

Why This New-Era Signpost Reveals Holy Spirit's True Fullness

"What will the church look like in the new era?" This is a question I am regularly asked.

Will it look radically different than it has over the past 1700 years? Is our model of church being altered? I don't believe this is about a model change or in how we gather together. No, this is about a change in perspective or focus based on a Scripture that I see as a signpost for the new era.

Signposts help us understand where we are headed and how to get there. As there are many seasons within an era, there must be a season that will set us traveling into this new era we have entered. A signpost to lead the way and give us a focus. Is there a change in perspective in how we understand Ephesians 4:11-13?

In summary, verse 11 expresses the Father's heart of the five gifts in how they have been bestowed to the body of Christ. Verse 12 presents the outcome by letting us know that these five gifts are to equip or prepare God's people for their works of service, their callings, purposes or ministries. The focus of this episode of the *New Era Explorers* podcast is on these two verses.

As I have talked with leaders of churches and ministries in various parts of the world, they want to apply these gifts by truly equipping the believer to fulfill all God has intended for them. It's not about the leader and their vision, but about the individual reaching out beyond the walls of the church and into the lives of those they influence.

The leaders I have had conversations with are hungry to

release those they lead into the fullness of the gifts in order to reach beyond the enclosed walls of the building we have called church and see the advent of 1 billion people meet, encounter and respond to Jesus Christ.

Follow **Byron Easterling** on Facebook and Instagram. And listen to this episode, *A New Era Sign Post*, on the *New Era Explorers* podcast. {eoa}

Atlanta Megachurch Suspends In-Person Worship for Remainder of Year

An Atlanta-area megachurch announced this week it will suspend all in-person worship services for the remainder of 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

North Point Community Church, which meets in multiple locations throughout metro Atlanta and was named the second-largest church in the U.S. in 2017 with a weekly attendance of more than 30,000, is led by pastor and bestselling author Andy Stanley. “‘Carry one another’s burdens. In this way you fulfill the law of Christ.’ Galatians 6:2” greets those who visit the church’s website.

The church had previously planned to resume service in August. However, Stanley shared in a video posted on WSB-TV2 in Atlanta, “As you would imagine, that was not a casual decision. Back in May when we announced a possible August 9 reopening, the COVID numbers were moving in the right direction. That has changed. Consequently, we cannot guarantee

your safety, and that's a big part of this decision."

In weekend services, Andy shared an interview with Stuart Hall, a survivor of the coronavirus, and his wife, Kellee. When he posted the video of the interview on Twitter, he wrote, "When global becomes personal."

When global becomes personal.

– Andy Stanley (@AndyStanley) July 13, 2020

In his announcement, Stanley added that he realized some would view this as a lack of faith on his part. "I actually have a lot of faith," he said. "In fact, I have so much faith that I'm absolutely confident that the church and our church will not only survive this, but I think ultimately, we're going to thrive as a result. ... 2,000 years of church history attest to the fact that Jesus is actually building His church, and we are simply invited to participate in the process." {eo}

Parenting Mentor: Be the Person You Hope Your Child Will Become

As a wife and homeschooling mother of four, Sally Clarkson guided her children into successful, creative, flourishing adulthood. As a speaker, podcast host and author of more than

20 books, she has poured into the lives of thousands of families through the years. And today, she continues to nurture other parents by sharing the vision, values and philosophy that have shaped her own family, most specifically in her upcoming release, *Awaking Wonder: Opening Your Child's Heart to the Beauty of Learning*.

But many parents don't seem to have time for wonder. Especially in the wake of COVID-19, they're struggling just to survive. "How do I teach my children completely or partly at home?" "What if I don't do enough?" "What are the best books and teaching techniques?" In her role as mentor, Clarkson hears all these questions and more. Although she admits there's no easy answer, she does share some practical advice with host Marti Pieper on a recent episode of the *Family Matters* podcast series on the Charisma Podcast Network.

"As we look in this world, it's very difficult right now. This is a season of time in which there's a lot of darkness, a lot of anxiety, a lot of challenges," Clarkson says. She adds that we need to understand that, as parents, we bring two important things to the table. "One is, we need to be the person that we hope they will grow into in the sense that Jesus said that the student will become like his master.

"And so if we want our children to have integrity, we need to seek integrity. If we want children to be readers of the Word of God, they need to see us doing it," Clarkson says. "If we want our children to engage with compassion for other people, then we need to be having hospitality in our home or be involved in reaching out to others so that they can learn, 'Oh, I have love I can give; I have generosity I can share.' And so the first and most important curriculum is the parent's heart."

