

THE 2020 PARADIGM SHIFT

The Year One Thing Becomes The Only Thing

by J.S. Boegl

2020 has been a *'time of trouble'* (Psalm 27:5). Consequently, many are asking: *"How is the Lord calling His Church to respond to Him in this crisis-ridden year?"*

The answer is the same solution the Lord issued to David later in Psalm 27: *"In the time of trouble... Seek My Face!"* (Psalm 27:5, 8)

When the Lord called David to *"seek His Face"*, He was calling him to something more than a singular event. The Lord's exhortation to David was to cultivate a lifestyle, and then create a *cultural vehicle* where the people could cultivate a lifestyle of encountering the presence of the living God.

This vehicle was ultimately the "temple of the Lord", dedicated by David's son, Solomon. On the day that it was dedicated, this is how the Lord met His people who were entering into His paradigm:

"When Solomon had finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the Lord filled the temple. And the priests could not enter the house of the Lord, because the glory of the Lord had filled the Lord's house. When all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the Lord on the temple, they bowed their faces to the ground on the pavement, and worshiped and praised the Lord, saying: 'For He is good, For His mercy endures forever'." (2 Chronicles 7:1-3)

Once it was established, the temple shaped every aspect of the way Israel related to God.

In our day the Lord is issuing a similar summons to His people. He's calling us to adjust *our foundational experience* of how we relate to Him so that encountering the dialoguing presence of the Lord becomes the Church's *essential normal*.

This alignment is the fulfillment of the famous prophetic word Mike Bickle received in 1982 in Cairo Egypt - a promise from God that launched thousands of Houses of Prayer throughout the world over the last two decades: *"I will shift the understanding and expression of Christianity in one generation."*

This shift is about establishing a cultural norm within families, churches, prayer groups, men's groups, ministry boards, workplaces, and FB friends of seeking the face of God together so that we become known as a people who expect to hear from the Lord in all of our gathering together.

The Lord expresses His desire for intimate, holy communing with His people all throughout scripture - from Genesis and Enoch, to Exodus and Moses, to Psalms and David, to the prophets, to Jesus' prayer in John 17, to the apostle's testimonies and Jesus' walking among the Churches in Revelation.

9 PRACTICAL AND PERSONAL KEYS TO SEEKING GOD'S FACE

Though it may have many expressions, walking in this paradigm of corporate prayer with the Lord will be based on giving ourselves to several elemental, and life-producing dynamics:

- A. We must come before Him, with a poor spirit that's intent to listen for His voice; not to reenforce arguments for our own narratives.
- B. We must repent of every high place in our hearts; every small and faithless place He shows us where we've forced our own ways.
- C. We must learn to weep and mourn together over the unrighteous ways in our lives, our churches, our families and our culture. And that we weep with those who are suffering from the curse of unrighteousness.
- D. We must teach others how to mine the Word of God for the whole Word of God; the famous scriptures, and the profoundly painful scriptures, and we posture ourselves before the Word of God; to be shaped by it - with an expectation that the Man looking at us back through our Bibles is coming, and will have His way on the earth.
- E. We must cultivate an abiding, honest fear of the Lord, and hungry appreciation for the mercy of the Lord, that goes as deep as our theological understanding of the love of the Lord.
- F. We must allow the Holy Spirit to cleanse us, prune us, baptize us, and crucify us to the center of the center of our being; examining our ways and our motives.

G. We must fix our eyes on one reality; one glory; one burning Truth; one Man. And that we learn to revel in the strength and Words of life that only He can bring.

H. We must continue in this until we walk, think, dialogue in perfect peace regardless of the tribulation/trouble/terrors that swirl around us.

I. We must lay down our many temptations to save, justify and exalt self in order to take up our cross for the sake of first commandment love for Him and His ascending glory. (That we learn the wisdom of knowing that all this is not about us.)

God bless the many passionate sacred assemblies called in our nation over the last 20 to 25 years. Many convocations have used 2 Chronicles 7:13-17 to rally the body of Christ to seek God's face together.

“When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people, if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land. Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to prayer made in this place. For now I have chosen and sanctified this house, that My name may be there forever; and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually. As for you... walk before Me as your father David walked, and do according to all that I have commanded you, and... keep My statutes and My judgments...” (2 Chronicles 7:13-17)

However, it must be noted that the context for ***the people who are called by My name*** doing 2 Chronicles 7 is directly connected to what happened earlier in the chapter. They had *already vowed to be a people who would live out the norm of engaging the Lord through the paradigm of the temple*. They had agreed to accept God's new normal of seeking His face in every aspect of their lifestyles.

