

Midnight Cry Messenger

FREELY SHARED WITH THOSE WHO ARE HUNGRY FOR TRUTH — NOT TO BE SOLD

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By Invitation Only

by Phil Enlow

Adapted from a message preached at the Bible Tabernacle in June of 2017.

I was kind of interested in some of the references this morning to the Lord building His church. The church is a big subject, and there's a lot of truth, and I think we are in regular need, as generations pass, of really seeing the truth of the church and what it is, established and re-established. We live in a cultural context in which it's so easy to sink down into something that is basically man-driven, tradition-governed where we're simply practicing a religion.

If you look up a dictionary definition of church, probably, one of the first would be a building. And I guess, in our culture, we all know what we mean when we say, "Go to the church." So, I don't see that we're going to undo that any time soon. But, as you know, the church is not this building. The church is something that is very real and very spiritual.

But, other uses of the term "church" would be like the Catholic Church, the Episcopal Church, or the Baptist Church. It means a religious establishment, an organization, a movement that, in each case, claims to represent Christ and be followers of Him. And then, it might be used of a local congregation, basically the same idea: they're followers of Jesus and claim to practice what He teaches and so forth.

But there is so much more that we need to really have so imbedded in our spirits that we "get it," we understand. What must the Lord think as He looks down? How does He identify His church? Who is really a part of it? Because, we could say, "Well, we're the Body of Christ." And I believe God has established good things here, but certainly the Bible Tabernacle is not in any exclusive sense "the" Body of Christ.

The reality is, that there are people who come here who may well not be a part of His church, and that's what we need to be focused on. I have a desire and a hunger, and I believe many share this, that we come to a place—a greater place, where we are so in harmony with Heaven and what Heaven stands for and what Heaven is doing, that we will become instruments of God in establishing what He wants.

And, while there is a "universal" church, there is a local expression that God longs to bring forth in a deeper way. I believe He's doing it, I believe He's working, but we need to understand a whole lot more about what the church is and how God does things so that we can truly be a participant in it.

Turn to Matthew chapter 16. I'm going to go ahead and start, by faith, and I don't know how much we'll get to. But I pray that God will

somehow burn these truths into our hearts in a way that will make a difference.

Now, verse 13, a familiar passage, "When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, Who do people say the Son of Man is?" (NIV). Now, the "Son of Man" is referring to Himself. That was the way He referred to Himself. Who do people say I am, basically?

And so, "They replied, 'Some say, John the Baptist; others say, Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.'" So, you had all of these religious opinions of people trying to account for the power and the authority and the works that He did. Oh, this must be one of the prophets. We've read about all the stuff they did. Maybe one of them has come back from the dead. That's who He is. And so — but what you really have is a lot of natural men trying to figure it out.

God, deliver us! Like I said, there's so much that is just totally natural in religion today that we need to build on a true foundation! We sang some songs about the foundation this morning. Do you know there is one?

Do you know it's something only God can do? Do you know everything about the Kingdom of God is supernatural from start to finish?

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Sweet Sound

Ken Yonish

"I love you Lord and I lift my voice to worship you, oh my soul rejoice. Take joy my king in what you hear, may it be a sweet, sweet sound in your ear." (Laurie Klein, 1978). Is that the prayer of your heart today? Shouldn't it be the prayer of every child of God? Shouldn't we desire a closer relationship with the Lord so much that it's pleasing to His ear, especially when we worship Him? But what kind of "sound" is pleasing to God? Is it simply the sound of our voice that pleases Him? Is it a beautiful voice alone that is pleasing to Him? Of course not. Obviously, the writer of this worship song is suggesting a much deeper and intimate meaning that goes far beyond what we think is pleasing to Him.

In the natural, one could make the argument that one of the sweetest sounds to the human ear includes the sound of close tight harmonic voices blending together. This is especially true with trios or quartets. We love the sound of the deep bass voice contrasted with the high tenor voice, then all tied together with the complimentary harmonies in the middle. It's almost as if it creates a sound of its own, a pleasing sound indeed to our natural ears.

But how does this apply to us as His church today when we come together to worship? What about God's ears? What sounds pleasing to him? What happens in the spiritual realm? What about every choir, song leader, musician, praise and worship team? Every congregation?

Surely just the sound of our praise pleases Him, right?

Maybe. Maybe not.

In Isaiah 29:13, the Lord through the Prophet Isaiah said, *"These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is based on merely human rules they have been taught."* Clearly from this scripture we can see that it is not just the act of singing the words that pleases God. We

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Editor's Letter

Dear Saints,

Greetings once again in the wonderful name of Jesus! It's hard to believe we are once again nearing the end of another year. It has been a year of both blessing and challenge.

I am often reminded as I observe the world scene of the unfolding reality of what the Lord so dramatically revealed in our midst about 50 years ago: the final loosing of Satan before the end of all things. We see the effects of it on every hand.

God's people need to realize that the increase of satanic power means that they will feel increasing pressures of many kinds. Satan is angry. I'm so glad that God's grace will carry His people through no matter what may come!

Once again, the lead article is an edited version of a message preached last year and recently used on the TV broadcast. It highlights some simple truth about both the gospel and the church Christ promised to build. What a glorious hope we have in Him!

Bro. Ken Yonish has contributed a wonderful article on worship that I hope will be encourage every reader.

The other article is a reprint of the answer to an incoming letter from a lady who, as the title indicates, was struggling to come to faith. May it shine a line on Satan's tactics in discouraging those who would respond to the gospel message.

We wish all a wonderful season remembering our Savior's birth and a spiritually prosperous new year. Till next time may God's rich blessings be yours.

Your brother in Christ,
Phil Enlow

By Invitation Only

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So now, Peter: "Simon Peter answered, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Now, Jesus immediately responds to that by saying, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven." Folks, if we want a foundation for God calling people into His kingdom, to make them a part of His church, this is the foundation.