Clarkson also says, "The second thing I would say is that I really believe that if we understand how important our influence is: that unconditional love and acceptance for each

child opens their heart to being willing to learn from us. What I mean by that is, I think sometimes in our public school systems or even Christian school systems, because we have to organize children ... to have order, sometimes what we might miss is that every child has a different personality, different DNA, different fingerprints. And as a teacher of our children, as parents, we can say, 'What motivates this child? What drives their imagination? What are they good at? What are they not good at? How can I enhance the development of my child, because I care about them more than anybody else ever will?'"

To hear more of Sally Clarkson's wisdom on awaking the joy of learning and discovery in your child, [click here](#) to listen to the entire podcast. {eoa}

How You Can Have a Firm Faith in the Face of Crisis, Including COVID-19

Dr. Mark Rutland, pastor, former president of two universities and *New York Times*' bestselling author, has experience with crisis—as do most of us in these days of COVID-19.

In a recent episode of *The Leader's Notebook* on the Charisma Podcast Network, Rutland examines how faith impacts life in the midst of crisis. He looks to what he terms “the call report,” or report of how he was called into office, of the prophet Isaiah to give us a word for our times. He says Isaiah begins his call report in the sixth chapter of his book by

pointing to the death of King Uzziah: "In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple" (Isa. 6:1, KJV).

But who was King Uzziah? Rutland says, "Uzziah had been a young king. He was a very religious king. He brought back temple worship; he was a patron of the priesthood. So certainly Isaiah, who is a priest, loved him and appreciated him. He was a very charismatic young king; he brought to the throne a lot of success, immediate success militarily, and economically, there was kind of a national resurgence under Uzziah.

"But then, at the peak of his career, as he became more successful and became more prominent, in the pride of his heart, in arrogance, he attempted to insinuate himself into the priesthood and go into the temple and perform priestly duties," Rutland says. "This was absolutely forbidden. Even the king is not a priest; only priests are priests. So the legitimate priesthood resisted him. And Uzziah the king became so angry that he was stricken with leprosy." Rutland explains that it was a disgrace for the king to have leprosy, and ultimately, he died of the disease, adding, "So this is the historical reference point that Isaiah is referencing when He begins Isaiah Chapter 6."

Rutland says we should think about God using this specific point in history to appear to His servant. "Why would he appear to Isaiah the prophet at exactly that moment in human history as a King, seated upon His throne? Don't you see, He's sending him a wonderfully comforting message. He's saying, 'I know that you're worried because the king of Israel is dead. But I'm showing you that the King of heaven is alive.'

"He's saying to Isaiah and to us, 'You're concerned, you're burdened, you're worried about the future because the throne of your country is empty, but I'm revealing to you the throne

of heaven is occupied. That's the reason that the little word 'also' is so important. ... 'In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw also the Lord.'

"In other words, he's not denying that the king has died. Faith in the face of crisis is not denial," Rutland says. "We don't deny that there is a virus abroad. We don't deny when the economic indicators all go down. We don't deny that the stock market is in trouble or whatever it is. We are not immune from the crises of life. We live in the history of our own day. We live in our own contemporary society. We have to; we're here. And faith is not denial."

To hear more of Dr. Rutland's wisdom on how we can face crises with faith, not fear, [click here](#) to listen to the entire podcast. {eoa}

How Her Father's Encouragement Moved This Singer-Songwriter Into a Hollywood Career at 17

Singer-songwriter Heather Evans is a Christ-follower and the creative talent behind a number of songs for television and film. At only 17, she had songs featured on MTV and Nickelodeon and continues her professional success today.

On a recent episode of the *Booth to Ballot* podcast on the Charisma Podcast Network, Evans shares the story of her start in the industry. "That story started back when I was 15 years

old. I had always been writing poetry and things, and I think I picked up the guitar when I was like 13 years old, and I started writing music from my poetry that I was writing in these little journals. And I just started kind of writing what was in my heart," she tells host Daniella Gibbons.

But at 15 years old, Evans' father did something amazing. "He bought me studio time at this studio in town ... and he believed in my dream, and he was like, 'Heather, I just want to listen to your thoughts.'

Her father's belief in her, Evans says, "encouraged me so much as a musician because I think a lot of times people see music as, 'You can't make very much money doing music; you'd better have a backup plan.'" But my dad, he was always that type of person to back me completely and say, 'Hey, if this is what God has put in your heart, go after it with all that you are,' and fast-forward to where I am today."

The owner of the studio where she recorded those first songs had industry connections that helped her. And within the past year, Evans says, "I had a couple of placements on *So You Think You Can Dance*, Disney's *Fairytale Wedding*, two songs on *Dancing With the Stars Jr.* ... all these things are just coming up and blowing up for me again for my music since my dad believed in me back when I was a 15-year-old."

