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CHAPTER 10- A CALL TO ARMS - BEYOND THE HOME

Defending the family of God

Our Father's family includes many smaller family units known to us as the local congregations, the gathering of the saints. That is why we are instructed to not forsake the assembly (Hebrews 10:25). There is strength in unity that goes beyond the sum of all the individual strengths (Ecclesiastes 4:12). Just as one of the enemy's strategies is to divide and conquer in the human family, so he does in the church family (Matthew 12:25). In the human family, if he can destroy respect for the parents the children become easy prey. So too, within the church family, if he can destroy respect for the shepherds the flock becomes easy prey (Matthew 26:31). His intent is to disgrace and discredit the bride of Christ and leave nothing desirable for Jesus to come back for. Spiritual ties between God's children should be stronger than the blood ties within the human family. We should be aware that there is a resident religious spirit assigned to every congregation by Satan. When we are aware of the spirit's tactics we can prevent it from getting away with any of its deceptions and trickery. We are to gather around our leaders, encourage them, support them, build a hedge of protection around them, and hold them up in prayer (2 Thessalonians 3:1&2). We should cherish them as some of God's gifts to the church (Ephesians 4:11), remembering they too are human like all the rest of us. We are supposed to see all the members of our congregation as essential members of the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:26&27) and also gifts from God to the church (Romans 12:6-9). Uphold the body in prayer, and love the members individually. It would do us all good to read Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, chapter 13, at least once a week, and then obey Jesus' new commandment to love (John 15:12). Our common enemy cannot overcome godly love (Romans 8:35-39).

By now we should all be aware that the devil is attempting to infiltrate the church and replace the Word of God with the doctrine of demons (1 Timothy 4:1). The scriptures warn us of the false prophets (Matthew 24:11), false teachers (2 Timothy 4:3, Titus 1:10&11, 2 Peter 2:1), and wolves in sheep's clothing (Matthew 7:15, Acts 20:29). They will subtly twist the scripture (Hebrews 13:9), misinterpret scripture taken out of context (2 Peter 1:20&21), and use twisted logic of men built on a false foundation of sand. Pray that the Lord provide all His children with the gift of discernment (1 Corinthians 12:10). The devils may be able to deceive us (Mark 13:22), but cannot fool the Holy Spirit (John 16:13). We need to immerse ourselves in the Word of God (Acts 2:42) until it becomes the essential part of who we are (1 Chronicles 22:12, Proverbs 28:7). The Word of God must be the only standard we use when we are presented any doctrine from any human, within or without the church. We should be alert to the danger of any statement that begins with the words "Doesn't it seem that - - ", or "Isn't it only logical that _ _ ". We should never accept as fact anything not built on the foundation of scripture. Those things are usually referred to as being politically correct, and what is required is being morally correct. It is ok to be as closed minded, prejudiced, and intolerant of the doctrine of demons as you would be of any deadly poison someone was trying to give you. Remember that the only intent of the enemy is to kill, steal and destroy. Also remember that a brother or sister who happens to be expounding on false doctrine are not the enemy, but are prisoners of war blinded by a religious spirit. Allow no room for demons or their doctrine within the family of God (Ephesians 4:27).

Society in general was openly hostile to the church during apostolic times (Acts 8:1). Many regions of the world still experience that open hostility while the rest of the world faces a more subtle opposition. Individuals may be able to openly walk the streets and live their Christianity, but in many

