Rising To The Occasion #1
8.12.18

Luke 18:7-8 NIV “And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? 8 I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?”

Introduction

I. There are moments when a sea-change occurs. This means a radical change or systemic restructuring occurs or is in the process of occurring.

II. This message defies adequate outlining, but I have tried to synthesize an approach to what has been placed upon my heart over the past few months. These ideas are defined as “Three Points of Challenge” that we will begin to process in a few moments.

III. All three of these things will cost you dearly. The Gauntlet has been thrown down in the spiritual realm. Incidentally, the challenge isn’t to us as God’s children, but to the selfishness that tends to keep us from walking in the victory He intends for us. This process will, however, feel very personal as we feel the attack against our old carnal nature.

A. This is the time of Elisha’s anointing. The gauntlet was thrown down; He was granted time for preparation. (Note: “Corban”; “Let the dead bury the dead”).

B. We do not always understand the nature of the Master’s Call.

1. To one He says, “Do not come and follow me, but stay here and testify to this community of the great things God has done for you.”

2. To another He says, “Sell everything that you possess and give the proceeds to the poor, then come and follow me.”

3. The call of God and His plan may be different for every individual, and the call I’m sounding out today is for those who are part of this Christian Life Family. It may be that the first decision to make today is whether you consider yourself part of this fellowship or not. Your “choice” is important, but more important in answering that question is His “calling.”

C. I believe the call upon this church is a difficult one. I believe it is always so when you have asked for a “Double Portion.” The decision to grant a double portion or not is His, but we believe He has put it in our hearts to ask. We believe it is our pursuit.

D. We are aware that there are two dimensions at work here — His part, and ours. He must provide resources, anointing, vision and laborers. We must respond with full surrender and immediate obedience. Like Isaiah, when He says, “Whom shall I send - who will go for me?” — we must eagerly respond, “Here I am Lord, send me!”
E. Key words:

1. “The Middle Ground is eroding.” people are being forced into decisions; securities are being taken away from saint and sinner alike; some are being drawn, others are being pushed, but life on the ‘middle ground’ will be almost non-existent.

2. “Crucible” - a severe test; a situation of severe trial, or in which different elements interact, leading to the creation of something new.

3. “A Living Sacrifice” Romans 12:1-2 NIV 1Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. 2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”

F. I refuse to follow in the steps of shepherds who dominate, manipulate or push the flock into forced obedience. Sheep can not be driven, they can only be led. Those who would shame you into obedience will never be satisfied with anything you do. I simply stand before you in obedience to the best of my ability. I want to present to you over these two or three Sundays the challenge I believe the Holy Spirit has brought to me, and to us all.

Three Points of Challenge:

1. Rise to the Occasion concerning our Gathering

2. Rise to the Occasion concerning our Giving

3. Rise to the Occasion concerning our Growing

Gathering at the River:

