

WORD AT WORK

VOLUME XXII NUMBER II
Honoring The Call

FRIDAY, February 1

Scripture: Ephesians 6:10-12

Ephesians 6:10-12 outlines for us the ministry model the apostle Paul experienced. We are told, in verse 12, “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.” This is the individual warfare ministry model Paul pioneered. When he was initially converted, because of his reputation among the churches, he was not very popular and spent a number of years in Arabia. Since 1900, the restoration of the Holy Spirit has followed this ministry model and pretty much dominated Charismatic and Pentecostal outpourings. Paul went before the Throne through prayer and personal relationship, received revelation, and then brought it back to the Church. The advantage of this pattern is one individual is never hindered by what anyone else thinks and is fully free to pursue the Lord based on personal motivation. The group ministry model that Peter, James and John walked was entirely different. They had to wait on each other and everyone grew by waiting for the slowest one to catch what God had for them. The Lord intended the Pauline ministry model to energize and renew the foundational harmony body model we see in the book of Acts.

SATURDAY, February 2

Scripture: Revelation 2:1-3

It should become obvious that we not only have a generational calling but there is a corporate call through which we impact and pursue the generational calling. It appears the Lord intended every believer to band together in a body and corporately contribute to their generation. We really get a feel for what a corporate call looks like through Jesus dealing with the seven churches of Revelation. Jesus outlines each church’s purpose followed by identifying each area of warfare. Revelation 2:1-3 reveals the corporate call of Ephesus to be purity. They even test those who say they are apostles and are not and have learned to judge between the counterfeit and the real. Certainly the church at Ephesus brought a great contribution to their generation and one that is sorely needed in the Church today.

SUNDAY, February 3

Scripture: Revelation 2:4-7

In verses 4-7 we find what the warfare against their corporate call of purity was - apathy. History tells us Ephesus had everything. Even Mary, the mother of Jesus, spent a season there. They had Paul’s leading protégé, Timothy, to pastor them. Many of the apostles stopped there or were resident for a period. Ephesus appeared to be a bastion of the very best the Early Church had to offer. The warfare against their call was strong and Jesus had to warn them to deal with the issue of apathy in leaving their first love. When God moves dramatically upon and

through individuals resulting in a movement or association of churches spanning the globe – pride and arrogance often sprout and grow and apathy sets in on the nation. We have the best of everything and we've seen it all.

MONDAY, February 4

Scripture: Revelation 2:8-10

The church in Smyrna has a corporate call to be faithful in suffering. They are about to face intense tribulation through which they must uphold the witness of the Lord Jesus Christ and continue their testimony. Such a testimony would have been very encouraging in their generation. We can certainly relate to Christians in Moslem countries today who suffer intense persecution and often death for acknowledging and being faithful to testify to the truth of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. This was the church at Smyrna and history reveals they were faithful to make that testimony in their generation.

TUESDAY, February 5

Scripture: Revelation 2:10,11

The warfare Smyrna faced apparently was fear from the intense tribulation that ended for a number of believers in death, but they walked through it faithfully, became overcomers and made a solid contribution to their generation. Foxes Book of Martyrs is a compilation of testimonies from those who walked the same path throughout the history of the Early Church. The testimonies of divine intervention are numerous. God apparently took the pain away and gave them the grace to walk through giving a solid testimony throughout the process until yielding their last breath. What a contribution was made through the Early Church by these Saints.

WEDNESDAY, February 6

Scripture: Revelation 2:12,13

The church in Pergamos also had a corporate call of being faithful in persecution. They were a church plant in geographically hostile territory. Like Smyrna they were called to be faithful when facing the onslaught of the enemy that often would end in death. The difference between Smyrna and Pergamos appears to be in the length of time they faced the intensity of the persecution. Smyrna was limited while the church in Pergamos appears to have been in it consistently. No doubt the church in Pergamos had much to contribute to their generation that would solidly encourage those who are called to wind up the age.

THURSDAY, February 7

Scripture: Revelation 2:14-17

The difference between Smyrna and Pergamos in their warfare is considerable. It appears that the temptation of Pergamos was to compromise in areas of doctrine in order to escape the persecution. They had to be encouraged to walk the straight and narrow path and refuse to compromise on foundational truth. Jesus even warns them to repent and return to the straight and narrow or He will be forced to come and fight against them with the sword of His mouth. Each church is exhorted to overcome the warfare that is generated by their corporate call. Perhaps because many Christians who live in America have never had to face the corporate call of a Smyrna or Pergamos they know very little about these temptations. What will God have to do to jolt us into reality? Yet we find we are rapidly moving into a place where nation after nation seems to look the other way while Christians are persecuted and ever-increasing numbers martyred. Surely we dare not train up another generation without preparing them for what an ever increasing number of believers are beginning to experience.

