

WORD AT WORK

Dear Friends:

As thirty years of ministry approaches, I find myself increasingly entering spiritual senior-citizen mentoring status, if I am to receive current prophetic direction. In such a season, Philippians 2:19-21 gains special attention, “But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged when I know your state. For I have no other like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus.”

Do you have a Timothy? How can you have a Timothy if you haven’t been one? Was Paul someone’s Timothy? How does a person get delivered from, “seeking their own”? Philippians 3:10 may hold some answers, “...that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,....” What does this process look like? How does it feel?

In verse 12, Paul says, “Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.” Are we pressing on toward this goal? What does being like Jesus entail? Hebrews 10:7 answers, “Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come – In the volume of the book it is written of Me – To do Your will, O God.’” How can I pursue God’s will with the same fervor as Jesus? What principle did Jesus employ to complete His destiny?

Philippians 3:17-19 says, “Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame – who set their mind on earthly things.”

What one thing could I do to guarantee me being a friend of the cross and not an enemy?

Beware: the answer follows in April’s “Word at Work” and may be a crucifying experience.

Yours in Him,

Al Houghton

WORK AT WORK

VOLUME XXIV NUMBER IV
Using Faith On Your Flesh To Obey God III

THURSDAY, April 1

Scripture: Matthew 19:16-26

In Matthew 19, Jesus outlines the initial standard for kingdom participation which is using your faith on your flesh to obey God. The Rich Young Ruler knew there was something missing. What was missing was his choice to embrace the voluntary application of the cross. Jesus defined the cross for him and he refused to apply it. The young man failed the primary test for kingdom participation: choosing to use our faith on our flesh to obey God. His stumbling block was money, probably because he had a lot of it. Nevertheless the underlying principle is still the same. The issue is not how much money we have, but are we willing to develop a pattern in life of using our faith on our flesh to obey God. That is the **foundational kingdom principle** which took Jesus all the way to the cross. Perhaps it is the only principle that will prepare us to fulfill our gifting and calling.

FRIDAY, April 2

Scripture: Matthew 19:27 - 20:16

Jesus continued to elaborate on this kingdom principle by drawing a distinction between those who worked one hour versus those who worked all day. After watching a one-hour worker receive a full day's wage, the expectation of those who worked all day was to have received much more. Kingdom participation demands that we use our faith on our flesh and obey. In Jesus' parable everyone who did received the same wage (eternal life). Perhaps we should remember that Jesus had already told them in Matthew 19:27-30 that anyone who uses his faith on his flesh to obey God's call and walks away from houses, family or lands would not only receive everlasting life but a hundredfold now in this time. Every time we successfully use our faith on our flesh to obey God, the Scripture says we receive a reward. Some of them we see in this life and some we have to wait till eternity.

SATURDAY, April 3

Scripture: Matthew 22:1-14

Jesus made it very clear that the process of using our faith on our flesh to obey God was really the foundational behavioral essence of the kingdom without which we forfeit God's promises, because we refuse the character of Christ. An army without discipline is not an army. A people who say we love God, but won't follow in the footsteps of Jesus, don't know Him. Many in the sodomite life style claim to "love God" but refuse to use their faith on their flesh to obey God. Perhaps the larger problem is a Church without the anointing to confront with conviction, because we have abandoned this same foundational principle. Jesus said

we would know His followers by their fruit. Are we believers in word only or are we believers in deed? Will we find ourselves qualifying for “invited but not worthy” or show up but “without the proper wedding garment”? Their fate of rejection was sealed and it was sealed over one very foundational issue. They simply never learned the language of the kingdom. Kingdom language is faith expressed in action – personally applied. The initial action is almost always on our flesh. The degree which we are willing to use our faith on our flesh is the degree to which God’s presence and blessing will be seen in our lives in the last days.