Joshua 4:1-5:15 1When the whole nation had finished crossing the Jordan, the Lord said to Joshua, 2 “Choose twelve men from among the people, one from each tribe, 3 and tell them to take up twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan, from right where the priests are standing, and carry them over with you and put them down at the place where you stay tonight.” 4 So Joshua called together the twelve men he had appointed from the Israelites, one from each tribe, 5 and said to them, “Go over before the ark of the Lord your God into the middle of the Jordan. Each of you is to take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the Israelites, 6 to serve as a sign among you. In the future, when your children ask you, ‘What do these stones mean?’ 7 tell them that the flow of the Jordan was cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord. When it crossed the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. These stones are to be a memorial to the people of Israel forever.” 8 So the Israelites did as Joshua commanded them. They took twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan, according to the number of the tribes of the Israelites, as the Lord had told Joshua; and they carried them over with them to their camp, where they put them down. 9 Joshua set up the twelve stones that had been in the middle of the Jordan at the spot where the priests who carried the ark of the covenant had stood. And they are there to this day. 10 Now the priests who carried the ark
remained standing in the middle of the Jordan until everything the Lord had commanded Joshua was done by the people, just as Moses had directed Joshua. The people hurried over, 11 and as soon as all of them had crossed, the ark of the Lord and the priests came to the other side while the people watched. 12 The men of Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh crossed over, ready for battle, in front of the Israelites, as Moses had directed them. 13 About forty thousand armed for battle crossed over before the Lord to the plains of Jericho for war. 14 That day the Lord exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they stood in awe of him all the days of his life, just as they had stood in awe of Moses. 15 Then the Lord said to Joshua, 16 “Command the priests carrying the ark of the covenant law to come up out of the Jordan.” 17 So Joshua commanded the priests, “Come up out of the Jordan.” 18 And the priests came up out of the river carrying the ark of the covenant of the Lord. No sooner had they set their feet on the dry ground than the waters of the Jordan returned to their place and ran at flood stage as before. 19 On the tenth day of the first month the people went up from the Jordan and camped at Gilgal on the eastern border of Jericho. 20 And Joshua set up at Gilgal the twelve stones they had taken out of the Jordan. 21 He said to the Israelites, “In the future when your descendants ask their parents, ‘What do these stones mean?’ 22 tell them, ‘Israel crossed the Jordan on dry ground.’ ” 23 For the Lord your God dried up the Jordan before you until you had crossed over. The Lord your God did to the Jordan what he had done to the Red Sea when he dried it up before us until we had crossed over. 24 He did this so that all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the Lord is powerful and so that you might always fear the Lord your God.” Now when all the Amorite kings west of the Jordan and all the Canaanite kings along the coast heard how the Lord had dried up the Jordan before the Israelites until they had crossed over, their hearts melted in fear and they no longer had the courage to face the Israelites.

Circumcision and Passover at Gilgal

5:2 At that time the Lord said to Joshua, “Make flint knives and circumcise the Israelites again.” 3 So Joshua made flint knives and circumcised the Israelites at Gibeath Haaraloth. 4 Now this is why he did so: All those who came out of Egypt—all the men of military age—died in the wilderness on the way after leaving Egypt. 5 All the people that came out had been circumcised, but all the people born in the wilderness during the journey from Egypt had not. 6 The Israelites had moved about in the wilderness forty years until all the men who were of military age when they left Egypt had died, since they had not obeyed the Lord. For the Lord had sworn to them that they would not see the land he had solemnly promised their ancestors to give us, a land flowing with milk and honey. 7 So he raised up their sons in their place, and these were the ones Joshua circumcised. They were still uncircumcised because they had not been circumcised on the way. 8 And after the whole nation had been circumcised, they remained where they were in camp until they were healed. 9 Then the Lord said to Joshua, “Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you.” So the place has been called Gilgal to this day. 10 On the evening of the fourteenth day of the month, while camped at Gilgal on the plains of Jericho, the Israelites celebrated the Passover. 11 The day after the Passover, that very day, they ate some of the produce of the land: unleavened bread and roasted grain. 12 The manna stopped the day after they ate this food from the land; there was no longer any manna for the Israelites, but that year they ate the produce of Canaan.

The Fall of Jericho

13 Now when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, “Are you for us or for our enemies?” 14 “Neither,” he replied, “but as commander of the army of the Lord I have now come.” Then Joshua fell facedown to the ground in reverence, and asked him, “What message does my Lord have for his servant?” 15 The commander of the Lord’s army replied, “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy.” And Joshua did so.
Notice the nature of the sea-change:

1. **Understand the Day** — After forty years of following, God had them commemorate that a significant day was upon them. Twelve stones would mark the occasion, and God said what they were doing would live in the heart of future generations. Future victories would be tied to this day, and a handful of other victories God had given them through the years.

2. **New Anointing upon Leadership** — The leaders modeled obedience and were signs of God’s promised presence and power. They went into the water first to create the moment, and they faithfully stayed in the water until everyone crossed over.