FRIDAY, February 8

Scripture: Revelation 2:18,19

The church in Thyatira had a corporate call of continual growth and development toward maturity. Verse 19 says, “I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and as for your works, the last are more than the first.” On the surface the corporate call of Thyatira is to demonstrate there can be a consistent steady growth toward maturity where year after year the church produces more and more fruit. They appear to be doing well in moving down that path but then encounter the warfare that comes with growth and its temptation of unsanctified mercy; notice verses 20 and 21, “Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and beguile My servants to commit sexual immorality and to eat things sacrificed to idols. And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent.” Thyatira had a wonderful corporate call and is evidenced by the warfare that comes against it. The Early Church produced some tremendous centers of wisdom and revelation. Mostly what we learn from Jesus dealing with the churches in Revelation is that each one had a very specific corporate call contributing to their generation. Certainly if this was true of the Early Church it is true of the generation that will wind up the age! How do we contribute to a generational call? We have to embrace the corporate call and join a body of God’s assignment.

SATURDAY, February 9

Scripture: Revelation 3:1-6

The corporate call of Sardis is one of integrity in fiercely representing the Lord and obtaining a good report. We read in verse 2, “Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God.” The Greek word for “perfect” is **on-o-ma** and **on-o-ma** means to gain or obtain a good report through a truthful and serious representation of another. This is certainly the issue of the church at Sardis. We could say their corporate call is one of integrity. But Jesus warns them they haven’t completed it, they haven’t finished the race and He wants them to remember what they have heard and continue the growth pattern – not to stop or retreat – but to continue until they achieve the full measure of God’s assignment.

SUNDAY, February 10

Scripture: Revelation 3:7-13

The church of Philadelphia has a corporate call of demonstrating the fruit of perseverance. Verses 7-10 say, “And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, ‘These things says He who is holy, He who is true, *He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens*’ I know your works, See, I have set before you an open door, and no man can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name. Indeed I will make *those* of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie – indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you. Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.’” The church at Philadelphia made a great contribution to their generation. They demonstrated faithfulness to the corporate call and persevered amidst the warfare against them in their city and because they were faithful to persevere God said, “I will keep you from the hour of trial which is coming on the whole world.” We know from history that a number of Roman Emperors instituted throughout their kingdom gory persecutions of Christians. It must have been exciting to see God’s hand of protection even in the midst of dramatic attack. What an encouragement to be faithful and persevere! Can we say, looking at what is happening to Christians throughout many nations of the world today that this testimony is not needed in our generation? Perhaps we’re more desperate for it than we think.

MONDAY, February 11

Scripture: Revelation 3:14-22

The corporate assignment for Laodicea was to be faithful in a season of prosperity. They were the technical leaders of their day in medicine and also in certain realms of business and production. Laodicea was a very wealthy area and the resultant prosperity brought a major test to the church. The church received the word of correction. The choice had to be made whether to return to the fire of their beginnings or to continue to trust in all their accumulated wealth. In many ways it appears that Laodicea has dramatic application for Christian churches in highly developed countries. Verse 18 proclaims the call that Laodicea was to demonstrate, “I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.” This was certainly the challenge they had to walk through – the issue for which they were called to overcome. Can we overcome the temptation to trust in our prosperity and continue to walk with the Lord? Will we find our corporate purpose and contribute to the call upon our generation?

TUESDAY, February 12

Scripture: Revelation 2:12-14

When we go back and consider different churches and the contributions they should have made to their generation, one that stands out is the church of Pergamos and its call to prepare people for persecution. When we look at the prevailing eschatology of the American Church we find it solidly in the pre-Trib camp. It is much more geared toward preparing people for the rapture than for preparing people for persecution. If we were to transpose the call of Pergamos to our generation, we can readily see the uphill battle this church would have among the other churches and within the prevailing eschatology of the Christian community. What a call! What a challenge for Pergamos to demonstrate a faithfulness in persecution when everyone’s expectation was the Lord’s return and catching them away. Answering and participating in a corporate call is an awesome responsibility and one, which I’m afraid, has been taken way to lightly by churches in our generation. Lets find out what the corporate call is on the church we’re attending. It may be as simple as asking the Lord to reveal it.

WEDNESDAY, February 13

Scripture: First Thessalonians 4:13-5:11

When we look at what First Thessalonians 4 and 5 are presenting, a foundational truth begins to dawn that releases us to think clearly concerning the corporate call of a church like Pergamos. In the first place we discover that the whole issue of the coming of the Lord was one of recognizing times and seasons. God promised He would deliver His people from what the Bible calls “the day of the Lord.” Chapter 5:1-4 says, “But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they say, ‘Peace and safety!’ then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.” The “day of the Lord” that is being discussed here is a day of judgment on the earth and that day of judgment is also a day of *wrath*. The clear promise of the rapture is given to a faithful Church who through God’s grace misses the judgment appointed for the world. Surely, we can agree with that!