To learn more about how God is using Evans in the music industry, [click here](#) to listen to the entire podcast. {eo}

How God Used One Student's Trip to Israel to Change His Life—And Break His Heart

Almost every Christ-follower who travels to Israel reports having an incredible experience, and this seems especially true for the college students who visit Israel with the Passages program. But in the case of Jack Meckfessel, the time there also broke his heart.

Meckfessel tells hosts Montana DeWitt and Jeremy Rivers on the *Passages* podcast on the Charisma Podcast Network, “It was a really incredible trip ... something I’ve been reflecting on a lot recently and was a massive highlight from my trip was the time that we got to spend at the Golan Heights, the Gaza border and in the West Bank... I remember while I was there, it was so heavy standing in those places—for those who are familiar with the significance of those areas—and just really feeling the weight of the brokenness of humanity,” he says of the sites that have been home to so much conflict through the years.

“I think when we talk about Genesis 3, we talk a lot about how our relationship with God was fundamentally fractured. But also in Genesis 3, we see the relationship between people is broken, and just sitting in those places and just feeling the weight of that. And especially that’s relevant right now,” he says in view of recent anti-Semitic attacks.

“But I remember sitting there and just being met by the Lord in such a sweet way and remembering that Jesus in the midst of that is the Prince of Peace, but He is also the righteous judge who will usher in justice. And so just sitting in that, that my peace comes from Jesus.”

To hear more of Meckfessel’s story and the impact of his trip

to Israel with Passages, [click here](#) for the entire podcast.
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Actor George Perez: How God Used My Teenage Prayer to Give Me a Spot in an Elton John Video

Actor, performer and producer George Perez was a teenage dancer when he came to know Christ in an intimate way. And very quickly, God showed him how personal this relationship was.

Raised Catholic by a widowed mother as one of nine children, Perez tells host Derrick Gates on the *Unleashed* podcast on the Charisma Podcast Network, he was dancing in a show for the March of Dimes someone he met told him he could hear from God. “Growing up Catholic, you see Him hanging literally on the cross, and then for someone to tell you that He talks to you, it’s Him talking to you—He’s off that cross. He’s not on that; He’s resurrected. He’s a living being, and He’s in you, and He’s with you,” Perez says.

But God had even more for Perez. “All I wanted to do was just give my life to Jesus,” he says. “I had desires in my heart to be a dancer; I was dancing, and I started getting more into dancing. I was doing more shows. I wasn’t thinking so much about acting, even though I told myself as a little kid that I wanted to be in movies.

“And I remember asking God to reveal to me how it is He loves me,” Perez says. “I wanted to know: ‘Show me how You love me. Show me how You love people. I want to see people the way You see people.’ And no one told me to pray; this was just something directly from my heart that I asked. And so He answered, and He revealed people’s hearts to me everywhere I went.”

But later, Perez prayed about his career as well. “God, I want to be in a music video. Even if it’s just for two seconds in the background” was his prayer, Perez says. “And I didn’t hear anything back. And then I felt convicted, like ‘Oh man, I shouldn’t have prayed for that. What’s wrong with me? I’m praying for something wordly.’”

But God quickly showed Perez how much He cared about even the “worldly” request. Only 15 at the time, Perez was attending the LA County High School for the Arts in Los Angeles and made a connection with Kenny Ortega, who had just finished choreographing the movie *Dirty Dancing*. “Wow, you can really dance,” Perez says Ortega told him.

Six months after their meeting, Perez got a call from Ortega, who asked him, “Do you want to star in a music video with Elton John?”

“Sure,” Perez said.

“What’s your availability? ... Can you get on a plane tomorrow?”

“And I was like, ‘I’m 15 years old. I got to ask my mom. It’s summertime; I’m not doing anything.’ And right at that moment, when I hung up the phone, I just dropped to my knees and just started praising the Lord and just crying because I knew that it was Him answering my prayer.”

To hear more of this story and how God has continued to use Perez in Hollywood, listen to the entire podcast here. {eo}

The Unique Way God Speaks Identity and Destiny Over You

Today, more than 20 million children live in a home without the physical presence of a father. And many more have dads who are physically present but emotionally absent.

Pastor Mike Signorelli speaks to this issue on *The V1 Church* podcast on the Charisma Podcast Network. He shares the biblical story from Genesis 35:16-18 of Jacob's wife Rachel, who, with her dying breath, names her second son "Ben-Oni" (Gen. 35:18a) or "son of my pain" because of her difficult delivery.

"Now watch," says Signorelli. "There's a comma, a coordinating conjunction, the word 'but.'" Whenever you see a comma and a coordinating conjunction, it means that we're connecting to opposite ideas: 'but his father called him Benjamin'" (Gen. 35:18b).

