TIMOTHY TIME

January 2009

"*To Timothy my true son in the faith: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord."* 1 Tim.1:2

It's time for the church to arise in grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Jesus Christ our Lord – otherwise known as favour - and the process that will cause that arising to occur includes the kind of dynamic we see occurring between Paul, a true father in the faith and Timothy his "true son in the faith."

It's also time for the church to arise in the spirit and power of Elijah – a prophetic anointing that challenges the false god's, false philosophies and idols of our day and brings an adjustment that releases God's blessing again, restoring families and the heart of our nation.

"See I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse." Mal. 4:5-6

We are seeing something in New Zealand right now that could only be described as a curse upon our beautiful country. Only this week the sentencing of those involved in the Nia Glassie torture and murder has taken place. I was horrified to watch on TV the appearance of total nonchalance on the faces of some of those sentenced for this awful crime. What has happened to their hearts? Surely, as Romans 1:31 describes, they have become "senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless..." most likely because they have been treated this way themselves. Nia literally had her destiny and purpose thwarted for the lack of a good father to protect and provide for her future... something needs to change.

How are we to respond?

Certainly not by dulling our hearts and minds to accommodate this behaviour in the scope of what's acceptable!

Definitely not by shrugging it off as too hard and wondering why the government doesn't do something about it.

But there is no need to feel defeated – there is much that we, the church, can do to make a difference.

Firstly, we must cry out!

Derek Prince in his book, Rediscovering God's Church, makes a direct link between the faithfulness of prophets in declaring the word of the Lord, and the moral condition of a nation. The church *IS* the prophetic voice of God, we are the ones who are to stand in the counsel of God, to hear his heart and mind, and then to communicate it. We must arise in the spirit and power of Elijah if we are to see the restoration of God's ways which includes the restoration of families.

"Say to them, 'This is what the sovereign Lord says' and whether they listen or fail to listen... they will know that a prophet has been among them. And you, son of man, do not be afraid of them or their words. Do not be afraid, though briars and thorns are all around you and you live among scorpions." Ezekiel 2:4-6

To be silent in the face of evil is to condone it – out of the church must come a message that is full of the light of God's truth which has the power to confront and dispel darkness – whether they listen or fail to listen, our responsibility is to express God's heart and mind in the ways that he calls us to.

God's answer to the darkness that is our backdrop in the world today is for the church to arise.

In order to arise we need to grow up *and* we need to defeat stop being afraid.

There is no mystery in this – as we step up and activate our gifts and callings together, we will see God move powerfully in transformation and even reformation – but he always does this through people who obediently and courageously respond to his call.

For this to happen we need 'true fathers' in the faith who take seriously the responsibility to raise up and put courage and vision into sons, and we need 'true sons' who know how to respond appropriately to the instruction and training of our 'fathers'.

Paul's letters to Timothy (1 & 2 Tim.) provide some timely keys to the release of the church in greater maturity, that we might arise with/as the answer to the needs of our nation right now.

<u>Some Attributes of True Fathers</u>

1. True fathers carry their call with gratitude and humility and share their journey

   "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me faithful, appointing me to his service. Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus." 1 Tim.1: 12-14

2. True fathers invest themselves generously in the lives of their spiritual sons

   Throughout these letters Paul's emotional involvement in Timothy's success is evident in the language and tone of his letters - he urges, appeals, commands, exhorts, warns and encourages Timothy.

   "I thank God, whom I serve, as my forefathers did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers. Recalling your tears, I long to see you, so that I might be filled with joy." 2 Tim. 1:3-4

3. True fathers are intentional about who to invest in because of the value they place on what they have received from God – they are directed by the Holy Spirit (Paul heard or knew of Timothy's prophesies)

   - True fathers have a prophetic vision for their sons and with that in mind they instruct and train them appropriately

   - Having a prophetic view they prepare their sons to be victorious in future battles, aware that they will need to stand on their own, and that they themselves may no longer present to help them – this training can be demanding

"Timothy my son, I give you this instruction in keeping with the prophesies once made about you, so that by following them you may fight the good fight holding onto faith and a good conscience." 1 Tim. 1:18

4. True fathers are an example – they are able to make demands on others because of the testimony of their own lives and the way they have responded to God's call

"You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions, sufferings... yet the Lord rescued me from them all." 2 Tim. 3:10

"*I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day..."* 2 Tim. 3:7

Paul didn't ask anything of Timothy that he had not first fronted up to himself.