SUNDAY, April 4

Scripture: Hebrews 11:7-10

How would you like to have been Noah, who got an assignment to build an ark? The problem was the ark was so big and he just had a small family who had to work for a living while building the ark in their spare time. That is why it took slightly over a hundred years. How much persecution, ridicule and mockery do you suppose Noah endured? And yet, for a significant part of his lifetime he had to apply one kingdom principle – using his faith on his flesh to obey God. When we look at Abraham and Sarah is there any difference? Perhaps that’s why they are in Faith’s Hall of Fame. They were willing to wander about looking for a city whose builder and maker is God. That principle was the foundation of their life – one very simple principle. How much of that principle am I embracing?

MONDAY, April 5

Scripture: Hebrews 11:24-29

Another of Faith’s Hall of Fame was Moses. Perhaps the more dramatic that a person’s situation is when they come to grips with this kingdom principle and choose to walk in it, the more we tend to honor them in our thinking. Moses would have pinnacle status because of growing up in Pharaoh’s house, having all the wealth of Egypt at his finger tips and having all the status one could ever desire. To use your faith on your flesh going out to join slaves was a pinnacle move. Moses understood the issue. This principle reveals hearts, whether it is a Rich Young Ruler who rejects, or a Moses who accepts, or Abraham and Sarah who yield in stages fighting with themselves every step of the way and failing as much as they succeed. The foundational issue is still the same. The underlying principle has not changed. The circumstances of your life and mine, once we come to grips with this principle, prove our hearts. Jesus walked this principle all the way to the grave proving God’s faithfulness in resurrection. It is what took Him to the cross. It birthed our salvation. It is what births God’s will in the earth in our generation. If we cannot raise up a generation of believers who are willing to use their faith on their flesh to obey God, how can we pass the torch to a generation who will birth God’s will in their lifetime? Perhaps the biggest challenge to us generationally is producing the next emerging generation of believers who can stand before God knowing they have received the true biblical faith of their fathers. Are we going to pass on the true? Or are we going to pass on counterfeit watered-down Christianity? That is the question facing us. What will we pass on to succeeding generations?

TUESDAY, April 6

Scripture: Matthew 24:45-47

Verses 45-47 say, “Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods.” Jesus made this message very clear. For those who use their faith on their flesh and obey Him, they rise to ever greater realms and dimensions of authority and responsibility. While those who refuse, meet Jesus in an hour when they are not expecting and they get swept away. He goes on to say in verse 51, “There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” What kind of Christianity have we been portraying? What level of commitment in Christianity did we receive? The Bible is very very clear. There is one foundational kingdom principle. It spends anywhere in the kingdom. And when we learn it, it will take us to the pinnacle of our gifting and calling or it will sideline us to

fellowship with the hypocrites. It is time we focus on this principle and make it a part of our life so we can pass it on to the next generation with the conviction of having lived it. That is our challenge.

WEDNESDAY, April 7

Scripture: Joshua 1:5-7, 10:12,13

Perhaps verse 7 describes God's preparational word to Joshua at the very beginning of his ministry, "Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go." God said, "Joshua, do the word. Do it. Don't turn from it. If you do, I will take you into the full measure of your gifting and calling." We certainly see that was the case with Joshua. He took it to heart. He walked it out and he did it to the point that he could stand and ask God, in the middle of battle, for the "Sun to stand still over Gibeon and the Moon in the Valley of Aijalon" so he could have more time to destroy his enemies. Because he built a pattern of using his faith on his flesh to obey God, when the moment came that he wanted the rotation of the planets to stop so that he could have more time to finish God's will – he got it. I wonder how many great things are awaiting us if we will but begin to build this foundational principle into our life. God may have things that are exceedingly abundantly above all we could ever ask or think and all we need to do is pursue this pattern. It was true with Joshua and God is no respecter of persons. I pray it may be true of us also.

THURSDAY, April 8

Scripture: Psalm 2:7-12

In verses 7-12 of Psalm 2 we are told, "I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will give You The nations for Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth for Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.'" Now therefore, be wise, O kings; Be instructed, you judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, And rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, And you perish in the way, When His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him." As we begin to pursue asking God for a harvest out of cities and nations, one of the qualifiers has to be, "To what level have we used our faith on our flesh to obey God?" When we find ourselves in a nation where anarchy is initiated by elected officials, with perverse judges refusing to honor the law, filling our land with iniquity because of their decisions, what shall we do? We desperately need qualified Christians asking God for a harvest and for dealing biblically with the judges of the land. Are we there? Can we pray that prayer? Can we expect answers because we have been willing to use our faith on our flesh and obey God? If as a Christian leader I have been too spineless to teach my congregation right and wrong politically, can I expect an anointing to confront the current baptism of filth?