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places the church meets behind closed doors. The early church learned the secret of survival under the leadership of the first apostles (Ephesians 6:18, 1 Timothy 5:17, James 5:13-16) and were even able to flourish. The church today needs to once again take up the weapons used by the early church in fighting the world and the devil. They did not just meet once or twice a week to be the church, but lived as the church all day every day (Acts 2:46). They were in constant prayer (Acts 12:5) and discovered what a mighty weapon prayer can be (Acts 12:7-10). When God created the universe He left us in charge of the world. His gifts are never withdrawn (Romans 11:29), He does not take them back. We still have free will, and He will not override it, but will be more than willing to help when we ask (Matthew 7:7). We complain and do without all because we don't ask (James 4:2&3). Prayer can accomplish so much (James 5:16), but the enemy seems to have convinced us that it maybe true for other, but not for us, so don't try. Jesus told us that when even two or three are gathered in His name He is there with them (Matthew 18:20). He also told us that if we are in agreement in His will, we shall be answered (Mark 11:24). We may pray individually, but seldom is the whole church involved for more than a few minutes of prayer. The early church prayed continually to free Peter, and they met daily to pray and study (Acts 2:42). They also met daily to worship the Lord and celebrate the breaking of bread. Worship keeps us God oriented, not problem oriented. There is a difference between praise and worship. To praise is to admire, honor, and glorify. God inhabits the praises of His people (Psalm 22:3). To worship is literally to bow down, bend the knee, and to admit to God, to ourselves, and to the world that only He is God and we are not. Worship is obedience, walking in the will of God in all things (Luke 6:46). It is something we are called to do (John 4:22&23), both individually and together as the Body of Christ (1 Chronicles 16:29, Psalm 95:6). The devil knows that disobedience can separate us from the grace of God (Galatians 5:4, Hebrews 12:15). The modern church seems to have focused entirely on praise and preaching to the neglect of prayer and worship, two powerful weapons we desperately need in these last days if we are to win the battle together.

Jesus came to earth to accomplish His Father's business (John 4:34, John 5:30, John 6:38&39). As the Body of Christ on earth we have an obligation to be about that same business (Ephesians 6:5&8). The Father's business is entirely focused on restoring His relationship with fallen Man (2 Corinthians 5:18, Ephesians 2:10, 2 Peter 3:9), and building a large family (Romans 8:29) of beings like Himself (Genesis 1:26&27) that He can dwell among for all eternity (Revelation 21:3). As individuals we should be shining examples drawing others to the flame of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 5:16). Corporately we should be striving together (Ephesians 6:18, Galatians 6:2) in the transforming process (Romans 12:2, 1 Corinthians 2:16, Philippians 2:5), allowing the Holy Spirit to give us the character of Christ (Romans 7:4, John 15:8, Galatians 5:22&23, Ephesians 5:1). We all know how to catch flies and yellow jackets. All we need is a trap and some rotten meat for bait, and they will come. However, if there is no bait, they will not come. The enemy wants to trap lost souls. His bait is worldly entertainment and carnal gratification and tickling the ears instead of preaching truth. His favorite ear tickler is telling them God desires that they be endowed with material things, sometimes referred to as "name it and claim it. He knows the truth will free them from their bondage (John 8:32, John 8:36). He also knows that the truth is that God desires them to seek His kingdom, not things (Matthew 6:33). God's bait of choice is Christian love and eternal life (Romans 5:8, John 3:36, John 20:31, 1 John 3:1). He told us to try Him and verify for ourselves (Psalm 34:8, 1 Peter 2:3). Just as God's children should be easily distinguishable from the world's children, so should their places of meeting be different from the world. The early church met in people's homes, called houses of prayer. If you enter a modern church building and have difficulty determining if it is a place of prayer and

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worship, or a McDonald's play-land and coffee bar, you can be sure the enemy has caused them to stray off the narrow path (Matthew 7:13&14, Matthew 20:16). We are not to be trying to manipulate the lost with worldly attraction. God does not need anything worldly (1 John 2:15&16). What we should be using are Christian love, joy in the Lord's presence, and the solid food of the Word of God.

We are all aware that the family of God has family leaders, pastors, church board members, elders, and ministry leaders. If we are not alert the enemy can trick some of us into believing that we own the church, it is ours and we have a right and duty to control it and make it be what we want it to be. What we should be saying is "I am the church, a part of it, and belong to Jesus." Jesus is the head of the church (Colossians 1:18) and we belong to Him because He bought us (1 Corinthians 6:20) and paid with His own blood (Ephesians 1:7). The family of God is at its strongest when we allow Jesus to exercise the authority He was given (Matthew 28:18) and we follow His lead. He is the one who will prevent the enemy from winning (Matthew 16:18). We must allow the Spirit of Christ (John 16:13&14, Romans 8:9&14) to rule our hearts and minds. We must seek guidance and agree in prayer so we too can say it seems good to us and to the Holy Spirit (Acts 15:28). We need to keep aware that we are involved in spiritual warfare and stand in unity behind our Captain (Hebrews 2:10, Revelation 19:14). Jesus is capable of frustrating every thrust and parry from the enemy, and driving him completely out of the Body of Christ.

