

May 19, 2011

Make hay while the sun shines

I (Mike) grew up around dairy farming. Frequently during the summer my brothers and I would get a call from a farmer friend or relative who had bales of hay still lying in the field when a thunderstorm was approaching. We'd rush to the farm knowing that if the hay got wet it'd be ruined. Either we got it into the dry barn before the rains soaked it or we didn't. There was no other alternative.

It was an incredible experience to be working with others who were determined to do their part to get the hay safely stored. A sense of urgency motivated all of us. There'd be those in the field throwing the heavy bales onto the flatbeds. Some would drive the hay to the barn. Others would heave it into the storage area. When I was 9, I started driving the truck along the rows of bales, a block of wood taped onto the gas pedal and brake so I could reach them. I knew early on that loading and unloading those trucks was back-breaking work, and that someday I'd be joining the older kids doing that.

A profound joy erupts when the last bale is safely in the barn and then the storm and lightening hit. I remember everyone standing in the wide doorway with a wonderful sense of satisfaction and sweaty camaraderie. How often we'd seen the farmer and his wife fight back tears of joy and thanksgiving for all of us laboring together to get the job done!

As you can tell by the last few e-mails, we're writing with a sense of urgency. We realize that the time we have left to get the Hebraic foundations out to prepare people is coming to an end soon. We believe that Lance Lambert's prophecy we included in our last e-mail is accurate — the day of Gentile conversions may be about to come to an end. Hearts ARE getting hardened, refusing to see either their *need* for salvation through Jesus alone or what it means to *live by His Word*. Several other trusted prophetic voices have also been sounding the alarm that God's judgment will soon come upon the United States.

We encourage you to take the time now to print out the materials on our website that can strengthen and encourage you during the Dark Days of Chastisement. Our Father promised that the truths we were given to share would bear fruit during that time. Please, see how He would have you use these resources to prepare yourself, your family and your faith family to stand firm in Jesus and to reach others for His great Name's sake.

***"He who overcomes will, like them,
be dressed in white.
I will never blot out his name from the book of life,
but will acknowledge his name***

before My Father and His angels"
(Revelation 3:5; see also Luke 9:23-26)

Can you imagine this glorious event as someone who has overcome sin through your obedient trust in Jesus? Our Lord announces *your arrival in heaven* to our Father and all the heavenly host! Think about the celebration that will be taking place. And even now, while you're still on earth, Jesus proclaims the joyous moment when you turned from sin to embrace Him and His purpose for your life: "*I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents*" (Luke 15:10).

At the Judgment Throne, with sin behind us and an eternity with our Father awaiting us, *how much more* jubilation there will be when our names are announced by our Lord Jesus to be with Him forever! As the old hymn joyfully declares regarding our earthly pilgrimage with its trials and suffering, "It will be worth it all when we see Jesus!"

Now, while we still have breath, we need be about our Lord's business so that not only our names but those of people we care about will be voiced by Him. Think of your death whenever it comes to be like an approaching thunderstorm with bales of hay still lying in the field. You need to be unswerving in your commitment that you and the ones you care about have individually and collectively pressed on diligently according to our Father's Word to be welcomed into heaven. Take seriously our Lord's warning to the called-out ones in the city of Sardis (Revelation 3:1-6). So many parallels there of *compromise with the world's ways* are neon stop signs to the "churched" today. If death comes and you've put Him off, it's too late...

In our last e-mail we wrote, "As long as a man can complacently sit back in a **clergy-dominated, effeminized religious system**, both grandfathers and fathers will neglect their personal responsibilities according to our Lord's command to train up godly generations." Our recent encounters with various people confirm how accurate this warning is. During the month of April we were in North Carolina to spend time with family. Before we even left on this trip, a prophecy was given to us that we'd meet many new people. Boy! Did we ever!

As we look back at our time away, we can see that God was giving us personal insight into the deplorable state of so much of Christianity in this nation. It broke our hearts to encounter so many self-satisfied "churchgoers" whose lives and families were riddled with sin — actions and attitudes that they readily admitted but felt not an iota of guilt about! Excuses and self-justification had blinded so many from humbly taking responsibility and turning away from what was spiritually devastating them all.

Too often we encountered complacent men from **clergy-dominated, effeminized religious systems** who were totally unconcerned about the eternal destination of their wives or families or friends. ZERO concern!!!! By their words and their actions they showed they were more concerned with the goals and values and acquisitions of this world than the reality of the next.

Men, think how seduced you are by attending a "church service" in which you passively listen to finely articulated words, as did the men of Ezekiel's day — yet inoculate yourself from any responsibility to live according to His Word. (Read Ezekiel 33:31,32 and ask yourself, "Am I any different?")

Did it ever occur to you that God never prescribed nor desired for His called-out ones any *liturgy*, that is, any preplanned form for corporate worship? For example, in 1 Corinthians, chapter 11 the followers of Jesus shared communion together. Yet the Bible doesn't mandate any particular way to go about it, other than making sure that each one who participates has a *clean, repentant heart* before God! And certainly the Word does NOT call for an ordained clergy person to conduct this celebration.