I'm thinking about the ways that men go about building churches. Can you imagine the Father sending Jesus out to do His work and

saying, "All right, Jesus, I want you to go out and win everybody you can. Here is a soul-winning script that you can follow and every time you persuade somebody to say the little prayer at the end of the script, then there's a discipleship course that you can teach them and you can begin to" Does any of this sound familiar?

That's just one of many ways that people build what they call churches in this world. They have natural ways. What's happened is the business mentality of Western civilization has basically invaded the church and people have had the idea, "I've got to build Him a church." We're out here, we're trying to spread the Gospel, gather as many people together as we can, and so what we need to do is to employ the methods of the business world. We are going to start advertising campaigns. We are selling a product. The product is Jesus.

God, deliver His people from such as that! My God, do we not understand how supernatural all of this has to be? The only reason Peter followed Jesus was not because he had a nice opinion about Jesus. Oh, He's one of the prophets. That sounds so good and so noble. God had planted a conviction, supernaturally, in his heart, as to who Jesus was, what He was about. And that was a conviction that held him through thick and thin, even through his own failure, when it came time for the crucifixion. There was something in here that he knew, supernaturally.

Has God ever planted that in your heart? That's the foundation! Every person—every person, when the Father looks down to see who is a part of His church, every single one will have a God-revealed conviction in the heart as to who Jesus is, and who they are! There is no substitute for this!

I find myself, at times, fighting off anxiety. Why are there so few? Why this? Why that? What about my deficiencies? Oh, God, I've got to say it right! Oh, God, I've got to do it right!

No, we just need Him! We just need God to come and convict and deal with hearts and bring us together and form what He is doing! He is well able to do what He said He's going to do!

Oh, we need to see that from the depths of our hearts and say, God, show me how to be a participant in that! Show me how, as Paul expressed it, to be a worker together with you.

So now, Jesus is going to make a statement: "And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it." Praise God! You know what Hades was, don't you? It was considered the place of the dead in the ancient world. The Hebrews called it Sheol.

And, you know, I don't care what you do in this world, everybody knows at the end that's where you go, and nobody comes back. It rules over everything that happens in this world. Here's Jesus standing and saying, I don't care, the gates of Hell won't stop what I'm doing!

I've got people that have died, but I'm going

to bring them out of there. I am the conqueror of death and Hades itself! There's nothing that can stop what I'm going to build! And the point that I have made many times is, God has never told the first person to build Him a church. Not the first one! It's not my job to build the church. It's His job!

It's my job just to yield my vessel. It's our job to yield our vessels as that living sacrifice, so that He can live in us as the Father lived in Jesus. And as we allow Him to express His heart and His Word in power through us, God is going to cause that word to be planted in the hearts of those that He is calling into His kingdom.

I'm getting miles ahead of myself, but that's all right. Praise the Lord! I'll just pause and say this: the rock is not Peter. There's a little bit of a play on words in that. The word Peter — by the way, how did he get the name Peter?

The Lord gave it to him. His name was Simon. And so, that in itself was a foretelling of what God was going to do to take a man called Simon and make him into Peter. Petros or Peter is a small rock. He's made of the same stuff as the big Rock, but he's not the big Rock.

But it's upon "this rock." The rock is the conviction, the rock is the revelation of who Jesus Christ is. It is a divine work of God in the heart of everyone that He calls and makes a part of what He's talking about here. Everything about this is supernatural! All we can do is be a part of it or not! I want to be a part of it!

I want this local fellowship to reflect that and never to depart from it, never to devolve into just another tradition to preserve what Brother Thomas taught. That would be the last thing he would ever have wanted! I can't think of any way to dishonor the man any more than that. But oh, God, we just need the power of God to come and to convict hearts. I see it happening, don't you? God's here! We just need to understand, in a deeper way, and cooperate with what He's doing.

"I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church." He will build it, there's a certainty to it. But somehow, I want to come at this in a slightly different way and focus on the word "church," because it's a little hard to render.

First of all, we have our cultural ideas as to what that means. Secondly, most people don't have access to the original word, "ecclesia." There are several ideas that are woven into that. It's more than just "church." It is a "called out assembly."

And every one of those words that we use in English is rich with meaning. In the first place, this is something supernatural, composed of people who are "called." How many of you know that the Kingdom of God is by invitation only?

Now that's not meant to sound snooty. It's not meant to sound scary, in the wrong sense. But what it is, is to put the emphasis upon God! This is something God is doing. Folks, we are dependent upon God. This is something

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Help, I'm Struggling to Come to Faith

The following is an answer to a sister struggling to come to a rest of faith in Christ. The issues addressed apply to all of us in one way or another.

Dear _____,

Greetings in the wonderful name of Jesus! Wow! Thanks for writing and sharing your experiences and thoughts in such detail. Like you, I hardly know where to begin, but I believe I should begin by saying that you should be greatly encouraged. It is very evident to me that God has been working patiently in you for a long time and that He has given you an understanding of many things that few understand. That is not a cause for pride but rather for gratitude and hope.

In several places you recount things the Lord has said to you at various times (in spite of the fact that you are not *sure* it was the Lord). It was. Early in your letter you quote the Lord as saying, "I know I am not all you need, but one day I will be all that you need. But you can't get yourself there, only I can do it in you." That's exactly right and you ought to remind Him of His promise – and *thank* Him daily for doing what He has promised.

Towards the end of your letter you summarized what you believe the Lord is saying. I won't quote it all but I believe it is *exactly* what He is saying and that you ought to believe it!