<u>Lessons from Paul and Timothy so that we might be mature</u>

1. **We must be willing to be directed and led by prophesy** 1 Tim. 1:18

"Timothy, my son, I give you this instruction in keeping with the prophesies once made about you, so that by following them you may fight the good fight, holding onto faith and a good conscience."

a. Paul referred to prophesies that had been given at some time earlier and tailored his instruction to Timothy to fit with what they revealed about Timothy's calling
b. We must diligently and intentionally follow God's direction ourselves so that we can fight a good fight and hold onto faith and a good conscience, and we must be alert to equipping and releasing people as we are prophetically directed
c. The enemy wants to distract, divert and discourage people from fulfilling the prophetic direction God has given – the danger is eventually 'letting go' of faith and a good conscience – we must exhort and encourage people to push through the fog that the enemy may create at the beginning of the year in order to follow through with how the Lord has directed them
d. Delaying obedience, or partial obedience results in our conscience accusing us – this is frustrating and dissatisfying – time to stop blaming circumstances or those around us and respond to the challenge to obey – some who are disenchanted with church need encouragement to go back to God and connect with their God-given dream, then take steps to be obedient to it
e. This is a season to exhort one another to run in the purposes of God and remind each other of our prophetic destiny and calling

"Have faith in the Lord your God and you will be upheld; have faith in his prophets and you will be successful." 2 Chron.20:20

f. This is also a season where faith will arise in people's hearts to seek God *and* his prophets for specific strategies to overcome the challenges we are facing so that, like Jehoshaphat, we can totally defeat the enemies that have come against us

(whether acknowledged prophetic ministries or through the activation of the prophetic gift in teams)

g. Acting on prophetic direction is going release breakthrough in areas that have been held back and delayed
h. As we obey and walk in breakthrough the church will go to a whole new level of freedom, maturity and influence - becoming light in darkness

2. **We must have a commitment to prayer, including for governments and civil authorities** 1 Tim 2:1-6

"I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone – for kings and all those in authority, that we may lead peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness."

a. Paul connected Timothy's ministry (and life-style) directly to the state of the nation – he must pray for those in authority if he was to expect a degree of peace and order in the society which was the context of his ministry and life – it's the same for us
b. Our prayer impacts our nation – it is a Biblical directive to pray for our leaders - "... first of all..." As we move into 2009, we must arise, in prayer

"Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you. See darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the Lord arises upon you and his glory appears over you. Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn." Is.60:1-2

c. This is a critical time for the new government and for the nation – pray for wisdom, grace, protection – strategic alliances that will help align us with God's direction and blessing
d. Global recession, the papers are full of bad news – darkness – but the favour and glory of God is rising upon the church – this year we will see breakthrough in areas that seem to have been delayed - even if it is against the backdrop of economic troubles
e. Like Jehoshaphat - prayer first, believe the prophets, then take obedient, faith-filled action

3. **Train *yourself* to be godly** 1 Tim. 4:7-8
   a. Time to take responsibility for our growth and development in God – don't stop – go to next level
   b. Godliness isn't automatic ever -it takes intentional, disciplined, ongoing effort to learn and continue to walk in God's ways – you can't become Godly by just hanging around at church – many will rise to the challenge of a greater commitment to growing in their Christian experience, others will find the challenge too demanding and drift away
   c. Natural human thinking and going with the flow will never produce godliness – time to intentionally exchange the world's thinking for God's wisdom – anointed preaching and teaching that challenges mindsets and brings revelation that renews the mind is greatly needed – a challenge to generation x

d. All believers must develop greater discernment by asking God for wisdom, intentionally seeking it and activating our spiritual senses in daily life
e. (4:1) Sorting, sifting, and selection – time to choose allegiances – Be selective about friendships, choose to align with and be influenced by people who are godly –another challenge to generation x

