

WORD AT WORK

VOLUME XXIII NUMBER II Pursuing God's Purposes III

SATURDAY, February 1

Scripture: Matthew 15:1-3

The first three verses of Matthew 15, outlining the exchange between Jesus and the spiritual leaders of His day, point to necessary changes when Church and political leadership use the same tactics. Jesus faced a religious climate where leadership was much more committed to maintaining the status quo, even when it was diametrically opposed to God's word, than serving the Lord in proper order. There is nothing wrong with tradition if it has a solid biblical foundation. But when scriptural precepts are perverted for the selfish purposes of men, shame and bondage result. Jesus addresses this very attitude. When leaders refuse the Holy Spirit while preferring the dictates of the "Home Office" franchise Christianity forfeits an anointing to change cities and settles for spiritual passivity which puts people to sleep on Sundays. We can have church with God or without God. Every local church leadership has to decide whether to move with the Holy Spirit or, in some cases, be damned by the dictates fostering spiritual death. The only safe way to navigate the spiritual rapids facing us in the river of life is personal relationship. Only specific direction from relational friendship can guarantee safe passage. We must pray for leadership as choices are being made.

SUNDAY, February 2

Scripture: Matthew 15, 4-6

Matthew 15:4-6 pictures a religious system that has almost completely departed from its roots. The gospel demands love and care for others, but most of all for the individual family. In biblical culture of that day certain family responsibilities were understood. The children were to take care of the parents in their old age. There were no annuities, 401-K retirement funds, Social Security, or Keogh plans for old age. The Pharisees had worked out a way people did not have to provide for their parents. They could bring a portion of the money into the temple instead, easing their conscience, while leaving the parents on their own. This doctrinal practice formed a perfect example for Jesus to show the Pharisees how their tradition had removed them far from God's revealed purpose and plan in Scripture. They demonstrated the depth of their commitment to the self-serving system by refusing to repent or change, even when God's word was revealed before them in the flesh. As God reveals His word to us are we willing to change, even if it brings us into conflict with the headquarters of our own denominational government? Following Jesus guarantees conflict – often with those we love. I wish there were an alternate route, but I haven't found it yet. The depth of our commitment to the Lord is revealed in our willingness to stand for what is right.

MONDAY, February 3

Scripture: Matthew 15:1-6; 6:19-24

Jesus gave the Pharisees from Jerusalem a perfect example of where their heart was. They were clearly in violation of the principle He preached in the Sermon on the Mount, "...where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." The Pharisees had made position, power and money their treasure. It brought them into conflict with God. Jesus said in Matthew 6:24, "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon." The desire to fund ministry apart from God brought them into conflict with the very foundational principles which guarantee God's blessing on a generation. When they began to upbraid Jesus because His religious practices were different from theirs, He did not hesitate to clearly specify who would have to change. Is Jesus the same yesterday, today and forever? Could we be facing aspects of the same conflict as restoration of the Church proceeds? Are we really ready for all the repercussions of restoration? Whatever we compromise to keep, we almost always lose!

TUESDAY, February 4

Scripture: Matthew 15:10-14

Verses 10-14 reveal a religious system setting boundaries God never set, becoming a god to themselves. Jesus said, "Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man – but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man." A couple called recently asking about a leadership qualification form demanding they abstain from a variety of things, one of which was pledging never to have wine as a condition for position. European and American Christianity vary dramatically on this subject. How does God feel when we set boundaries beyond His word. It may be necessary in youth, but in maturity grace reigns. How can we prohibit what Paul recommends for Timothy? I believe we are entering a season where verses 13 and 14 are taking place on both the national and local level. "Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted." Let's not be uprooted plants because of tradition. That is a radical statement but it shows the depth of God's commitment to purify and cleanse a religious system that bears His name. Verse 14 says, "Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch." As one surveys the religious landscape he can almost name the denominational ditches. Only God can deliver us from the ditch! It is time to *pray* for every aspect of that deliverance to come quickly.

