



A Church Without Ears

Joseph Herrin (10-20-01)

It is rare that I have dreams that I remember, but last night I had such a dream. It was a very frustrating dream, but as I think on it the dream mirrors the experience I have had in attempting to proclaim the truths of God to the church. Let me relate the dream to you here.

The dream began as I found myself in a home group setting. I was in the home of some people we knew from the last church in which I ministered. I had my Bible and a little note pad with writing on it, and I was prepared to proclaim the word of God to the group assembled there. It was evident that the group also knew that I was the one to bring the message that evening.

As sometimes occurred during these home groups, there was much activity, with people talking, people getting up to go to another room, the phone ringing, etc.. I was smoldering inside with a desire to deliver the word that was within me, but the people were not showing any eagerness to hear the word. The lady in whose house we were meeting got up at one point to go wash a load of clothes, and I remember that as she did this that everyone else went to go do things as well, and I was left alone in the room.

I was frustrated by this, but soon everyone made their way back into the room. The room was noisy with conversation and the phone ringing, and this prevented any teaching from going on. Eventually someone suggested that we go outside where there was a better environment for teaching. At this suggestion, everyone in the room got up and went outside.

I remember that outside there was a large parking lot such as one would find at a shopping center. The people walked across this lot and gathered at a location, but it was noisy there as well. I remember that there were people out in the parking lot working on vehicles. There was a large travel trailer that was jacked up on one side as some people were changing the wheel. After milling around for a time, someone suggested that we move somewhere else.

Finally we gathered at another spot, and there were many more people present than at the first. I began to try to speak forth the word, but there were many conversations going on, and since I was on the same level as everyone else, many could not hear me, or even see where I was at. In the dream there was a table present, so I climbed up on the table to get everyone's attention and I began to call out for people to look at me and listen.

I began to speak forth the message the Father had given to me, but I had not gotten far into it when I noticed a young woman going around from person to person at one end of those gathered. She was telling them something that she would like them to do. It was some type of activity that she wanted them to participate in, and she was distracting the attention of everyone around her, making it impossible for me to continue speaking. I asked her to stop what she was doing and to sit down. I remember that my request was delivered to her very bluntly, but she complied and sat down.

As I began to speak again another interruption occurred, and at this I began to proclaim a different message focused on making known to the people that all of their activities were displeasing to the Father. I began to tell them the message that is recorded in the book I recently wrote, entitled "Sabbath." I began to tell them how their activities were originating in their own souls and not in the spirit and how this would bring the judgment of God. Finally I declared, "You people will not desire to receive light until you have been surrounded by gross darkness."

I then prayed for darkness to fall on the people, and darkness did come. It was a darkness so thick that it could be felt and no one there dared move. At this point a tongue of flame appeared over my head and all eyes were drawn to the light that it produced. The attention of everyone was toward the tongue of flame. Then the dream ended.

It is not difficult to perceive the message in this dream. From my own perspective, it was a very frustrating dream. I wanted to deliver the message that the Father had given to me, but no one desired to hear it. The people had no real hunger to hear the word of God. They were distracted by this thing and that. They preferred their own activities.

As a minister in the church, my experience has paralleled this dream in many ways. In home groups I often found that it was with great difficulty that people were brought

to the place of seeking the Father's desire for them during that time. In more than one home the telephone sat in the middle of the room we were gathered in, and no matter what was going on, when the phone rang it would be answered and the host couple would speak on the phone disrupting the flow of what was transpiring.

On one occasion, a getaway was planned for the ministers and their wives. It was announced by the head pastor that we would go up to a house in the mountains and we would spend time seeking the Father in prayer, and discussing the direction of the church. I was the most junior minister present, having only been ordained that year, so I waited for others to take the lead in this time. We had four or five days at this house in the mountains.

The first day the ministers just sat around and talked, and I was surprised to find when we got to this house that there was a large television set up in the main room and it was on most of the time. The ministers would watch sports, or the news, or some old movie, and I waited and waited for the prayer time and the seeking of the mind of God that had been announced.

On another day while there a driving trip was planned. The scenery in the mountains was beautiful, but I was desirous of praying together as ministers and seeking God's instruction. Instead many stops were made at little antique shops and roadside sites. Another day was spent in mindless activity and driving to a nearby town to eat together in a restaurant.

On the morning of our last day we still had not prayed together or discussed anything about the church. I spoke up and shared my disappointment with the other ministers and I was met with reproach, but they agreed to spend the time that morning doing what had been announced as our goal for being there. However, our time was almost up, and we had only a couple of hours and we had to leave the house and return home.

On many occasions during my tenure at that body, when the word of God was burning inside me, I found that the other ministers and the congregation had little interest in the message. This was a body that was viewed as very progressive and that was moving in renewal. The gifts of the Spirit were welcome, but the burning truths of God found little welcome there.

For a year and a half now I have been outside of the organized church. I have visited

another church with some friends, but from the very first meeting it was obvious that the truths of God were not welcome there. A message of prosperity was being taught and the focus of the preaching was upon building the church organization and swelling the numbers in attendance.

I see no desire in the organized church to hear the messages that the Father would proclaim to them in this hour. There is still no room in the inn. The Savior still has no place to lay His head (His mind is not sought, and His message is not received.) As it was in my dream, I believe that the church will not begin to seek the truth and the light until they find themselves immersed in gross darkness, a darkness so thick that it can be felt. Only in their utter desperation will they begin to seek a message of truth and light.

This is a frustrating time for those ministers of God who have a burning inside of them to speak forth the message Yahweh has given to them. The church does not have ears to hear. As long as things are fine, or even tolerable, in their lives they will not seek a word of truth. They are content to know material blessing and they equate this with spiritual success. Oh church of Laodicea, you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked.' You have neither eyes to see, nor ears to hear.

If the hearts of those who would speak forth a message of truth and light are so frustrated in this hour, then what is the emotion of the One who is the source of the message? Is He not frustrated as well? Will He not judge His household soon and teach them to desire truth and light?

I believe the message of my dream to be that only when the church finds itself surrounded by gross darkness will she begin to seek the light. The darkness is coming swiftly. Do not pray for a delay of darkness. To do so is to pray for a delay in repentance coming to a church that loves not the truth.

Selah