

The Prophetic Charge for Agathos

Part 2: Ministers not Ministries

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Full Text (for reading on your own)

The Prophetic Charge Committed to Agathos

1 Timothy 1:18 says *“This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare ...”* You can actually wage warfare according to the prophecies made concerning you. We need prophecies speaking into things that God has yet to do in our lives. The charge Paul was referring to was committed to Timothy by prophetic words. There is a charge upon Agathos according to the prophetic words spoken over this church - and there have been many. We are a people of promise, prisoners of hope. We have been given a prophetic charge!

The last message and this message are about sharing the vision I am having for our church to empower you to partner together with me and the Lord in going there! I don't have the whole vision. But as I have pieces of the puzzle I will be trying to share them with you.

In December of 2016 I had a vision in which I saw the Lord stand up on stage in front of our congregation and speak to our church. He said “I am calling you to go out - to reach out ... to deliver to your neighbors what I've delivered to you.” Around that time I was asking the Lord “how do we do that?” and I saw this vision of a rake which had a wooden handle and all these tines. I felt that the Lord was speaking to us saying “you will have one message - one handle - and lots of different outreaches - tines.”

With prophecy you see in part - you look through a glass dimly. You get a bit more and a bit more. The will of the Father becomes increasingly clear.

The different tines connected for me to a word from Mark Crawford for Agathos that he shared in 2013. In that word he said “this church is going to be a prototype church.” One of the keys to prototyping is agility - another is trying things! Companies have R&D departments b/c they know they need to try things.

We are called to be a “prototype church that is going to equip and send people. People are going to go out into society, into places, and are going to make a difference. They’re going to bring the Kingdom into places.”

We come "together in a time such as this, you encourage one another, you hear what God is saying, you come together, you worship together, and the gifts are operating, but its a training place ...” One of the pieces of the puzzle is this: ***the goal of church is not Sunday service.***

Mark continued by saying that the gifts “will actually happen on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday at a greater intensity than in here.” We need to get that ... the goal of church is not Sunday service. When we meet on a Sunday we are NOT at the pinnacle of what we do as a body! The pinnacle is throughout the week. I am not trying to sound nice. I am telling you what’s real. Sunday gatherings are a training place. When are the Buckeyes at their pinnacle? During the game - not at practice! Sunday gatherings are practice - training!

Mark said “You have a privilege in the days that are ahead of you to display something that a group of people do as a church of the Kingdom, the Kingdom coming.” That is a significant phrase “a church of the Kingdom.” Remember that this past spring I taught a series that asked the question “what is church?” The Greek word for church is *ekklesia*. The *ekklesia* was the democratic ruling body of Greek and Roman society. They decided issues of war and peace, treaties, tariffs, and cultural issues. Jesus said “*on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.*” Apparently the *ekklesia* Jesus spoke of is supposed to be pretty legislative on this earth!

The *ekklesia* carries a mandate - Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven! That’s the mandate that the church carries! Accordingly, here’s another piece of our puzzle: ***the Kingdom is the goal, not church!*** Said differently, as it relates to church, ***KINGDOM FIRST.*** “Seek first the Kingdom of God ... and all these other things will be added unto you.” The church serves the Kingdom, the Kingdom does not serve the church. We are representing a heavenly nation here on this earth and Jesus commissioned us to go disciple the nations - until the kingdoms of this world become the Kingdoms of our God! When you step into this mandate, Heaven steps in behind you. This is the agenda that Heaven is backing up. And all these other things will be added to you. “A church of the Kingdom.”

Mark continued “He’s called you to be a people who ARE the church. He’s called you to be a people who are a people of action. He’s called you to be a people where you’ll see the Kingdom come, and you’ll see His will being done on earth, unlike any other place.” There is a uniqueness to

what God has called us to. That doesn't mean to compare our church with other churches - that's silliness. Don't compare yourself among yourselves. Don't we have an identity in Christ that is far better than anything a church could do? Please!

“There is such an amazing calling and destiny around you guys, where it won't just be one or two of you, but there'll be a whole group of you-- all of you, all of you moving together.”

If what I (Peter) lead doesn't produce something that involves more than just a few of us I have failed. The church has been charged with something. I am part of a lineage of leadership from Joshua to Brad to me ... and we have been prophetically charged with something.

Mark concluded with this: “I can see it so amazingly, it's like in formation, but yet you're going in different places, but you're still in formation. It doesn't quite make sense, because if you're not in formation and you're going different places... it's a paradox. But that's what it will be.” Mark was seeing us in formation but going different places.

A Season of Reformation

Recall that last time I spoke (prophetically) with you about there being a revolution and a reformation. I am talking about the kairos (prophetic timing) we are in as a church. Revolution and Reformation are supposed to lead to Renaissance.