WEDNESDAY, February 5

Scripture: Matthew 15:7-9; 15-20

How have we slipped into a place where we have a form of worship and godliness but little power? Are we drawing near with our mouth and honoring with our lips, but our heart is still far away? Verse 9 seems to clarify the issues. We teach doctrines which allow the flesh to fulfill its desires and never yield to the Spirit of God. I think the enemy works overtime at planting people in places God did not call them to occupy. Verse 13 is a gross reality in many of our churches where people are leading worship who have no anointing and are not called. The consequence is you pick up a dead service and the only anointing coming on the word flows from grace, because it is not there through the progression God ordained in Scripture. One of the encouraging signs I see in traveling is many churches are developing a variety of worship teams. This is one area that God is restoring when leadership opens to the divine plan. When people are in their right place, worship flows accordingly and it lays the foundation for the word of God that transforms and changes hearts. Restoring anointed worship seems to be one of the greatest needs in today's Church. The anointing that comes through praise and worship brings hearts before the Lord to be transformed by His power and might. God deliver us from the dead tradition of songs we can sing in our sleep.

THURSDAY, February 6

Scripture: Acts 3:19-21

Acts 3:19-21 demonstrates a pattern for God's restoration. We are told that repentance is the key that brings revival, transformation, change, times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, and that Jesus Christ will come to visit when there is a true change of heart. We can't take to the nation what we haven't birthed in the Church. We see here that "times" of restoration is plural, meaning more than one of them. Two **chronoi** leadership periods of forty years have already elapsed since the restoration of the Holy Spirit and we now stand in the third. The end of the promise is that all things spoken by the prophets will be fulfilled. But it begins with repentance. This is a Church issue. The world doesn't know it needs to repent. This is a key individually and corporately. Seasons of change, visitation, blessing, and outpourings of glory await our entering the door of repentance. A pattern portraying perilous seasons of change and restoration developed during Hezekiah's reign. We might as well prepare to encounter the same yardstick.

FRIDAY, February 7

Scripture: First Peter 4:17; Acts 3:19-21

God's restoration process usually follows a customized pattern determined by cultural and political choices. When Jonah's personal choice resulted in fishy captivity, acknowledgment and repentance resulted. Will God do for nations what He has done for individuals in restoring them to assigned works? If we answer "yes" do we smell or see fishy circumstance emerging? The fruit of war can result in very fishy circumstances for many aspects of the economy. Nearly every person is impacted by economic conditions. How far in rebellion can a nation run before the storm is so great, the leaders abandon their attempts to control? We obviously haven't come to that point but are traveling the same path. Where will the Church be when our leaders finally turn to us for help and heed our words as they did Paul in Acts 27:20-26? A major question is can we avert judgment or should we prepare to be mouthpieces in the midst of it? Have we seen the refiners fire for just such a season? Our response to God's preparation can determine the length and depth of our contribution.

SATURDAY, February 8

Scripture: Second Chronicles 28:1-4

Perhaps the reign of Ahaz was a very short example. He only ruled for 16 years, less than half a normal leadership generation. As we look at what transpired in his reign, we realize that the fruit of sin and disobedience may have shortened his ministry. Not everyone who has a short life fits this pattern. Sometimes the Lord takes His own to spare them from what is coming. Normally a leadership generation is 40 years. Ahaz greatly departed from God by building his own religious system, causing Israel to sin as they began to participate in counterfeit religious practices. Is it any wonder that God cut his life short? When does church life become worthless? When does it qualify as counterfeit?

SUNDAY, February 9

Scripture: Second Chronicles 28:5-8

The fruit of disobedience is captivity but captivity has a variety of manifestations. The Church is responsible for birthing the anointing to break captivity. If we have multitudes in our nation spiritually incarcerated, why have we failed to make an impact? Where is the root of our failure? Have we, as a Church, withdrawn from our call and are retreated to the safety of the church-house? Many sons and daughters are captive to the homosexual life-style – where is their deliverance? Aids is a captivity – a category by itself. Aids is *not* beyond God's ability to heal. Financial bondage is a captivity as we have become the greatest debtor nation in the world. America as a nation continues to experience new levels of captivity. Manufacturing jobs have been lost to China and Mexico. The things we see happening in America are signs of the price paid

for departing from the standards of a covenant-keeping God! We need a revival of repentance. Scripture declares, “We can’t lead other people in repentance until we have walked through it ourselves.” Are we walking that direction?