You use the word "struggle" frequently. In the first place not everyone's experience is the same. We are all different and God works according to our need and His purpose. It might encourage you to know that John Bunyan, author of the great classic, *Pilgrim's Progress*, went through a terrible protracted struggle in coming to faith. What he gained as a result of that struggle is everywhere evident in his writings and ministry later on.

It seems obvious to me that much of your struggle is being orchestrated by Satan who is understandably terrified at the truth God has revealed to your heart. He is throwing up every hindrance he can muster to prevent your laying hold of the hope God has set before you.

One hindrance involves the multitude of religious "voices" you are subjecting yourself to. As the Lord told you long ago, not everything that appears to of Him actually is. Believe it! I'm not in a position to issue a blanket condemnation of _____ (surely there is something on it that is good) but the few times I've had opportunity to watch (usually on overseas trips) it has been obvious to me that much of it is religious "garbage." As you point out several times, the message and emphasis is often very different from what the Lord has revealed to you in various ways. Why is that? Surely these voices are not all from God! God is not the author of confusion. If He isn't then who is? Shouldn't we go by the Word of God and recognize that the source of much in Christendom today is really demonic? Yet it is allowed

to influence you and side-track you from what God would make real. Wouldn't it be better to stop listening to so many voices and stick with the Word of God, thanking the Author for revealing it to you and working it in you?

Another recurring theme in your letter is your addiction to self-effort. You know you can't, but you can't stop trying. You're afraid to stop trying, but also afraid that you will "let God down." Guess what! You and I will *always* fall short through self effort. You're trying live in Romans 7. Self-effort is rooted in unbelief, pride, and self-righteousness. You are no different from every other sinner. In ourselves we are all unworthy, helpless, guilty, and in need of mercy. But that is exactly what God offers!

Yet Satan keeps you on this "treadmill" through the fear of what will happen if you "stop trying," as though acceptance by God depends somehow on your efforts and if you stop trying and then fail God will reject you. Satan knows that this is the very reason we need a Savior in the first place! Your addiction to self effort is fueled by reasonings such as you express. You need to go to the Word and use it to answer the devil.

Isn't that what Jesus did in His temptation? Even the Son of God didn't attempt to debate or reason with the devil. He simply gave Him the Word. Satan can always come up with some kind of rationale to prop up his lies but he has no answer for a simple stand on what God has said. The truth is that when we *don't* do that – and none of us does it perfectly all the time – aren't we really saying that maybe God is a liar after all and that His Word isn't reliable? We're left caught in the middle, trying to evaluate what God says, what the devil says, and trying to come to a conclusion through our own powers of reason. Not a good place to be! Jesus said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away." Matt. 24:35.

Closely related to this is that Satan works to keep you on the treadmill of "analysis." Perhaps you have heard the expression, "paralysis through analysis"? It simply means that because we can't understand *everything*, we are afraid to do *anything*! Did not Jesus say, "I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it"? Mark 10:15. There will always be things you cannot fully explain but must leave in God's hands. That is trust, the kind of trust a small child has in a loving parent.

The idea of trusting God is an area Satan has concentrated on – as he once did with Eve. He paints God as untrustworthy and plies us with the ridiculous fantasy that by *not* trusting God we can somehow remain "in control"! Get real! Since when have you and I *ever* been "in control"?! So he has you caught between the fantasy of control and the fear of what *might* be.

And he has succeeded as he did with Eve in

getting you to question God's character. What does God have to do to prove Himself? He sent His Son to die for us – in spite of the fact that we were hopeless sinners, utterly undeserving. He gave up His Son for you; can you not give your children to Him? You can't guarantee them anything in *this* world, let alone the next. And His concern for them is focused not just on this present world but ultimately on eternity. What better hands could your children be in?

God has not given us a spirit of fear – but there is one influencing you to doubt God. Why do you not steadfastly stand on the Word of God in the face of such a damnable lie? Are you not believing Satan – a liar and murderer – more than God? I do not say this to condemn but to shine a light on the enemy of your soul.

You refer to entering into rest and that is exactly what Jesus offers. Matthew 11:28-30. In Hebrews 4:10-11 we read, "... anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest..." That sounds like a contradiction but it isn't. The *work* from which we are to cease is our own effort to make ourselves acceptable to God. The *effort* to enter that rest refers to overcoming the obstacles that would hinder us from resting from our own work. That means recognizing these tactics of Satan's and resisting him with the Word of God. It is a battle of truth verses lies. Which will you trust? Where will you stand?

Another area of hindrance I see in your letter is in the area of what you are expecting. It's almost as if real Christians are beyond faults and difficulties. Therefore as you focus inward and observe needs the devil is always in a position to say, "IF you were a Christian it wouldn't be this way." And so coming to a place of rest is always somewhere "out there," some other time and place, etc. We can be so self-critical and analytical that we never really come to faith. When that happens we are looking in the wrong direction! As long as you are in the flesh you will always see faults when you look inward. It is not that we are dishonest and unaware of need but our focus needs to be on Christ who came to save sinners. If you are looking any other direction then, like Peter when he tried to walk on the water, you will sink. Isn't it wonderful that Jesus reached out to rescue him!

Another thing Satan is holding over you is the fear of past sins. What are you afraid of? Are you afraid to be what you are, a sinner? Are you afraid that the blood of Jesus won't be quite enough to cover your sins? Is it pride, not wanting to face the depth of your own need? Are you afraid of what those you have hurt will think of you? What? Satan has you in "jail" over this, terrified because he knows better. He knows perfectly well that there is freedom from the past in Jesus, that His blood can make

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that is in His heart from all eternity to do. And He is doing it and He will do it!

But I'll tell you, you don't just volunteer for this. You don't just get a soul-winning script and go out and manufacture Christians. If God happens to be working in that situation, thank God! He works in spite of a lot of stuff, because He's going to reach His. But I'll tell you, you could fill a church and teach them all the songs and you would have nothing that would last for eternity. If that's how it happens, if it's just simply human effort with human energy behind it.

