

# CHIEF MINISTRIES

August 2020

In the book of Revelation, Jesus brings strong words to the churches of Asia Minor; rebuking 5 out of the 7 congregations in no uncertain terms (see Revelation 2-7). Yet in each and every case He ended His words with hope and a promise. The Lord wounds in order to heal. He smites in order to make well. As Jesus said to the church in Laodicea, *“Those whom I love, I rebuke and discipline. Therefore be zealous and repent.”* (Revelation 3:19).

Even if the Lord sees fit to humble you like dust, it is only so that He can raise you back up, but this time, more like Jesus, more dependent on His Spirit, more true to the Word, more dead to the flesh. That is the place of exalted service!

After 15 years of having to wander in this desert, I’ve finally been approved to be paroled! Hallelujah! I never would have dreamed that I’d have to be humbled like dust, but never lost sight of the calling on my life. To whom much is given much will be required, and much like David who made some egregious errors, he always repented, and came back to His loving Father. Have you? Do you?

I was guilty of abuses that harmed others and even myself, but I’ve also been willing to say in repentance, “I blew it”. From here on out I really want to honor the Lord and serve His people.

So then, where do we go from here? As the Spirit continues to move mightily around the globe, how do we strengthen our foundations, here are 4 things we can – and must – do.

## **1. We must pursue intimacy with the Lord and immerse ourselves in the Word.**

Is there anything more foundational than fellowship with Jesus and immersion in God’s Word? The more closely we walk with Him, the more godly we will be. The more deeply we are grounded in God’s Word, the sounder we will be. The more we major on the majors, keeping the main things central, the less we will drift off into doctrinal error, deception, and sin.

Have you heard that old saying that either prayer will keep you from sin or sin will keep you from prayer? (I’ve heard it applied to the Word as well. Either the Word will keep you from sin or sin will keep you from the Word.). It’s true!

I personally believe it’s impossible to spend quality time with God in prayer and the Word - I mean really meeting with Him in prayer and really digesting His Word on a regular basis – without changing for the better. Either we will harden our hearts to the Lord’s leading and correction running away from that place of intimacy, or we will turn away from sin, renounce the flesh, and surrender to our Master.

Hebrews 4:12-13 says this: *“For the Word of God is alive, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit and joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intent of the heart. There is no creature that is not revealed in His sight, for all things are bare and exposed to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.”*

Quality time with the Lord and His Word will expose the arm of the flesh and reveal our carnality, and we will have two choices alone: humble ourselves and repent or, harden our hearts and run. Which will it be?

I once heard about a leader who allegedly spent hours alone with the Lord every day, basking in worship music and communing with the Lord. But he was so carnal in other ways, by which I mean walking in serious sins of the flesh. Yet I was told his wife used to complain about how much time he spent with God. How could this be? I thought, he may be going through the motions but there’s no way he’s actually meeting with the Lord in deep worship. If he were, he wouldn’t be getting drunk or committing adultery.

Sometime after that it came out that this “intimate with the Lord” man of God, a man of deep prayer and worship, yet living in sin, wasn’t praying and worshipping. He was playing video games.

## 2. **We must put our emphasis on being disciples and making disciples.**

I once heard the story of a public speaker who brought a giant vase onto the platform and filled it to the top with big rocks. He then asked the audience, “How many of you think this vase is full?” They all raised their hands in affirmation.

Then he brought some very small rocks and let them drop into the space between the big rocks until there was normal room. Again, he asked, “How many of you think this vase is full now?” This time fewer people responded, recognizing they were wrong the first time around.

He repeated the exercise with pebbles, then finally sand, after which everyone agreed that the vase was totally full. What was the purpose of his demonstration? I thought the answer was obvious: “There’s always room for more!”

I was totally wrong. The speaker’s point was this: Put the big rocks in first, otherwise you won’t have room for them later. What a great illustration!

This is what we need when it comes to gospel priorities. We need to major on the majors and give our attention to what matters most. If we don’t do this first, everything else will crowd out what matters most.

Why are we here on this earth? To know God and to make Him known. To be disciples and make disciples. Everything else we do – in our personal lives and marriages and families and jobs and free time – is subservient to that.

We must grow in our relationship with the Lord and in the character of the Lord, meaning we must grow in the fruit of the Spirit, grow in integrity and honor, grow in maturity and discipline, grow into the image and likeness of Jesus. This is our ultimate goal, in this world and in the world to come. (See Romans 8:29). That’s why we’ve been anointed with the Spirit’s power (Luke 24:44-49, Acts 1:8): to make the resurrected Son of God known to a lost world and to strengthen His people to do His work.