3. **Circumcised Hearts** — The people fully committed to their identity with Jehovah. “As for me and my house, WE WILL SERVE THE LORD!” All the Jewish males were circumcised. It should be noted that the ritual occurred in the presence of their enemies, and at what could be called “an inconvenient time.” Jeremiah 4:3-4 NIV 3“Break up your unplowed ground and do not sow among thorns.” Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, circumcise your hearts….”

4. **Mature Living** — The previous provision ended that day. What could have been viewed as disaster was actually a sign of the Lord’s blessing. The promise that had been coming for forty years, was now settling upon the people.

**Looking Ahead**

1. (Giving) — A sacrificial offering on August 26th - to set us free from the love of things.

2. (Growing) — A sacrificial service commitment - to love our neighbors as we love ourselves - actively sign up for a ministry (try it for one term).

3. (Gathering) — A sacrificial cutting of your heart - to facilitate a new culture of life and community.
A Word from Cindy Jacobs — From Elijah List and Charisma magazine

“Many of you have been feeling like you are in a pressure cooker, a crucible. The Lord would say to you, "My child, you are going to come out of this as pure gold, for this is a season of refining. This is a season where I am asking people, ‘Would you choose the difficult jobs in life for My kingdom? Would you be willing to go to the high places rather than to walk in low places where you just get by and you just take care of yourself and a few others?’"

"Ask Me for nations; ask Me for large things. Don’t be content with living a small life. I want you to live a large life, for I have plans for you. I have destinies for you."

"I want you to be willing to step up to a higher level. It’s time to go higher, not lower. I will let you choose what you want to do, but you will not fulfill the highest on your own. You might do My good will or My acceptable will, but you will not come to the perfect will that I have set for your life," says the Lord.

The Lord says, "If you have run with the horsemen and you are weary, then what will you do with the flooding of the Jordan? In the crucible time, in this time, My eyes are running to and fro. My eyes are searching to see those who I can use, those who I can trust, those who I can call upon to change situations that are difficult. I’m going to pour out an anointing upon the Jeremiah’s of this generation, but it’s going to take strength. It’s going to take courage. It’s going to take more than you have.

"It’s a time to pull into Me," says the Lord. "It’s a time to crawl into My presence if you have to. It’s a time to be intentional about being a person of presence, a person who spends time with Me, a person of intimacy because if you do not crawl into that place in the cleft of the rock and let Me cover you with My hand, many of you will not be able to do what you could do.

"Don’t whine and don’t pity yourself when the crucible time comes," the Lord says, "for I promise you only the wheat, the hay, and the chaff will burn off you. It will not be those things that are lasting. As the fires of opposition come, know this: if you were not going the right way, there would be no fires of opposition. Take it as a challenge. Rise up and say, 'No. The greater one lives in me. This will not take me under. I'm going over. I'm going to be a champion in life. I am called to be victorious. I am called to triumph.'"

The Lord would say to you, "Come up to Me. Come up to a higher place. Don't live in the low place, the weeds, the places of opposition where Satan wants you to be. Come up to Me in the throne room. Come up to Me in the heavenly places. Come and sit beside Me, My son and daughter. If you will do that, you will begin to look down from that high place onto this opposition that is only temporary. It is not an eternal thing. You are an eternal being. You are not meant just to go under the things of the world. You are called to be an overcomer."

The Lord says, "I am releasing a comforting anointing right now to you. Even as you listen to this, there is a power of comfort. I am the God of all comfort. I am the good Shepherd. I am the God who loves you. I am the God who leads you beside still waters and green pastures. I will cause you to come to a place where you say, 'Surely my cup is overflowing. Surely You are good. Surely goodness and mercy follow me all the days in my life.' You will dwell in My house one day."

But the Lord would say, "I want to say 'Good and faithful servant.' I want to say, 'Yes, you did everything I called you to do.' Do not lose heart in the crucible times, for you will come out of this as pure gold." — From Elijah List and Charisma magazine