saying, “Tell those who are invited, ‘See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatted cattle are killed, and all things are ready. Come to the wedding’”””. Again the sad thing that develops are all the excuses people produce for not accepting God’s call. Despising the second call had serious consequences. Jesus said the consequences were judgment – without apology! No place was left to hide. No place was left to run. Is it possible that as a nation within a nation God’s Church has refused the **call** – either generationally or nationally? Is it possible the increasing economic and natural judgments of the past 40 years have been in response, not so much to the condition of the nation, but the refusal of the Church to answer God’s call.

WEDNESDAY, January 23

Scripture: Matthew 22:8-10

Perhaps one of the things we need to most understand about God’s **call**, especially in a season where a considerable part of a generation seems to have walked away and disdained even their second summons, is the rules change between 2 and 3. Notice the third call of verses 9 and 10, “““Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.”” So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding hall was filled with guests.”” Notice in the third call the issue had nothing to do with whether a person had been “bad” or “good”. The issue was – would they *come* when *called*! In a season where the third call is issued, it is obvious no weight is attached to past failure. The issue is simply – will you come when you are called? If we at any point in our life are allowing our past to hinder our response to God’s call then we have misunderstood His ways, His heart and the very clear principles by which He operates. It made no difference at the time of the third call whether somebody had been bad or good. The issue had nothing to do with whether they had been in jail, prison or led an exemplary life. The issue was – will you answer the **call**! How much gnashing of teeth will those who have led an exemplary life display when they see those who have not – going beyond them in God’s call. It is time to realize what is really important and respond accordingly.

THURSDAY, January 24

Scripture: Matthew 22:11-14

The third call populated the wedding. Qualifying to attend had nothing to do with whether a person had been bad or good. The issue was simply two fold. Number one: will you answer the **call** when it comes? Number two: will you embrace the righteous lifestyle, put off the old man with his lusts and change into a

wedding garment? The wedding garment is a symbol of embracing the character traits and lifestyle outlined in God's covenant. Will we embrace the principles God demands? Multitudes caught in homosexuality and lesbianism appear to be answering their call. But that is just step one bringing them into the church. Taking step two is far more difficult because they must be willing to put on a wedding garment which means changing their lifestyle. What we are finding now in the American church is that rather than taking step two, having answered the call, they are now demanding that they not have to put on the wedding garment but be allowed to keep a perverse lifestyle. *This* – Jesus never tolerated and we can never allow it either. Nobody because of their past, whether it is bad or good, was disbarred from the call. The call came to all and they all answered. When they came in they were forced to embrace a biblical lifestyle if they were to qualify for the wedding. That issue was not negotiable. God's standard of righteousness has *never* been negotiable. All who answer the call have only completed step one and step two is usually much more difficult. Many a denominational Christian in the American church are facing the choice of embracing the wedding garment! Let us be **crystal clear** – Jesus called all including those without a wedding garment. At first He was speechless that anybody would even consider the abject stupidity of rejecting it! Only spiritual morons depart from God's word to that dimension. “Then the king said to the servants, “Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” For many are called, but few are chosen.” The fastest way to obtain God's one-way ticket to hell is to answer your call but refuse to put on the wedding garment. We see that in our headlines as denominational councils vote on whether to ordain homosexuals. But Jesus made it very clear. He said the second choice is a necessity and it has to be made. It is not enough to answer the call – we have to go the second step. We have to choose to put on God's standard of righteousness in every dimension. When Jesus said, “For many are called, but few are chosen” everybody in this passage has been called. Among all those who came only those without a wedding garment were thrown out. So the issue was *not* whether or not God calls you. God called everybody that was there including multitudes who didn't even show. They were all called. The issue became – are we willing to embrace God's standard in order to qualify to be chosen. It was not God who determined whether or not they were chosen. God's job was calling them. Their job was making the choices that would end up with their full anointing for the season in which they lived. Manifestation depended on the choices they made. God called them and their responses determined whether or not they were chosen. We are in the process of watching this unfold in our churches throughout the nations. Perhaps the parable of the marriage feast is a prophetic picture that is being lived out before us daily. Have we chosen to answer the call? What are we doing with what God is saying?

FRIDAY, January 25

Scripture: Matthew 22:1-14

Principles governing God's call become more apparent as we take a closer look at the words that are used and the fullness of meaning behind them. Between the second and third call we hear frustration in this statement, “Then he said to his servants, “The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy.”” The Greek word translated “worthy” is **ax-ee-os** and it means deserving based on choice. When we think about whether or not we are worthy it has nothing to do with our sins of omission or commission and it has everything to do with the *choices* we make. If we choose to answer God's call, the Bible says we are worthy based on our choice. What distinguishes the third call, in verse 10, is that “...both bad and good” are called. The word for “bad” here is **pon-ay-ros** and it means a bent toward evil in a moral or spiritual sense. “Good” is **ag-a-thos** which means benevolent or profiting others or one who enjoys giving. The issue of putting on the wedding garment had nothing to do with moral failures or with benevolence. It had everything to do with simply answering the call. In verse 12 when those who refused to put on the wedding garment are thrown out, the Greek word used is **gam-os** meaning the actual joining of husband and wife as in us with God through Jesus as we embrace a righteous lifestyle or as with the devil as we reject it. Again we can see the issue of those who have answered the call and the warfare of whether or not they are going to choose the wedding garment. Choices made today determine our anticipation in eternity tomorrow.