Defending our communities

Any decent army would really want to know what they are getting into before engaging an enemy in combat. They would want to know about the type of terrain in which they will be fighting, mountains or swamps, desert or plains. It makes a difference. They would want to know about the enemy's weapons, air power, artillery, armored vehicles, or infantry. It makes a difference. They would want to know how long the enemy has been there, just arriving, or long enough to be established, or a very long time and are now entrenched with strongholds. It makes a difference. They will want to know about the inhabitants of the area, will they be friendly to us or hostile, will they be friendly to our enemy or hostile. It makes a difference. When it comes to defending our communities we need to know similar information. Is our community rural farmland, or urban, primarily residential with homes and picket fences, or an asphalt jungle.

Our enemy is not flesh and blood, but evil spirits (Ephesians 6:12). We will be coming against territorial demons, which are different from those we encounter defending self and family. They are more powerful, and the longer they have been entrenched, the more difficult they will be to dislodge. When Daniel was a captive in Babylon he prayed and fasted for 21 days, and the angel Gabriel could not get past a territorial demon referred to as the prince of Persia (Daniel 10:12&13). After three weeks God sent the Arch-Angel Michael, who was able to make a way for Gabriel. That area, now known as Iran and Iraq, is still under the sway of the prince of Persia. It has been under demonic assault since the beginning of time. That is where the Garden in Eden was located (Genesis 2:10&14), near the Tigris, also called Hiddekel, and Euphrates rives.

We need to know what to pray against for our communities. It could be a spirit of licentiousness, which includes pornography, adultery, fornication, homosexuality, and all sorts of sexual impurity. It could be a spirit of debauchery, which includes drug abuse, drunkenness, gluttony, and all sorts of orgies. It could be a spirit of violence, which includes murder, fear, robbery, and gang

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rule. It could be a spirit of idolatry, which includes all sorts of false religions, devil worship, witchcraft, and abortion, which is nothing more than sacrificing babies to the god of self. There will be one demon prominent, but that one will probably be supported by one or more others, and will always be aided and abetted by a spirit of confusion. We can be sure some of the people will be brothers and sisters in Christ, those we might enlist to assist us in the battle. All the rest of the people should be seen as potential brothers and sisters in Christ once they have been freed from the demonic bondage.

Unless we are extremely foolish, or have a desire to lose the battle, we will ensure that we are properly equipped and trained for the coming fight. When we are under personal attack we can resist and the enemy will flee (James 4:7). However a territorial demon is controlling the community and the local government, not attacking us personally, and it will not flee. If we don't want to be like the sons of Sceva and run for our lives naked and bleeding (Acts 19:13-16), we need to ensure we are walking in obedience to the Lord (Matthew 7:21, John 15:10) and keep ourselves pure (Matthew 5:8, 1 Timothy 5:22) and holy (2 Corinthians 7:1, Hebrews 12:14). We need to fast and pray (Matthew 17:21, Ephesians 6:18) because sometimes that is all that will work, and we need to be in agreement with our brothers and sisters in Christ (Matthew 18:19, 1 Corinthians 1:10, Ephesians 4:13). Strength comes from unity (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12), which is difficult to overcome. We need to inquire of the Lord (Psalm 48:14, Luke 11:10), seek His wisdom and guidance (Proverbs 2:2-7, Ephesians 1:17, James 1:5), making sure we are attacking the real enemy, and neither tilting with windmills nor beating up on captives, prisoners of war being held in bondage to the demons.