Folks, this Kingdom, this Church is not of this world! What Christ is talking about building here is not an institution of this world. It's not an organization. Organizations are run by men. Organizations are ruled over and governed and the energy behind them, the ideas — people get together and have committees or else they have a dictator and he decides what's happening.

My God, we have nothing we can do but stretch forth our hands and say, oh, God, lead us! We don't know what to do. We're like Solomon when he took over the kingdom. We need God to lead us, and empower us, and tell us what to do. We need His Spirit to go forth and accomplish what Jesus said was going to happen here.

When Jesus went forth he didn't have a soul-winning script. He simply gave out what the Father gave Him. Every day He went to the Father. He said (to paraphrase), "I can only do what the Father shows me. He acts and I act. We're in total harmony in what we're doing. And so, my job is to go out and speak truth as He gives it to me."

Now, by every measure of modern religion, Jesus was a total failure. Thousands listened to Him, thousands followed Him and thousands walked away from Him. Was Jesus a failure? No! God was reaching through Him and reaching those that He was calling into His kingdom, at that time.

There came a time when the numbers were greater, but was Jesus worried about all these people who just wouldn't believe? "Oh, Father, what's wrong? Why won't they believe in me?" Do you get the feeling anywhere that He was upset about that? No! He had a perfect understanding. I am part of something that is sure, that is eternal, God is speaking words that are calling people out of a world that is headed for the grave and headed for destruction. That Word has the power to bring them to life and that's up to Him. That's up to God. He knows those that are His. He knows how to reach them. Oh, I'm glad He knows how to reach His people!

There are some winding paths we walk. But how merciful, how faithful God is to reach and to work with hearts, isn't He? But this is by invitation only.

Remember what Peter said on the day of Pentecost when deeply convicted listeners

basically asked, "What are we supposed to do?" And he says, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Then what did he say? "The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off — for all whom the Lord our God will call." You see, there's a voice that's going, that's been going, ever since the day of Pentecost, it's been going out into the world and God has been calling! Yes, men have been the instruments of His calling, many times! But in the midst of that it is God who has spoken, who has empowered that Word!

Oh, God, how empty it is when we simply expound the concepts of the Gospel and expect that to do something. We need God to come! We need to be praying! We need to call upon God to let the Word be so powerful — His Word is like a hammer! It's like a sword! It has the power to get down into the depths of the needs of these desperately, wicked hearts of ours and break down the resistance!

Oh, I'll tell you, there's a tremendous need in hearts! We cannot manufacture Christians! We can't teach you, come here and learn how to sing our songs and believe our doctrines, that won't do you a bit of good if God doesn't change your heart.

That's what we need to be praying, that God will do something that's supernatural because that's the only thing that's real. This is a supernatural Kingdom from top to bottom.

Look at Romans chapter 8. You know the scripture we use so many times: "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been..." What? Oh! "...Who have been called according to..." Whose purpose? "...His purpose." Sounds to me like God's in charge! Wouldn't it be good if we would recognize and live like that and say, "Okay, God, you're the One doing all of this. You're in charge. I rest my life in your hands?"

Anyway, we're, "...called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he..." the Son, "...might be the firstborn among many brothers." God's called a family, hasn't He? By invitation!

"And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified..." made righteous in His eyes, "...those he justified, he also glorified." So, we're allowed, through the eyes of Paul, to stand back and see the big picture. My God!

Now, the Devil would take this and cause some to say, "Well, God's in charge, I don't have any choice. He made me like I am." That is a horrible, demonic cop-out! What we're seeing here is not a lack of ability and responsibility on our part, but the fact that underneath are the everlasting arms! When we surrender to Him, our lives belong to Him and He is able and willing to do everything that He has promised! We are in a secure place in Him!

So, it's wrong to listen to the devil's lies

that say, "Oh, He might just not even call you. You're not one of 'the called.' You're like you are because that's how He predetermined it." That's not what His predestination is about. I'll tell you, it is meant to give us that firm foundation, and to remind us that He is in charge.

What a hope we have! You think of the language and you could enumerate many scriptures along this line. But think about Paul talking to the believers and wanting them to have an enlarged understanding about the hope to which God has called them! God has called you to an expectation of something that is coming that depends upon Him. It's His gift to you, and we need to live in the light of that!

But it is a calling, isn't it? God has literally issued an invitation to participate in something that is beyond this world, that goes on forever. That's the essence of what we're talking about here this morning.

And then you look at Ephesians chapter 4 and see there's one body, there's one Spirit, even as you are — called according to one hope of your calling. Praise God! I don't care what label you wear in this world and all the stuff that has divided the church of Jesus Christ, God has a people. Those are the ones that He sees as His people in the earth. But I'll tell you, the hope that He's called us to is an amazing one!

"All that the Father gives me..." What? "...Will come to me..." John 6:37. He's describing an absolute process of God reaching down into human hearts, convicting them of their need, drawing them to a place of surrender, and on that ground alone, they come, and they cast themselves upon His mercy and put their faith in Him. That's the process of God reaching, but everyone that God does that for, they will come. Thank God!

Now, for the last part of it. Everyone will come, "...and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day."

Praise God! See, that's where even death doesn't win. Death has absolutely lost the battle. Praise God! "For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

Well, the Jews were grumbling about that. And so, Jesus said in verse 43, "Stop grumbling among yourselves. No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day."

Now, He's going to explain that just a little bit, because you've got some folks out there that just have God make all the decisions, you know, "You're going to Heaven, you're going to hell," like we don't have any responsibility at all, and it's not that way.

