

Midnight Cry Messenger

FREELY SHARED WITH THOSE WHO ARE HUNGRY FOR TRUTH — NOT TO BE SOLD

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Called According to His Purpose

by Phil Enlow

Adapted from a message preached in January 2017 at the Bible Tabernacle and used in the TV broadcast in May 2018.

I'd like to start with a very familiar scripture, but you know, even though you start, many times, in a familiar place, the Lord always has something that He wants to emphasize that isn't necessarily just repetitious. But there's something that I feel like the Lord has emphasized in my own heart and mind and it's a need in people.

I want to begin in Romans 8:28, certainly one of the most familiar and beloved scriptures by all Christians, because we do live in a world where things are not always smooth and we need to understand that there is a purpose in it. I have a particular thing that I want to use this as a jumping-off point for. So let's just read it.

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified." (Romans 8:28-30, NIV).

It's an amazing, comprehensive truth that is meant to give His people a solid hope, a ground for a place of rest, a place where we understand that everything that has to do with our destiny has been given into His hands and it's a safe place. What an awesome thing! God has given us a perfect Savior, a perfect Salvation.

One thing we see here is predestination. Often this is a matter of debate among theologians as to God's part and man's part. God is sovereign on the one hand, and yet man is responsible to make choices, on the other. I believe, with all my heart, there's a middle ground between the two extremes.

And so, what God is describing here is not a matter of Him saying, "I pick you, you, and you and the rest of you go to Hell," and we don't have any choice or responsibility in the process. There are choices that are made. But there's a way that God gets to this point, and that's what's on my heart this morning, because the promises are to those, "...who have been called according to his purpose."

Now the word "call" indicates God taking an action, doesn't it? It isn't that man seeks after God. We know he doesn't. Left to ourselves, there isn't a single person here who would have the least inclination to go find out about God. We just wouldn't do it! We'd follow our inclina-

tions and that would be the end of it. We're born into this world and we learn from our environment. We learn what the world is about or what we *think* it's about.

And, becoming part of His purpose is not just like flipping a switch. It's not that God has to simply come down and explain it to us and we say, "Oh, okay." There's a lot to it. There's a lot more than we may realize that's involved in God lifting us out of the condition in which He finds us and bringing us out of our purpose and into God's.

And every one of us has a particular purpose in life. Now, we vary according to our personality and our circumstances. But I don't care who you are, whether you are someone high and mighty, who has achieved great things and wealth and accomplishment, or whether you're somebody who just pursues pleasure or comfort or a certain career that builds up your pride and gives you a sense of accomplishment, and that's all your purpose is about, or whether you're simply one that hides from life and just plays. Everyone has a life that is basically founded upon self-will. It's what we want! It's what we think is right!

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His Habitation

by Ken Yonish

"Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? And where is the place of my rest?" Isaiah 66:1 KJV. Isaiah knew firsthand just how awesome and great the Lord was when he saw a glimpse of His majesty and beauty. He was so overwhelmed in His presence that he said, *"Woe is me! For I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts."* Isaiah 6:5 KJV. The angels cried, *"holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts and the whole earth is filled with His Glory!"* Isaiah 6:3 KJV.

So where is the house that is built for the creator of the universe?

When Solomon constructed the temple in Jerusalem he used the finest gold and precious metals of the day. He brought in cedar from Lebanon, incorporated assistance from other nations and over 150,000 men to work on its construction for twenty years. Solomon said, *"... the house which I build is great: for great is our God above all gods. But who is able to build him a house, seeing the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain him? Who am I then, that I should build him a house, save only to burn sacrifice before him?"* 2 Chronicles 2:5-6. When the temple was completed Solomon brought the Ark of the Covenant containing the tablets with the Ten Commandments God to Moses and the children of Israel when they came out of Egypt. At that time all the people of Israel gathered with the Priests and the musicians and the *singers*....

Musicians and singers? Yes, that right...musicians and singers.

"It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD; and

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Editor's Letter

Dear Saints,

Greetings once again in the wonderful name of Jesus! Once again we have the great privilege of sharing with our brothers and sisters the wonderful things of God! How good and faithful He is in spite of our great need!

The lead article this time is an edited version of the transcript of a service preached last year at the Bible Tabernacle and then used recently on the TV broadcast. I am convicted afresh as I re-read it. May it touch many hearts.

We as human beings are born into a world system devoted to self-will and rebellion. That is our nature. It is a product of Satan's self-delusion that he could successfully be like God and rule. But God has His own purposes, conceived before creation itself and nothing can change that. The gospel is all about rescuing us from the kingdom of darkness and bringing us into the kingdom of God's dear Son (Colossians 1:13).

And beyond that it is about changing us from the inside out into the likeness of His Son that we might be part of a glorious purpose that goes on forever! Hallelujah!

Two shorter articles by Bro. Ken Yonish are also included, one a testimony. Be blessed.

Later this month we look forward to gathering in Lake City, Florida for our June Convention. May God honor us with His presence. Remember us in prayer.

Till next time may God's rich blessings be yours.

Your brother in Christ,
Phil Enlow

was thinking recently about something that I shared a little over a year ago, and it actually was from the message that forms the basis of the article in the latest *Midnight Cry Messenger*.

I had referred to seeing a Christian movie and something that had jumped out at me. There was a male character and a female character, and he was talking to her about people who come to "Christ," quote, unquote. And he said a lot of people come to Christ by *addition*. And what he meant by that is simply that they find out about Jesus and they *add* Him to their life.

Now, you understand what's going on here. I have not given up my purpose. I still live for what I want. It's *my* life! I live with this illusion that though I have only recently arrived here, it's my life! I can do what I please with it.