MONDAY, February 10

Scripture: Second Chronicles 28:8-19

Perhaps verse 19 is one of the most descriptive verses in this entire chapter. It says, “For the Lord (not the devil) brought Judah low because of Ahaz king of Israel, for he had encouraged moral decline in Judah and had been continually unfaithful to the Lord.” 9-11 accelerated America’s descent to a humbled lower place. Our healthiest airline a few years ago has sought bankruptcy protection. What has happened to our land? Is it bad luck or has the Lord brought us low? Some of the former pillars of our society have verse 19 as a testimony. Our nation has already been brought low morally and financially. *But there is still hope if the remnant does its job.* If we take our assignments from the Lord and walk obediently with them, I believe there is still time to bring this nation back to God and see the restoration only the Lord can perform. The key to America’s future is in the hands of the Church. Will we rise to the occasion, or will we continue to do our own thing?

TUESDAY, February 11

Scripture: Second Chronicles 28:22-25

These verses accurately describe the impact of mammon in some streams of our religious system. Verse 24 says, “So Ahaz gathered the articles of the house of God, cut in pieces the articles of the house of God, shut up the doors of the house of the Lord, and made for himself altars in every corner of Jerusalem.” When the spirit of “...made for himself...” begins to function in the house of God then we know a season of judgment is ahead. This spirit works its way in and permeates the desires of the heart. When this spirit begins to impact leadership, divinely ordained individual seasons of confrontation over issues of integrity usually never take place. They don’t take place because of the potentially adverse impact financially on the ministry center. If you have to correct a rich man for a rotten attitude, you might lose his contribution. Once again we go back to the Sermon on the Mount and the principle Jesus laid down, “You can’t serve God and money.” Any allegiance toward money will bring you into conflict and departure from God. If our desire is to build something for God, we don’t flinch at calling for purity and holiness even when confrontation is demanded. If, in fact, we are building something for ourselves then we are afraid to move into the area of confrontation and conflict because there is potential loss. So once again the very important question comes to the forefront, “Why are we doing what we are doing, and for whom are we really building this ministry?”

WEDNESDAY, February 12

Scripture: Luke 19:28-48

Jesus demonstrated the servants’ heart manifested in self-sacrifice, in contrast to self-serving which is the attitude of the world. Embracing the cross is never easy but necessary to follow the Lord. The path to that end is always customized to fit our individual circumstances. Was the religious system of Jesus’ day serving God or self? Verses 45-48 make a clear statement judging it as self-serving requiring a total house cleaning. Jesus went into the temple, drove out those who bought and sold saying, “It is written, ‘My house is a house of prayer,’ but you have made it a ‘den of thieves.’” When a religious system is doing its own thing because the motivation has been corrupted, it guarantees a visitation, confrontation and conflict with the Master. Can we escape such a visitation today? Probably not! When the Lord demands transformation, there is no escape. One difference is that Jesus is not here in the flesh to confront face to face, so He convicts us individually by the Holy Spirit for the purpose of washing away sin. Personal repentance often leads to corporate power. Some believers are presented with an opportunity to choose the cross while others are drafted by life’s circumstances. The result is usually the same – Christ-likeness.

THURSDAY, February 13

Scripture: First Kings 19:1-3

Even in spiritual victory, crucifixion follows with unexpected precision. Such is the case with Elijah. He cleansed and purified Israel from great abomination by executing the prophets of Baal. Elijah called fire from heaven, and turned a nation back to God. He soon found himself running away from the very spirit God called him to confront. The man who called fire down from heaven was running from the very one God determined to destroy. The very curse Jezebel spoke in verse 2 would come to rest on her own life, because she could not bring an end to Elijah in the desired time-frame. Confrontation is inevitable, whether it be in the natural or in the heavenlies. It is the place and point of warfare we are being called to in this hour. God wants sanctified vessels and He knows what produces them.