THURSDAY, February 14

HAPPY VALENTINES DAY

Scripture: First Thessalonians 5:5-11

We are told, “You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation. For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation

through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.” The clear testimony of the New Testament is that the Church is not appointed to *wrath* reserved for the rebellious who reject the Lord and live according to the standards of the world. A good example is Egypt and Goshen during the ministry of Moses. Egypt underwent all the judgments while the covenant people in Goshen were free from those which were much more severe. The potentially dangerous part of misinterpreting a prophetic event like the rapture is the squandered mis-opportunity of preparing the next generation.

FRIDAY, February 15

Scripture: Revelation 6

The “day of the Lord” in Revelation appears in a number of descriptive chapters. In Revelation chapter 6 we see the opening of the seals, at least numbers 1 through 5. Each seal releases a distinctive judgment in the earth. In the 5th seal, verse 17 of Revelation 6 says, “For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?” If there is one thing we should be able to agree on it is the fact that God did not appoint the Church to the judgment deserved by the world.

SATURDAY, February 16

Scripture: Revelation 8

In Revelation chapter 8 we see the seals are finished and the trumpets begin. The seals are finished by silence in heaven and the trumpets begin with dramatic judgments. Revelation 8 ends by stating, “And I looked, and I heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice. ‘Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!’” Once again we see a whole chapter dedicated to specific judgments being poured out. What do we know is a consistent theme of Revelation? It outlines the different judgments that come for rejecting Jesus and again and again and again tells us that to these the Church is *not* appointed.

SUNDAY, February 17

Scripture: Revelation 9:20,21

In Revelation 9 the 5th and 6th trumpets are outlined and the last two verses say, “But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk; and they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.” Verses 20 and 21 make it very clear the wrath of God is poured out during this season aimed at one issue – gaining repentance from those who remain. Even judgment has a redemptive aspect in which God attempts to get man’s attention and effect a change of behavior. Obviously these are not aimed at the Church. The Revelation judgments are aimed at the world.

MONDAY, February 18

Scripture: Second Peter 3:10-13

In Second Peter 3:10-13 we are told, “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening and coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.” The Church has an assignment, according to Second Peter, and that assignment is to birth a new heavens and a new earth. Our choice of accepting and birthing God’s corporate purpose has a definite impact of hastening the coming of the day of God or the judgment on those who reject Him. Our response to God’s call in our generation, both

generationally and corporately, will either contribute to hastening or postponing “the day of the Lord”. What contribution are we making?

TUESDAY, February 19

Scripture: Colossians 3:5-11

We are told in Colossians 3:5-11, “Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which you also once walked when you lived in them. But now you must also put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.” This passage shows us another issue, which dramatically impacts how we apply the issue of the Church missing the wrath of God. We are told in this passage that the *wrath of man* is what demands the ***wrath of God***. Is it possible we have failed to consider the fact that one major end-time assignment of the Church is to force those in the world to either accept the witness or display the wrath inherent in their nature propelling the process toward a divine conclusion? If that is the case then it is entirely possible to fully embrace and believe in the rapture while understanding the necessity of preparing the Church for dramatic persecution.

WEDNESDAY, February 20

Scripture: Romans 1:18-31

Verses 18 and 19 say, “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them.” We should ask ourselves: “How has God shown it?” One of the ways is He shows it through the witness and testimony of believers who come across their path. Progression of Romans 1 leads into a seven-step slide into judgment where the continual rejection of God’s truth takes a nation into a place where they deserve to lose their sovereignty while usually being conquered and forcefully evicted. This progression shows us that the wrath of man against God and His representatives ultimately births the divine wrath outlined in the book of Revelation. We have failed to ask some very major and pertinent questions. One of those questions is: “Why does God allow the wrath of man to reach such dramatic proportions?” The answer is so that He may wind up the age and the Church birth a new heavens and a new earth. Perhaps we have assumed that because the Church is not appointed to the wrath of God we won’t have to face any wrath at all, forgetting, or denying, that the ***wrath of God*** is poured out because of the demonstration of the *wrath of man*. All we have to do is ask ourselves: “Who does God use to bring forth the wrath of man so it can be dealt with?” The answer to that is very clear and we don’t have to go very far to find it. It is us!

