

Jesus Is Asking, 'Will They Allow Me in This Time?'

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On Sunday morning, May 24, I awoke with a deep stirring. I heard the Lord speak to my heart, "Will they allow me in this time?"

As I prayed, it became even more clear that we are at a crossroads as a bride and church. Will we return back to what had been and how we did church before, or have we allowed this season to reset and change us? I feel so deeply in my spirit that there is so much more He is calling us to!

During this unprecedented season, the church has had to shutter its buildings to protect from a virus, but our light burns even brighter. A decree by a government or public official has never been able to stop the gospel.

Now, as so many churches prepare to reopen, could it be we now know how Jesus felt in Revelation 3:20 (NIV), "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me." He too was locked out of His church. He knows what it means to be on the threshold waiting for the doorman. He has always simply desired to encounter His bride. Perhaps we have been given a gift to actually fellowship in the sufferings of Christ (Phil. 3:10).

Maybe our posture changes when we return. No longer can it be just about the production of the services, the comfort of the saints and the development of great systems. It must be about

encountering “the one.” The James 4:8 (MEV) “Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you” promise.

Maybe, as we enter back in, we will invite Him to lead us into the buildings and church He establishes. We must then get out of the way and watch Him restore hearts, minds and bodies. His mandate has not changed, “Come to me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11:28, NIV). Could it be that we have learned that the church isn’t a building, but it’s hearts and minds wholly committed to the King of kings.

We must evaluate! Have we personally changed? Will we go back to our microwave services where there is little time for people to meet with the one who died for them? Or will we sit, wait and tarry as the disciples did in the upper room?

Will we allow Holy Spirit to awaken lives or ask Him to only visit twice a year on an encounter weekend or preplanned special meetings?

Will we cry out for more of Him or once again simply enjoy our prepackaged worship sets, tightly planned chorus bridges and just the right song to move our weary souls?

What if we asked Jesus what He desires? Maybe we have it wrong. Our motives are right, but what if we said, “Oh God, we move out of the way for You to have Your way.” Maybe it isn’t about just having amazing serve teams in place to meet the masses, but it’s about individuals being transformed by a deep encounter with a living God.

The cry from our Savior is still the same, “The Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ And let the one who hears say, ‘Come!’ Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life” (Rev. 22:17).

Surely this quiet season we now find ourselves exiting has caused us all to focus once again on the cross of sacrifice

and not the mirror of self. Joel 2:13-14 (MSG) says it best, "Change your life, not just your clothes. Come back to God, *your* God. And here's why: God is kind and merciful. He takes a deep breath, puts up with a lot, This most patient God, extravagant in love, always ready to cancel catastrophe. Who knows? Maybe he'll do it now, maybe he'll turn around and show pity. Maybe, when all's said and done, there'll be blessings full and robust for your God!"

I was reminded of an excerpt from our book, *Rebuilding the Altar*, over two years ago. "May the church never have a tombstone, but rather always burn a neon sign that lights up the caverns of darkness, the foggy streets of eternity, the forests of fear and the oceans of obscurity. Its light should shine brightly, declaring, "Jesus Christ is Lord, and He came to seek and to save that which was lost."

This is the hour in which men must once again crawl to the altar of repentance and burn with a fire that cannot be extinguished. May eternity say of us, "These were the ones who grabbed ahold of the altar and held on to that which released them from the weight of their sin and pain! These were the ones who with unabated breath labored in the fields that were white unto harvest."

The verdict is still out. Let's let Him in! It might just change the next season of the church and world. {eo}

You can go online today and purchase Pat and Karen Schatzline's newest book, Restore the Roar or their book Rebuilding the Altar at .

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