FRIDAY, February 14

Scripture: First Kings 19:1-8

Realizing a life-long goal does not mean the end of crucifixion circumstances. It may signal a whole new level of warfare. Elijah had announced to the king there would be neither dew nor rain except according to his word, and it was so for three and one half years. He had called fire down from heaven and it had consumed the sacrifice. He had turned the hearts of Israel back to the Lord and purified the land by destroying the 400 false prophets of Baal. The entire congregation of Israel had affirmed “the Lord, He is God!” Victory faded under the mountainous waves of discouragement launched by Jezebel. Pressures arise as the enemy tries to stop what God has ordained to do through our individual and corporate ministries. God calls us to live in a higher realm, perhaps to take our place seated in the heavenlies with Him far above all principality and power, might and dominion, and every name that is named. Can we successfully complete our calling in such seasons of ordained confrontation without a thorough preparation? The life of Elijah seems to warn us of preparations’ importance.

SATURDAY, February 15

Scripture: First Kings 19:1-12

Perhaps Elijah’s first mistake was allowing himself to become so isolated. Such isolation robs us of courage, because there is no one we can look to for aid or support. Although it seemed so, he was not alone. But there may be a greater message God wants us to see. Elijah was a prophet of judgment. Each manifestation while he was at the mouth of the cave spoke about judgment. “A great and a strong wind...” came in such strength it “...broke the rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind....” This great wind was like a tornado or hurricane in destructive ability, yet God was not in it. Then comes an earthquake, another type of judgment, but God was not in the earthquake. The drill finishes with a familiar judgment, one Elijah had called down from heaven. But the Lord was not in the fire. Elijah had become familiar with judgment. When he cried out God answered by fire. God demonstrated that judgment was not to be the chief purpose of his ministry. God is a very reluctant judge! When we find ourselves praying about the condition of our nation in its rampant sin, the tendency is to expect God’s judgment, after 50 plus years of enduring mercy. Judgment has never been God’s ultimate desire. He is in the “...still small voice” that speaks in communion and fellowship in our inner most being. God is a reluctant judge, *but* He is Judge – a fact utterly lost to most of today’s Church. Elijah had to come but also learn that he was not to live for judgment alone. God’s mercy dictates Elijah’s must come.

SUNDAY, February 16

Scripture: First Kings 19:14-18

Elijah was convinced that he was the only one remaining faithful, while everyone else had forsaken God and was living for themselves. The Lord said, “Appearance is not fact, Yet I have reserved seven thousand in

Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.” This teaches us God always has a remnant and many times the remnant is not visible to the natural eye. We usually can’t see unless our eyes are opened supernaturally or God leads us across their path by a manifestation of the gifts His Spirit. Even in the darkest days of moral decline and divinely ordained confrontation, there was a true ministry and a sizable remnant but it took the sovereign grace of God in order to find it. Have we found our place in the remnant yet? Elijah, while thinking he was alone, was really not. In all seasons of questioning and wondering, if we are alone, we really need to cry out to God and say, “Lord take us into that place of fellowship with those of like mind and heart so that we’re prepared for the days ahead.”

MONDAY, February 17

Scripture: Second Chronicles 28:19-21

During a season of great moral decline in Israel, Ahaz not only encouraged immorality but he began to integrate the house of the Lord with the world. He started mixing worldly principles with sacred things. He “...took part of the treasures from the house of the Lord,...and gave it to the king of Assyria...,” in order to buy help and deliverance from a war. The marriage of ministry and manipulation is one that defiles the landscape quickly and accelerates the judgment of God. When a nation is at war, its interceding believers can’t afford a platform void of authority. The idol of mammon won the war for Ahaz’s worship. He didn’t see it that way and neither do we but the results are the same - a lack of God-given authority. Integrity in private where no eye can see produces power in public where every eye can see.