But, now I find out about Jesus, who loves me and wants to forgive my sins and so I'm going to add Him to my life and that's going to help me achieve my purpose. I'm going to be more successful. I'm going to be happier. But it's still my life and Jesus effectively becomes my servant to do what I want to do. That's coming to Jesus by addition.

How many of you think that will get you anywhere? No! That's not the Gospel. But I'll tell you, that is essentially the Gospel that is preached in many places, even though those particular words are not used. And even where there are people who preach the truth, and even here, regardless of where people hear the truth, many times what they wind up doing is embracing "cafeteria religion."

Now, why do people go to a cafeteria? They want to get what they want! I don't like this, but I like that. I can make up my own little plate and it'll be what I want. I'll tell you, when we come to Christ we take what He gives, because it's right! It's exactly what I need! I don't need to write my own ticket and say, "God, come be my servant."

But, there's an awful lot of that where people come and supposedly embrace Christ and what they have really embraced is a religious culture. It's a tradition. It's a way of life in which they can perform all the "stuff." They can carry out all the religious activity and go on their merry way believing that they are Christians, that they know Christ!

I'll tell you, there are going to be some awful surprises one of these days. There are going to be some terrible surprises for people that may have taught Sunday School all their lives and come to the end and find out they're rejected, because they never really became a part of what the scripture here is talking about: "called according to his purpose."

There is a divine act that must happen in everyone's life where God arrests you and arrests me. However it happens, whatever the circumstances may be, it could be dramatic, it could be quiet, but there is an arrest. You

don't just go on your merry way and suddenly, oh, Jesus, come on, join me. It's not that at all. We join Him! There is a 180 that has to happen in every single life! "Called according to His purpose."

Back to that movie: after the one character explained to this young lady that so many people come to Christ by addition, he then says that there are others who come to Christ by *submission*. What a simple, clear way of expressing the truth! Those who come to Christ by addition, try to add Jesus to their life, but oh, when you come by submission, it's not your life anymore. There is a surrender! Your purpose is laid at the feet of the Cross to be completely submitted to Him, whatever He says, wherever we're to go, whatever we're to do.

Praise God! It's not my life anymore! I am bought with a price! That price is the blood that Jesus shed on the Cross! Anything short of that is not the Gospel and it's not Salvation! There are people who claim this scripture about all things working together and they're thinking, "It's my life," and yet they're trying to claim this promise.

I believe there's a good company of people here who have been called and you have surrendered and you've seen what this is about. But, I believe there's a burden in the heart of God that would reckon with the truth and with the simple fact that there are people who hear the Gospel and somehow never grasp what it really means in their earthly life.

Praise God! We're going to have to come to that place where we come to Jesus by surrender! By submission it becomes His life, His will! And there's no other way around it. We are either a part of His purpose or we're part of our own. And I'll tell you, your purpose will end.

If that's the way that you conduct your life, I don't care how religious you may be, if you simply live out what you want to do the way you want to do it and you try to integrate Jesus into your life, you're going to come to the place where you're going to die. Everything you have lived for will be left behind. And the rebellion that caused you to do all that will follow you to a place of judgment where you don't want to be.

The relentlessness of our nature is such that it takes a miracle of God to transform somebody, to take them out of that one way of life and bring them into another. You've got to see something that can only be communicated by Divine revelation. You're going to have to come to a place where you see things in stark clarity as God sees them. And when you see it, you surrender! There's no other way! There's no other path that leads home!

There's a heart of God that is reaching out to young people, to others that may be here. I don't know. I have nobody in mind in this.

Called

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And that's the fundamental issue that separates man from God. It's self-will! Another word for it is simply, rebellion! God created everything with a purpose yet we insist on pursuing our own purpose. And it isn't easy to get from one place to the other. We've got to come to a place where God has got to perform a miracle.

And none of us comes easy, none of us comes willingly! God has to do a mighty work in our hearts if we're ever going to come! I

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I've had this burden that we would more see real conversions. I know how people do it. You preach an emotional message and you get people to come down here to the front and make a profession — and God *can* work in spite of that.

But there is a work of God that goes on in the heart of everyone that He calls that has nothing to do with method! It has nothing to do with how well we explain it. It has nothing to do with anything except it is a Divine work of God to call His people and to cause them to see the reality of His Kingdom and His claim upon their lives! And they're brought to a place of surrender. Time and place are irrelevant! It simply means a Divine encounter.

I want to go to some scriptures here: John chapter 6 is one that we have referred to many times, and I will just pick out some of the things that Jesus was expressing here. They were asking Jesus all kinds of questions and all kinds of people were seeking Him for a variety of reasons.

Some of them loved the idea that He could seemingly manufacture food out of nothing. He could multiply food and was a miracle worker and they wanted Him so bad they were about to make Him king. They really understood God's purpose, didn't they! Totally earthly thinking. They had no clue what was going on as to why He'd really come.

Other people were entertained by the miracles. This was exciting and they wanted to be associated with this guy! And so, Jesus began to talk to them to point out their unbelief.

In verse 37 we see the familiar words, "All that the Father gives me will come to me..." That sounds pretty positive! There is a Divine action. If you find somebody who has been brought to the place where they have surrendered to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, they have become partakers of His Spirit, it started in the heart of God, it did not start with you! It started because God looked down and knew your name and made a plan to reach your heart! That's the short version.

And then, God is the one Who absolutely engineers it! Everyone that the Father gives me will come! That's a positive statement. I'll tell you, I'm leaning on that with all of my heart. I want to preach this, but I don't want to preach it in a striving way, as though I've got to make it happen. I don't have to do anything, except give out His words and believe with all of my heart that God will take those words, sow them in the hearts of those who are in need, and He will bring His people at the right time.