4. **Train *yourself* in the word** - be *"a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth."* 2 Tim 2:15
Remember the basics and do it:
   a. Time to sacrifice and take opportunities to study the Word and grow in understanding (courses, Bible college, Christian resources, God TV, conferences)
   b. A return to love for the Word of God - disciplined Bible reading and study – for some, needs and challenges will drive them deeper in to God
   c. Believers equipping believers and discipling new Christians - sharing what they are learning with others – you retain 90% of what you teach and as you give out the Lord gives more revelation –some Christians aren't growing because they're not teaching others (can be as simple as sharing a testimony)
   d. Time to choose to look at life's challenges as the school of the Holy Spirit – use them as motivation to dig into God's Word and presence to access what you need to overcome – some of this God has allowed to draw us into another level

5. **Honour leaders – fathers in the faith** 1 Tim. 3:12-14
"...continue in what you have learned and become convinced of because you know those from whom you have learned it."

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." 2 Tim. 4:7

" 'The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honour, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, "Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading the grain." And, "The worker deserves his wages.' "
1 Tim. 5:17-18

   a. Paul sets an example of continuing in his calling to preach the Gospel and build the church despite persecution *and* he calls on Timothy to learn from his instruction and draw courage and conviction from his example
   b. We also have a heritage that can encourage and strengthen us – as a nation, as movements, denominations, networks and local churches
   c. It's a good thing to look at heroes of the faith who've gone ahead *and* our current leaders and say, "well if they can do it so can I" – for some churches an adjustment needs to come in regards to finance – salaries and offerings that honour the servant of the Lord - if they are to move forward
   d. Like Paul good leaders draw on their own victories and war stories to encourage and exhort others to overcome – personal victories and faithfulness to the Lord over time are a badge of honour that should be acknowledged as giving a weight of authority to leaders – we must honour senior leaders (I don't mean staff positions here)to really benefit from their instruction
   e. Leaders must be willing to give clear direction and leadership – realising that as they make demands on others' gifts they call them into the flow of their purpose

f. Watch out for accusation – the enemy seeks to bring confusion to the army of the Lord by undermining leaders in the eyes of the people - distrust towards leadership puts the brakes on the church. 1 Tim. 5:19-20
"Do not entertain an accusation against an elder unless it is brought by two or three witnesses. Those who sin are to be rebuked publicly, so that others may take warning."

6. **Be diligent about activating your gifts** 1 Tim 4:14-15
"Do not neglect your gift, which was given to you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid hands on you. Be diligent in these matters, give yourself wholly to them so that everyone may see your progress."
    a. The church will arise as every member learns how to activate their gifts in the realms of influence the Lord has called them to
    b. Prophetic ministry is valuable in helping believers clarify their gifts and callings and position themselves more effectively - we need to actively engage in encouraging, positioning and releasing the whole church in their gifts
    c. Personal prophesies encourage and help define people according to how God sees them – they are *supposed* to *challenge* (and maybe even offend) natural mindsets and limiting self-views – as well as bring confirmation
    d. We must be humble enough to let the word of God shape our sense of self and direct our attitudes and behaviour – the Lord wants to re-define some Christians who have been around for a while and have become "stuck" in an old wineskin – this may be "offensive" to their thinking for a start
    e. Do not neglect the gift that God imparted at the time of the prophesy or at another time – use it – don't wait for a platform, you already have one – use your gifts to bless any and everyone you come in contact with
    f. Wholly give yourself to God's call – be devoted to it – to be devoted is to be set apart *exclusively* for a particular purpose – no matter what your 'job' is, your real job is to minister the life of Christ
    g. Ask yourself regularly: "Can people witness the developing maturity and fruitfulness of my activated gifts?"