TUESDAY, February 18

Scripture: Second Chronicles 28:22-25

The Church structure we have today is the result of spiritual action paralleling the physical action of this passage. We have all inherited a system which is the remainder left from a generation who cut up and sold off appointed furniture (five-fold positions) hundreds of years ago. The true victim is the pastor who is expected to do what God appointed *five* to do in the early Church. Five-fold ministry was the fruit of resurrection and ascension. We have inherited a mess. Paul warned the early Church of this battle, the waves would come after his departure. The team ministry concept could not co-habit with “made for himself maturation.” It was virtually impossible for these two things to operate side by side. The “wolves” would always persecute, destroy, and drive out the other. We have inherited a structure created by wolves hundreds of years ago. This system destroys pastors by the sheer weight of expectation. They alone have to be the “perfect examples.” God never intended just one man bring His people to maturity, but ordained that they grow and develop through the different ministry gifts. The Ahaz attitude must be confronted when faced so freedom can come. God is calling for transformation, recognition and change. We are losing far more pastors than we should because of an inherited structure.

WEDNESDAY, February 19

Scripture: Second Chronicles 28:26-27; 29:1

There is no doubt about the fact that Ahaz died early. It would appear the ministry killed him. Ministry built upon an unbiblical structure sacrifices its priests, shames God and robs people of covenant blessing. As Ahaz dishonored God in his lifetime, so God dishonored him in his death, and he was not brought into the burial place for the kings. God redeemed this sad testimony to the fruit of a king’s ministry. What is so surprising is that his son reigns in his stead and becomes one of the greatest kings Israel ever had. Only God can redeem the personal failures of an ungodly leader by raising a son to bless, restore and purify the nation. How is it that one generation living in the captivity of selfishness can bring forth a generation yielded to holiness? Is this the sovereign manifestation of God’s grace, or are other things involved?

THURSDAY, February 20

Scripture: Exodus 20:4-5

The transition from Ahaz to Hezekiah is remarkable because of the dramatically different nature of their ministries and corresponding impact on Israel. Adding fuel to the fire of this change is the principle that seems to govern successive generations as outlined by God, when He thundered to the people from heaven at Mount Sinai. The same chapter that records the Ten Commandments, as they were spoken initially to the people by God, outlines a principle that should govern this generational transition. Exodus 20:5 says, "...For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me,...." Hezekiah was such a good king that one wonders why God set aside His very own generational law. Surely there is an unseen force shaping Hezekiah for the Lord beyond the input of his father. What was it that enabled Hezekiah to escape the sentence decreed by God Himself from heaven as recorded in Exodus 20? God set aside a major law when Hezekiah came forth as an excellent king. Was there anything that transpired in those years that accounts for such a dramatic change? How did Hezekiah qualify to be part of the righteous remnant when his very own father was the cause of major failure?

FRIDAY, February 21

Scripture: Second Chronicles 29:1

"Hezekiah became king when he was 25 years old, and he reigned 29 years in Jerusalem." The Scripture tells us that "...his mother's name was Abijah, the daughter of Zechariah." We can safely assume Hezekiah did not get any godly training from Ahaz, his father. Therefore, whatever of value was spoken into his life must have come through his mother. The only thing we are told about her in this passage is that she was the daughter of Zechariah. Is it possible that this woman somehow prepared the way in training Hezekiah for him to be a part of the remnant and to overcome the law of judgment governing generations? Is it possible that the remnant experienced a true move of God throughout Ahaz's reign but it took place behind closed doors where one mother was giving herself to the training and spiritual development of the next generation?

