

Dear Friends in Christ Jesus our Lord,

Attached to this email is Saga 7, ***The Lordship-Committed Serve A King Who Empowers His Own***. In Saga 6 we wrote about some of the methods we used at the retreat center to meet the goal of helping followers of our Lord Jesus to *mutually cooperate*. In this Saga we discuss our own combination of spiritual giftings which the Holy Spirit apportioned to us: Mike, *apostle and prophet*, and Sue, *exhorter and faith*. Our Lord sent us specifically to the retreat center because of these empowerments which He wanted to use through us during our stay there from 1983-1993. We realize that His specific placement of us through the giftings of His Spirit is a far different approach than how most others in Christianity make their decisions as to how our Lord would use them. But our Lord Jesus does use the gifts His Spirit apportions to direct His followers as they serve Him and one another in love.

👍 The **Lordship-committed** purpose to live intentionally as directed by the Holy Spirit and His empowerment to do the will of our heavenly Father by His grace.

👎 In contrast, many who are **religiously-mired** and **scribally-influenced** tell our Father what they're going to do and ask Him to bless them. All too often these self-initiated endeavors end in failure and are swept under the carpet within "Christian" circles. For instance, do you remember the millions of donation dollars that were solicited and squandered by Jim Bakker on the Heritage USA project? Do you know that 6,000 to 10,000 congregations cease to exist each year in the USA? Does this sound like the Kingdom work of our Lord Jesus being advanced by His Spirit? Or, does it reflect the self-generated endeavors of the religiously-mired and scribally-influenced which were doomed to run aground?

In this Saga you'll see that we again received prophetic direction from our Lord: ***"For the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy"*** (Revelation 19:10; see also 1Thessalonians 5:19-21). Much of our spiritual journey has been led by our Lord's prophetic guidance, most of which came through other prophets He sent to us. His prophetic direction is completely in keeping with this biblical assurance, ***"Surely the Lord God does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets"*** (Amos 3:7). When you read your Bible **without scribal influence**, you clearly recognize that no one truly serves Jesus as their Lord or fulfills our heavenly Father's will except through the Holy Spirit's guidance, whether through promptings within your spirit or through prayer and God's Word or through prophecy or words of knowledge or wisdom that are given to you by others. **The God Who created everything isn't short on providing clear guidance to His own** no matter how many scribal theologians say He doesn't do that anymore. Just because **they're too learned and arrogant and spiritually sophisticated** to believe that He might speak to them doesn't mean He isn't speaking (see Luke 10:21)!

The "voice of the Lord" and "hear His voice" and even having "ears to hear" is threaded throughout the Bible. Father is quite willing to speak when hearts are attuned to His Spirit and are ready to respond to what He says. Jeremiah sums up a relationship of loving and obedient trust which God desired for Israel of old, and for followers of Jesus today who are indwelt by the Holy Spirit: ***"Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be My people; and walk in all the way that I command you, that it may be well with you"*** (Jeremiah 7:23). What has our Lord Jesus told you to do in response to His Spirit's voice within you?


Consider two primary reasons why so many who say they belong to Jesus receive no guidance from His Spirit:

•First, they're captive to a **rebellious, self-limiting agenda**. Vestiges of their sin nature convince them that seeking and following the Holy Spirit's guidance is something to be feared and avoided. After all, who knows what could happen if you actually entrusted yourself fully to doing Father's will? So they exercise self-will over God's will — **they refuse to yield everything to the Lordship of Jesus**. Yielding everything to Jesus might include leaving their current residence or job or friends or relatives or comfort zone or ... So they rationalize that any of these *rhema* words from the Spirit couldn't possibly be God's will — and they refuse to confirm or obey. But what is the biblical mandate of Lordship, the very definition of Jesus being LORD of your life? Out of grateful love and obedient trust you're prepared to go anywhere and do anything for your Lord!

•Second, Christians who harbor **bitter audacity** never hear His voice either. Think of bitter audacity as

the arrogance of holding onto an unforgiving attitude toward *anyone*, despite the magnitude of sin which our Lord Jesus has forgiven *you*. Ongoing bitter audacity nullifies for you our Lord's sacrifice on the cross — you've put yourself above needing to forgive. Can anything be more audacious than that?

Scribal Theology
Discarded the Hebraic foundations
and replaced them with:
anti-Semitism, Nicolaitanism,
syncretism, revisionism,
Hellenism and Romanism.
Successive "church" councils over
the centuries concocted, from human
reasoning and debate,
"hallowed" creeds and traditions.



Rebellion against the Holy Spirit creates a vacuum that the devil likes to fill.

