

Charismatics Need to Focus on the Crucified Life

Having covered the charismatic movement for more than four decades, I understand why sometimes we're called "charismaniacs." While there has been a fresh wind of the Holy Spirit and many churches have come alive, there have also been excesses and a lack of biblical teaching that resulted in the unflattering nickname.

Some ministries are strong on teaching the Word, but too many sermons lead believers to focus on how to have a happier, more prosperous life. Too few focus on what Jesus said about taking up our cross and following Him.

The liturgical branch of the church often understands the crucified life, a particular emphasis during the weeks leading up to Easter. They call it "Lent," and there are probably charismatics who don't even know what Lent is.

What a shame. It's good to focus on Christ's death and to understand what that means in terms of forgiveness and living in humility.

I recently discovered a program for Lent that I'm recommending to others called The Christian Life Trilogy, and the first part is The Crucified Life. It's by the Rev. Charlie Holt, rector of St. Peter's Episcopal Church only a block from our headquarters. He and I have been friends for years, and I've seen how his church is a vibrant example of the love of Jesus in our community, and how it is growing as people are drawn to its Spirit-filled worship, evangelical teaching and liturgical traditions.

A few months ago, I recorded a podcast in which I interviewed Father Holt about this series. You can listen to it [here](#). After a bit of banter between friends, the podcast zeroes in

on how this series focuses on the heart of the gospel: The Crucified Life leading up to Easter, then The Resurrected Life after Easter and The Spirit-Filled Life, which begins with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

Since then, I've decided to lead weekly study sessions at our office for any of our staff or friends in the community who would like to go through this study. I feel so strongly, in fact, that I decided to focus attention on this so you and your church can participate in time for Lent, which begins two weeks from tomorrow on Wednesday, March 1. Below is a link to a special offer for readers of The Strang Report.

Starting with a word of prophecy, Reverend Charlie Holt has changed how he does church at St. Peter's Episcopal in Lake Mary, Florida, by aligning his message around God's heart for the church. It's a message that could bring renewal to your church, too.

The prophetic word came from a woman at a conference with Francis and Judith MacNutt in Jacksonville, Florida, that "the Lord wants to renew the heart of your church around His heart and begin with your heart." With that, she pointed her finger at Father Holt's chest. In the next year, he experienced a deepening of his relationship with the Lord and began the study that ended in this three-part series he calls the heart of the gospel.

The first part of the series is about the crucified life and dying to self and centers on the seven last words of Jesus on the cross. This fits in with the weeks leading up to Easter.

With Easter comes the second section, focusing on the resurrected life, recognizing that all things are new and finding out who we are in Christ.

The third study, tied into the Day of Pentecost, is about life in the Spirit and discovering the fullness of living with His presence and power in our lives.

Father Holt told me of reports of churches and lives that have been transformed through this series. Although designed for a small-group setting, individuals can go through the series on their own.

You can find out more about The Christian Life Trilogy online at [. There are free training materials, including seven sessions that explain how to implement this in the life of your church.](#)

Because I know Father Charlie Holt personally, have witnessed his life, know his family and have attended services at his church, I can vouch for him personally, spiritually and professionally. I give this my highest recommendation.

But don't take my word for it. Listen to our podcast, research the materials and decide for yourself. If you know of people or churches that need renewal, feel free to share this newsletter with them either via email or social media.

As a way of saying thank you, Rev. Holt is offering Charisma Media readers and listeners **20 percent off any order simply by using the coupon code "charisma."** You can place your order [here](#).

America and the church need a Great Awakening. I believe it starts with churches that are renewed and living the heart of the gospel as represented in the cross, the resurrection and life in the Spirit.

What a great way to introduce this to your own church or to utilize in your own life.

By the way: Please help me get the word out. Share this on social media and encourage people to sign up for this series. If someone forwarded this to you, please subscribe to get my Strang Report twice a week. We've added 4,000 new subscribers so far this month. And, as always, share your comments on Facebook or in the comment section below. {eoa}