SATURDAY, January 26

Scripture: Matthew 21:1-7 and Luke 19:28-31

In Matthew 21:1-7 Jesus told His disciples what to do. He told them to go into the village...they would find a colt...loose it and bring it along and if they were questioned as to why they were ripping off somebody's colt they were simply to say, "The Lord has need of them" and it would be done. Because they chose to obey, God's anointing was released on that statement and what they needed they appropriated. Is such an anointing waiting for us to answer the magnitude of God's call on us generationally? In the parallel passage we find one more detail about this colt that Jesus sends the disciples to obtain. He says in verse 30, "'Go into the village opposite you, where as you enter you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Loose him and bring him here.'" Jesus was after an unbroken animal. In Matthew 21's account we find there were *two*. There were the donkey *and* the colt and "they set Him on *them*" and He went into Jerusalem on the back of two generations. The reason why the unbroken colt follows along is because the previous generation is there to set the example. God is calling an unbroken generation into the kingdom, but the example has to be set by the previous generation. Are we willing to pay the price and set the example by embracing the wedding garment? It is a *choice* that is being made right now.

SUNDAY, January 27

Scripture: First Chronicles 28:1-13

In First Chronicles 28:1-13 we see king David at the end of his life outlining what he understands to be his spiritual purpose and a declaration of God's covenantal faithfulness to bring to pass everything that he has seen and heard from his father. He exhorts Solomon in verse 9 and says, "As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a loyal heart and with a willing mind; for the LORD searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever." David outlines Solomon's call. He tells Solomon he has been chosen to build the sanctuary for the Lord and then in verses 11, 12 and 13 he gives Solomon all the plans for the building, he gives the position of the mercy seat which he has learned through personal failures and he outlines the operational plans for the priests and Levites. All Solomon had to do was follow the directions that were mapped out by the previous generation. If our generation has a Davidic call, are we answering that call? If we are not answering that call, are we beginning to experience in national adversity the fruit of not embracing our national call?

MONDAY, January 28

Scripture: First Chronicles 22:14-16

The covenantal promise to the Davidic generation that will embrace their call may be as good today as it was then. David was able to say, "Indeed I have taken much trouble to prepare for the house of the LORD one hundred thousand talents of gold and one million talents of silver, and bronze and iron beyond measure, for it is so abundant. I have prepared timber and stone also, and you may add to them. Moreover there are workmen which you in abundance: hewers and workers of stone and timber, and all types of skillful men for every kind of work. Of gold and silver and bronze and iron there is no limit. Arise and begin working, and the LORD be with you." A number of years ago the Lord brought me to this passage and He said, "You are believing too small. You will live to see the day where verse 16 is true in your generation." Now for verse 16 to be true in our generation, we need to understand the magnitude of what God did for David. The Logos Bible Study program has a little calculator that allows you to convert numbers based on a country's current wage per hour. At \$8 US an hour we find that God gave David one trillion, one hundred and fifty-two billion in gold. At \$8 US an hour He gave him seven hundred and sixty-eight billion in silver. If God would do that to build a type and shadow temple how much more would He give to build a temple made of living eternal stones that are human beings? It is time to embrace our Davidic call and see verse 16 manifested in our lifetime.

TUESDAY, January 29

Scripture: First Chronicles 29:3-4

Verses 3 and 4 state, “Moreover, because I have set my affection on the house of my God, I have given to the house of my God, over and above all that I have prepared for the holy house, my own special treasure of gold and silver: three thousand talents of gold, of the gold of Ophir, and seven thousand talents of refined silver, to overlay the walls of the houses;....” We find at \$8 US an hour David gave, out of his own treasury, 34.56 billion in gold – 5.376 billion in silver. Clearly we can see that God was very serious with David about His call and about raising up the fulfillment of His visions in the next generation. Why should it be any different for us? Is not our call equally as noble – the building of an eternal spiritual sanctuary with living stones populating the New Jerusalem? Surely we can see the same magnitude of God’s promise if we will but answer our call and put on the wedding garments.

WEDNESDAY, January 30

Scripture: Acts 3:19-21

Acts 3:19-21 expounds a biblical ministry model based on the concept embodied in a Greek word **homo-thu-ma-don**. It is a model of restoration. Restoration used here has a two-fold meaning. It means, first, to surgically, skillfully remove the diseased piece followed by physically picking up all that remains and repositioning in God to finish the race and carry out the call. Jesus has promised His presence to the Church who embraces this model of restoration. Will we recognize the Gay community as they begin to answer their call? Will we help them put on their wedding garments and embrace a change of lifestyle? Are we prepared to love those God loves and to champion them through the transition as they remove the filthy rags and replace them with a biblical lifestyle? God is calling - are we prepared to answer?

THURSDAY, January 31

Scripture: Acts 3:19-23

In verses 20 and 21 the Father promised to send Jesus Christ, “whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. For Moses truly said to the fathers, ‘The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren, Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. And it shall come to pass that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.’” The Bible is very clear about the issue of our response to the call Jesus issues. In addition it is also straight about our response to the righteous standard which He outlined. Jesus spent more time with the “bad” than He did with the “good.” But when it came to the issue of the wedding garment He was crystal clear and razor sharp. There was no compromise with either group. ***The righteous lifestyle of Scripture is demanded as a wedding garment.*** God’s mercy and grace covers everything else. Can we hold up that standard? Can we exemplify the life of Jesus in our generation? We’re certainly being called to do it. What are we doing with the call we’re hearing?

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