FRIDAY, April 9

Scripture: Psalm 2:9

The harvest that Jesus promises in verse 8 seems to be the product of a parallel application of authority mentioned in verse 9. Perhaps the most recent event, which demonstrates the absolute validity and necessity of verse 9, is marriage license rebellion continues, as of this writing, in San Francisco. Even though California voters established the fact that marriage is defined as the union of "one man and one women", the Mayor decided he would take it upon himself to overthrow the will of the people and launch perversion of his own. Is there any doubt about the need for the anointing of verse 9 when the land is being filled with iniquity expediting judgment, potentially thwarting the harvest for which the Church is asking? If judgment comes before we get the harvest, because the land is filled with iniquity, then all in the Church will wish we had qualified to stand before the Lord and see verses 8 and 9 in manifestation! The time has come. The time to ask is here! I believe God will be answering!

SATURDAY, April 10

Scripture: Isaiah 55:1-2

Verses 1 and 2 say, “Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk Without money and without price. Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen diligently to Me, and eat what is good, And let your soul delight itself in abundance.” The issue of “come buy and eat without money and without price” is the issue of the spendable commodity in the realm of the Spirit called our “time”. If we use our faith on our flesh and spend our “time” as God directs, then we can purchase in the realm of the Spirit whatever God has ordained for us to have, appropriate and dispense. Perhaps we need to understand that God, being no respecter of person, has given us all the same amount of spiritual purchasing power – its our “time”. The degree to which we are willing to use our faith on our flesh and obey Him in the spending of our time, is perhaps the fastest way to qualify for the promised power of Psalm 2. We need to answer the question – **how ARE WE SPENDING OUR TIME?** Does God have access to our time? Or do we spend it doing what we want to do? **IT’S A QUALIFIER.** Lets spend it wisely!

SUNDAY, April 11

HAPPY RESURRECTION DAY

Scripture: Revelation 3:18-22

In Revelation 3:18 we’re told, “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.” The question becomes, how do we buy gold that is refined in the fire? That process removes shame and brings anointing, helping us to see. What could He be referring to? One of the things we understand about Scripture is that context determines meaning. Laodicea, in the season this was written, was the richest city in the Roman Empire. When an earthquake destroyed much of their infrastructure, they didn’t need money from Rome to rebuild. They had it all right there. So the Church had to use their faith on their flesh not to trust in their wealth and their regional resources. Of all the seven churches, the historical background and setting of Laodicea is, perhaps the most in economic circumstance and situation, like America today. They had to use their faith on their flesh, as do many of us who live in fairly affluent Western countries. It is a challenge and God is calling us to it.

MONDAY, April 12

Scripture: Revelation 3:18-22

The context of “buy from Me gold refined in the fire” is in verses 19-22. “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, **as I also overcame** and sat down with My Father on His throne.” So how did Jesus “overcome”? What did Jesus “overcome”? Perhaps the Garden of Gethsemane gives us the greatest view into that spiritual sphere. What did Jesus have to use on His flesh to obey God and overcome? “Nevertheless not My will, but Thine be done.” When you are sweating great drops of blood, you know you are seeing inordinate **pressure**. And anybody who has seen THE PASSION OF CHRIST recognizes the pressure and the process. This was the pinnacle of Jesus life and ministry. Everything He was born to do, all the training, every circumstance and situation led Him to this place. And what is the principle that enabled Him to overcome? He used His faith on His flesh to obey God. This is the essence of what we must pass on to the next generation. How can we impart something they have not seen us live? If we’ve lived it – we can impart it! If we haven’t lived it – we have to trust God to bring somebody else to mentor our own children! What a **grief** throughout eternity that our own children would have to look to another as a role model, because we used our faith to pamper our flesh – instead of using our faith on our flesh. What a **disgrace** to stand before Jesus,

having used our faith for natural gold instead of using our faith for spiritual gold that lasts throughout eternity! We have a choice – and the making of it is ...**right now!**