7. **"Fight the good fight of faith"** 1Tim 6:12
    a. There will be favour and grace and release, but there *will also* be a fight *this year*
    b. This is a new year and a new season so shake off the weight and weariness of last year's battles – don't bring even the dust of the old battle into the new year, it will colour your view and weigh you down – God has gone ahead of you and you don't need to worry about what's coming, you are equipped and able.
    c. The enemy *will* oppose you, your flesh will rebel, and the world won't understand – but there is a place of grace that's new and if you step into to God's grace (don't fight in your own strength) he will lift you up above the battle in a whole new way and give you victory
    d. Anything worthwhile *will* be contested – the purposes of God in you are very worthwhile
    e. If we won't fight for it we're not worthy of the calling of God but we have weapons that are mighty in God to the pulling down of strongholds – and the contest produces maturity that we need to fulfil our calling

8. **Value the deposit of God entrusted to you** 1 Tim. 6:20
"...guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what has falsely called knowledge, which some have professed and in so doing have wandered from the faith."

"*What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you – guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us."* 2 Tim. 1:13-14

a. Guard the gifts, revelation, training, corporate treasures, life message, people you lead, areas of responsibility... that have been passed on to you as if they are a holy trust...don't let familiarity breed contempt
b. Don't undervalue what *you* carry – what God has taught you, worked in you, and entrusted to you - when you realise it's value you will share it with others appropriately and stop holding back
c. Keep watching out that rational thinking, the world's values, your education, family/cultural expectations don't rob you of the sense of purpose and calling that you have in God
d. Ideas that oppose the fulfilment of God-given dreams and visions *are* "false knowledge" but can seem so reasonable

9. **Fire up your gifts** 2 Tim. 1:6
"For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands."
a. Paul has a personal investment and intimate acquaintance with the gifts in Timothy's life – he imparted them to him - made a personal investment – we must invest in others
b. We must value the impartation we've received from others – even previous moves of God - and remember them in order to motivate ourselves to keep activating our faith - then their investment is honoured
c. No-one else is responsible to fan *our* gifts into flame but us – *we* must do it - through prayer and use
d. We must invest energy and focus into getting our gifts to blaze as strongly, brightly and effectively as we can, that's how the glory of the Lord will arise
e. Carrying something of God within us that is like a flame of fire can be uncomfortable – Jeremiah's prophesies felt like fire shut up in his bones – but we need to develop resilience and learn to carry it well – I wonder how Elijah felt carrying the anointing that was on him at My Carmel?
f. People who carry the fire of God's purpose within them can make those around them uncomfortable – we need to develop the maturity and integrity to manage that too

10. **Conquer Fear** 2 Tim 1:7
"For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self discipline."
a. We must defeat *our* fear with power of the Holy Spirit – another level - every manifestation both reasonable and unreasonable, fleshly and demonic

b. Until we defeat the fear of man and learn to keep it at bay we will not be able to fully walk in our calling – decide to stop making agreements with rejection
c. Let your *love* and concern for others shift the focus off yourself – God loves them so much he will even use you to minister to them – like the prophets of old, we are answerable to God to deliver the revelation/word/ministry that he has given us
d. Feeling the fear and choosing an obedient response anyway is a *discipline* that progressively breaks the stranglehold of fear – this is the season to put fear under our feet!

11. **Value what you have been given and be intentional about passing it on** 2 Tim. 2:1
"You then my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others."
    a. We must *value* what has been entrusted to *us* – as a nation, a movement, a network, a church, a team - what do we carry as a church that is an amazing treasure from God?
    b. We must intentionally invest it in others who are 'reliable' – they will faithfully carry what we've imparted and accurately represent the revelation/vision
    c. The whole church will grow and mature as we *all* commit to teaching and training others – what you have from God, pass on
    d. We must have a generational view – pass the baton

12. **Develop the ability to endure** 2 Tim. 2:3-5
"Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs – he wants to please his commanding officer."
    a. Settle it ahead of time – there will be hard times and we need to develop endurance – sometimes we just need to outlast the challenge
    b. This is individual and corporate – at times the whole church needs to stand together and endure through hard times without breaking rank or grumbling and undermining morale
    c. Once you're a Christian you're no longer a civilian – like it or not you're in an army and on the front line
    d. A soldier leads a life that is set apart for a particular purpose - he surrenders certain freedoms (including a degree of individuality) for the honour of serving his nation – now that's a culture shift!
    e. He chooses a life of discipline, obedience, danger and discomfort for the sake of the cause and the 'mates' alongside whom he fights
    f. Jesus is our commanding officer but so are our leaders – a mature church will know how to keep rank and follow direction for the sake of the cause
    (Of course, this doesn't mean either domineering spiritual abuse or cultish, mindless following – but we must stop throwing out the baby with bath water)