Mark Crawford had been talking with me and others about Revolution and Reformation and then at Voice of the Apostles in 2017 Bill Johnson said (as an aside) something like this “we've been hearing a lot about Revolution and Reformation ... can I add another word to that? Renaissance.”

The Reformation is supposed to produce Renaissance in the spheres of society. (If we cannot speak about political things with the heart of the Father we are ill-equipped to lead the world. If we can't solve these sorts of things amongst ourselves how are we going to rule nations? In 1 Corinthians 6 : 2-4 Paul said “*Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life? If then you have judgments concerning things pertaining to this life, do you appoint those who are least esteemed by the church to judge?*”) We need to not be conformed to this world but instead be transformed by the renewing of our minds according to Him that we might have our senses trained to discern what the Father is doing!

About a month before President Trump was elected I had a dream where I was falling through the sky after the bridge I was on had been shaken so strongly it collapsed. The Lord spoke to me and said to me “tell My people to not be shaken.” I told you all that in Oct. 2016 I believe. Then Trump was

elected. Trump was the shaking. Revolution. I believe Trump was the revolution that was prophesied. I also believe that the big fight around the confirmation of Justice Brett Kavanaugh was almost revolution 2.0. This is what I believe prophetically about the time that we are in.

I believe that the reformation (in the church) has just started. After last message Olin saw a tidal wave (of revival) start. He told me “I don’t know if it just started today or just recently, but get ready.” Amen.

I was at 2018 Voice of Apostles between the last message and this one and Bill Johnson taught 2 messages there: (1) Reformation and (2) waging warfare with the prophetic words spoken concerning us (1 Tim. 1:18). That’s awesome! I had not listened to him in probably 6 months to a year in terms of any of his current teaching, but here he is saying some very similarly themed things to what we are pressing into as a body. There is something happening! There is a season of reformation right now.

Recently Mike Bickle (leader of IHOP in KC) just released an open letter explaining why they scrapped their entire December conference plans and are resetting the whole planning for that at this late hour. He basically was saying that we are in such a time that they cannot just do what they’ve done before but we must start fresh and keep our ear to the ground and hear what the Father’s saying or we are going to miss Him. There is a reformation starting to happen right now. There is a now-ness to God, but amazingly there is never a hurriedness to God.

If the church does it’s job in the reformation it should produce renaissance in the spheres of society - because reformation in the church that doesn’t produce renaissance wasn’t reformation at all ... because Sunday is not the goal!

Learning to Operate in a New Wineskin

As a church one of the things we are going to need to learn is how to operate in a new wineskin. You can listen to the last message, but we need to remember as we step into a new wineskin that revelation is both progressive and positional. We will get clarity in God bit-by-bit and sometimes we have to be in a new space to see more clearly! I also shared how I believe it is essential that we don’t step into a place of judgement toward the “old wineskin” when seeking to walk with God into a new wineskin. He will not have dissension amongst His ranks.

We need to guard our hearts individually in order to succeed in this corporately. One thing we need to guard our hearts against is that constant feeling of needing to define it ... “yes but WHAT are we going to do?” Remember that the wineskin (the form of a thing) is not where the power is. The power is in the new wine! The wineskin just allows the powerful new wine to exist in our midst successfully. Our tendency is to try to create the new wineskin - to create the new form - thinking that brings the power. No. The wineskin (form) does not bring the power. It just allows for it! The

Holy Spirit if we follow Him will help us form the new wineskin to receive the new wine. He after all knows exactly what the new wineskin needs to be like to receive the new wine.

When we are operating in a new wineskin we each have a responsibility to shepherd our hearts. We have to be careful not to try to over-define a thing. It will start to look like something but we can't make it look like something before we know what it looks like. We don't want to birth it out of the flesh "It's by My Spirit says the Lord."

New Operating Systems (OS's) vs. New Programs

Luke 5:39 says "*And no one, having drunk old wine, immediately desires new; for he says, 'The old is better.'*" Stepping into a new wineskin requires a purposefulness. "The old is better" is our normal, default thought process. What we have done before is our default mindset. I believe this is why Mike Bickle is saying "reset" not "lets make some small incremental changes." When God is doing a new thing you have to realize that it requires purposefulness in your heart to go there.

In Matthew 4:17 Jesus said "*From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.'*" Repent.

There is a difference between an operating system (OS) upgrade and a new program. When you go to the app store, you download a new app. But what happens when your operating system needs an upgrade? It overhauls the whole thing. Your phone has to shut down and reboot.

I am trying to use an analogy here to help describe a process I go through with the Lord ...