"Now, when you read that, if you don't understand the Hebrew context, you missed the profound revelation that God wants for your life today," Signorelli says. "Let me give you an analogy. Imagine you jump into a swimming pool. And your entire life, the way that you survived was that you inhale and you exhale; you inhale and you exhale. You do it involuntarily, right? ... Imagine you jump into a pool, you dive down into that pool, and then all of a sudden you begin to do the very thing that's necessary for you to live. What happens instead? You die. Because when you're breathing in and breathing out, you're doing the right thing in the wrong environment. And you're inhaling water and you die.

"Let me just tell you, we are living in a society without

fathers,” Signorelli says. “And the world is doing all the right things in the wrong environment. Inhale, exhale, and we’re drowning. We’re drowning. And as we’re drowning, we’re realizing ... fatherhood is the oxygen of identity. Fatherhood is the oxygen of identity, and the world is breathing underwater.”

Signorelli explains that “You can miss it if you don’t know what ‘Benjamin’ means.” What Jacob did when he changed Benjamin’s name, he says, was to change his son’s identity. “All of a sudden he flips it and says, ‘This is not son of my struggle. This is son of my strength. This is son of my strength And out of Benjamin’s lineage came kings; out of Benjamin’s limited lineage came royalty; and we’re learning the Jesus way. You want to know the Jesus way? Dads give destiny.”

To hear more from Pastor Mike Signorelli on the power of biblical fatherhood to speak identity and destiny (and what He does if you don’t have a father who is able to do this), listen to the entire podcast here. {[eo](#)}

Why You Need to Stop Looking for a Sign That God Loves You

It’s easy for people to fall into the kind of thinking that says if good things happen to them, they have won God’s approval or His presence. But this, Pastor James Levesque says, can be a dangerous trap.

Levesque explains this issue on a recent episode of *Engaging*

Heaven Today on the Charisma Podcast Network. “That’s why spending time with Jesus matters. There’s a rest in the gospel; there’s a rest in your relationship with God,” he says.

“My value is determined by the Father. I’m not seeking out value everywhere on this earth,” Levesque says. “My security, my confidence, my faith and everything in my life are already set by the Father. And if you understand that, then instead of operating *for* love, it’s *from* love, right? I know who I am. I know who He is. And then you are more compelled to live the life that God wants you to live.

But Levesque says he’s seen plenty of believers who lack this understanding. “A lot of people are caught up in this place of ‘When good things happen, that just means God’s with me. And when things are challenging or difficult, then something’s got to be wrong,’” he says. “You want to be careful with that. Because persecution’s real; challenges are real. And you live in a fallen world.

“Now, I’m not saying if great things are going on in your life, the devil’s moving ... But I’m saying don’t look to just good things to value if God’s with you, because when the day comes, if those things aren’t happening, what do you believe?”

To hear more from James Levesque on why believers need to stop looking for signs that God is with them, listen to the entire podcast here. {eo}

Pastor, Revivalist: The Real Truth Behind God's Coming Judgment

What is the most dangerous segment of our society today? What could cause God to send judgment on our nation?

Pastor Todd Smith of Christ Fellowship Church in Dawsonville, Georgia, and the North Georgia Revival has an answer, and it may not be the one you expect. On the *Kingdom Ready* podcast on the Charisma Podcast Network, Smith says, "The most dangerous segment to our society is not the abortion industry, as violent and as hideous as that is... The most dangerous component to our way of life is not racism. As repulsive as that is, as detrimental as that is, racism is not going to be the thing that brings our nation down. Corruption in government, lack of prayer in schools or the removal of The Ten Commandments from our public building—as demoralizing as that was and as incomprehensible as that was, these things are not the most dangerous segment in our society.

"I don't even think that the human trafficking epidemic that we're experiencing not only here in America, but literally all over the world is not what's going to bring this nation under judgment," Smith adds. "Now again, as horrific as that is that alone, I don't think will bring judgment to the nation. It won't even be the aggressive LGBT agenda, once again, as big an abomination as it is now.

"God is not overlooking those things. God's not bypassing those things," Smith says. "But I do not believe that those issues, movements, segments of our society—I do not believe that those things alone are going to bring judgment to this nation. This is basically sinners doing what sinners do. And Jesus came to save sinners."

So what is that dangerous societal segment? Smith says it simply: "It is a sick, consumer-based, offended, lukewarm, lazy, entitled, unholy, carnal backslidden prayerless church. I believe that this what I just described to you is the most dangerous component in America. It alone will be responsible for the judgment. If and when it comes to America, the church will be held responsible."

To hear more about the church and its responsibility for the coming judgment—as well as how we can advance change through the power of God, [click here](#) to listen to the entire podcast.

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