And when we make the plain things the main things, the silly stuff will fall to the wayside. We’re too busy walking with the Lord and laboring in the harvest fields to play foolish games. “Back to the basics!” I hear the Spirit saying.

## 3. **We must get our own houses in order and redemptively confront those who are in error.**

I know we don’t want to quench the Spirit (or worse still, speak against the Spirit) and I know we try not to be judgmental. But it is one thing to be judgmental and spirit quenching; it’s another thing to address and confront error. Failing to do so actually quenches and grieves the Spirit. Why have we allowed so many abuses to continue in our midst? Why are we so reluctant to correct and rebuke.

It’s not everyone’s place to confront a sinning (or straying) leader, but surely it is the place of some of us, even to appeal to that person with a spirit of humility and grace. Why do so few do this?

Have we forgotten that “*open rebuke is better than secret love*” (Proverbs 27:5)? Do we no longer believe that “*faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful*” (Psalms 27:6)? If we really love people, why don’t we tell them the truth? If we really revered the Spirit, why are we so silent? If we really honor the Lord, why don’t we act with more holy jealousy?

If it’s one thing, one thing that I have tried to convey in these writings is: First, biblical truth, and second, truth that exposes inconsistencies in the body of Christ.

I know that those of us who used to be part of legalistic, highly judgmental churches don’t want to repeat the same mistakes. And I understand that those who came up from spiritually reserved backgrounds love to bask in the liberty of the Spirit. And then there’s those of you who have no clue what you belong to. That’s okay! Belong to Him, Jesus Christ the Righteous and all will fall into place.

But I ask again: Why one extreme or the other? Why not be biblical, embracing what is good and rejecting what is wrong? Wouldn’t the Spirit be poured out in our midst with much greater power if we didn’t make such a mess of things? Wouldn’t God use us if we were more accountable?

It's true that in many cases, most of us have no access or platform to reach out to abusive leaders, let alone correct them. But we can vote with our feet, looking for someone, a pastor on the radio, perhaps, during these covert 19 times, we serve as true pastors, or refusing to support a ministry that propagates and practices error. Quit going to that class when you know that teacher is the biggest thief on the unit, or just to get the air conditioning. If enough believers demand accountability, change will come. If enough of us grow out of our gullibility, the scams will cease to succeed. But let me issue a word of caution here as well. Whatever we do, let's be redemptive. If a leader has sand, let's work towards true repentance and restoration, not condemnation and rejection. Treat others the way you would want them to treat you. And if they don't want to hear you, leave it alone. God will take care of it. All who oppose Him will eventually be removed. You'll see.

#### 4. **We must have a fresh encounter with the Holy Spirit**

The great cure for complacency and compromise is a fresh visitation of God's refining fire.

*"Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. <sup>v2</sup> But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap. <sup>v3</sup> He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, and they will bring offerings in righteousness to the LORD. <sup>v4</sup> Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years. <sup>v5</sup> "Then I will draw near to you for judgment. I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired worker in his wages, the widow and the fatherless, against those who thrust aside the sojourner, and do not fear me, says the LORD of hosts. (Malachi 3:1-5 ESV).*

The great cure for flesh and folly is a fresh encounter with the living Lord. The great cure for professionalism and posturing is a fresh infusion in the Spirit's power. The games.. The showmanship will stop. The abuses will stop. The carnality will stop. Or else.

Ironically, one of the greatest weaknesses in the move of God's people today is that many build a ministry on past experiences, on what happened years ago, or on the skills they have required over years of service – but often without the ongoing presence of the Holy Spirits. Others are simply building their ministries on fleshly charisma and power, substituting what the flesh can do for what the Spirit can do.

This means that contrary to what critics say, the problem is not that we put too much emphasis on the Spirit. The problem is that we do not have a deep enough encounter with the Spirit. Having Him at work mightily in our midst will bring streams of refreshing to the weary, deep repentance to the worldly, and powerful rebuke to the wayward. That which is built on flesh will be exposed; that which is built on (and by) the Spirit will survive the fire. In fact, it will come out shining more brightly than ever before.

What, then, will it be? Will we continue to play with holy fire, or will we be purified by that Holy Flame? Encountering the fire of God afresh – the refiners fire; the consuming fire; the baptism in the Spirit and fire – will change us forever and will glorify His name.

And so, we pray, "Lord, send the fire! We want to become holy torches for You" and let all God's people say, "Amen!"

Don't lose hope, Keep the FIRE going! Your time is coming!

Praying for you all!

## **Chief**

***If you want to know more about CHIEF Ministries or would like to be a part of this, please go to [www.chiefministries.com](http://www.chiefministries.com) and [www.chiefshouse.org](http://www.chiefshouse.org)***

***Christ's                      Heart                      In                      Every                      Felon***