Demons are created spirits without physical bodies (Hebrews 1:13&14, Revelation 12:9), and they require humans to accomplish their dirty work. If we can liberate the prisoners we can both reduce the enemies troops and gain new allies in the struggle. If we are to free them we must know who they are so we can pray specifically for them. We should intercede for them daily (Matthew 5:44, 1 Timothy 1:15), asking the Holy Spirit to open their eyes (John 16:13&14, 2 Corinthians 3:14-17) and bring them to repentance (Matthew 9:13, John 16:8-10). We are called to be a light in a dark place (Matthew 5:16, Ephesians 5:8), a living example of the power of the gospel for others to follow (John 13:15, 1 Timothy 4:12). Personally, we cannot follow every doctrine that blows in the wind (Ephesians 4:14, Hebrews 13:9), but must be adamant in following godly ways. The devil's advocates will tell us we should be open minded and tolerant, but we must tell them we cannot accept what is going on, and it must cease. We must always walk our talk, be true to all we profess as right, or the world will accuse us of being hypocrites and proof that there is no power in the gospel. While it is true that God gave everyone free will, the right to choose, and neither violates that Himself nor gives us the right to violate it, He did not give anyone the right to cause spiritual harm to another. That is why we have laws making stealing, murder, prostitution, and the like illegal. The enemy would like to make them all legal and accepted. We have an obligation as children of God to do all we can to prevent it by actively keeping our communities wholesome according to God's values. The world may make the groundless statement that we have no right to set standards, but God tells us we must (Romans 12:9, 1 Thessalonians 5:22, 3 John 11).

Demons are not quitters, and they will fight with all they have to keep whatever they have stolen from God's children. They stole our authority (Genesis 1:26-28, Luke 4:5&6), our joy (Genesis 3:17-19), our fellowship with our God (Isaiah 59:2, Isaiah 64:7), and eternal life (Genesis 2:17,

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Romans 6:23). If we free a prisoner, they will try to recapture him (Matthew 12:43-45). Whenever a new generation arrives they will attempt to influence and control it, because children are vulnerable (Ephesians 4:14). Whenever we make any progress destroying their strongholds they will turn their captives against us to heap abuse and accuse us of bigotry and prejudice. We can sit and accept it, which they desire, or fight it, which they fear. Most people shudder and cover their ears when hearing someone scratch a chalkboard. Whenever we honestly sing our Father's praises from our hearts it has a similar affect on the demons. If all of our brothers and sisters in Christ would openly sing God's praise aloud (Psalm 47:1&6, Psalm 66:8, Revelation 19:5), and worship Him in truth and spirit (John 4:23&24), our communities would become most uncomfortable and undesirable places for demons of any sort. They would soon be covering their ears and shrieking for us to stop. We can overcome the fruits of evil with the Fruit of the Spirit (Proverbs 16:6, Colossians 1:10, Titus 1:8&9). When we are battling spirits of violence we need to pray for the spiritual fruits of love and peace to abound. When we are battling spirits of licentiousness and debauchery we need to pray for the spiritual fruit of temperance to abound. When we are battling spirits of idolatry and pride we need to pray for the spiritual fruits of faith and humility to abound. When we are battling spirits of dishonesty we need to pray for the spiritual fruits of love and goodness to abound. When we are battling spirits of oppression and darkness we need to pray for the spiritual fruits of love and joy to abound. Whenever territorial spirits flee they will abandon most of their prisoners, leaving them bewildered and vulnerable to the gospel of Christ.

Holy ground is where ever God is present, and the Holy Spirit dwells within believers. We must claim our communities as holy ground in the name of Jesus (Exodus 3:5, Joshua 5:13-15), and make sure we keep our communities as such by keeping them filled with God's children. Identify the dens of iniquity and pray for all those involved. Intercede daily both for our communities and for the people that reside in them (Matthew 5:44, 1 Timothy 2:1-4, 2 Peter 3:9). Be alert to attempts by the demons to come back with reinforcements, because they will continue to try to destroy us until our Lord returns to take control.

Defending our world

Getting involved with the world means foreign duty in unfamiliar lands and unfamiliar cultures. Our every day words and actions can have local meaning in another culture that are the opposite of our understanding, and may come across as rude and unacceptable. While bringing the gospel, we must respect their ethnic cultures (Exodus 22:28) without prejudice (1 Timothy 5:21), seeing ourselves as possible prisoners with the people there (Hebrews 13:3). There will be sufficient work to do just overcoming ancient and powerful strongholds without creating inadvertent hostility. Africa has Muslim, witchcraft, and voodoo strongholds. Asia has Hindu, Buddhist, ancestor worship and Muslim strongholds. Parts of Europe have witchcraft, humanism, and pagan strongholds. If we were fighting a flesh and blood physical war we would use highly trained warriors, and for really tough jobs, Special Forces. When the situation gets to be too much for the Special Forces the elite warriors, like the Delta Force, are sent in. God has His own elite team for the difficult jobs, called the M-Force, dedicated and trained missionaries (Proverbs 2:3-5, 2 Peter 1:5).