You can't manufacture babies any time you want them. There's a process that happens. There's a conception that takes place. There's a time element. There's a time to be born! And

there is a time to be born into God's Kingdom and that varies with every single individual that He calls. I believe with all my heart somebody could come this morning. This could be your moment! But I don't know! You may not have been brought to that place!

I want to look this morning at a little bit of that process, but I want to lay a little bit of groundwork here. "All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away." What a foundation that is! God acts to bring people to the feet of Jesus. He says, I'll never drive them away! There's a hope, there's a strength that comes, not from my willpower, not from my decision! It's not a decision to *accept*. This is a *surrender*!

And Jesus said, "For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me." Even Jesus was surrendered to God's purpose! He didn't live out His own! He didn't have something independent going!

"...This is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those he has given me, but raise them up at the last day." See, there's something that goes way beyond the grave. Nothing ends, even with the end of this life, when you come to Christ. That's the beginning! Praise God!

Everyone who truly is part of what I'm describing today, your hope lies not in this world. We are sojourners. We are traveling through. We are learning. We are growing. We are finding out what this is about. And in the furnace of affliction we are being changed into His image.

There's one day we're going to leave all of this behind. Every hindrance is going to be gone and we will walk with Him in absolute purity. We will be like Him, not because we are special but because He is, because of what He has done!

"For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life..." There's more to this than this easy-believism gospel. It's not that it's difficult or complicated, but it's not easy.

And it's often made too easy. It's reduced to a human decision, based upon emotion, and based upon misinformation, a lot of times, of what it means to come to Christ. When people come to Christ, they're going to know what it means. They may not be able to explain the theology of it. That's not important. But when people truly come to Christ they know it means surrender!

So anyway, down in verse 44 Jesus goes on and says, "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him..." That surely shoots in the head the idea that people can just come any old time. We are dependent upon God!

What that tells me is *I do not have the ability to come to God*. Even if I theoretically

wanted to, I can't just come. I am dependent upon God working in my heart, right now! There's an immediacy, there's a confrontation, there is an encounter with the Living God where He presses the claims of the Gospel upon a human heart and there is a surrender to that, in that moment, in that experience!

As I say, there's no one pattern that has to happen exactly the same way for everyone, but the principles are always going to apply. God is always the Author of what happens. We do not possess the ability. It is a God-given ability to surrender and to believe. Faith is not a human ability nor is the ability to surrender. It is given to me by God. And when He does it, when He comes, I need to listen! That's the time! Does not the scripture say, "...call on him while he is near"?

There's going to come a time when God's going to take His hand off of this world, as He did in Noah's day. He said, "My spirit shall not always strive with man..." (Gen. 6:3, KJV). So you see, even then, even in the midst of their descent into such terrible darkness, God was striving with them, trying to reach their hearts!

There was an influence that was coming at them, trying to turn them from the way they were going, and they were so relentless and so headstrong in what they wanted to do with their lives and their purpose, that they shut their ears! And eventually He said, all right, I'm going to take my hands off and let you go the way you're going to go, but judgment is coming. It's the world you live in, the world we live in.

But now, here's the promise and the explanation of what's going on. "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him..." — there's that influence — "...And I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the Prophets: They will all be taught by God."

Now, this highlights a major difference between the Old Covenant and the New. The Old Covenant was not meant to be the final deal. It was meant to prepare people for the coming of Christ, the end of the world, and the establishment of a Covenant that was going to last forever: one sacrifice for all time!

But you see, the people didn't deal directly with God, did they? They came to God through a priest. They listened to God's words through a prophet. If they wanted to inquire about God, they went to somebody who represented Him. But I'll tell you, in this new Covenant every single person knows Him! It becomes a personal relationship with the Living God! Every single person is taught, how? By God!

Yes, there may be people involved, it may involve God using a person to communicate it, but the real teaching that embeds itself in your heart, is God at work. I or somebody else could communicate ideas to your head.

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That's not the same thing as God speaking to the heart.

Folks, we need to pray. We need to not just pray and beg God as though it's not going to really happen. We need to pray with an expectation that God is going to save, that He is going to do what He's describing in this passage. There are people that are going to hear this Word and they're going to believe it, not because of anything about us, except God will do what He has promised that He's going to do.

I believe it! I confess it this morning! There's a God who saves! There's a God who convicts! There's a God who does what it takes to save people! "It is written in the Prophets: They will all be taught by God." See, now you're getting a little bit of a hint of the process. "Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me."

Do you see the work of preparation that goes on? This isn't like somebody wanders in off the street, totally clueless, nothing has happened up to this point, and all of a sudden they hear about Jesus and – boom! There's a work of the Spirit of God to prepare that soil. It's like sowing the seed. You don't just go in there and sow it among all the thorns, briars, and rocks. Jesus talked about that, didn't He? There's a preparation that must happen. There's a softening, there's a work of the Spirit of God.

God knows about you and He has a purpose, and it's not your purpose. It's not mine. It's His. And that's the purpose I want to be worked out in me. And all I can do is just throw up my hands and say, "God, You've got to do this. I don't even know what's wrong. I don't even know the depth of my need. I'm so blind to my own condition that, God, You've got to do what needs doing."

Well, Peter certainly was in that condition. He had no clue. Not only that, he was prone to speak up quickly, prone to act, very zealous. If you say, "Go," he's half way down the road, just that kind of a person, a take charge, I-can-do-it kind of guy. Well, the Lord had a lot of work to change that, didn't He?

