

Mike Bickle's Prophetic Encouragement for Post-Pandemic Period

International House of Prayer founder Mike Bickle just concluded a phone connection with about a million leaders and intercessors worldwide. We then engaged in an hour conversation focusing on the next phase of the continuing COVID-19 crisis.

Our friendship spans 40 years, so after 20 minutes of personal updates, I began to pepper him with questions to draw from his experience and deep spiritual well. Mike's passion for Jesus and prayer have been a constant inspiration to millions of Christians and to me. Senior leader R.T. Kendall said Mike is "a man of transparent integrity who shows us the way forward into areas where angels fear to tread."

If you don't know Mike's ministry, I encourage you to check out his website to familiarize yourself with the magnificent work he does with his team. Their mission is "to partner in the Great Commission by advancing 24/7 prayer and proclaiming the beauty of Jesus and His glorious return."

For over 20 years, their community has engaged in 24/7 prayer, devoting themselves to works of justice and evangelism. Over 2000 "intercessory missionaries" raise their own support to reach others from a lifestyle of prayer and worship. Their New Testament church is healthy and growing, their training school equips believers in a balanced biblical worldview, and their online resources serve people around the world.

King David mobilized and supported 4,000 musicians and 288 singers to worship God night and day (1 Chr. 23:5; 25:1,6,7). The IHOP community leans into this pattern and from personal involvement, I testify to God's manifest presence in their

midst.

I encourage you to listen to the three podcasts on *Here's the Deal* (Charisma Podcast Network) to get the full benefit of my interaction with Mike for your family and your church. It's informative and inspiring.

We discussed a prevalent problem area for scores of people in the midst of this global pandemic: God and judgment. Is this pandemic similar to divine disciplinary dealings in the Bible? Is what happened the "beginning of sorrows" Jesus spoke about in the end times (Matt. 24:8)? Are we starting to see retribution described in the book of Revelation?

Mike stressed the importance of us being discerning in the midst of this international crisis. He highlighted four sources of pressure.

4 Pressure Points

First is the pressure God brings upon nations through shaking (-27) to awaken us and bring us back to Himself. Many people don't like the "J" word, but it's imperative we recognize God is loving but also holy and must deal with ongoing rebellion. He created the heavens and the earth and is to be served "acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12:28b-29).

Psalms 76 came to mind: "You, even You, are to be feared; and who may stand in Your sight from the moment of Your anger? From the heavens You gave their judgment, and the earth feared and was silent, when God arose to judgment, to save all the meek of the earth. Selah" (Ps. 76:7-9).

Second, pressure comes from Satan when he rages and schemes to "steal and kill and destroy" (John 10:10). Jesus told us Satan is a "liar" and a "murderer."

"He [the devil] was a murderer from the beginning, and does

not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies" (John 8:44).

The third source of pressure in our world comes as a consequence of man's sin. "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). Evil doing has a payday, whether immediately or eventually.

"Be not deceived. God is not mocked. For whatever a man sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life" (Gal. 6:7-8).

Finally, the fourth source of pressure that can come upon us is from creation. Floods, earthquakes, calamities and natural disasters have permeated human history and stem from Original sin. "Echoes of Eden continually reverberate and will until the return of Jesus to establish the "new heaven and a new earth" (Rev. 21:1a).

"For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but by the will of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from slavery to corruption into the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now" (Rom. 8:20-22).

Righteous Responses

We are not to succumb to fear but rather submit to God in a biblically informed manner.

1. When God shakes the nations, we as His people need to proclaim truth and lead the way by humbling ourselves, confessing sin and bowing before Him that He would "heal the land" (2 Chr. 7:14c).

2. When Satan rages, we are to “resist him firmly in the faith” (1 Pet. 5:9a) utilizing our spiritual authority and God-given weaponry: “They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death” (Rev. 12:11).

3. Regarding mankind’s sin, the solution is simple: repent! The message of the New Testament is not “accept Jesus as your Savior to go to heaven” but confess and turn from sin declaring Jesus Christ as Lord, risen from the dead (Rom. 10:17). “If anyone will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me” (Matt. 16:24b). The content of the message determines the quality of the convert!

4. Regarding natural disasters and calamities in creation, we should pray, prepare and provide for those suffering as we rebuild and replenish after tragedies.

Mike Bickle reminds us to rightly interpret judgments as either punitive or redemptive intended by God to draw people to Himself and learn His righteous ways. Isaiah 26:9b reassures us, “for when Your judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness.” This is why we must recognize “divine appointments” and engage consistently in lifestyle evangelism.

As we are surrounded by lost people who are fearful, anxious and confused, may we seize opportunities to practically share God’s love and the transformative message of the gospel.

Twofold Biblical Narrative

Mike Bickle strongly encourages us to embrace the twofold biblical narrative outlined in Isaiah 60:2. “For the darkness shall cover the earth and deep darkness the peoples; but the Lord shall rise upon you, and His glory shall be seen upon you.” In other words, conditions prior to the return of the Lord will be gory and glory.

Demonic activity, evil and pressures are going to intensify greatly. At the same time, a victorious church (book of Acts) will emerge, characterized by bold preaching, the promised end-time harvest, amazing angelic activity, signs and wonders plus powerful, mountain-moving prayer!

Listen to these three podcasts and let your heart be stirred as Mike describes the exploding global prayer movement declaring over the COVID-19 crisis that what the enemy meant for evil, God intends for good (see Gen. 50:20).

Here's the deal: As the nation begins to reopen after this unprecedented pandemic, let's rise to the occasion throwing off all sin, compromise and silence in the pulpit to boldly proclaim the truth and the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ! "And who knows if you may have attained royal position for such a time as this?" (Esth. 4:14).