At the retreat center we also focused on helping Christians realize the biblical reality of the devil and freeing themselves from his evil influence in the Name of Jesus. Demonic influence significantly obstructs the mutual cooperation that is so needed in faith communities. Here too we were compelled to confront **scribal theology** and its deceitful effect within Christianity: 67% of Christians today refuse to believe that Satan even exists, the very real rebellious fallen angel whom the Bible so often references from Genesis to Revelation. And the majority of scribal theologians have eradicated any mention of the demonic influence that is exercised against Christians. Therefore these same theologians ignore any mention of the biblical authority of the Name of Jesus to demolish demonic control and influence. Just keep this truth in mind: ***If*** one Christian recognizes the biblical reality of the devil and another Christian doesn't believe the devil even exists, then their relationship will have a spiritual barrier between them.

How has fulfilling our Father's will on earth been hindered by the lack of spiritual empowerment and the refusal to recognize the influence and control of demons within Christianity? Throughout much of Christendom too much effort is expended outside of Father's will because the essential need for the Spirit's revelation has been eliminated by the majority of denominations and sects. The voice of the Holy Spirit through prophecy, words of knowledge, or wisdom have been silenced. Decisions which affect many Christians have often been developed through reasoning and debate by individuals who are unwittingly influenced by their own sin nature or by demonic activity which they would deny even exists. And at first their decisions may appear *seemingly blessed*. But then Satan intervenes with relational discord and failure, inflicting maximum damage through participants becoming demoralized and ultimately blaming God for their efforts not succeeding.

Keep in mind that human effort without spiritual guidance — no matter how cooperatively people work together — is useless in Kingdom living because they collectively lack spiritual empowerment. This is the major difference between the religiously-mired and the Lordship-committed: those who are committed to the Lordship of Jesus know what specific things we are to do on His behalf according to Father's will, and He empowers us to complete them (see Philippians 2:13). ***Soli Deo Gloria! Glory to God alone!***

A Prophet Is Our Lord's Messenger Of His Mercy Preceding His Judgment

"Mike, our Lord has given you a forehead of flint to break up the fallow ground." A Navajo prophetic friend who had known Mike for several years and had traveled with us described Mike's gift of prophecy this way. We believe it's vital that you understand this particular insight about Mike's spiritual gifting as you read the various materials which the Spirit reveals to us and how He uses us. Neither of us asked for these particular gifts! The Holy Spirit gave them to us according to His purposes for us (see 1 Corinthians 12:4-6). Because of the nature of the Spirit's work through Mike, for example, he is used to hearing the Spirit's voice not just in himself but also when others are speaking. Often during our prayer walks when Sue mentions a particular verse or passage that has touched her, Mike will hear the Holy Spirit say, **"Have her write down that passage and what it means to her because you will need that insight shortly."** For us, one spiritual gift is no more important than another since they are all given by the Holy Spirit (see 1 Corinthians 12:7-11). But there are certain gifts such as apostle, prophet and evangelist that pave the way for the other gifts to operate. Helping others to identify and use their gifting from the Spirit is one way in which we view ourselves.

We have to admit that Mike's prophetic gift has been hard for many Christians to understand. Most have never had an encounter with the prophetic! We'll discuss in a future email how Roman Catholicism was the first religious entity to eliminate the role of the prophet along with apostle and evangelist. And later, almost all Protestant denominations followed suit. Many of these denominations have written doctrinal creeds which abolish the present biblical role of apostle and prophet. And several go as far as blaspheming the Holy Spirit by denying that spiritual giftings even exist today.

The Holy Spirit's prophetic use of Mike didn't begin at the retreat center. Rather, the use of this gifting began several years earlier while he was still in the navy. Two chaplains commissioned him using this passage regarding the nature of what his prophetic ministry would be:

"Now as for you, son of man, I have appointed you a watchman... so you will hear a message from My mouth and give them warning from Me. When I say to the wicked, 'O wicked man, you will surely die,' and you do not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require from your hand. But if you on your part warn a wicked man to turn from his way and he does not turn from his way, he will die in his iniquity, but you have delivered your life" (Ezekiel 33:7-9). In carrying out his responsibility to our Lord Jesus to confront sin so that a person might repent, you can probably understand why Mike got the nickname, "The Enema."

Just prior to our going to Israel and receiving the Hebraic foundations in 1993-94, the Holy Spirit revealed to Mike what our ministry would be like when we returned to the US:

"Get yourself ready! Stand up and say to them whatever I command you. Do not be terrified by them, or I will terrify you before them. For behold, I have made you this day a fortified city and an iron pillar, and bronze walls against the whole land — against the kings of Judah, against its princes, against its priests, and against the people of the land. They will fight against you, but they shall not prevail against you. For I am with you,' says the LORD, 'to deliver you'" (Jeremiah 1:17-19).

