

# THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;  
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,  
I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God  
IN CHRIST JESUS.*

(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)

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## ***Thoughts for a Pause***

As a result of the Lord commanding me at 1.53 am to "publish (i.e., proclaim) the one new man," I have been writing about this new man, which actually speaks of the sons of God. In writing the last issue on 153, I realized that on three occasions the Lord has spoken to me at 1.53 am about the sons of God. I have written on the first and third and, Lord willing, will write on the second one as well. It seems that the second one is a good segue into something that has been brewing in my heart for several weeks now.

In this issue, I want to take a pause and candidly share about a few things. Since I restrict myself to two pages for each issue of *The Upward Call*, I have to leave out some detail, as well as commentary. So, this issue is devoted to filling in some blanks, so to speak.

First of all, when Jesus said, "**My sheep hear My voice**" (John 10:16, 27), He meant it as a truth that would continue on down through the centuries. Contextually, Jesus was speaking to the ones that were flocking to hear Him in that day. He was walking in the midst of ones who were considered to be God's people from the nation of Israel. He came to His own but many in that day, especially amongst the Jewish religious elite, refused to listen to what He was saying. Even though they knew who He was, they conspired to kill Him (Matthew 21:38; John 8:37). In this context, Jesus told the Pharisees that His sheep hear His voice, meaning they were not listening and receiving the import of His words because they were not His sheep in that day.

But, how does this work in our day? Obviously, Jesus is not walking the streets of this earth speaking forth His word, at least in a physical form that we recognize as Him. For many, especially those of certain denominations, the answer is in what most call *the word of God*, that is, the *Bible*. It's all about the Bible, the word of God, as if this is the only way Jesus speaks to His people today. I believe this is too narrow a view and leads to worship of the *Bible*. Those of us begotten of God, having been implanted with the seed of God that is growing into a mature son, have a voice, the living Word, within us that comes forth through this seed. Another way of stating this is that we have Christ in us, that is, we have the Spirit of Christ or the Spirit of the Lord in us. This Spirit speaks to us, and we need to learn to hear what is called the *still, small voice of the Lord*.

I realize that there is a lot of craziness going on in the name of Christ, with people running around declaring that the Lord told them this and told them that. It is quite obvious from some of the wackiness that the Lord has not spoken to some, perhaps more than we realize, of these people.

As a writer, I often share what the Lord has spoken to me. But believe me; I do not do this lightly. It is a very serious matter to declare that the Lord has spoken a word, and I take it very seriously. However, I strongly believe that He speaks, and when He does, His word has purpose, especially for someone like me who desires that the Lord's people be encouraged in these last days as we press on toward the goal. This is the point: we have the word of God in us, and this word speaks to us in a variety of ways *in* life, if only we would listen and discern. I have more to say on this subject, but for now, I want to stress that He speaks to all of us individually and personally. We don't need a pastor, a priest, a commentator, a big name, a pulpit, a website, or even me, for that matter, to hear the voice of God. The challenge is that we need to learn how to discern His voice from all sources and not follow the many deceptive, persuasive voices that might lead us astray. I share my experiences because I want people to know that it is more than possible to hear His voice; it is imperative. And, He speaks in a variety of ways. I have known Him to speak through time on the clock, dreams, visions, signs, wonders, nature, people, circumstances, and, of course, the *Bible*, to name a few ways. Each of us has to learn to discern His voice *in* life.

The second thing I want to point out is in regard to the word **publish** that the Lord spoke to me at 1.53 am. You might wonder why He used this particular word. Why didn't He simply tell me to proclaim the one new man? Good question! In my experience, the Lord often uses what could be called an *indirect* method of communicating a thought. He does this because He wants me to dig for an answer, and, in digging, I learn the lesson or the message that He is communicating in such a way that I will not forget it. It is His way of sealing it or writing it on my heart. In this particular case, I had no idea that the word *publish* also means "**to proclaim.**" But there is more, for the word *publish* also means "to proclaim to the public and to put it in print." So, He did not communicate to me about the one new man merely for my personal edification or even for that of other brethren but for the public, meaning for the world-at-large. Frankly, I do not know how this plays out practically because my website is such a small fish in a huge sea, so I leave this to the Lord, which leads to another thought.

The third thing is that we don't have to work things out for the Lord. It is His responsibility to see that God's glorious plan of the ages is worked out according to the Father's appointed times. For our part, we are called to **hear and obey His voice** when we are instructed to do or not to do something. It is that simple. I have grown weary of all the Christian chatter about God has a purpose for your life and you need to find it and do it. I don't refute that God has a plan or calling or a gifting, whatever term you would like to use, for our lives. What I do reject is all the hype associated with it that, for the most part, produces a whole lot of activity and confusion as to what God is up to. Look around you; the hallmark of Mystery Babylon is confusion, and this very same confusion is manifested in the church-at-large. Don't confuse this church-at-large with the true *ecclesia* that Christ is building. They are not the same building project. Much of what we see being built in the name of the Lord, including the many ministries out there, is simply man's doing. What Jesus is building is often (but not always) hidden in the few with no name, no outward ministry, no websites, no books, no following, and no worldly or churchly recognition. Jesus is building a remnant in the earth today, a remnant that knows His heart because they wait upon Him, listening for His voice and responding out of obedience and love for their Beloved Lord, the Love of their life. If you find yourself in this company, then rejoice; it is a good and wonderful place to be. This leads to the next point.

The fourth thing is that we need to learn to **wait upon the Lord**. Many know that there is scripture about this, but how many actually practice it? I don't have the answer to this, but over the years I have sensed that few really know how to do this because, again, the hard-driving, "let's do something for Jesus" church-at-large encourages something else. I can think of several big name church/ministries in our area that are so hard-driving that I doubt many have time to wait on the Lord. The ears of the people are tuned to their "anointed" pastor who hears from God for them. Sadly, these are the so-called *churches* that are growing the fastest. The point is that we need to not only learn to discern His voice on our own but also to learn how to patiently wait upon the Lord. Just because He speaks to us does not mean that we are to immediately rush out and do something. Timing is essential in God's plan, and this often requires that we wait, even if the wait is several years or even decades. I am still waiting upon a word (a promise) the Lord spoke to me nearly three decades ago. The wait time is the Lord's prep time, meaning He has been doing a work in me over these many years to bring about His promise. This leads to the next point.

The fifth thing is that I want to encourage all to **wait for the coming of the Lord**. For the last 34 years, my wife and I have not lost our desire and expectation for the coming of the Lord, even when other believers have reacted less than enthusiastically to this glorious hope (an understatement). I had one brother mockingly ask: *What are you looking for a 6-foot or an 8-foot Jesus?* He is in the camp that emphasizes Jesus is coming back in His people. I had another brother, who was instrumental in helping plant a large church, tell me he had no expectation or even desire to see the Lord. I was stunned. None of this has distracted us from holding to the one hope we have as the Lord's people. We will literally see the Lord; and this is an event. And now, the Lord is telling me that He is coming very, very soon, and I am to announce this to the world. So, I do! This leads to the final point.

The sixth thing is that **when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is, and everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure** (1 John 3:2-3). It takes the Lord's appearing for us to be transfigured into His immortal life. The coming of the Lord is about the manifestation or the unveiling of the one new man, which is an entirely new humanity that we can only relate to in some small measure as we occupy mortal bodies. I have referred to this one new man in many different ways, most notably, as the sons of God. The Father is after sons in the image of *the* Son, and He will have them, all to His glory. This is our hope!