In chapter 14 we're told that when a faith family collectively gathers, each one should be prepared to do their part through their spiritual gifting and through their witness of His Spirit at work in and through them: "*Whenever you come together, **each one** has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. Let **all of these** be [done] for **edification***" (v.26, literal). Being used by the Spirit with others in your faith family *edifies them*; your participation builds up and strengthens their faith walk. Nowhere in the biblical text do you find any prescribed order to follow in your faith family gatherings. We're just told that out of the character of God and respect for one another, whatever you do should be seemly, not chaotic (see v.40). If this isn't the type of gathering your family is taking part in; if you and they aren't preparing to be used by the Spirit to edify others in your worship time, then consider how you're sinning against God and against your family!

In our last e-mail we quoted Tom White, Director of Voice of the Martyrs: "**Pray that we will not squander our fruit of the Spirit, lavishing it on ourselves and on our inner family circles to provide a more harmonious life only for ourselves.**" Tom's words should be inscribed on the hands and foreheads of the churchgoing grandfathers and fathers we met. Sadly, the primary concerns of so many of the men we met revolved around personal and family satisfaction, and worldly success. Sorely lacking was any sense of Kingdom connectedness, especially regarding our persecuted family suffering on behalf of the Truth, Jesus.

The common thread we found among so many churchgoing men was the absence of the Holy Spirit in them. This was evidenced by their fearful resistance to change, their cowardly evasion of biblical responsibilities, and their flagrant disregard and disobedience of God's Word. If they *were* abiding in the Holy Spirit, they wouldn't fear carrying out His commands: "*For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a **slave again to fear**, but you received the **Spirit of sonship**. And by Him we cry, 'Abba, Father'*" (Romans 8:15; see also 8:9). How our Father's heart must ache as He watches so many deceived "churchgoing" men leading their families to hell. We arrived home heartbroken for this generation of Christendom.

During my (Mike's) almost 11 years of counseling clergy, I met only *one* who was

concerned about whether the Holy Spirit was present within the people in his congregation. The rest were more focused on the number of people in the pews and maintaining the status quo of programs and activities. This experience was reinforced after we returned home. Sue got a book from the library by Ronald J. Sider entitled, *"The Scandal of the Evangelical Conscience — Why Are Christians Living Just Like the Rest of the World?"* So that you don't think it's just us recognizing the ineffectual nature of contemporary organized religion, we want to share a few excerpts from Sider, an "insider" in the evangelical community:

- "By their daily activity, most "Christians" regularly commit treason. With their mouths they claim Jesus is Lord, but with their actions they demonstrate allegiance to **money, sex, and self-fulfillment.**" (p.13, emphasis added)
- "The Gallup Organization and The Barna Group...hand us survey after survey demonstrating that evangelical Christians are as likely to embrace lifestyles **every bit as hedonistic, materialistic, self-centered, and sexually immoral** as the world in general." (p.13, emphasis added)
- "What a tragedy for evangelicals to declare proudly that personal conversion and new birth in Christ are at the center of their faith and then to **defy biblical moral standards** by living almost as sinfully as their pagan neighbors." (p.14, emphasis added)
- "Barna also found in one study that **90 percent** of all divorced born-again folk divorced **after** they accepted Christ...25 percent of evangelicals—just like 25 percent of the total population have gone through a divorce. Does it make no difference to evangelicals that their Lord and Savior explicitly, clearly, repeatedly **condemned divorce?**" (pp.18,19, emphasis added)
- "Since 1993, about 2.4 million young people have signed a pledge ['True Love Waits', sponsored by the Southern Baptist Convention] to wait until marriage to engage in sexual intercourse. [Of the 12,000 teens followed up for 7 years in a study], they found that **88 percent** of these pledgers reported having sexual intercourse **before** marriage; **just 12 percent** kept their promise." (p.23, emphasis added)
- "Barna found from a 2001 poll that the **rate of co-habitation**...is only a little lower among born-again adults than the general public. Nationally, 33 percent of all adults have lived with a member of the opposite sex without being married. The rate is **25 percent for born-again adults.**" (p.23, emphasis added)
- "Fully **26 percent** of traditional evangelicals **do not think pre-marital sex is wrong**, and **46 percent** of non-traditional evangelicals say it is morally okay...Of traditional evangelicals, **13 percent say it is okay** for married persons to have sex with someone other than one's spouse. And **19 percent** of non-traditional evangelicals say adultery is morally acceptable." (p.24, emphasis added)
- "Now **our very lifestyle** as evangelicals is a ringing practical denial of the miraculous

in our lives. Satan must laugh in sneerful derision. God's people can only weep." (p.29, emphasis added)