We noted in our book, ***God's Instruments For War – Discovering & Coordinating Spiritual Gifts As Weapons of Warfare*** that there is often a "learning curve" in understanding the gift which the Spirit apportions you. For example, it took awhile for us to understand Mike's role as our merciful Lord's means to restore fellowship when people have strayed from Father's will and need to repent. Mike began to understand the depth of mercy of our Lord as He was using him through a prophecy for individuals, families, religious leaders, or even faith communities when he was speaking to them. Our Lord's desire for people to repent is evidence of His great mercy toward them even when the words the Holy Spirit gives Mike seem harsh to the unrepentant.

There were generally two outcomes when the Holy Spirit gave Mike a prophetic word for an individual. If the person repented, Mike's reputation was in good hands. But when someone acknowledged that what Mike had told him was true but refused to repent, Mike's goose was cooked. The unrepentant person spewed slander against him far and wide — like "shooting the mailman". And you should know that it was hard for our son and our relatives especially to understand the role the Holy Spirit had given him prophetically unless they asked the Holy Spirit for revelation and wisdom about it.

We realize that your view of prophetic people may be somewhat negative; in fact you might think they're being harsh as messengers from the Spirit. But when you study Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, for instance, you recognize that the messages they were sent to deliver were God's merciful attempt to restore fellowship *before* He sent His judgment. When people hardened their hearts against His messages, not only did God reveal His anger. He also allowed the prophet to vent his own feelings for having to be a messenger of doom instead of an envoy of reconciliation. On a more personal note, Father told us 25 years ago that no matter how hard we tried to restore people to Him through repentance, it all ends up in the **Dark Days of Chastisement** because this nation would collectively refuse to repent.

A bit more about the prophetic gifting to Mike from the Holy Spirit, since it seems that few followers of Jesus today are familiar with this gift. Not only was Mike given prophecies about sin which needed to be repented of. Over three decades ago the Holy Spirit used him to expose a particular work of Satan in the State of Connecticut. Television news reported that two thousand satanists were moving into Connecticut to "take the state for Satan." Most people, including clergy, knew little about the power and authority of Jesus's Name in combatting demons. Mike, on the other hand, had a lot of experience with the satanists who were onboard his last ship. An article in *The Hartford Courant* in July 1989 read, "More than 40 municipal mayors, police chiefs and school superintendents turned to four evangelical Christians for information about youth involvement in Satanism at a recent seminar."

Mike was the primary representative providing a Christian understanding of Satan. He was able to discuss the biblical reality of the devil and especially the power of Jesus' Name in defeating demons. Many chiefs of police appreciated this knowledge because they were increasingly facing criminals who seemed to possess super-human strength. After Mike spoke, the moderator, a Jewish woman who worked with the State Police, told the entire audience that what Mike said was true: "Only in the Name of Jesus do the demons submit!"

"God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart" (1Samuel 16:7).

There were times while we were attending Sunday worship at the different congregations who used our retreat center when the Holy Spirit told Mike to get on his knees during the service. The Spirit would tell him that because of the **tolerated sin** in the congregation, the Father refused to hear their worship. Meanwhile, everyone in the congregation was happily singing, but failing to realize that their tolerated sins were keeping their praises from getting past the ceiling. When this happened, Mike would speak to the religious leaders after the service. Some verified that what he shared with them about tolerated sin in their midst was true, and they brought their congregations to repentance and deliverance. Others, however, mocked him and made no changes whatsoever.

Sue: I'd like to add that Mike is constantly aware of the impartial character of our Lord regarding each of His children – nobody is greater than another, and nobody is lesser than another. Since Mike is very aware of my spiritual gifts of exhortation and faith, he'll often let me know of a specific opportunity in which the Holy Spirit can use me. I know after 52 years of marriage that Mike's no spiritual hero — but he's not a coward either! When others step back and refuse to do what our Lord wants of them, my husband just doesn't know how to step back. By the grace of our Lord Jesus, he stands firm in his desire to serve the One we love.

We have a special memory about the New Jersey singles group we mentioned in Saga 5 who came on many retreats over the years and kept us fervently in their prayers. On one retreat some of them took Mike aside. They told him they understood him as our Lord saw him, and played Twila Paris's song for him, "***The Warrior Is A Child***." Mike sobbed as he listened to the lyrics because he knew that others could understand who he is inside — a child of our Father who depends on His love and strength to carry him through.