It says, "It is written in the Prophets: They will all be taught by God. Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to

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me.” Has God ever spoken to you, I mean, personally? You know it down in here. Has God ever spoken to you? What happened when He did? What happened? How did you react?

See, this is where the “rubber hits the road.” This is the crux of the matter. God speaks to a human heart. What does that heart do? Everyone who listens — you see, that’s what He’s looking at. “Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me.”

You see the work, the preparation work that happens in the human heart? Oh, I pray for everyone here that’s ever heard the voice of God. I pray for the kids that are growing up, that this will become real to you. You know, until that happens, all you can do is just listen, and learn, and grow, and ask God to help you.

But I’ll tell you, there’s got to come a point where God will absolutely reveal Himself to your heart and say, “You, come. You, surrender. You, give me your heart and give Me your life. Put your trust in Me.” You’ll never be a part of what Jesus is talking about until that day.

Look at John chapter 5, verse 24: “I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word...” Now, again, this is not just with ears. This is not just an intellectual process. Whoever hears my word! There’s something that’s beyond just one mind to another, because His words are spirit, and they’re life. There’s supernatural power when God speaks.

So, when He’s talking about hearing that Word, He’s not just simply talking about hearing the concept, He’s talking about hearing it, to where it makes an impact upon the heart, and you’re receiving it.

“...Whoever hears my word and believes...” There’s the response to that hearing. “...Believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.” Have you ever crossed over from death to life?

Now, I don’t want to over-emphasize the event in the sense that, oh, I had this tremendous crisis. Lights flashed. Angels sang. Not necessarily. But I’ll tell you, there is a moment in time in God’s economy when God seals the deal and you have crossed a bridge from which there is no return. You are His for time and eternity. It’s a response to His Word that is faith.

It’s not just believing concepts. This is, “I rest the hope of my eternal destiny on Your promise of what You have done for me through Jesus Christ.” That’s it. It’s a sealed, settled deal in my heart. “I am Yours, ‘lock, stock and barrel.”

And it takes God to do that. You won’t find that ability in any human being. You won’t find that inclination in any human being. God has to work with a heart. But when He brings the heart to that point, I’ll tell you, there is a God who hears and answers that prayer! You are in His hands, and you are in the hands of One who will never fail you, never leave you, never

forsake you. Thank God!

But listen to how He describes this. “I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live.” That’s some strange sounding language. What’s He talking about?

He goes on to talk about a day way down there at the end of the world where the dead are going to come out of the graves and all that. This is different! This is an apt description of what it is before you really come to faith! You are dead to the Kingdom of God! If all you have is Adam’s life, and you were just born into this world, you’re dead as far as God’s concerned. You have no more capacity to react than someone laying here in a casket, and Donald walks up and blows his trumpet in their ear. Do you think that would make any difference?

We need a supernatural God to do something supernatural to even cause somebody to be able to hear the voice. Oh, how dependent we are on the mercy and the grace of God. Isn’t that what He describes in Ephesians 2? You were dead, and you were made alive in Christ. Praise God! You were part of a world that was under the dominion of the power of darkness, but God raised you from the dead.

That’s what salvation is about. That’s what happens when the human heart hears the voice of the Son of God and puts their faith in it, believes it, receives it! God imparts His life! I’ll tell you, we need to be born. This is a birth, isn’t it? This is something that’s radical.

But I want to add one little dimension here, lest anybody would listen to the enemy and say, “Okay, God’s in charge. Nobody can come unless God calls them. He decides who’s coming. It’s all up to Him. I have no responsibility in this matter.”

I tell you, it’s not that way at all, because not everybody who is called answers the call. God’s call goes out to so many. You think of Noah’s day when God said what? “My spirit shall not always strive with man.” (KJV). Well, what does that tell you? God’s Spirit had been striving with men. He’d been striving with people who would not listen!

So, God wasn’t just saying, “Oh, I didn’t choose you, go on to hell.” This was God reaching out. This is the heart of God. This is still His heart. If there are some who don’t hear His voice and refuse to humble themselves and put their faith in Him, it’s not God’s fault! No one’s going to be able to stand there on the Day of Judgment and say, “God, You’re at fault! You didn’t give me a chance! You’re responsible for my condition! You have no right to judge me.” Trust me, that isn’t going to happen.

Oh, if we could see the heart of God! God, open our eyes to see the mercy and the love that would reach down to sinners who have absolutely no qualifications for His Kingdom. Folks, this isn’t about being some special somebody. This isn’t about being strong. This isn’t about being anything.

This is not just a rule-based religion He’s

called us to. This is a new life! This is one where the weakest of the weak just says, “Lord, I’m Yours. Come and change my heart and make me what You want me to be.” Praise God!

But think about the parable Jesus told of the great supper. What a picture that is! Jesus said, “A rich man made a great supper, and...” — who did he call? He’s called a whole bunch of people that had been invited. The invitation, the general invitation had gone out, and he said, “Now, it’s time. Everything’s ready. Come!” So, there was an invitation, wasn’t there? There was a calling to come and partake of a feast that had been completely prepared.

But what happened? One after another, they made excuses. Something was more important than responding to that call. That’s a picture of the Gospel. Folks, if there’s anything in anybody’s life that takes precedence over what He’s talking about, oh, God. I don’t even want to think about it.

What do you think about the rich young ruler? What do you think he thinks now? “What an utter fool I was. I had a little bit of money for a short time, and then the grave claimed me, and now what? And He was offering me eternal life if I’d just turn loose of that! And eternal life is forever, and I would get to be with Him and be set free.”

There is nothing in this world worth putting up your hands and saying, “I don’t want it. I won’t come. I choose my way over Yours, Lord.”

Isn’t it interesting that, no doubt, Jesus drew on a custom of the time where people didn’t even have to provide their own clothes to come. How would you like that kind of an invitation? Of course, some of you ladies would say, “I want to wear what I want to wear. I’ve got this great new dress, and I want to go show it off.” I’m sorry. I had to throw that in there!

