

Samuel Rodriguez: 'A Bunch of Elijahs Are Rising'

Rev. Samuel Rodriguez says there is little doubt that today in America we are reliving 1 Kings 18 and 19. Spiritual darkness indeed has covered our land, and the spirits of Ahab and Jezebel are running rampant.

By no means, however, is Rodriguez giving up on America—quite the contrary. It is why the president of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference wrote his latest book simply titled *Be Light*. Along with many others, Rodriguez is pressing to initiate a movement to “awaken the church,” for believers to rediscover their identity in Christ and to reflect the light of Jesus to overcome the darkness.

“Ahab and Jezebel are alive and well in our country, and the vast majority of Christians are afraid to speak up for truth,” Rodriguez told me in a recent interview. “The thing is, the church has allowed this to happen. We are a Facebook church because we care more about likes—about people liking us—than we do about sacrifice and about biblical truth.

“We are a selfie generation and we’re hiding under a bowl that must be removed. We are the ones who are light in these dark days. We know who we are in Christ. We have to remove the bowl. My objective in writing this book is to equip people to recognize that they are the light and to prompt them to get out their comfort zone. We need to expose the darkness for what it is, live out the light and the enemy will flee.”

I’ve interviewed Dr. Rodriguez a few times, and I’ve listened to him preach a couple of times. What I’ve always admired about him is his genuineness, his passion for God’s Word and his fire to help bring God’s children—His church—to a higher level in Christ. He’s one of the preachers who have inspired

me in my own ministry and with this column, Step out of the Boat. My vision is to help Christ followers realize they need to come out of the comfort zones of our own lives, strengthen their faith and to come to a more intimate relationship with Jesus.

Be Light

“Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven” (Matt. 5:16, MEV).

And how do we do this? Dr. Rodriguez says in his book that we “must begin by unifying our hearts, minds and lives to God. If we can find true unity with Him, we will begin to see the power like that of the laser light in our lives.”

But the desire must be there. In fact, Dr. Rodriguez says aligning our light with God’s is predicated on that desire.

“We must develop a redemptive view of the world around us, pouring out mercy to others, bringing grace to those in need and denying ourselves. We *must* (emphasis mine) hate sin the way God does, knowing that sin always keeps us from being on the same wavelength as God. Being one with the Lord, and joining Him in the pure light of salvation requires *everything* (emphasis mine) from us; we are one with Him when we are hidden in Him, away from the darkness of sin and selfishness.”

In other words, as Dr. Rodriguez says, we must allow our internal temperatures to heat up to a boiling point. As Christ followers, we must be transparent and allow God to reveal our deficiencies that keep us from being that white-hot light He wants us to be.

“Just as sunlight reveals particles in the atmosphere, God’s light exposes the ‘pollution’ in our lives,” he writes. “Professor W.F. Adeney reminds us, ‘We never know how odious our sin is till we look at it in God’s light. Hidden and

forgotten sin is not repented of. Pride grows on the graves of buried sins.'”

I know what some may be thinking. “I don’t want my sin exposed. I don’t want to be transparent.” In that regard, I grok you. I’ve been there. But to grow in the Lord, to be free of guilt and shame, I knew I had to bring some things into the light. I may still be struggling to overcome some things, but my sins are no longer hidden in the darkness.

Don’t be afraid to be transparent. God knows your heart, and if you truly want to be His light, He will bring people into your life who are a safe haven for you and you will discover freedom. As Dr. Rodriguez writes, “Transparency is a quality that needs practice and nurturing to become part of who we are. If we allow ourselves to be fully known, we will find a new freedom with God and others.”

Elijahs Rising Up

Another thing I love about Dr. Rodriguez is his confidence in the younger generation. While many are lamenting a belief that millennials are leaving the church in droves and that they have abandoned a pursuit of God altogether, Dr. Rodriguez chooses instead to believe this generation will produce an army of warriors to spark transformation in the church and to reflect the light of Christ.

I pray diligently on a daily basis that my daughter, Rachel, 14, and my son, Joshua, 12, will be right on the front lines with them. I’m comforted by the fact that we’ve got three in our office—Jenny Rose Curtis, Jessilyn Justice and Taylor Berglund—whose lights shine daily and that I’m confident will carry the torch for Christ into the future.

“Yes, the church is tolerating corruption and perversion, but here is the redemptive good news, and I’ve seen this happening,” Rodriguez says. “There is a generation arising that is going to surprise all of us. There are a bunch of

Elijahs arising that are Spirit filled and do reflect God's light. They've been pushing the plow. Their day is coming when the mantel of leadership will be placed up them. And that day is right around the corner."

So, spirits of Ahab and Jezebel, watch out. The light of God is coming.

And as I always like to say, "there is that." {eoa}