This order has massive implications for how the Church responds to the Lord in 2020. I believe the Lord has been inviting His people to trade in our wineskins (Luke 5:36-39) and relate to Him in a foundationally intimate, prayerful and dialogical way for decades in America. As someone who's been walking in evangelical circles of leadership since the 80's, I can say with some degree of education, I believe this is what the Lord has had in mind for the "prayer movement" all along.

There's a lot that can be said here. It's sufficient to point out that the evangelical church has spent the better part of 40 years refusing to come into God's paradigm of prayer, and mostly relegated God's universal invitation to specialized "intercessors". God bless the intercessors. There's a great deal the whole Church has to learn from those who have been giving themselves to intercession in this hour, but on the whole, the distinction between an "intercessor" vs. a "regular New Testament believer" is a thoroughly unBiblical implementation of God's intent.

It's only as we've encountered crises (hurricanes, fires, 911, supreme court decisions, presidential elections etc. that the larger swath of the Church has sought out God's solution - and with great fanfare we suddenly choose to employ the part (not the whole) of God's 2 Chronicles 7 prescription: the part we can market and sell tickets to.

It's important - no, it's vital that we see this from God's perspective. When we only engage prayer as an event, or in crisis, we're in effect telling God, *“We don't want a life of communing with You; just what's necessary to the success of the rest of our lives please.”*

Again, as a Bible-toting participant/observer/leader in the prayer movement over the last 40 years, I have come to believe that the Lord looks at this minimalist application of prayer no differently than (forgive the crass, but prophetically faithful illustration) should a spouse only want sex in the relationship, but, for the sake of their own liberated lifestyle, very little daily interaction.

Personally, I believe the Lord has been saying throughout this year, *“I'm not asking you to put your hope in sacred assemblies, or secret warfare tactics in order to stave destruction from the Church, and your land.”* The Lord knows our self-serving motives for such strategies have become too prevalent and too ingrained. Beloved, the truth of the matter is the people of God needed the Joel 2 model two decades ago. The Lord has been holding out His invitation to wholehearted, lifestyle corporate prayer in the Church, conference after conference; ministry strategy after ministry strategy; building project after building project; new fangled paradigm after new fangled paradigm...

Yes, this is stark. But is this not where we are in 2020? If the rolling sequence of calamitous events have not convinced us that we're in a desperate hour of intensifying judgement - an hour that can no longer afford to fiddle around with the universal deployment of corporate prayer, I wince at what will.

What then do we do? How are we to engage God in His new paradigm?

We must throw ourselves on the mercy of God.

We must get ourselves anchored to the place of prayer until He proves from the scriptures where we are, today.

We must understand that the Lord isn't about making ourselves, our church experiences, or our nation great. We must figure out that what's happening in our world is not primarily about us at all. It's about Who's coming; Who's at our doorstep; Who's shaking our world; our circumstances and our hearts - and then learn to tremble at His greatness. He's a Bridegroom returning for His Bride who's making herself ready. He's a King Who's coming to establish HIS Kingdom on the earth (for real). He's a Judge who will execute real people who oppose Him and the administration of His reign in our world. (Real people are going to **perish in the way** (Psalm 2:12) at His hand!)

This isn't an hour to ask, *"What must we do for us, for our families, our lifestyles, our nation or our church to be saved."* This is an hour to ask, *"What must we do to be in line with the increase of His government? What can we do to marshal everything to His increase? How do we do life? How do we do Church? How do we relate to our enemies?"*

My strongest pastoral advice (my *only* pastoral advice) is that if you do *not* find reason to engage in corporate prayer; if you know of others who do not; if you're not convinced of what's at stake, and of what the Lord is up to in these last 10 months, that you put down your favorite news sites, put away the white noise of social media, and get before the God of Hebrews 12; Psalm 2 and Matthew 24 and 25. Get others before Him for the sole purpose of being consumed in His holy fire.

Perhaps...

He's looking for a people who will disregard everything else in order to secure this one thing. ***"One thing I have desired of the Lord, that will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple. For in the time of trouble..."*** (Psalm 27:4,5)

JSB • October, 2020

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