

Living to Grow in Kingdom Life

by Pastor Marvin R. Barham

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Hebrews 10:20-26 ²⁰By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; ²¹And having an high priest over the house of God; ²²Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. ²³Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) ²⁴And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: ²⁵Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. ²⁶For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,

I read an article in Voice of the Martyrs entitled: “*The Testimony of Missionary Lee*”. She was a Korean woman who had returned to the terrible conditions in North Korea to share the gospel of Jesus Christ. She underwent many months of daily torture and beating to the point of near death. Still, in prison, she continues to share with others about “life” through Christ Jesus. The government did not want her to die. In fact, they ensured that they did not kill her in the process of torture and beating, and paused to allow her to heal so as to return to the torment. One of the most convicting things in her testimony was the fact that one of the crimes she was accused and found guilty of was “**building God’s Kingdom in North Korea**”. This powerful woman of God truly lives, and her only purpose in living, is to indeed build the Kingdom of God.

Immediately, I begin to look at my life and ask, “Marvin, what are you truly living for?” **I believe God is asking us all, “What are you truly living for? What are you doing to build My Kingdom?”** I think most of us would have to honestly say that we are living, even in our seeking spiritual sensation to sustain our commitment to Christ... that we are really living for self. As to what we are doing to build His Kingdom we might say, “Well God, I endure my boss every day or the co-worker next to me. I endured some frustration today and I have gone a whole week without cursing anyone out.”

I believe there is a new and living way. I believe there is a church better than what you or I have ever experienced or known. However, I believe that so much of the church in our nation today has settled for so little of the Kingdom of God because we perceive we have endured and done so much, yet we have nothing to compare it to except our selfish flesh. As Gene Edwards states, “We have settled down in the habitat of fallen man; furthermore, we keep on being told that our habitat is something that it is not. In fact, we are constantly being bombarded with a sales campaign that tells us this artificial, uncomfortable, boring habitat we are in is our natural habitat.”¹

What we perceive as the church today in this great nation is far from realistic or the truth. Even with signs, wonders, prophecy and great moves of the Spirit of God, we have yet to truly embrace the essence of Father’s Kingdom intent of the church. While we sit in our churches having exponential experiences, people are sitting in our pews and standing outside our doors going to hell. Nations are crumbling and people are being martyred daily for simply being caught kneeling and praying in their homes, and in this nation every pillar of our social

and civil fabric is perverted and corrupted. Half the nation says we are having a progressive move of God while the other half says we are progressing without Him. We pray for revival but refuse to harken to the voice of God while the greatest revival taking place is among Islam, Humanism, and Post-Modern Marxist ideologies.

In the early days of the church things were extremely different for those who lived as believers of this faith we call Christianity. Professing to be a believer and truly living as one in the habitat of a true believer were one and the same. Indeed, the very collective lifestyle of all believers together is what defined them as followers of Christ to the rest of the culture around them. It was far more than what they professed to believe that made them peculiar. Nor was it the fact that each of their lives had been radically transformed by the truth and Spirit of Jesus Christ. Instead, in the eyes of their surrounding culture and the community of believers themselves, it was the unity of their relationships one with another that brought glory and honor and validity to the love of Christ they preached.¹

The habitat of believers took on an interdependence of one another and the Lord. As such they encountered and experienced **a daily touch with an “indwelling Lord”** personally in each and every believers life.¹

Unfortunately, what we as the church have come to perceive as our natural habitat is simply the weekly gathering on Sunday morning. Although important and not to be forsaken, it is not the basis for true Christian growth, maturing in Christ and the building of the Kingdom of God, nor is it the Kingdom intent of *ecclesia* (*congregation, assembly of the church*). “One solemn hour together each week, then six days and twenty-three hours lived in the civilization of fallen man, was not the earlier believers’ understanding of *ecclesia*.”¹

The intent of our assembling is to provoke and admonish you to spiritual growth. It is as **Ephesians 4:12** states, “*For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:*” Here we give you the tools and resources to grow. Here we give you a base for seeking more wisdom and knowledge of the precepts and principles of God’s Word that you may pursue a deeper relationship. Here we provide edification, exhortation and comfort, but your spiritual growth in Christ does not begin and end there. Your spiritual growth in Him is in living and serving Christ and His body daily with each other. It is in the intertwining and working of His glory in our lives, interconnected and interdependent with each other. If not, the Kingdom intent of assembly is forfeited. If we assemble on Sunday but are collectively independent of each other we have missed the point.

“The Christian today who is seeking to grow in Christ has just possibly never heard about this habitat and surely does not know he needs it. Yet he longs for it. A life lived in love and care, a life lived in close proximity to others, a life of experiencing Christ together, internally and corporately, was the Christian life during those early days of our faith.”¹

Gene Edwards asks, “How long can a new born lamb ‘live a sheep life’ by itself? Until it meets its first bear, or needs its first drink of water, or encounters its first lion. A lamb survives and thrives only within its natural habitat.”¹

Fellow believers, I leave you with two thoughts to consider. **1.)** How long will your spirituality and commitment to live as Christ lived be sustained without the fellowship and impartation of fellow believers in your life? How little of fellowship and impartation of fellow believers will sustain your spirituality? How much fellowship and impartation of fallen men can your spiritual life endure? **2.)** How long will our new believers' new life in Christ be sustained without you sharing your life and growth in Christ with them? What are you truly living for? What are you doing to build God's Kingdom?

1 Gene Edwards, *The Highest Life*