THURSDAY, February 21

Scripture: Revelation 6:9-11

When we read Revelation 6:9-11 we are told, “When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, ‘How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?’ And a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed.” The answer to where does the wrath of God begin is obvious. It begins when the cup is full from the testimony the Church gives in their generations. God’s wrath progressively increases the more persecution comes against the Church but only when the cup is **full** does He begin to pour it out in what the book of Revelation calls “the day of the Lord”. We’ve made an assumption and missed a whole major section of persecution. We assumed that because the Church was not appointed to the wrath of God – the Church would escape wrath through

the rapture. We forgot that it is the *wrath of man* that produces the ***wrath of God!*** And there is a generation of believers who will have to endure the full measure of the wrath of man in order that a new heavens and a new earth can be birthed. **Are we preparing** such a generation for that level of persecution or through assumption are we preparing people to be raptured out?

FRIDAY, February 22

Scripture: Matthew 27:17-20 and 21-25

As we read in Matthew 27 the account of the crucifixion it is obvious that wrath increases dramatically until a tumult is made and Pilot is forced to abandon his strategy of attempting to get Jesus released because of his dream. It culminates in verse 25 with these words, “And all the people answered and said, ‘His blood be on us and on our children.’” That is wrath in action demonstrated fully and completely. We have to ask ourselves: “How did God use the wrath of man aimed at Jesus?” The answer is He used it to birth eternal salvation. If the Church walks the same pattern Jesus walked how will God use the wrath of man against us to wind up the age? The answer is simple. Destroying the old heavens and earth requires the ultimate outpouring of the wrath of God. That in turn is a response to the ultimate manifestation of the wrath of man. Jesus has already demonstrated the pattern by taking the wrath of man, in order to produce eternal salvation. A generation of the Church has to be willing to endure the wrath of man to birth a new heavens and a new earth. What is the corporate call? Where is acceptance of the generational call to prepare and consequently empower for such a season? Is it possible for a generation of believers to hinder God’s visitation to their children by focusing on the wrong goal and call corporately and generally. The answer to that is unequivocally “yes.”

SATURDAY, February 23

Scripture: Revelation 3:14-22

Is it possible we have been so caught up in the blessing of prosperity that we have majored in it, taught on it and it has produced a focus blinding the Church to the essential corporate call of preparing a generation for persecution that they may walk with the full testimony of Jesus? It is time for the Church to rise up and find their corporate call and only then will the generational call begin to come into true focus. Are we guilty of having itching ears and accepting only teaching which placates our flesh?

SUNDAY, February 24

Scripture: Ephesians 2:4-10

Ephesians 4:4-10 makes it very clear that we are “...His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” Not only do we have a generational call and a corporate call but we also have an individual call and how can we ever develop a corporate body who embraces a specific call that will change and prepare their generation if we don’t begin to yield individually? Is it possible that God refuses to talk to us about a corporate and generational call until we have surrendered to the individual call? Should we be offering ourselves as clean chalkboards imploring the Lord to come and write HIS purposes? Perhaps He is waiting on us.

MONDAY, February 25

Scripture: Ephesians 4:15, 16

Ephesians 4:15 and 16 says, “...but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head – Christ – from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.” It would appear that Ephesians 4, verses 15 and 16, says we can only have a true corporate purpose when we yield as individuals and allow God to blend us together in His pattern. Can we come to such a place? Are we ready to walk that out?

TUESDAY, February 26

Scripture: Acts 4:23-29

In Acts 4:23-29 we are told that we need to put on the new man and the process of putting on the new man is letting God begin to write on our hearts and direct us where He wants us to go. It is a rejection of all the flesh offers and a move toward allowing God to demonstrate His sovereign purpose in our lives. It is the same yielding Jesus had to go through to accept the call and everything involved. It is the pattern Jesus walked out where He emptied Himself, in Philippians, of His own desires and let God write the eternal purpose, which by choice was promptly embraced. This is the process God takes us through as we wrestle with our call.

WEDNESDAY, February 27

Scripture: Ephesians 4:30-32

When we choose God's call we are led into places where our choice will either bring joy to the Holy Spirit or grief. As we choose to walk God's path, we choose not to grieve the Holy Spirit but to bring Him joy. This process also involves embracing each other in what is obviously a description of corporate covenantal relationship. Notice verse 32 says, "And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also forgave you." The path Jesus leads weaves us together as a body for a corporate purpose - each of us having a necessary, essential, individual contribution.

THURSDAY, February 28

Scripture: Ephesians 5:1-21

Again we see that this process of being joined together is a process of allowing the Holy Spirit to walk us through the tests of the flesh encountering darkness and yet choosing to expose that darkness and bring it into the light. This is the issue of transparency. We can never successfully embrace and follow through in God's individual, corporate and generational call unless we are prepared to walk in transparency in our corporate relationships. This is a key that brings the full flowing power of the Holy Spirit. Are we pursuing relationship? Are we being transparent? Is God waiting on us? Is a generation waiting on us?

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ITINERARY

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February 3

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