SATURDAY, February 22

Scripture: Second Kings 18:1-3; Second Chronicles 26:1-5

We are told in Second Kings 18, concerning the reign of Hezekiah, that "His mother's name was Abi the daughter of Zechariah. And he did what was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father David had done." But where would Hezekiah get the foundation for walking in the ways of God? When we look at Second Chronicles 26 with the account of king Uzziah, we find this revealing statement, "And he did what was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father Amaziah had done. He sought God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the visions of God; and as long as he sought the Lord, God made him prosper." Abi's father was Zechariah the priest who had prophetic vision and insight into God's purpose and plan for Israel. All of the days of the king, as long as Uzziah listened to Zechariah, he walked with God and there was great blessing in Israel. It would appear that Zechariah passed that understanding of prophetic vision onto his daughter, Abi, who again indoctrinated and taught all of those things to Hezekiah. Where was the move of the Spirit during a season of great moral decline? It was behind closed doors in a house where a mother was giving herself totally to the training and preparation of her child. Are we training our kids for God's purposes? We need to train many just to replace those leaving.

SUNDAY, February 23

Scripture: Joel 2:19-27

There is so much pressure on people in ministry that over 1400 pastors leave the priesthood every month. Only a dramatic change in structure can remove the shame of what ministry does to leaders. God promises in verse 26, "You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, And praise the name of the Lord your God, Who

has dealt wondrously with you; And My people shall never be put to shame.” Then verse 27 ends by saying, “My people shall never be put to shame.” The Lord spoke about an ongoing work behind closed doors where no eye could see, and the day would come when by His Spirit they would stand up and link arms from one end of the country to the other. As they stood up and began to link arms it became obvious it was too late to stop them. The blessing was that God was doing a preparation behind closed doors where no eye could see for the purpose of minimizing resistance. The training of Hezekiah, to fulfill the purpose and plan of God for his life, became a type and shadow for how God often operates. Training and development in secret, where no eye can see, produces righteousness in public where every eye can see. In a season where it is hard to find a move of the Spirit in the Church, it is not a time for great despair but, in fact, a time of rejoicing. Personal preparation is going on behind closed doors and the fruit of it is going to be a generation that, when they stand up, cannot be stopped. Are we doing our part in that preparation?

MONDAY, February 24

Scripture: Joel 2:12-18

Joel 2 characterizes a three-stage revival begun by a wave of repentance through priests between the porch and altar. The one move of the Spirit that precedes the promise of God to remove all shame from the Church is a revival of repentance. Isn't it interesting that as we look at the emphasis of the world today, the mom's who choose to stay home and work with their kids, not developing a career, are in many ways derided. Everyone wants a career and to make a mark on the world. The real question is which avenue do we take. Jesus made the greatest mark by discipling twelve. His pattern whether 12, 3 or 1 is still the best. There is very little emphasis, strokes, or encouragement given to the housewife who chooses to sow her life into the next generation. And yet, it is a divine calling which can produce fruit impacting and changing the whole direction and course of churches, cities, and nations. The true move of God during the moral decline of Ahaz was in the home behind closed doors, where no eye could see in the preparation of the next generation. Now the issue is not whether mom's are forced to work or can stay at home. The issue is this: Are we as a people going to give ourselves to the preparation, teaching, and indoctrination of the next generation so they can step on the stage and begin to totally move with God unreserved and free from the bondage of past tradition? It is a calling that is upon us right now and we need to move in it by giving our time to any young person who wants it.