TUESDAY, April 13

Scripture: James 1:2-4

Verses 2-4 state, “My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.” What do “trials” give us the opportunity to do? What is the “testing of our faith”? When we look at Jesus, what “trials” did He endure? Did He face lies, character assassination and ultimately rejection? Joseph is another good example. Did Joseph have to use his faith on his flesh to obey God? What a warfare he endured and yet we see him in Hebrews 11, a member of Faith’s Hall of Fame. They all had one thing in common to be mentioned in that chapter. They used their faith on their flesh. In verse 4, James tells us this process has a perfect work and it brings us into fullness or completion where we lack nothing. Maturity is the fruit of consistent progressive opportunities to use our faith on our flesh to obey God. Perhaps what we need to do is identify the opportunities when they arise and put them in this context. The problem is, we don’t see the maturing, we don’t see the personal growth but in process we feel like we are much closer to “lack” than we are to being “victorious”. Yet, it is a progressive training toward the pinnacle of God’s purpose and plan. Can we identify the “trials” that are in our life and begin to put them in the context of James chapter one? Perhaps they would be easier to endure if we could look at what is being accomplished in the realm of the Spirit and that we are, in fact, “buying gold tried in the fire.”

WEDNESDAY, April 14

Scripture: Matthew 3:1-9

When John the Baptist came into his ministry verses 7-9 state, “But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, ‘Brood of vipers! Who has warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not think to say to yourselves, “We have Abraham as our father,” For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.”’” How much faith would you have to use on your flesh to tell the leaders of two competing spiritual groups that they were a “brood of vipers” and their judgment was imminent? How much faith would you have to use on your flesh to confront the whole religious system of your day? I’m sure we can realize what the repercussions of that action would be for John. He would be branded. We can read what the repercussions were and see how John had to progressively use his faith. John starts using his faith on his flesh to confront religious leaders and graduates to frying bigger fish. Is God consistent? Does He attempt to train us, year by year and month by month? The end of the training is developing enough spiritual testosterone to accomplish the pinnacle of our gifting and calling. If this is true, where are we in the progression? Do we recognize that this *is* the foundational kingdom principle and are we incorporating it into our lives? It is never too late to start. Will **today** mark the beginning? Tell the Lord, “I’m willing to say what You want me to say, when You want me to say it.” That is a commitment every believer must have. Jesus lived by it. We have to raise up a generation that is willing to *speak* what they hear and *do* what they see. But it has to start in us. We can’t raise up somebody to that dimension having never walked there ourselves. Will **today** mark the beginning?

THURSDAY, April 15

Scripture: Matthew 3:10-12

Verses 10-12 say, “And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” Isn’t it interesting

that John the Baptist saw the ministry of Jesus, not only as Savior, Empowerer and Baptizer in the Holy Spirit but also as Judge. He even emphasized the ministry of Jesus as Judge! Jesus was not ever permitted to read Isaiah 61:26 in His home town. But John both saw and warned of its manifestation as a major part of his message. Did John grow into another level of using his faith on his flesh to obey the Lord? Yes, it was proclaiming things that would not be seen in his lifetime. Proclaiming what God says, even though we know it won't be seen in time to vindicate us, usually means a life filled with criticism and rejection. That ushers in a whole new level of using your faith on your flesh to speak things for which you will be harassed and maligned and will never be vindicated until after you are gone. John the Baptist was being led in a progression of using his faith on his flesh from glory to glory – just like Jesus. The apostles and Early Church leaders bore the marks of persecution. What do we bear? The pattern is so consistent, how can we run from it and call ourselves Christians?.