- "We cannot embrace Christ as our Savior without embracing him **as Lord**. A genuine personal relationship with Christ brings **sweeping transformation of our sinful selves**." (p.58, emphasis added)
- Justification **and** sanctification are **both** central parts of the biblical teaching on the gospel and salvation...Whether emphasizing simplistic slogans such as 'once-in-grace-always-in-grace' or focusing on seeker-friendly strategies that neglect costly discipleship, we have propagated the **heretical notion** that people can receive **forgiveness without sanctification, heaven without holiness**. Notions of **cheap grace** are at the core of today's scandalous evangelical disobedience." (p.59, emphasis added)
- "**Discipleship** is at the very core of the salvation Jesus commands us to offer to the world. And discipleship means **turning from sin** and **following Jesus as absolute, unconditional Lord**." (p.69, emphasis added)
- "**Relativism** has invaded evangelical thinking. Barna reports ... that only **14 percent** of born-again adults **'rely on the Bible** as their moral compass *and* believe that moral truth is absolute.'" (p.90, emphasis added)
- "The very purpose of Christ's coming to earth, the New Testament declares, was to create a **holy community** (Titus 2:14). St. Paul also insists that Christ came precisely to create a **holy church** (Eph. 5:25-27). Peter commands the Christians not to conform to their former sinful ways but rather to **live in holiness** (1 Peter 1:14-16). ...Paul issues the ringing summons, 'let us **purify ourselves** from everything that contaminates body and spirit, **perfecting holiness** out of reverence for God.'" (2 Cor. 7:1).[emphasis added]
- "Jesus warned that the world would **hate his followers** because they **refused to live like the world**. The New Testament writers used the images of **aliens and strangers** to describe the church." (p. 104, emphasis added)
- "'Come out and be separate,' Paul urges in another vigorous call for **separation from the sin of the world**." (2 Cor. 6:17, emphasis added)
- "The **radical worldliness** that pervades surrounding society has **infiltrated** almost every part of the church. This worldliness takes the forms of **racism, sexual promiscuity, materialism, and easy divorce**." (p. 105, emphasis added)
- "In light of what the Bible says about sexual purity and marital fidelity, the **love and joy in Christian homes** where spouses keep their vows **for a lifetime** should contrast so starkly with the agony in contemporary families that millions of broken persons are **attracted to the Savior**." (p.106), emphasis added)

Just a note: We are not promoting the book, nor Sider's recommendation for all Christians to be under denominational authority. We cited the above quotes because Ronald Sider is a recognized writer in evangelical circles. Our solution to the worldly compromise and unholy syncretism within westernized Christianity has been and will remain the same: that trusting in the Spirit of Jesus within each of His own is far more reliable than confidence in a religious hierarchy whose chief aim is to keep their system running smoothly. Sider's proposal is like shifting the hay bales from one field to another to be rained on and ruined.

Our Father told us to call what He is restoring a "**Hebraic Restoration**." He intends that each of His children live by the same trust-based, obedient lifestyle of our father, Abraham, the first Hebrew (Romans 4:11, 12). The patriarch's life involved no denomination, no weekly service in a religious edifice, no clergy person to direct his steps. Yet because of his obedient trust in God, the man was promised an eternal covenant. And, because of that trust relationship with his Father in heaven, Abraham is declared to be the father of every follower of Jesus (Romans 4:16).

The Bible commends our father Abraham's trust, the kind of unwavering, obedient faith our heavenly Father wants in your life as well:

*"We have been saying that **Abraham's trust was credited to him as righteousness**. Under what circumstances was it credited? Was it after he was circumcised, or before? It was not after, **but before!** And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the **righteousness that he had by trust** while he was still uncircumcised. So then, **he is the father of all who trust but have not been circumcised**, in order that righteousness might be credited to them. And he is also the father of the circumcised who not only are circumcised but **who also walk in the footsteps of the trust that our father Abraham had BEFORE he was circumcised**" (Romans 4:9-12)*

Whether you're a Jew or Gentile, the first thing our Father wants from you is your trust — a relational foundation made possible by the reconciling death and resurrection of His Son. Out of his trust in God, Abraham set aside his fear and obeyed Him through many seemingly impossible situations. And think about this: Abraham didn't have the Spirit of Jesus *within* him as we can today, yet still He trusted God! If you're following Jesus as Lord of your life, His Spirit *is* within you. So what excuse do you have for not trusting Him to guide and empower you? What impossible things has God called you to do that you've rationalized away? It's time to repent and begin living in the trust-filled obedience that reveals your love for our Lord. Be like your father Abraham, and be a joy to your heavenly Father!

Again, please don't rush through our article, **Mutually Growing Christ-like Relationships**. It's absolutely worthless to you if you don't discuss it with your family and those in your faith family, and *apply it*. Incorporate each point the Spirit quickens in you to be a *way of life* that's pleasing to your Father. If you've been unsure about whether the Spirit of Christ is within you, may you use this material to remove the

hindrances and finally *trust* our Lord as He has long desired for you.

Mike & Sue