But what a picture it is of the Gospel when the ones who were invited were even provided the garment that they wore. Is that not a picture of the Gospel?

You think you’re too bad. You think you’re too this or too that, or is some other obstacle in your mind about what you are and what you’ve done? Forget it. What He did is enough, the song that was sung. It’s enough! It’s all that we need. It’s all that any of us needs, to be able to say, “Lord, I just surrender. You cover me with Your righteousness. You give me everything that I stand in need of. I rest my hope, my case in Your hands. I just come.”

And so, what did the master of the feast do? He sent his servants out, and he started gathering people off the streets. And then they bring them all in, and there’s plenty of room still. “Go out and get some more. Go into the highways and the hedges, I mean, just everywhere you can, anybody that’s willing to come.”

Folks, God’s not looking for the strong and great. He’s looking for people who will just simply humble themselves to His eternal purpose. He provides everything. Oh, praise God!

What a Gospel we have! This isn’t for the

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By Invitation Only

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strong who are able to keep rules. This is for people who say, I am desperately in need of a Savior. I have no hope. I have a record of sins that reaches to Heaven. How could He love somebody like me? But He does, He does.

But you think about what Jesus said in one of the accounts of this great supper. He made the comment. He said, "Many are called, but..." what? "Few are chosen." But do you suppose that means God is just playing games with calling people, because He's just calling them and saying, I don't really choose you, but I'm going to make a show of calling you? When God calls out to those who refuse to respond, is it just an act?

No! He's calling, but He's looking for a response, isn't He? And where there's a willingness to just say, "Yes, Lord, I surrender..." I'll tell you, there is a choice. Then there's an eternal hand that reaches down and takes care of the rest. Oh, praise God!

What a place of rest He's called us to. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." That's the hope of the Gospel.

You think of what Jesus said through the prophets. I think of a couple of places in the end of Isaiah. He said, "...When I called..." When I called--when I called, what? "...Ye did not answer...and did choose that wherein I delighted not."

I'll tell you, we have an awesome God who is building something that is supernatural. And He is going to reach every single one of His. But I'll tell you, the heart of God is not looking to keep people out. The heart of God is looking to reach the weakest of the weak, the most hopeless of the hopeless. His heart is going to reach out until there's no more capacity for someone to say, yes.

Think of the reaction of Jesus having to watch from Heaven as He would send prophets to the nation of Israel, century after century. He would send someone, and they would murder them. They'd say, "I don't want you. I don't want what you're saying. I reject it! We're going to go on and practice our idolatry. Get out of here. Stop rebuking us! We're going to kill you," and they did.

And here's Jesus looking down at people that were supposedly His people. And now, He comes on the scene, and He realizes what's about to happen. He's about to be crucified, totally rejected. What does He do? He's out there on a hill looking over Jerusalem. What does He do?

Does He say, "I can't wait until I can get you for all this stuff you've done"? NO. He weeps. Is that not a divine response? Jesus breaks down and weeps. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered...as a hen gathereth her chickens..." What was the problem? "...ye would not!"

That's what's happening in the earth today. I want to be part of the voice of God calling forth. It's not about eloquence. If it is, I'm not going to qualify. But it's about having His heart, His Spirit. It's about calling people to surrender their lives and put their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ with the promise and the hope of something that goes beyond anything any of us could imagine.

Look at Hebrews chapter 3. "Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling..." (NIV). I could say this: "Brothers and sisters who share in the heavenly calling, somebody here who has heard the voice of God, you said, 'Yes,' and God has put His Spirit in your heart, and you've been born of that Spirit and that life..." What about you? What's God's word to you?

"...Fix your thoughts on Jesus..." That tells me it's not just something instant where you suddenly become mature. You know, we're born into this thing. We hear the calling. "... The apostle and high priest whom we confess. He was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was faithful in all God's house. Jesus has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honor than the house itself. For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything." Praise God!

I'll come down to this where it says in verse 6, "And we are his house, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast." Here's the verse that Brother Thomas used so many times over the years, and I think I want to end with this. "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts..."

Now, is that an angry threat, or is that a

Sweet Sound

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can go through the motions, doing all the right things and saying, "Hallelujah" or, "Praise the Lord" at just the right moment and never once touch the heart of God. Jesus quoted this same scripture to the Pharisees and Scribes when they condemned the disciples for not living according to the traditions set forth by the elders.

May we never measure the worth of our worship through the traditions of our past. If His mercies are new and fresh every day shouldn't our praise be new and fresh every day? Shouldn't we lift up a new praise to Him every time we worship? In the Psalms there are many references to singing a new song to the Lord. Is the Psalmist referring to learning a new song every week or so to please Him? No! He means being engaged with all our heart, soul and being and not simply reciting words and phrases in a meaningless way.

The Apostle Paul put it this way. "So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my understanding; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my understanding." 1 Corinthians 14:15. Although Paul is referring to speaking in tongues, the

yearning heart that knows what the consequences of hardening one's heart are? It's the latter, isn't it? Don't you see the heart and spirit of God in the way He reaches out to people? Why would Jesus weep if He didn't have that heart? "Oh, if there's anything I could do," but yet He was part of an eternal process where God was working with hearts and speaking to people and calling them out of this present world into something that's eternal.

And I'll just return to this. Has God spoken to you? Have you ever heard His call to come and truly belong to Jesus Christ, "lock, stock and barrel"? And if you've heard it, what did you do? And if you hear it today, what are you going to do?

Oh, in the name of Jesus Christ, I beseech you to humble yourself and call upon His name. Don't let anything the devil tells you stand in your way. You run to Jesus, and you fall at His feet, and you give Him your heart and your life. He will hear your cry. He will respond. God is not looking to keep people out. He's looking to bring them in.