But the first time we meet Peter is not in Galilee. It's down in Judea. Did you ever notice that? It's in John, chapter 1. And what's happened is that in order to set up and prepare people for the ministry of Jesus, God raised up and sent a man named John the Baptist.

Talk about somebody who was not part of the establishment! This guy wore leather clothes, lived out in the wilderness, ate locusts and wild honey! He did not graduate from their schools. He was not part of the synagogue crowd. He was just way out there somewhere, but He was God's man.

God had prepared him with a message that was uncompromising: repent, the kingdom of God is at hand! You quit living hypocritical lives. Do right before God. Come and receive this baptism that signifies you are repenting of your sins. Let your heart be prepared for the One who's coming.

I'm not the guy! He was plain when they out and questioned, "Who are you?" He says, I'm not Him, but there's One coming after me. I'm not worthy to untie His shoes. But you need to get ready, get your hearts ready and listen to Him.

Well, a lot of people were attracted. And the fact that we find Andrew and Peter, as he became known, down there where John is baptizing and not home fishing tells me something. Does it tell you something? God was working, wasn't he?

There was something they weren't getting from their culture, their tradition. They probably went to the synagogue, but there was something missing, something that caused them to feel a need. That was God! God was at work! You see, Peter had experienced the thing he talks about in his letter!

And the point when I thought about all of this was seeing the process of God bringing us out of our own purpose into His. Let's look at that in action. And what an awesome example we see in the life of Peter, because God had a job on His hands, didn't He? But don't look at me like that. God has a real big job with you, too!

And me. But you know what? He's up to it. "...He is able to save completely those who come to God through Him...." Praise God! He's not dependent upon your strength or will, or mine. He's dependent on His power.

So we find the two of them down there in Judea over by the Jordan, actually somewhere in the general area of Jericho, a little bit north of there, but on the other side of the Jordan River. There's John baptizing. Crowds are coming from everywhere, and these guys are there.

Well, this is about the time that Jesus was baptized. And you remember, the Lord was revealed to John. God said, the One upon whom I set My Spirit, you're going to see the Spirit descend like a dove. That's Him! And so, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," was John's testimony. (KJV).

Let's continue in verse 35 of John 1: "The next day John was there again with two of his disciples." (NIV). So, these are not just casual people. These are people who had somehow attached themselves to John. This was a guy sent from God. They wanted to be a part of what he was a part of. They weren't just casual followers, but people who wanted to know what was going on. So, John was with these two disciples.

"When he saw Jesus passing by, he said,

Look, the Lamb of God! When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus." So, they'd been following John, and all of a sudden, there's the Lamb of God, okay, we had better get with Him. So, there was something at work in their hearts that attracted them to this One. You see God working in hearts?

"Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, What do you want? They said, Rabbi (which means Teacher), where are you staying? Come, he replied, and you will see. So they went and saw where he was staying, and spent that day with him. It was about the tenth hour." I believe that was 4 o'clock in the afternoon the way we reckon time. So, now you've got these two former disciples of John, and now they're hanging out with Jesus.

"Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said...." So, now you've got this fisherman, the brother of Peter, and he's not off fishing. He's down there hanging out with John, and then leaving John to be with Jesus.

All right, Andrew "...was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, We have found the Messiah (that is, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, You are Simon son of John..." different John, obviously, "...You will be called Cephas (which, when translated, is Peter)." It means a stone.

So anyway, now he begins to head back to Galilee. So at this point, there is an encounter between Peter and Jesus. And Jesus begins to tell him a little bit about himself and about where He's going with this. Was Peter saved at this point? No. But I'll tell you, there was a preparatory work going on. There was an encounter with Jesus.

And I'll tell you, there are a whole lot of people that have encounters with Jesus that are not salvation, but are surely meant to lead there. And somehow, there was a conviction born. This guy is special. I respect Him. Man, I want Him to be part of my life. I want to somehow have a connection with Him.

Well, the next time you find Peter, he's doing what? He's fishing, isn't he? Or he's cleaning his nets. You have accounts in Matthew 4 but also in Luke 5, and I'm not going to try to weigh in on this. There are people who believe there were two different accounts, two different incidents. You know, the one where they're cleaning the nets, and he says, follow me, and the other one where he gets into a boat and goes out and catches a bunch of fish.

But the thing that matters, whether Matthew was just generalizing what happened there, and whether that was the same incident, or not, what we see is God beginning to do a work that has not yet come to that place.

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He has not yet crossed the bridge and burned it. But do you know there's no such thing as salvation where you don't cross the bridge, as it were, and burn it behind you?

Peter was interested. It was a genuine interest. But at this point, he had never really understood! I mean, he was focused on who Jesus was. Well, that's great! It's got to start there. You've got to know who He is. God is the only One who can reveal that. But at this point, he didn't really know, did he?

But then, you come to that other incident in Luke chapter 5. "One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret..." which is another name for Galilee, "...with the people crowding around him and listening to the word of God..." So, at this point, you've got a lot of people who are kind of interested! You know, wherever God moves, there are always people who gravitate to that for one reason or another. Peter was one of them at this point, wasn't he? He was interested.

"...He saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets." So, here's Peter, he's one of them, and he's busy as a fisherman. He hasn't caught on to what this is about. God has a purpose that's way beyond his being a fisherman.

Now, I'm not going to try to translate that into every life, because God has a purpose for every life. Sometimes, it might involve leaving whatever you're doing. Of course, the devil will tell you, Oh, if I do this, He'll make me go to a jungle and be a missionary!" I don't know what His purpose is, but I know it's right.