Some revelation is just additive. Some revelation requires a subtraction before the addition. Some revelation requires a re-boot before it can boot up. That's what I am referring to as an operating system upgrade. Some revelations are just like a new program "that was so good what I got from the Word this morning ... let's add it to that shelf I already have." Sometimes you get a new revelation and it is like "there is NO place on my shelves for that! My shelves are working against that!" If the Lord keeps giving you more on that you have to rearrange all the shelves in the place to accommodate this new revelation the Lord is giving you! "We can't even be open for business right now while I'm rearranging all these shelves; we've got to shut down! Let me rearrange all these things ... OK, now, let me start back up."

God sometimes will end a thing before He gives you a new thing. Not every revelation is only additive. Some are subtractive before they are additive.

Jesus said "REPENT ... for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." He didn't just say "the kingdom of heaven is at hand" - although that is a revelation! He said "you are going to have to let something DIE in your thinking before this thing can raise to life!"

Here's a practical example. A few weeks ago I was having "off" emotions. For more than a decade I've learned to simply take those to God ... "Father, what are these? Am I believing a lie? Am I forgetting a truth from Your Word? Show me what's going on!" And for more than a decade I've seen God renew my mind and transform my life through this process.

Yet a few weeks ago, it was like God changed the program. Instead of the emotions quickly leaving I hear from the Father "what if everything is OK right now?" That phrase arrested my attention. For days, I asked the Lord "what are these emotions? Am I missing something?" A week or so later I was driving out to Pennsylvania again asking God about it. I remembered again that He had said "what if everything is OK right now?" I asked Him "what do you mean?" After pondering that for a few hours or so I have a new thought "the safest place I can possibly be is in the words of the Father."

In other words, I still had odd emotions I did not understand but my Father was still speaking to me "everything is OK right now." I just settled into it and had a great peace "wow, something new."

Here's what happened: that weekend, at the conference we were driving to in Pennsylvania, I had one of the most profound encounters of my sonship in God, an amazing revelation of His Name being upon me - Him identifying with me, and a revelation of His compassion. What I learned was that compassion is not love despite of weakness, but love especially because of weakness.

All of those revelations came because I got to a new place that week in which I settled into "I don't know what I am feeling right now, but I do know that my Father says I am fine."

I had to repent and change an old way of thinking - specifically, when there is an issue I go to the Father and I deal with it. That's a great thing to do, but in this case it seemed the Lord was saying "you can't get this revelation unless that thing gets set aside." That's an operating system upgrade.

A Key Piece to the Puzzle: Decentralization

So too our church is in the midst of an operating system upgrade. I am giving you pieces of the puzzle the Lord is piecing together as I have them. We know (1) Kingdom first. We know (2) the week more than Sunday. This next puzzle piece is pretty seismic so I will share it narrative style:

In December of 2017, my friend Brian Orme had a Facebook live that I felt led to schedule myself for! He said something like this: "the biggest taxi company does not own a car ... Uber. The biggest hotel chain does not own a building ... Air B&B. The common theme is decentralization. When's the church going to catch up?"

For years I have talked with Joshua and Brad (not out of a place of critique but out of a genuine curiosity): "what is missing in the church at large? Why don't we seem to produce the things we see

in scripture?” I’ve had lots of thoughts about that, but in this Facebook live with Brian it was like the missing puzzle pieces started to get inserted.

Later that month (Dec. 28th and 29th), I was in prayer and I heard the Lord clearly speak to me: “I want you to start designing in the Kingdom of God ... I want you to start a *mobilization*, not a movement ...”

So what Brian was talking about was decentralized church. I love big churches and what they can do - they can do things that more agile churches cannot do. So this is not against centralized church, but acknowledging that there is a prophesied billion soul harvest and the centralized church model likely lacks the agility to meet the needs of that harvest.

Over the Spring and Summer, this decentralized church concept kept growing inside of me. About a month and a half ago I woke up with a phrase in my heart (or maybe it just popped into my heart at some point ... it was just there all of a sudden) and the phrase was “I want a church with no ministries.”

Everything inside of me jumped with excitement about that phrase. But my head said “that’s crazy.” So I went to the Word. I studied 137 scriptures in the NT that have the word “minster” or “ministry” in them. I thought “there has to be something in the Word that disproves this notion I have.” I had a holy fear. I didn’t just want to lead the church into something that sounded interesting. I wanted to see from the Word of God. I didn’t find anything in the Word that contradicts what I am telling you. I thought wow!

Sometimes you have to prove yourself a diligent worker - a laborer approved - before He gives you the next piece of the puzzle. About a month into that scripture study I was talking with my brother-in-law who was asking how church is going. I was explaining the decentralized church concept that had come alive inside of me. As I was talking with him, this phrase comes out of my mouth: “you know what, I bet the founder of Uber felt crazy saying he wanted a taxi company with no cars.” All of a sudden I realized that the Lord had led me exactly full circle to where we had started. “I want a church with no ministries.”