FRIDAY, April 16

Scripture: Luke 3:15-20

In Luke 3:15-20 we see Luke's account of the ministry of John the Baptist. John is preaching the same thing, but suddenly the Lord asks him to step to another level of using his faith on his flesh. Verses 18-20 say, "And with many other exhortations he preached to the people. But Herod the tetrarch, *being rebuked by him concerning Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done*, also added this, above all, that he shut John up in prison." The Holy Spirit led John the Baptist to not only take on the religious leaders in both parties of the Sadducees and Pharisees, but in the next level to confront Herod the king. Notice the fruit of this confrontation! John went to prison. John paid the price of losing his head. How much faith does it take applied to our flesh to grow to this point? And this is the **key – HE GREW** to this level. John the Baptist started the progression at the beginning of his ministry. He grew to the point where he could reach the pinnacle of his ministry using his faith on his flesh to obey God. The perfect forerunner for Jesus. Jesus is coming again! What kind of forerunner are we?

SATURDAY, April 17

Scripture: Matthew 11:1-19

John the Baptist, at the end of his life, found himself in prison having a very difficult time resolving the difference between his walk and that of Jesus'. John walked as a Nazarite but Jesus seemed to do all the things that were contrary to John's marching orders. That's why in Matthew 11:2-6 we see this exchange, "And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples and said to Him, 'Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?' Jesus answered and said to them, 'Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: "The blind receive their sight and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me.'"" Since John grew up in a family whose mother had a supernatural experience, and his mother knew Mary, who also had a parallel spiritual experience, it is fairly certain John and Jesus knew of each other. Not to mention the fact that John recognized Jesus at the baptism and saw who He was, and proclaimed it. Suddenly something has happened causing John to question what he has known already by revelation. John was using his faith on his flesh *not* to be offended. That's why Jesus said in verse 6, ""And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me."" How many of us are willing to use our faith on our flesh *not* to be offended at what people do and say? Perhaps there is not a greater crucifier of the flesh than being offended at what Christians say and do. The enemy often uses it to steal from us and yet there is a great application and opportunity to overcome just as Jesus overcame, according to the exhortation in Revelation 3. Are we overcoming as Jesus overcame?

SUNDAY, April 18

HAPPY HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY

Scripture: First Corinthians 3:5-10 ENJOY IT THE NEXT ONE MAY BE OUR OWN

In First Corinthians 3:5-10 we see the warning. Verse 10 says, “According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it.” Every one of us are being prepared for our gifting and calling in ministry, so the “take heed” is a warning. We are called to use our faith on our flesh and obey God not only in the training process where we learn to serve others, but in the interaction of those with like precious faith. “How” we do is as important as “what” we do. There are seasons which are foundational and I believe we are in one. In those foundational seasons, what we accept, what we hear and what we walk out become the cornerstones on which our spiritual buildings are built. We are talking about a principle that is foundational. Obedience now will determine the size and magnitude of what we can build for God. It is time to incorporate it into our cornerstone and make the choices which will produce tremendous future fruit.

MONDAY, April 19

Scripture: First Corinthians 3:11-15

Paul makes it very clear that there is only one foundation that can be laid and that is the ministry of Jesus in all of its application, its pattern, and its fulfillment. So we have to ask ourselves – what is the pattern of preparation in the ministry of Jesus that builds toward fulfillment. The pattern is consistent from a young age when He said He had to be about His Father’s business. The pattern is using your faith on your flesh to obey God. Jesus lived it, then taught it. That pattern brought great conviction. Is this pattern part of our lives? Is it the foundational principle that undergirds our ministries and our impartation to the next generation? Or, are we using Madison Avenue Marketing techniques to build the Church? Are we teaching the Church to use their faith on their flesh to obey God or are we afraid to bring that kind of depth because we might offend somebody? What is the foundation of the Church? Is it what Jesus declared? How would Paul look at where we attend or what we’re building? He is the one who wrote, “For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” He did promise that each one’s work would be revealed and it would be revealed by fire. If our work withstands the fire, our work remains. Is what we are doing for God based on the cross, using our faith on our flesh to obey God? What Jesus did was. It was the foundation. It has to become the foundation again! Let’s make that choice **now**. What we do now will be the foundation for our rejoicing in eternity. What we refuse to do now will produce great weeping in eternity. The fire is coming. Are we building for it?