He might want you to stay right where you're at and be a light. Somebody hears this, and you're in prison, you don't have a choice where to go. But you can be a missionary right where you're at. You can be God's representative right there. But it'll be Him and not you. Praise God!

Okay, so now, Jesus is crowded by the shore. He sees a couple of boats. He gets into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon. So now, there's another encounter with Simon. He had had the one in the area where John was baptizing. Now, he's back up at home. "When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, 'Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch.'"

And you remember what Simon said. "Simon answered, Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything." But somehow, in his encounter with Jesus, something had happened. He had begun to have a confidence in who Jesus was. So, what was his next word? But!

Thank God! Even though he had this feeling, looking at things naturally, there is no point, we've just been out all night and we're here fixing our nets, and You want us to go

out again? We didn't catch a thing. "But." So, you see the progression of his coming into contact with God through Jesus. Now it is, "But because you say so, I will let down the nets."

Do you see God working in his heart, drawing him, and him responding to that? That's the key. He deals with everybody one way or another. He deals with people's hearts. What do you do when He does? Do you always have an answer? Do you always say, no, it's not this way, it's that way? Do you always find a way to slip and slide, and the bottom line is you keep ahold of your own life? It's never really laid at His feet. You've never seen what you need to see. Peter was about to find out, wasn't he?

"...Because you say so, I will let down the nets. When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them..." And who was that? James and John, wasn't it? "...and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink."

Now, a lot of people saw miracles. A lot of people were wowed and entertained and drawn by the miracles. What was Peter's reaction? *This is a key*. This was not so much about seeing who Jesus was. He was convinced, certainly, at this point. "When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" No one will ever come to Christ without facing, not only who Jesus is, but *who they are*.

Peter's illusions about his own goodness, his own rightness, his own anything, they were gone. In that moment, he knew. God convicted him of his need. This is at the heart of the issue. If God is calling you, this is part of it. You cannot escape facing the truth of God's light that will come searching in your heart.

And it may terrify you like it did him. He was so conscious of his unworthiness even to be in the presence of Somebody like this. He said, go away, Lord! Go away! I'm a sinful man! There's this sense, oh God, I see what I am! I can't run from it! It's real! Oh, I feel it so keenly!

But what an awesome response Jesus gives us! "Then Jesus said to Simon, 'Don't be afraid.'" Oh, how we're afraid to face what we are in God's eyes. And here's Jesus, the very Son of God, the sinless Son of God, standing there looking at Peter who's full of the sense of his own sinfulness and unworthiness, hopeless in his own eyes, and Jesus says, "Don't be afraid."

That's what He longs to say to every heart that will come to this place. Don't be afraid! I didn't come to the world to condemn it! I know what's wrong! You don't. But when you come to that knowledge of what you are, I don't want it to terrify you and take away your hope! I want it to be a doorway into some-

thing that's eternal! I have paid the price for your sins! I can deal with that! What I want is your will! I want you to come to a point where you're willing to surrender. Leave your purpose. Leave that behind you, surrender it at my feet, and live out the life that I've called you to.

This was a moment that he never got over, did he? He had some wobbles, didn't he? But he never got over this moment. Up to this point, he was interested. He had a conviction. He could have said, that's the Guy, man, He's come. He's the Messiah! He's the One we've been looking for!

But he's still on the outside. You see what's going on? You understand? He was still on the outside. But now, Jesus brings him face to face with his own need, and there is a surrender of his heart. That's what's going on. We see the fruit of it so many times in his life. "Don't be afraid; from now on you will catch men."

And there's another one of the accounts that said, I will make you a fisher of men! That's the key to everything when it comes to the Gospel. It's not what we've got to do to keep rules! It's that, *I will make you!* It's a divine work. We saw it described in Romans. He who foreknew us, called us, and did all these things, and He finishes with glorifying us. Man, I want to step into something that's eternal, don't you? I want to be part of that!

The price of admission is coming to Him on His terms. It is unconditional surrender. It is the embracing, not only of who He is, but what I am and what I need. God has a way of bringing every single individual. You're all different. We're all different. For some it might be quiet. It might be late at night. It might be under all kinds of circumstances when God brings you to that sense of need.

Has He brought you to a sense of need in your life? You know, that theme jumped out at me as I was listening Wednesday night, those of you who were here, how God sees us in our condition, and He has this place of blessing over here. How do you get from here to there? If He leaves us like we are, if He leaves our circumstances like they are, are we going to get there? No! We're going to be comfortable here. It's familiar. It's part of our life. But God has to bring us to points of need in our hearts where we know deep in our hearts we don't have what we need.

If you're here this morning and you feel that sense of need, that's God! That's God reaching out to you, and He's saying, don't be afraid. But you have the right to call upon God from your heart and say, oh God, I don't have what I need. Help me! If you'll call from your heart, He will! He'll make Himself known to you. He will blot out your sins and come to live and to give you a new heart and a new life. He'll start you down a different pathway. Oh, when He hears, when He works with your heart,

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Called

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answer. And don't answer, "No!" But answer, "Yes, Lord, I surrender."

This was Peter's day. This was when he passed from death to life. This was when there was no going back. He didn't just see Jesus and who He was and feel like, hey, I can attach myself to Him, and my life will be better. This is, oh my God, I have no part with Him, the condition I'm in. I need something I don't have. And that's when His message came and just broke his heart and saved him.

You see it later when Jesus comes to the disciples and says, who do people say I am? You see a picture of religious people who were amazed at Jesus and said, oh, He's one of the prophets. He's this. He's that. But who do you say I am? And Peter said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." (Matt. 16:16, KJV) And he said, you're blessed, Peter. Flesh and blood did not reveal this to you. This is something God has to reveal to the heart.