But folks, this is a divine process. Jesus is the one building this church, I mean, the one I'm describing. I pray, I hope everyone here becomes a part of that. But I'm not fool enough to think that everybody is, necessarily. But I'll tell you, we serve a God who's able to seek and save those that are lost.

So, I just put this in your hands today. You're a part of this world: are you going to perish with it, or are you going to call out to Him and surrender and become a part of something that will never pass away? That's His promise, and He will answer the cries of those who call upon Him. Praise God!

same principle can be applied with regards to worship. If we do not understand what we are singing how can we truly worship him and not just be reciting memorized words, or worse yet, just reading them out of a Hymnal. We must engage our hearts and our minds.

So how can we know if our worship is a sweet sound to God? How do we avoid just going through the motions? First of all we are His children. When He saves us He puts His Spirit in us crying, "Abba, Father." In other words, it is the Holy Spirit within us singing praises to the Lord. But our spiritual growth is a process. We don't springboard from spiritual adolescence to spiritual adulthood overnight. Much of our growth process comes simply by walking day by day in unity with our brothers and sisters in the Body of Christ. As we walk in unity together God enables our new heart to worship on a higher plane. For example, David, in Psalm 34, starts the psalm by saying, "I will bless the LORD at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make her boast in the LORD: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad." Psalm 34:1-2.

But then David almost seems to turn a different direction. He adds, "O magnify the

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Struggling

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the vilest sinner clean! Satan will invoke fear and pride regarding making things right with those you have hurt, because he knows that if you trust God – however those involved react – you will be free!

Take up the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, and fight through these obstacles. The God who has helped you thus far won't abandon His promises to you. He will help you. In Matt. 11:12 Jesus said of the kingdom of God, "forceful men lay hold of it." That includes women! Let the opposition of Satan encourage you. He is afraid. He knows the power of the gospel. Don't let Satan define what it is you expect to "happen." Take it a day, an issue at a time. Stand on the Word. Like a child entrust each issue as it comes to your Heavenly Father – and THANK Him. (And don't let the devil argue that He isn't your Heavenly Father because you don't measure up, etc.) Let God do the saving, a day at a time.

Always answer the objections and reasonings of the devil with the Word. What else do you have to stand on, your own powers of reason? When the devil tries to tell you that you have no right to expect anything from God remind him of the woman who said to Jesus, "Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from the master's table." Quit trying to deserve what you get from God. Rely instead upon the cross and the One who died there. He paid the price in full for everything God offers.

Don't fall for the lie, "God wants me different." God wants you *as you are*. It is His job to change you – and that doesn't happen all at once.

I guess I could go on but those are essentially the thoughts that came to me. As I said at the beginning you should be greatly encouraged that God has so patiently worked in your heart and mind – and that the devil has fought all this so hard. Don't be afraid to let go. He is faithful.

In Christ, Phil Enlow

Please pray "...that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel...."
Ephesians 6:19.

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www.midnightcry.org

COMING EVENTS

June Convention
June 19-22, 2019
Southern Pines, North Carolina

BOOK CORNER

Delivered From Demons, by C. Parker Thomas

The story of a young girl's deliverance from demon possession and also a collection of a number of other articles relating to Satan's kingdom and activity, specially as it relates to the end of this present age. Suggested Price - \$6.50.

Does God Speak To You? by C. Parker Thomas

This booklet is composed of a wonderful series of articles published in the Midnight Cry Messenger during 1979. In this time of great spiritual darkness and deception what are the various ways in which He speaks and how can we learn to recognize His voice and respond? Suggested Price - \$3.50.

Examine Yourselves, By Phil Enlow

Paul said to "examine yourselves." There must be a way to do that. Can you say with Paul, "I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day." 2 Tim 1:12. Suggested Price - \$7.50

The Gospel, By Phil Enlow

What is the gospel? Everyone thinks they know--but do they? In this day of watered-down "easy-believism" it is critical to know what real salvation is. What was the gospel that Paul preached? Suggested Price - \$3.00

How Do You Know You Are Right? By Phil Enlow

A spiritual challenge. A study of spiritual knowledge and how it is acquired. This is an area of critical importance in this hour of spiritual darkness and deception. We cannot afford to blindly rest in tradition. Suggested Price - \$4.00

Immortality, By Phil Enlow

What does the Bible teach about immortality, the future of unbelievers, the future of God's people? From the eight-part series in the MCM. Suggested Price - \$5.00.

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A clear study of the keys as they apply to us in today's world. Suggested Price - \$3.00.

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The Midnight Cry, by C. Parker Thomas

Contains two articles that set forth the truths concerning the midnight cry: what is it? who hears it? who makes it? what is its significance for us. A must for people who would understand this ministry. Suggested Price - \$1.00

Sex and Marriage in the Light of God's Word, by C. Parker Thomas

From a series of articles covering a whole range of scriptural and practical truth designed to help God's people in this important area. Suggested Price - \$7.00.

Sudden Death Overtime, by Phil Enlow

From the series published beginning in 2001. A look at our world and its prospects through biblical "glasses." What can we learn from history? What lies in our future? Why is the world like it is? Things every Christian should know. Suggested Price - \$7.00.

The Sure Foundation, by C. Parker Thomas

A collection of four articles published in the early 1980's on the important subject of the foundation believers have in Christ. Suggested Price - \$4.00.

Tongues: My Testimony, by C. Parker Thomas

Contains the article by the same name as well as an article entitled "Tongues Should be Tested" by Gerald McGraw in which he recounts lessons learned from testing to discover the spirit enabling someone to speak in tongues. Startling! Suggested price - \$3.00

What About Genesis? by Phil Enlow

How should we understand the Genesis accounts of the creation and the flood? Can a simple historical understanding of these accounts be defended in this age of scientific skepticism? Does it matter? Suggested Price - \$4.00.