TUESDAY, April 20

Scripture: Mark 9:33-36

While the disciples are disputing on the road as to who is going to take over when Jesus is gone, He brings a little child, calls him, sets him down in the midst and says, “‘If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all.’” Jesus made it very clear that if we are going to walk with Him we have to learn to use our faith on our flesh to serve other people. Secondly, we have to be willing to use our faith on our flesh not to seek positions but let Him be our promoter. Now if we were to apply that rule to ministry today, where would we be. If we were to take all the promotion and self-advancement out, all the marketing, all the advertising – where would we be? How are we doing in the ministry with **THE** most foundational principle of the Bible? Are we using our faith **ON** our flesh, or are we using our faith **FOR** our flesh? The difference is **ETERNAL**.

WEDNESDAY, April 21

Scripture: Philippians 2:3-7

We are told in these verses, “Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a servant, and coming in the likeness of men.” The Greek work translated “made Himself of no reputation” is **ek-ee-no-sen** and may very well be the ultimate in using our faith on our flesh to obey God. Using Your faith to leave the God-head to become a man and walk in all the limitations of man and then to lay Your life down is incredible to contemplate. And yet, we see this principle for just what it is, the foundation of all earthly life and ministry in our Lord Jesus. Only God can show us the application of using our faith on our flesh for Him. But just as much as the enemy will try to hide it from us, surely God is waiting to be *asked* for this is something that must be sought and embraced because the natural man runs from it. Will we run **FROM** the very thing that made the sacrifice of Jesus possible? Or will we run **TOWARD** it? If we don’t run toward it we cannot impart it to the next generation. It’s **time** we made a choice to run.

THURSDAY, April 22

Scripture: Philippians 2:19-21

Thank God we know there was a generation that caught what Paul was sharing. Paul caught it by revelation. But then he shared it in faith as a mentor to the next generation, he outlined the path of Christianity. Verses 19-21 state, “But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged when I know your state. For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus.” It seems that Paul didn’t have a great deal of success in raising up the next generation, but he at least found one. What seemed to be the stumbling block which tripped everyone up? It appears the stumbling stone, in the discipleship process, was in using their faith on their flesh to obey God and putting other people ahead of themselves. Paul’s blanket statement in verse 21 must have been a source of great discouragement for him. He didn’t say “some seek their own.” He said “all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus.” What is so repulsive about the things “which are of Christ Jesus”? What can you think of that would drive everyone away or make it so difficult that they would go another direction? Using our faith on our flesh is not a popular message. It is not how to build a crowd. It doesn’t offer people something for nothing. It is a simple manifestation of the extension of the cross. Yet, it is the foundation of the principle of growth in Christianity. It is the very thing Jesus demonstrated. It was what brought Him to the fulfillment of His ministry, as it did with Abraham, Sarah and all those listed in Hebrews 11. Will we qualify for an end-time Hebrews 11, or will we find ourselves comfortably perched in Philippians 2:21. Where shall we settle?

FRIDAY, April 23

Scripture: Philippians 3:17-18

Paul even outlines exactly what is going to happen to those people who make the choice to build this principle into their lives, and what happens to those who don’t. In verses 17-19 of chapter 3, he says, “Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ:...” Isn’t it interesting that the majority, in Paul’s experience, walked in such a way that allowed them to accept Christ but reject the cross. How can you be a believer and walk as an enemy of the cross? Its very simple. You just never embrace the foundational pattern and principle of Christianity which will lead you to ever greater realms of overcoming and consequent fulfillment in God’s ultimate path. How can any of us fulfill God’s call without embracing the foundational principle – using our faith on our flesh to obey? I remember

reading Kenneth Hagin's book I Believe In Visions, nearly 30 years ago when I was in Bible School. I was staggered at his account of a personal appearance Jesus made after 12 years of ministry in which He informed Brother Hagin that he was just about to enter into the first stage of his ministry. Hagin protested that he had been in ministry for 12 years. Jesus replied, "Most men live their whole lives and never enter the first stage of their ministry." I was stunned in reading that statement and a sense of fear engulfed me – the fear of the Lord! I thought to myself, "How could it be that men could live their whole life and never enter the first stage of their ministry?" But after 30 years, I think I know. At least I understand more now about this principle than when I first began. And I understand how that after 30 years of not embracing using your faith on your flesh, to suddenly do it may mean the loss of everything you've built thus far, if it is not built on the proper foundation. And like the Rich Young Ruler, many would walk away sad, and sadder yet on Judgment Day. **CHOICES HAVE TO BE MADE AND WE'RE IN A SEASON WHERE GOD IS DEMANDING THEM OF US.**