Our orders from our Commander are some of the clearest and most easily understandable scriptures we have. He never told us to have bigger and fancier houses of worship or to have fancier high-tech programs. He never told us to provide entertainment, even if it has a religious flavor. The

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world has infiltrated the church with those complications to lead us away from our assignment. God's commands to us were two-fold. The first command is basic and straightforward, "Mature spiritually (1 Corinthians 14:20, Ephesians 4:13&15, Hebrews 6:1, 2 Peter 3:18) and be transformed into My image and likeness (Philippians 2:5, Ephesians 5:1)." The second command is just as basic and straightforward, "Go and make disciples in your community, homeland, adjacent lands, and throughout the world (Acts 1:8), and teach them all I have taught you (Matthew 28:20)." The command to go includes going behind the enemy lines, deep into enemy territory. Going means sometimes being in physical danger and risking death (Matthew 10:21&22) at the hands of the locals that are under bondage to evil spirits. The demons themselves cannot harm us (1 John 5:18) so they must use the locals. When the scriptures talk about nation against nation and kingdom against kingdom (Matthew 24:7), it would be more accurate to say ethnic group against ethnic group and government against government. The scriptures are referring to flesh and blood battles in the physical world, which are outbursts of the fighting in the spiritual realm. Most of the ethnic groups located in what is referred to as the 10-40 window are associated with false or corrupted religions. They are all hostile towards each other, but are united in their hatred of Christianity (John 15:18&19). That is the area where God's elite troops are the most needed. Within most of this area a hostile and violent minority rules over a fearful oppressed majority. Many in that majority are open to the gospel of Christ, some even to the point of risking martyrdom, as was Paul (Acts 21:13).

Not everyone can go into the entire world because our mission includes our communities and homeland as well as adjacent land and the uttermost parts of the earth. Those individuals, called and anointed by the Holy Spirit, God's elite M-Force, are sent out by the Lord. If they are not sent, they cannot go (Romans 10:14&15, 1 Corinthians 9:7). Like flesh and blood warriors being sent into a hostile foreign land, God's elite also require support from those back home. We must always remember that they are physically present where the fiercest spiritual battles are being waged. Their physical needs must be provided so they can devote all their attention to their mission of freeing the captives and harvesting souls for God. They not only require material things for their own survival, but also evangelistic materials tailored to the area they are in, medicines, food and clothing, and other things needed by the locals. It is useless to tell them God loves them and then leave them naked and hungry (James 2:15-17). They will be more receptive to the gospel if they first experience the love of God being channeled through our missionaries. Our heavenly Father will provide all the spiritual armor and weaponry they will need, but He made us responsible for supplying the material needs (2 Corinthians 8:14). We are also called on to provide spiritual support in the form of prayer (Matthew 9:38). We should be as concerned for the spiritual welfare of our brothers and sisters in God's M-Force as we are for our flesh and blood military troops that are in the midst of physical combat. Pray for missionaries daily. Pray that the Lord goes before them to prepare the way (Genesis 24:7). Pray that the Lord blesses them with health, strength, and His own wisdom (Isaiah 40:31, Isaiah 41:10, Luke 21:15, Ephesians 3:16, 2 Corinthians 12:9). Pray a hedge of protection around them for both physical and spiritual dangers (Psalm 34:7, Psalm 91:4). Ask God to fill them with the joy of His presence and to prosper their task of harvesting souls (2 Corinthians 9:8, Philippians 4:13, 1 Timothy 1:12).