What Does Deception Look Like? by Phil Enlow

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Your Adversary, By C. Parker Thomas

Awhile back, while looking through some of our oldest issues of the MCM, we uncovered this timely gem, published in about 1960! There is a simple directness and clarity in this teaching that will help anyone who desires to walk with the Lord and overcome in this hour. Suggested Price - \$2.50.

Note: The prices listed above are suggested with the thought in mind of simply covering the costs of printing and mailing these materials. It is not our intention to become "book-sellers," selling books for profit. Our desire is to get out truth that can help set God's people free in this critical hour. Please write to us at:

Midnight Cry Messenger
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Sweet Sound

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LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together.”

Together? Yes, together.

In this Psalm David is exhorting us to worship with him. Together means unity. Can we truly worship God together without unity? Psalm 133:1-3 says, “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.”

It is impossible to have God’s presence in our midst without unity. It is impossible to have God’s presence in the midst of our praises without unity. It is impossible for our worship to be a sweet, sweet sound in His ear without unity.

Thank God for the measure of unity we have in our fellowship. But don’t be fooled into thinking there is any other way. You can’t say that you love God if you hate your brother. “If a man say, I love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar: for he that loves not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?” 1 John 4:20. Of course you’re not going to say you “hate” your brother, but do you talk about him behind his back? Do you gossip about him when he’s not around?

What’s the difference?

But, thank God, He provides everything we need from start to finish to accomplish this seemingly impossible task. It’s not within us to love anyone but ourselves. That’s why we need His Love in us. However, there is a part we play. We have to be willing to do His will. It’s a death-to-self message. Paul encouraged the Ephesians this way: “Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God. Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other’s faults because of your love. Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace.” Ephesians 4:1-3, NLT.

If we have to make every effort to keep ourselves united in the Spirit as Paul encourages us to do, then that implies there might be occasions to put that into practice, doesn’t it? This is when we must die to our own ambitions and purposes. We must seek to understand His purpose. Paul addresses the Philippians this way: “Is there any encouragement from belonging to Christ? Any comfort from his love? Any fellowship together in the Spirit? Are your hearts tender and compassionate? Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose. Don’t be selfish; don’t try to impress others.

Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don’t look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too. You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had.” Philippians 2:1-5, NLT.

What does Paul mean we must have the same attitude that Jesus had? In verses 6-8 Paul adds, “Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal’s death on a cross.” Now God may not require us to physically die on an actual cross but he may (and most certainly will) give us opportunities to humble ourselves to one another from time to time. Just as Jesus Christ humbled himself and became a servant so must we humble ourselves and become servants one to another. This is truly having the same attitude that Jesus had.

Paul instructs the Colossians with the same message. In Colossians 3:12-17, he writes, “Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”

What is Paul’s message here? He is defining the very heart of God. What is the main attribute and characteristic of God’s behavior? Is it not that God is Love? Just look at the message of the Cross. Is that not the full expression of God’s Love to us? Romans 5:8. “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

If Love is the principal force that defines God’s heart shouldn’t it also be the principal force that defines us and motivates us toward one another? Absolutely. Jesus said “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” John 13:34-35.

The ears of God are tuned into the sweet, sweet sound of unity among His children as we walk together in love — His Love. Every time we gather together in His Name He is there in the midst. This is the place of His Habitation. This is where He commands the promise of His blessing where brothers and sisters dwell together in unity. To Him there is no sweeter sound.

Broadcasts

RADIO STATIONS

Monday - Friday

Stat.	Freq.	Location	Time
KXEG	1280 AM	Phoenix, AZ	9:00 AM
WEMM	107.9 FM	Huntington, WV	11:00 AM
WWVA	1170 AM	Wheeling, WV	9:30 PM

Short Wave Radio

WHRI ANGEL 1

Australia/New Zealand

Mon.-Fri.: 0900 UTC - 12.015 Mhz

East/Central Africa

Mon.-Fri.: 1600 UTC - 21.610 Mhz

Caribbean/Central & South America

Mon.-Fri.: 2315 UTC - 7.315 Mhz

WHRI ANGEL 2

East North America

Tues.-Sat.: 0015 UTC - 5.920 Mhz

KWHR ANGEL 3

China - Mon.-Fri.: 0915 UTC - 9.930 Mhz

Bonus Airings on Webstreaming

Angel 2 - Off Air-Streaming Only - 2000-2015

Angel 3 - Off Air-Streaming Only - 1715-1730

For a current schedule of “Angel” stations go to leseaa.com/whr/program-schedules/, scroll down to “Detailed Schedule Search,” enter Midnight Cry for the program title and then click “Start Search.”

Television Broadcast

— (30 Minutes Weekly) —

Local Broadcasts

Albuquerque, NM - KAZQ - TV 32
Sun. 7:30 AM

Chicago, IL - WJYS TV-62
Sun. 7:00 AM

Dallas/Forth Worth - KTXD TV-47
Sun. 8:00 AM

Greenville, SC - WGGS TV-16
Sun. 7:00 PM

Jacksonville, FL - WTLV - Ch. 12 HD
Sun. 6:00 AM

Los Angeles, CA - KDOC-TV 56
Sunday, 6:30 A.M.

Minneapolis, MN - WUCW-TV CW23
Sunday, 6:30 A.M.

Phoenix, AZ - KASW-TV CW6
Sunday, 6:30 A.M.

San Francisco, Oakland, California
KBCW TV-44 - Sunday, 6:00 A.M.

TV Network Broadcast

— (30 Minutes Weekly) —

The NRB Network (DirecTV 378)

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