SATURDAY, April 24

Scripture: Philippians 3:19-21

Paul went on to state in verses 19-21 the fruit of not using our faith on our flesh: "...whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame – who set their mind on earthly things. For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself." Notice that if we embrace this principle, of using our faith on our flesh, we give the Lord the opportunity to subdue everything in us to Himself; which means we end up just like Him. Regardless of what our ultimate assignments are, in character, in nature and in commitment, we can show the "full measure of the stature of Jesus Christ" because we choose to walk the path He walked. There is no way I can be like Him if I don't choose to walk as He walked. It is impossible! That is why Paul says, "...many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping,...." It is the dividing line between true Christianity and religion. Religion gives you a Jesus in name only – never embracing the principle of the cross. What kind of Christianity do we have in America, in Europe, in Australia, in South America? What kind of Christianity do we see in China? Would the depth of Christianity in China and Muslim countries put those of us in the affluent West to shame? What is it about them that would cause us to seem like babies? What has persecution forged that is obviously absent in a significant percentage of Western Christianity? Is it the very principle about which we are talking? If so, we need to make some changes. We need to start passing something eternal to our children.

SUNDAY, April 25

Scripture: Mark 9:36-38

Verses 36-38 say, "Then He took a little child and set him in the midst of them. And when He had taken him in His arms, He said to them, 'Whoever receives one of these little children in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me, receives not Me but Him who sent Me.' Now John answered Him, saying 'Teacher, we saw someone who does not follow us casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow us.'" "Forbade" comes from an interesting Greek word. It means to lop off a branch or to sever it from the trunk of the tree. How well were the twelve doing at accepting people outside their little circle? They were not doing well at all. Actually they had drawn a circle and used it to exclude people. Apparently they weren't doing a very good job of using their faith on their flesh to obey. We need to ask ourselves, is the Christianity in which we are involved teaching us to use our faith on our flesh to widen the circle or to narrow it? Can we fellowship with people in a different denomination or in a different stream? How much openness do we walk in? Do we judge those in other movements unfairly? Do we exclude because of our understanding of their doctrine? Are we doctrinal Pharisees? Do we have the heart of God when it comes to this issue? What has denominational Christianity produced? Are we like John in verse 38? Where do we stand with God's heart

and His discernment? It is certainly time we find out. I'd rather learn now then spend my whole life and find out I was way off base when I face Jesus. The time to act is **now**.

MONDAY, April 26

Scripture: Mark 9:39-41

Jesus made it very clear how we should function and operate with each other when He said, “Do not forbid him, for no one who works a miracle in My name can soon afterward speak evil of Me. For he who is not against us is on our side. For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in My name, because you belong to Christ, assuredly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.” Do we use our faith on our flesh to extend encouraging words and cups of water to the Catholics, to the Presbyterians, to the Methodists, to the Episcopalians, to the Congregationalists or to the Baptists? Are we using our faith to narrow the circle or to increase it? John got caught narrowing the circle and he was rebuked for it. Let's check ourselves and find out where we are in order that we can move toward God's pattern and have the fruit that He is after in the end-times. The time for change is **now**.

