



The Church That Thrives in Crisis

Part 1 of 5

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*"At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, 'Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.' This phrase, 'Yet once more,' indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire."
Hebrews 12:26-29*

*"For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places."
Ephesians 6:12*

For the first time in our lifetime we face a global pandemic, a crisis of significant proportion. God is using this global crisis to change His church. It is entirely inappropriate to aspire to come out the other end of this pandemic the same as we went in. That is not God's purpose! During this season, Christian leaders must embrace the reality of accelerated kingdom change. This message is the first of five messages on "The Church That Thrives in Crisis."

Crisis: a turning point for better or worse; an emotionally significant event that radically changes life.

ILLUSTRATION: When COVID-19 presented its threat, the state of California realized that they had 21 million masks in hidden climatized warehouses, kept for a moment like this. They were prepared to distribute them when someone discovered that all the masks had expiration dates. They had all expired. They regretfully discovered that out of date equipment is useless. Rather than periodically replacing the masks as they should have, they presumed that yesterday's masks would work today. While this could have happened anywhere, their level of unpreparedness was astounding.

PRINCIPLE #1: Churches that thrive in crisis see things they've never seen before.

We are living in a day where everything that can be shaken is being shaken. The Bible prophesied that this would happen. Jesus talked about wars, economic collapse, plagues and pandemics. The writer of Hebrews shows us the purpose of shaking—to show us what we may not have seen before, the kingdom that cannot be shaken!

Pastor and kingdom leader, one of your primary responsibilities is maintain an accurate view of reality. As a kingdom leader, during crisis God wants you to see the higher reality, to see beyond the shaking, so that you can help your people live in the kingdom that cannot be shaken.

Heavenly Places:

We need to understand the reality of “heavenly places.”

“Heavenly places” used five times in the book of Ephesians.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.” Ephesians 1:3

“That he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places.” Ephesians 1:20

“And raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” Ephesians 2:6

“So that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.” Ephesians 3:10

“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.” Ephesians 6:12

Insights Into Heavenly Places:

- An accurate view of kingdom reality sees heavenly places as just as real as earth and heaven.
- Of the three realms—earth, heaven, and heavenly places—Christ is in two of the three realms today, heaven, and heavenly places.
- Of the three realms, you and I as born-again believers are in two realms, earth and heavenly places.
- You and I should love heavenly places because this is where we receive every spiritual blessing in Christ, this is where Christ is taking dominion over all things, this is where we are seated with Christ, and this is where we as the Church proclaim to the demonic forces the superiority of grace and the supremacy of Christ.
- Heavenly places is where we wrestle and where we win. In these heavenly places is where we bind and loose; this is where we exercise our spiritual authority first, before exercising it on earth. Any hypocrite can preach on earth, but only a kingdom leader can preach in heavenly places.

In order for the Church to walk in her kingdom authority, she must have an accurate view of reality, specifically the reality of heavenly places.

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