Has He revealed it to your heart? See, He's going to use means, He's going to work through people sometimes, but what He's bringing you into is something that is eternal. Oh, when you hear His voice, don't harden your heart. Christians, pray. I believe with all my heart that Christ is here in a measure. I'm certainly not going to try to measure all that. That's not my job. My job is to try to give out what God puts on my heart — anybody else that ministers.

We have the right to claim the promises of how God does things. We have the right to pray, not oh, God, please do something. But God, I know Your promise is true. You will save those that the Father knows. They will come. We can pray that God will absolutely do whatever it takes in hearts and in lives.

I don't know where you're at. I don't want to try to pick green fruit. You may be somewhere between the Jordan and Galilee. You may be interested. You may see something in the Lord, but yet you've never been brought to the place where you've really seen yourself and let go. Keep looking to the Lord.

Christians, keep praying. I believe with all my heart that there are people here, young, some of them, they're growing up. Bible Tabernacle religion will not save you. We do not have a religious culture to hand off to people. We have a living Savior.

By faith, He is the Head of this church. I am not. You are not. He is the Head of this church. Our job is to be channels of His life one to another. He's building us together. He lives in one another, and He's bringing us out of a lot of tradition. But we don't need to form our own traditions. We need Him. Every time we come together, we need to come together and say, God, speak to us. Speak to the need.

Well, there's a need. There's a need for

people to cross this bridge and burn it. And God will do it for you. You don't have that power in you, but when God speaks, you do. His grace will give you the power to believe and to repent. Listen! You will never ever be sorry.

Do you think Peter was sorry when he came to the end of his life? Do you think he looked back and said, "Boy, did I mess up. My life has been hell. Everybody hates me everywhere I go. And now, they're getting ready to crucify me all because I followed that crazy preacher a long time?"

No! There was a revelation that only God can impart to the heart. He knew just like Paul: "I know whom I have believed. I am persuaded. He is able to keep what I've given to Him! I've committed it to Him against that day." (2 Tim. 1:12 paraphrase).

That's the kind of hope and assurance God wants to give every person. We don't need second-hand religion around here. We need people who have met God! And they've come to Jesus, not by addition but by submission.

What He can do in the heart and life, that never ends, I just praise Him! I commit the message into His hands today. It's up to Him to do what He's going to do with it, but He will. Praise God!

His Habitation

Continued from Page 1

when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the Lord, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endures for ever: that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord; So that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God." 2 Chronicles 5:14.

The presence of the LORD filled the temple that day. Was it because of the finest gold, silver and other precious metals used in the construction of the temple? Was it the cedar of Lebanon that framed the temple? Was it the talented and skilled craftsmen carving out the beautiful wood works?

Let's take a closer look.

"It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD."

They were gathered together with purpose. That purpose was to offer praise and thanksgiving. But it started with unity. They were as one the Bible says.

What does the Psalmist say?

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. It is like the precious ointment upon the head that ran down upon the beard even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; as the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the

LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore." Psalms 133:1-3.

What is life for evermore? It is the promise of the presence of God in our midst. It is the promise to every member of the church from the smallest to the greatest. We all have an active role in dwelling together in unity and offering praise and thanksgiving to God and we all benefit as a result.

But where is God's temple?

The Apostle Paul told the Ephesians, *"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."* Ephesians 2:19-22.

We are the temple. We are His Holy Habitation with Jesus Christ himself being the Chief Cornerstone. We are fitly framed together in unity.

This is where God dwells.

"For the LORD hath chosen zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it. I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread. I will also clothe her priests with salvation: and her saints shall shout aloud for joy. There will I make the horn of David to bud: I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed. His enemies will I clothe with shame: but upon himself shall his crown flourish." Psalms 132:13-18.

Think about that the next time you gather to worship. It's not just another song service or another song from the songbook. It's not just another choir singing another song. It is an invitation of praise sent to the throne of God inviting Him to come and saturate our lives. He inhabits those praises and then commands the blessing.

His presence. For evermore.

God Had a Plan

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The news of our family gatherings spread throughout the neighborhood and beyond. Soon we had more people than we could hold in either of our living rooms. Our house had a large finished basement that would allow more space so we began meeting there. Looking back I estimate we had around 40 people at one point meeting on Sunday mornings in our home. It was an exciting time. We didn't know what we were doing. We didn't have an agenda. We just went with it. Then one Sunday we had some visitors that brought with them a reel to reel tape recording of a church service from the Bible Tabernacle in Southern

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God Had a Plan

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Pines NC. God had a plan.

I was 10-years old when our two families and friends made our first caravan trip to Southern Pines from Detroit. It was October 1968. There were at least 15 of us packed into 3 cars. The church people opened their homes to us. My family stayed with Alice and Dewey Edmisten. What an experience for a 10-year old boy from the city. They had land and horses.

I remember all the good things I experienced that weekend but nothing prepared me for what I witnessed and experienced when we walked into that old block building on US 1. We were a little late getting there and the song service had already begun. As Brother John B. Campbell was leading the singing I can remember very vividly how I felt when I walked up the aisle and followed my parents to an open pew and sat down. It felt surreal. I felt like I was home. I remember how I felt the presence of the Lord in such a way that night that I knew this was where God wanted our family to be. Everyone felt the same as me. After another visit in November of that same year, our family and the Cousins family left Detroit together in May 1969 packed in 2 big U-Haul trucks headed south to Southern Pines to become a part of His Body.