TUESDAY, April 27

Scripture: Luke 22:24

Luke 22:24 is a parallel passage from Mark 9 and we are told in verse 24, “But there was also rivalry among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest.” Isn't it interesting in verse 24 that we see rivalry or strife over who is going to take over when Jesus leaves because they are not using their faith on their flesh to serve. They had been warned. They had been told. It had been demonstrated to them. They had seen it in a variety of ways. They had heard it preached. It had been on display for them. They asked Jesus at one point to send the multitudes away and He said “Absolutely not, you feed them” and God did an awesome miracle. They had watched Jesus use His faith on His flesh to serve, bless, heal and deliver when everybody was so tired they just wanted to drop right where they were. And yet, they still hadn't **embraced** it. Isn't it interesting – its one thing to be told, but quite another to see it in action. Only a quality decision opens us to real change. What shall we then say? Which group will we be like? Will it take something dramatic to shock us into the realization that this principle is not optional, or will we like so many just live a life of looking out for Number One and never quite embracing what we have heard and sometimes seen? God is calling for some changes. We're the ones that have to make the choice.

WEDNESDAY, April 28

Scripture: Luke 22:25

Verse 25 says, “And He said to them, ‘The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called “benefactors.”’” For what reason do we seek power and position? For what reason do we seek anointing? For what reason are we looking for authority? Is it to serve or is it to be served? According to Jesus, in the world people gain position in order to be served and yet that is not the pattern He has chosen for us. The pattern He has chosen for us is if we are given position and authority, we must use our faith on our flesh serving others. A total reversal of how the flesh operates. Jesus used His position to serve us. He could have failed if He had not consistently, compellingly, continually used His faith on His flesh to obey. This is a life pattern that God is calling us to work into our being so that we can pass it on to the next generation. What are we going to do with what God's Word says?

THURSDAY, April 29

Scripture: Luke 22:24-27

Jesus made it very clear which standard we were to live by. In verses 24 through 27, He said, “But there was also rivalry among them, as to which of them should be considered greatest. And He said to them, ‘The

kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called “benefactors.” But not so among you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves. For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves.” Jesus drew a parallel and a picture that was so powerful nobody could miss it. The parallel is in His attitude as a servant and the pattern that He set *versus* how the religious system operated that the disciples had experienced. The real question is, to what degree and what level are we willing to use our faith on our flesh to obey God? Jesus was willing to use His faith on His flesh unto death – in obedience. That is the standard. There is no other standard. For those who are called in the business world, you may be able to afford a Farari but are you willing to drive a Saturn? Are we willing to live below our means, using our faith on our flesh, in order to fund God’s purposes?

FRIDAY, April 30

Scripture: Romans 12:6-8

Romans 12:6-8 identifies the giving gift and it outlines the spiritual platform from which it must come. Verses 6-8 say, “Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them; if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching, he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality;....” In the King James it says, “...he who gives with simplicity....” The Greek word used there is **hap-lot-ace**. It means without self-seeking or singleness of heart and mind. It is the place where what we sow comes forth with purity and not with a motivation to influence what is done. There is a place in giving where God tells us what to do by revelation as opposed to giving by apparent need where manipulation can be a factor. A sanctified gift is one that is given with simplicity without any ulterior motives. If we can sow, if we can give with this kind of heart, we know it is acceptable before God’s Throne. Using our faith on our flesh has an infinite number of applications. God knows exactly what we need to be fully prepared!

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ITINERARY

Al Houghton

April 1-4	Embassy Christian Center 600 North Street, Hannibal, MO 63401 Services: 1st & 2nd 7PM 4th 10AM	Phone: (573)221-8121
April 16-18	Daystar Ministries 105 W 3 rd Street S, Summerville, SC Services: 16th & 17th 7PM and 18th 10AM	Phone: (843)821-0089
April 18-19	Dayspring Ministries 765 Longpoint Road, Mt Pleasant, SC Services: 18th 6PM and 19th 7PM	Phone: (843)884-0667
May 2	Seattle Revival Center 12636 South East 89 th Place, New Castle, WA Services: 2nd 10AM and 6PM	Phone: (425)228-0810

OUT OF THE BOAT

*Jesus doesn't always come
The way that you'd expect
At times it's most amazing
How He'll choose to intersect*

*Through means that are surprising
You may not have walked before
He'll orchestrate creative plans
And new doors to explore*

*These plans might need your action
Much like walking on the sea
So be prepared to leave the boat
And act creatively*

*It may be a simple request
Or take faith to make a stand
The fruit is in the doing
We are His Promised Land*