While it is true that we cannot all go out into the world, we can all participate in preparing the way for those who do go. If we are to be the Body of Christ we need to learn how to see others through God's eyes (Isaiah 55:8&9, 1 Corinthians 3:19). They are hurting, lost souls that need salvation. We must not focus on the external, like their culture, religion, nationality and other

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divergent distinctiveness, but on their needs. Whenever a natural disaster occurs we need to reach out in love to serve their immediate needs without regard to who they are or what they may have done to offend us. When the tsunami hit Indonesia, with 85% of the people practicing the Muslim faith, many lost all their worldly possessions and some of their relatives and friends. The government of Indonesia focused on the population centers and ignored the smaller remote villages. The Body of Christ responded with food, medicine, and materials to rebuild their homes. The local people were amazed that "Only the Christians care about us!" Jesus said that people would know us by our love (John 13:35), the kind of love that goes out not expecting or requiring anything in return. The people did recognize the genuine love of God. The missionaries moved in with the supplies, and they remained, still helping to rebuild and telling them about Jesus. We will never be able to get rid of the demons in our world. Only Jesus can do that, and He is going to when He returns (Revelation 20:10,14&15). In the meantime, we can continue to free the captives and impede the demons evil schemes using love as our weapon.

Restoring the Kingdom of God

When humanity came into being we actually lived in the Kingdom of God. The dictionary tells us that a kingdom is a government or a country headed by a monarch. The kingdom is the monarch's sphere of control and influence. Jesus is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords (1 Timothy 6:15), and is the monarch over the Kingdom of God. God's kingdom is not physical, but is spiritual (John 18:36), and is not available to flesh and blood (1 Corinthians 15:50). That kingdom was given to Jesus by the Father (Daniel 7:13&14) and will be returned to the Father by Jesus when this corrupted creation, sin, and death are no more (1 Corinthians 15:24-28). Until then our spirits are dwelling in His Kingdom and we are subjects of His Kingdom as long as Jesus is our Lord. We do not need to search for His kingdom because it is located within us (Luke 17:20&21).

The scriptures tell us that the Father made Jesus to be both Lord and Christ, the messiah or anointed one (Acts 2:36). Jesus is both Lord and Savior (2 Peter 1:11, 2 Peter 3:18). Humanity cannot separate the two because they have forever been made one in Jesus. If Jesus were compared to a cup, you would look at the outside and see the great I AM that spoke to Moses (Exodus 3:14, John 8:58), and on the inside you would see the Messiah (John 1:41). On the outside you would see the Son of God (Matthew 14:33, Matthew 27:43), and on the inside you would see the Redeemer promised by the prophets of old (Isaiah 49:26). On the outside you would see the King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Revelation 17:14), and on the inside you would see the Savior who paid for us with His own life on the cross (Romans 5:8, Hebrews 12:2). It is a true statement that if there is no outside to a cup there is no inside, and it is not a cup. You cannot have the inside of anything without having the outside also. So it is with Jesus. If you want Him to be your Savior you must accept Him as your Lord. That requires walking in obedience. Jesus warned us about the church people who called Him Lord but are not obedient (Luke 6:46, Matthew 7:22&23).

We are told of two kingdoms, one of light (1 John 1:5) and one of darkness (Ephesians 6:12). We know that the devil is a defeated foe, and it is only a matter of time until his evil empire is banished from our presence forever. In the mean time, we can cause his kingdom to shrink by advancing the Kingdom of God. We do that by first strengthening the kingdom within ourselves. We must work out our own salvation (Philippians 2:12) by cooperating with the Holy Spirit's work of sanctification (1 Peter 1:2) and molding us into the likeness of Jesus (Philippians 2:5). We need to

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practice walking in the Spirit (Galatians 5:16&25) and building up our own faith through focusing on the Word of God (Romans 10:17). We must individually and together (1 Peter 2:2, 2 Peter 3:18, Ephesians 4:12) grow into the full stature of Christ (Ephesians 4:13).

The second step in expanding God's kingdom is to free the devil's prisoners and reduce his sphere of influence. We are called to make disciples and teach them all Jesus taught us (Matthew 28:19&20, 2 Timothy 2:2). That may mean we have to give up some earthly pleasure such as video games, TV, sports, and the like (Matthew 10:39) to come beside a new brother or sister in Christ to help them stand (Ecclesiastes 4:9&10). Our objective should be to teach them to go out and make disciple they can train to maturity (Ephesians 4:14). It may mean having to experience rejection and hard ship (Matthew 16:24). For some it may require sacrificial love (John 15:13). While doing this, we need to establish strongholds of truth (John 8:32) and love (1 Peter 4:8), something the enemy cannot penetrate to steal souls back from us. Maranatha! Come Lord Jesus.