

February 26, 2021

Letter to the Arizona Branch of City of the Lord, from Az Branch Senior Coordinator Jeff Looker

Brothers and Sisters:

As I write this, I am in Augusta Georgia at the North American Network of Charismatic Covenant Communities (NANCCC). It is great to see old friends from so many sister communities around the country. It is especially nice to see the new generation of young adults present that have caught the vision and have been called to Covenant Community by the Lord. The Lord is continuing to keep His promises and is raising up a new generation to serve His purposes of renewing the world!

Dan Keating spoke to us today at the conference about fulfilling our mission in the midst of the trials. He quoted Mark 13:5-8

*And Jesus began to say to them, "Take heed that no one leads you astray. Many will come in my name, saying, 'I am he!' and they will lead many astray. And when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed; this must take place, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places, there will be famines; this is but the beginning of the sufferings.*

The word Jesus used for "suffering" is the Greek word "Odin" which is literally the pain of giving birth or the pain necessary in introducing something new. I think Jesus is asking us in the passage from Mark to see the state of our world as the beginning of something new, rather than as the "end" of something. Jesus warns us in Mark 13 to expect turmoil in the world and not to be alarmed by it. It is a sign that he is doing something new! We know by observing creation that He is always creating new life. All is "new" in Him.

I shared a prophetic word at the NANCCC conference today that has been on my heart for several years , but I think reflects the heart of God in the times we are living in:

*Although you have experienced the fulfillment of my promises to you, my generosity is not at an end. My plans for you remain fresh. Newness is on my heart. Beginning today, that which is stagnant must be active. That which is closed must now be opened. That which is silent must now be proclaimed. Observe my creation. All is in motion with, life and change. My love creates transformation and evolution. Inactivity is a sign my love has not penetrated your hearts.*

*I want my people to dream dreams again. I want my people to experience overwhelming visions of my plans. I want you to be captivated and swept forward by the excitement that I have in renewing the world. I want you to have a new expectancy of victory and favor. Know today that I am providing a new level of freedom and protection as you are attentive to my Spirit. Children I begin again with you, All is new all is fresh. Will you cooperate with me as we renew the World together?*

After the great fire of 1666 that leveled London, the world's most famous architect at the time, Christopher Wren, was commissioned to rebuild St Paul's Cathedral. One day in 1671, Christopher Wren observed three bricklayers on a scaffold, To the first bricklayer, he asked the question, "What are you doing?" to which the bricklayer replied, "I'm a bricklayer. I'm working hard laying bricks to feed my family." The second bricklayer, responded, "I'm a builder. I'm building a wall." But the third brick layer,

the most productive of the three and the future leader of the group, when asked the question, “What are you doing?” replied with a gleam in his eye, “I’m a cathedral builder. I’m building a great cathedral to The Almighty.”

As a member of City of the Lord, what would your answer be to the question: “What are you doing?” One of the bricklayers in the story related his work to a necessary activity to feed his family. His vision for what he was doing with his life was practical and utilitarian. The second bricklayer took pride in himself as a builder without regard to what he was actually building. The last bricklayer saw purpose beyond his individual efforts and had his eye on the bigger picture. All by himself he could not build a cathedral, but he was content being part of a work that would eventually result in something great for God.

Although our Community was founded many years ago, we are just at the beginning! The Lord is not done with us yet. He continues to create and bring forth new life in this world that, although fallen, He loves and wants to redeem! One difficult reality that I think we all have to face is that the Lord may not accomplish the fullness of the work we are building as a Community in our lifetime. We may never see the full fruit of our efforts. What we are doing today may only be the foundation for something five generations from now. Are we ok with this? Can we have enough confidence in God (and not in ourselves) to be obedient to our call even when it seems like the “cathedral” looks like a pile of bricks?

Fortunately, the Lord in His mercy, allows us to know His heart and His plans through scripture, the Church and through each other. Being about the work of building the Kingdom in City of the Lord can be seen by us, at times, as labor, as something we do as individuals to obtain salvation, or as a beautiful journey that we are on together, being obedient to God's call to build His kingdom as a covenant people. How we view our role in Community is up to each of us.

One final thought; I have been writing these Senior Coordinator letters for the last few years as a way of providing some unity and common vision, especially last year in the height of the pandemic. I believe it is time that the other Senior Leaders of our Branch contribute in this way as well. Starting with the next letter you will be hearing from other leaders too and get to know them through their writing. I will still be writing letters, but I am very excited to see what God shares through each of them!

Blessings,

Jeff