13. **Purify yourself from 'ignoble' purposes**, "flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart." 2 Tim. 2:20-22
    a. We *can* purify ourselves – it's our choice (Col.3:12-17: Put off impurity and put of purity)

b. We must take responsibility for our own breakthrough and transformation while accessing all the gifts and resources available in the Body of Christ – the Lord wants to bring the church into a far greater level of freedom so that we can walk in a far greater level of authority
c. Run from temptation – don't be overconfident or casual – distance yourself from temptation as fast as you can – the enemy is as intent on robbing Christians in these days as any
d. We must make it our goal to keep up with those who are running after God –find a way to get in the slip-stream of someone going a bit further and faster than we are - take personal responsibility for this – many of us need to realise that the time for laying about like babies crying for our bottle is over!

14. **Choose to stand out** 2 Tim. 3:1-5

"There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves... having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them."

a. We are entering into a season of great favour, where the church is being called by God to arise in his name, to bring light to the world in all kinds of radical ways.
b. But it will be against the backdrop of darkness that the church will shine – in fact God has allowed the challenges that the world is now facing for his purpose
c. This is a season where the grace of God is available to purify and deliver Christians from stuff that has been holding them back and that has kept them bound in powerless religion
d. It's time to stand out and stand apart from everything that has to do with darkness and bring a contrast with the light of truth that is in our lives – we must turn up our light
e. It's time to step into the spot-light of God's favour and be confident enough to represent him there

15. **Love God's Word** 2 Tim. 3:16

"...from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

a. The word of God is a living, God-breathed document that is nothing like any book
b. We must continually draw on the word of God – make it your life breath, and daily food and drink
c. Dig into it continually for God's wisdom and revelation regarding your personal world and the lives of those you minister to
d. Make it a habit not to settle for natural wisdom or playing your natural game – go to God regarding big and small things you are facing
e. The word of God will equip you to be victorious in every challenge you could face – it will save your life
f. Crazy ideas and deceptive doctrines will increase, but those who love the Word will be anchored by truth an d be able to pull others out of traps the enemy has set for them

16. **The most important thing: Fulfil *all the duties* of your ministry well and above all preach the Gospel** 2 Tim 4:1-5
    "In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage – with great patience and careful instruction... keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministries."
    a. Because he is a true father, Paul doesn't hold back from making sure that Timothy understands the full weight of responsibility that has been entrusted to him – he doesn't hold back from making a demand on Timothy's gifts – are we willing to do front up to the Paul part or the Timothy part – whichever is appropriate for us in our current roles and responsibilities – the next level of maturity for the church depends on our response
    b. He makes sure that Timothy really understands the main thing: preach the Word in season and out of season and to do the work of an evangelist – that's it – without us preaching, us activating our gifts and calling, people are going to hell
    c. He does this because he is feeling the responsibility that has been given to him to entrust the revelation and life of God that he carries to someone reliable - God has forewarned Paul that his time on earth is short (2 Tim 4:6-8) and this contributes to the clarity and urgency of his message in these letters
    d. True spiritual fathers have a generational view – they are focussed on carrying what has been given to them well *and* they have an urgency to pass the baton well
    e. True sons in the faith honour the deposit of God in their spiritual fathers and accept the responsibility to receive what is being handed on

We must arise in 2009 and receive the heartfelt, urgent exhortations of the apostle Paul, as though we were Timothy, his true son in faith. This is a new season – there seems to be a passing of the baton going on - and to mark it some who have been good fathers in the faith have already gone home to be with the Lord. There seems to be a sense of urgency in the spirit, a call to take our commitment and devotion to another level, for the sake of this and the coming generations. When we do I believe we'll see the church arise in the boldness, clarity and supernatural power of Elijah that is desperately needed in this day.

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