I’m telling you “it’s a new wineskin.” What’s that look like? I don’t know...

But I will tell you what ... Kodak apparently didn’t know what digital photography looked like and they don’t exist anymore. I don’t think Borders knew what online book sales looked like; Borders isn’t here any more.

God does new things. His character doesn’t change. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. But His expression of what He’s doing will always meet the need of the people.

Joshua had an original vision as it relates to our church, the Lord showed him that He was going to change the face of the church in a generation. We are still within that generation time. I believe the time is now. There is a kairos moment that we have arrived at and we have a privilege as a body of believers in the days ahead of us to have a unique expression of a people that are “a church of the Kingdom.”

Uber is a taxi company with no cars. How’s that going for them? Air B&B is a hotel chain with no buildings. You can’t do that! Well at least not in an OLD wineskin ... but in a new wineskin you can.

We are uniquely positioned as a prototyping church. We are small. God’s positioning us to be able to move into a space that doesn’t exist yet.

In order to keep proper perspective, I’ve been telling myself through this discovery process that “there is nothing new under the sun.” We’re rediscovering things that church fathers surely walked in. There’s truth to that. But the Lord did correct me about 2 weeks ago. When I said that I heard “that’s an Old Testament phrase.” (It’s from Ecclesiastes). Because there are things hidden in Christ which no eye has yet seen!

A movement is a series of organized activities working towards an objective. It is an organized effort to promote and attain an end - it speaks to the moving parts of a mechanism.

To mobilize on the other hand is to “put into circulation.” It is to release for bodily use; to assemble and make ready for war duty.

Under the old framework, you are a taxi driver if you are full time. You are a taxi driver if you have a company car.

Under the old framework, you are a minister if you are full time. And you need a company car - these are the ministries the church runs.

When do you minister? 9-5 or whenever you are driving the company car. When are you not a taxi driver? When you are not in the company car!

Erin shared about a time when she was 13 and was very new to hearing God. She had just been on a missions trip and she *really* wanted to hear from Him about whether He wanted her to go into the ministry. “Lord do you want me to be a minister?!? I am ready to lay my life down! Do you want me to be a minister???” Two days later she heard Him “well you are.” She responded “yes Lord, I know, but do you want me to be a minister?” “You are.” “Right, but do you want me to go into full time ministry?” He said “you are...” Her whole life the Lord has always reminded Erin of that word and

she has never been “full time” and she has been called into a job that is not in the church sphere and the Lord is constantly saying this to her “you are!”

I want a church with no ministries, ONLY MINISTERS.

I am giving you design pillars as the Lord is giving them to me. It’s just bit by bit. Things like “Kingdom first.” “The week more than Sunday.” Things like “ministers not ministries.”

Repent for a New Wineskin is at Hand!

In moving from our old space to this new space, I found myself interceding for our church and weeping over what seemed at times like some potential had not come to pass there. Then the Lord spoke to me very strongly and reminded me of John 12:24 “if it dies it produces much grain.” What did I say about a new operating system? Something needs to die. Something needs to stop - before the new can come in. It needs to have a shutdown, a reset.

With the dynamic leaders we had, the great worship, and the wonderful people there was always some sense in me as though we had not yet fulfilled what we could fulfill. That’s what I was weeping over. As I was weeping over that the Lord speaks to me “sow that seed into the ground and do not raise it back it up - don’t dig it out. Count it loss. Let it be dead.”

I saw a photograph on the wall that had a barbed wire (difficulty), a sunset (the end of a thing), and a blade of grass that had gone to seed. And the Lord was saying “unless the seed falls to the ground it will not bear much fruit.”

I am here to tell you that to whatever extent we feel like we failed as an attractional church model the Lord is saying SOW THAT ONE DEAD RIGHT INTO THE GROUND and I WILL RAISE IT WITH A NEW BODY - A NEW FORM!

Don’t come into this new place trying to reproduce or improve upon what He has said is “our seed for the next harvest!” The former expression (which was a beautiful expression but one in which it seemed like we never walked into the full harvest of it) ... let that be sown! Don’t dig it up! Let it die! That’s what I was weeping over. The Lord says “Let that go under so that I can raise it with a new body.” I can raise it in a new form!

If you are a part of this body, we each in our own hearts need to allow that whole vision to die. God wants to do a new thing - a reformation in the church - but so long as we have a goal of church as an attraction model, we will never move into a sent model!

Let all of those expectations die! God says to Agathos “that is now your seed to create the harvest for the next season!”