"Aren't you glad that Jesus remembered you? Aren't you glad that Jesus brought you to the truth? Brought you to the Body where He is the Head, brought you to the living out from among the dead." I didn't know it but I was dead in my sin. He brought me to the living. God knew that even as a young child I needed an encounter with Him. He knew I needed a Savior to save me from my sin. Without Jesus I had nothing at all and although I didn't know it I was now a part of His plan. Ephesians 2:21 says that *"We are carefully joined together in him, becoming a holy temple for the Lord."* Isn't it wonderful to know we are carefully joined together? We are His masterpiece. *"We are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do,"* Ephesians 2:10.

Great is His faithfulness! I'm glad that God isn't making this up as He goes; it is prepared in advance!

God has a plan for each and every one of His children. What I've shared with you is just part of His plan for me. It's not over yet! Thank God! *"But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand."* Isaiah 64:8 (KJV). *"All the way my Savior leads me, Oh, the fullness of His love! Perfect rest to me is promised, In my Father's house above. When my spirit, clothed immortal, Wings its flight to realms of day. This my song through endless ages: Jesus led me all the way."*

BOOK CORNER

Delivered From Demons, by C. Parker Thomas

The story of a young girl's deliverance from demon possession and also a collection of a number of other articles relating to Satan's kingdom and activity, specially as it relates to the end of this present age. Suggested Price - \$6.50.

Does God Speak To You? by C. Parker Thomas

This booklet is composed of a wonderful series of articles published in the Midnight Cry Messenger during 1979. In this time of great spiritual darkness and deception what are the various ways in which He speaks and how can we learn to recognize His voice and respond? Suggested Price - \$3.50.

Examine Yourselves, By Phil Enlow

Paul said to "examine yourselves." There must be a way to do that. Can you say with Paul, "I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day." 2 Tim 1:12. Suggested Price - \$7.50

The Gospel, By Phil Enlow

What is the gospel? Everyone thinks they know--but do they? In this day of watered-down "easy-believism" it is critical to know what real salvation is. What was the gospel that Paul preached? Suggested Price - \$3.00

How Do You Know You Are Right? By Phil Enlow

A spiritual challenge. A study of spiritual knowledge and how it is acquired. This is an area of critical importance in this hour of spiritual darkness and deception. We cannot afford to blindly rest in tradition. Suggested Price - \$4.00

Immortality, By Phil Enlow

What does the Bible teach about immortality, the future of unbelievers, the future of God's people? From the eight-part series in the MCM. Suggested Price - \$5.00.

The Keys of the Kingdom, by C. Parker Thomas

A clear study of the keys as they apply to us in today's world. Suggested Price - \$3.00.

Light in This Present Darkness, by Phil Enlow

From the series in MCM. Message for God's Remnant in the earth regarding the present hour of darkness. Suggested Price - \$7.00.

Lying Signs and Wonders, by C. Parker Thomas

A collection of articles concerning the end of the age exposing much deception as well as giving forth important truth needed by those who would be prepared for Christ's soon return. Suggested Price - \$7.00.

The Midnight Cry, by C. Parker Thomas

Contains two articles that set forth the truths concerning the midnight cry: what is it? who hears it? who makes it? what is its significance for us. A must for people who would understand this ministry. Suggested Price - \$1.00

Sex and Marriage in the Light of God's Word, by C. Parker Thomas

From a series of articles covering a whole range of scriptural and practical truth designed to help God's people in this important area. Suggested Price - \$7.00.

Sudden Death Overtime, by Phil Enlow

From the series published beginning in 2001. A look at our world and its prospects through biblical "glasses." What can we learn from history? What lies in our future? Why is the world like it is? Things every Christian should know. Suggested Price - \$7.00.

The Sure Foundation, by C. Parker Thomas

A collection of four articles published in the early 1980's on the important subject of the foundation believers have in Christ. Suggested Price - \$4.00.

Tongues: My Testimony, by C. Parker Thomas

Contains the article by the same name as well as an article entitled "Tongues Should be Tested" by Gerald McGraw in which he recounts lessons learned from testing to discover the spirit enabling someone to speak in tongues. Startling! Suggested price - \$3.00

What About Genesis? by Phil Enlow

How should we understand the Genesis accounts of the creation and the flood? Can a simple historical understanding of these accounts be defended in this age of scientific skepticism? Does it matter? Suggested Price - \$4.00.

What Does Deception Look Like? by Phil Enlow

Recognizing spiritual deception at the end of the age. What are its characteristics? Satan is waging all-out war and his chief weapon is the lie. As never before believers need to be grounded in bedrock truth. Suggested Price - \$9.95.

Your Adversary, By C. Parker Thomas

Awhile back, while looking through some of our oldest issues of the MCM, we uncovered this timely gem, published in about 1960! There is a simple directness and clarity in this teaching that will help anyone who desires to walk with the Lord and overcome in this hour. Suggested Price - \$2.50.

Note: The prices listed above are suggested with the thought in mind of simply covering the costs of printing and mailing these materials. It is not our intention to become "book-sellers," selling books for profit. Our desire is to get out truth that can help set God's people free in this critical hour. Please write to us at:

Midnight Cry Messenger

P.O. Box 685

Southern Pines, NC 28388 USA

God Had a Plan

by Ken Yonish

“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.’” *Jeremiah 29:11*. I’m amazed that God in all His Greatness has a plan for me and you. It wasn’t enough that He said, “Let there be light” and spun the galaxies into space. He thought of you and me and declared, “I have a plan for you.” Great plans! It also amazes me how God sometimes will allow us to get a glimpse of that plan as our life unfolds. We may not see it as clearly when we are young but as the days pass He allows us to look back through the events of our lives and we can see how “Jesus led me all the way.”