TUESDAY, February 25

Scripture: Second Kings 18:1-4; Numbers 21:4-9

What kind of man was Hezekiah? He was one who had an understanding of God's purpose and plan for the season in which he lived. “He removed the high places, broke the sacred pillars, cut down the wood images, broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made; for until those days the children of Israel burned incense to it, and called it Nehushtan.” Beginning in Numbers 21:4-9 we find the circumstances that surround the instituting of the bronze serpent. In a period of great discouragement on a long journey toward the promised land, the people spoke against God and against Moses and said, “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness?” God's judgment during that season was a plague of fiery serpents among the people that caused many to die. As Moses cried out in intercession over the sin of the people and their complaint and bitterness, the Lord told him to make a bronze fiery serpent and set it on a pole. As many as looked at the bronze serpent were healed. Needless to say there was great jubilation in the camp and many people developed a great respect and reverence for the bronze serpent as God's means of healing and deliverance during that situation. The problem was over a number of years it had become an idol. Moses brought the people out of Egypt in about 1444 BC, and it was 1405 BC when Joshua took them into the land. So the fiery serpent incident was somewhere during that 40 year period. Hezekiah, on the other hand, came to rule in 715 BC. To make things easy to figure, we shall assume the fiery serpent incident happened in 1415 BC allowing seven hundred years of tradition by Hezekiah's reign. Where did Hezekiah get the courage to destroy something which had been revered in Israel for seven hundred years?

WEDNESDAY, February 26

Scripture: Second Kings 18:1-8

Second Kings 18:1-8 reveals that the courage to deal with the – “bronze serpent” – came down from the family tree and was planted in Hezekiah, probably while he was still a little boy. Hezekiah was so settled on the issue that at the very beginning of his ministry he removed all idolatry in the land and began a temple-cleansing operation that would impact the entire nation; laying a foundation for years of blessing. The magnitude of Hezekiah’s willingness to face the full spectrum of problems in Israel reveals the magnitude and nature of those who planted such spiritual things in his life. Truly we can say that the real move of the Spirit during the decline of Ahaz was behind closed doors as a “mom” ministered and taught relationship with God to her child. Do we not need the same measure of life flowing today in the same place? When we teach relationship, God can speak and our disciples can confidently operate from “rhema” instead of rules.

THURSDAY, February 27

Scripture: Second Chronicles 29:1-3

Hezekiah greatly endears himself to both the people and to God by his straight forward behavior and earnest seeking of the Holy Spirit. In Second Chronicles 29:1-3 we see Hezekiah making another dramatic move toward restoration. In verse 3 the Scripture says, “In the first year of his reign, in the first month, he opened the doors of the house of the Lord and repaired them.” It takes a lot of prophetic insight and courage to open the doors to the house of the Lord, when they have, in fact, been closed. This passage should speak volumes to us as we contemplate our commitment in these last days. There are those whose doors are open to Jesus but closed to the in-filling of the Holy Spirit. There are those whose doors are open to the Holy Spirit but closed to the manifestation of His gifts. There are those who have closed their doors to faith. There are some who like to hear faith but have closed their doors to the cross. There are many, perhaps, who have closed their doors to the possibility of persecution. There are more in leadership who have closed their doors to the concept of fivefold ministry. Whole segments of the Church have closed their doors to women in ministry. There are many in the Body of Christ who over one issue or another have closed their doors! God is saying it is time to open the doors to the house of the Lord that the King and Lord of Glory may come in! When He comes, we probably won’t agree with what He does, but will we welcome Him anyway?

FRIDAY, February 28

Scripture: Second Kings 18:1-8

Verse 6 says Hezekiah “...held fast to the Lord; he did not depart from following Him, but kept His commandments, which the Lord had commanded Moses.” Hezekiah dared to stand against the much stronger enemy of God, the king of Assyria, and win. Angels intervened when he prayed, leaving 185,000 dead enemy soldiers. I would count myself a resounding success if one of my disciples got those results in war! When it came to the issue of cleansing the temple, which could have taken several decades, Hezekiah immediately set it in operation. But the vision was planted behind closed doors by his mom years before. We have walked through a season where every leader wants to fill a convention center, but the real ministry comes through personal discipleship where no eye can see. There is no glory in it, no fame, no big dollars, no great mailing list, no promotional material. It is a job that has to wait years until you see the full fruit. Yet, with all my heart, I hear God recruiting. The question is, “Are we willing to enlist?”

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The path that you're walking's
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So do not retreat
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View the bigger picture
Through the pain hold the Light
Your Day Spring beside you
His peace stamps out the night

This broken heart's part of
My workings in you
Hold fast to me child
Embrace what I do

Jayne Houghton