Although His great plans for me began before the foundations of the world were laid, I can see proof of His plan when I was too young to know it or even remember it. There was a speeding car, a head-on collision and a terrible accident. It began when my family was riding through a suburb of Detroit, Michigan in 1960 in a new Ford. I was 3 years old. Life was good: new car, a new home and dad had a good job. We were the typical post WWII family living the American Dream.

Suddenly a speeding car was headed straight head-on into our path. I was standing up in the front seat between mom and dad, my brother Dennis was sitting on my mother’s lap, my oldest brother Johnny was sitting in the back seat. CRASH! The speeding car hit us head-on. God had a plan. On impact I somehow was thrown into the floorboard and didn’t get a scratch on me. Dennis went through the windshield and was severely injured but God was merciful and spared his life. Although last rites were admitted to him by a Catholic priest at the hospital he survived. Everyone in the car (except me) was injured in some way, broken legs, black-eyes, cuts and bruises but all survived. God had a plan.

Because of the accident my father was unable to work for 2 years. With no steady work, we lost the home and thus began an economic spiral downward. We found a house in a new neighborhood to rent. As I recall we stayed there a couple of years while I was in Kindergarten and the first grade but we had to move for some reason that is still unclear to me. We looked at several homes. I remember the stress my parents were going through trying

to find another home.

It seemed like forever but then we finally looked at a house in the suburb of Westland. The rent was affordable, the neighborhood was decent, the schools were nearby and the house was big enough for our family. We moved into it the summer before I was to start the second grade in 1964. After we moved in we were greeted by our new neighbors who welcomed us to the neighborhood. They were Warren and Jane Cousins and their three children, Warren, Jr., David, and Shelly. God had a plan. We spent time together cooking out, swimming in the Cousins’ pool and doing things that neighbors do but then God began to do His work.

Warren and Jane had been attending a local church but dropped out and began having devotions in their home on Sunday morning. They had a hunger for more than they were getting in their church. For my family Sunday was just another day. We believed in God, but didn’t serve Him and we sure weren’t seeking Him. But I believe He was seeking us. God had a plan.

For months the Cousins were faithful to meet each Sunday morning and have prayer and devotions in their home. One Sunday morning my brother Dennis was invited to attend the Cousins’ morning devotional. He was good friends with David and Warren, Jr. so it was really an extension of their friendship and a time to be together. This continued for several weeks and finally Warren, Sr. invited our whole family to meet with them on Sunday. So began a life changing event as both families were now searching for more than just neighborly friendship. God was forging something much greater.

Something eternal.

Jane would play the piano, Warren, Sr. would sing some great old hymns like “Sitting at the Feet of Jesus,” and “Constantly Abiding,” “Jesus Saves,” and many more. Warren sang from his heart. We began to have regular singing time every Sunday and then we would read from the Bible. Each of us would read a verse aloud and then the person next to us would read the next verse. At the end we ended with prayer and then shared a meal together.

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COMING EVENTS

June Convention
June 20-23, 2018
Lake City, Florida

Matthew 24:14 — “And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.”

Broadcasts

RADIO STATIONS

Monday - Friday

Stat.	Freq.	Location	Time
KXEG	1280 AM	Phoenix, AZ	9:00 AM
WEMM	107.9 FM	Huntington, WV	11:00 AM
WWVA	1170 AM	Wheeling, WV	9:30 PM

Short Wave Radio

WHRI ANGEL 1

Australia/New Zealand
Mon.-Fri.: 0900 UTC - 12.015 Mhz
East/Central Africa
Mon.-Fri.: 1600 UTC - 21.610 Mhz
Caribbean/Central & South America
Mon.-Fri.: 2315 UTC - 7.315 Mhz

WHRI ANGEL 2

East North America
Tues.-Sat.: 0015 UTC - 5.920 Mhz

KWHR ANGEL 3

China - Mon.-Fri.: 0915 UTC - 9.930 Mhz

Bonus Airings on Webstreaming

Angel 2 - Off Air-Streaming Only - 2000-2015
Angel 3 - Off Air-Streaming Only - 1715-1730

For a current schedule of “Angel” stations go to leseaa.com/whr/program-schedules/, scroll down to “Detailed Schedule Search,” enter Midnight Cry for the program title and then click “Start Search.”

Television Broadcast

— (30 Minutes Weekly) —

Local Broadcasts

Albuquerque, NM - KAZQ - TV 32
Sun. 7:30 AM

Chicago, IL - WJYS TV-62
Sun. 7:00 AM

Dallas/Forth Worth - KTXD TV-47
Sun. 8:00 AM

Greenville, SC - WGGS TV-16
Sun. 7:00 PM

Jacksonville, FL - WTLV - Ch. 12 HD
Sun. 6:00 AM

Los Angeles, CA - KDOC-TV 56
Sunday, 6:30 A.M.

Minneapolis, MN - WUCW-TV CW23
Sunday, 6:30 A.M.

Phoenix, AZ - KASW-TV CW6
Sunday, 6:30 A.M.

San Francisco, Oakland, California
KBCW TV-44 - Sunday, 6:00 A.M.

TV Network Broadcast

— (30 Minutes Weekly) —

The NRB Network (DirecTV 378)

Sunday - 6:30 AM Eastern
Monday - 3:30 AM Eastern

VTN - Little Rock Arkansas

Online or Cable
Sunday - 1:30 PM Central

SacFaith TV - Sacramento, CA

Monday - 8:00 AM Pacific Time
Tuesday - 8:30 PM Pacific Time
Watch Online or on Cable Channels
Comcast 20 / AT&T 14 / Consolidated 19

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