

Ignite the Light

HAPPY NEW YEAR CHURCH FAMILY...

I want to share with you all a powerful word from our Metropolitan District Superintendent Kelvin Walker...



Dear Metro District Family,

“Still Giving God My Yes...” As of January 1, 2021, this is the way all my emails are now signed. You might think, “Kelvin, you always sign your emails that way.” There is now a new word that has been introduced to the signature – STILL.

“Do I STILL have your YES?” This was God’s response to my petition for fresh vision and/or new revelation in 2021. As I prayed, I heard the Holy Spirit speak to my heart:

“Even if I give you a fresh groundbreaking word it would still take your yes to accept it.”

“Even if I were to give you new revelation or fresh insight it would still take your yes to obey it.”

“Even if I give you a new direction and mission for the district it would still take your yes to follow it.”

You see, saying yes to God is the groundwork for all that we do. The very faith journey that we are on began with saying yes to Jesus! “Jesus, YOU are the Way, YOU are the Truth, YOU are the Life! YOU are the ONLY way to the Father. I say yes to YOU - I will follow YOU!” But this was the FIRST yes of many – this was only the beginning.

What I am starting to learn.... you would think I would have learned it by now...is that the Lord asks for and requires my yes repeatedly. He asks, “Are you still following Me? Are you STILL saying yes to Me? Are your eyes STILL fixed on only Me?”

After a year like 2020 my temptation is to

Say yes, but halfheartedly.

Say yes, but with qualifications and conditions.

Say yes, but no longer speak out against injustice.

Say yes, but be done with this global pandemic.

Say yes, but... (I think you get the picture.)

As I watched the events that unfolded at our Capitol on January 6th, I heard the voice of God speak once again: “Do I STILL have your yes?” And, once again, I was tempted to say, “Yes, but....” And, once again, I find myself just simply saying yes. So, here we go.

Brothers and Sisters, what happened within and on the grounds of the United States Capitol last Wednesday challenged the core of our democracy. The world watched as protestors carrying flags - some in the name of Jesus - participated in a violent riot against the peaceful transfer of power that has defined our country. While the events that unfolded were disheartening and revealed the vulnerability of our democracy, sadly, they were not surprising to me.

We have just finished the Advent season. Isaiah 9:6 reminds us the Prince of Peace has come and the government shall be upon HIS shoulders. In 2021, our YES must redefine who the church is, to Whom we are submitted, and upon Whom we are dependent – not a political party, not an ideology, not even a President. Rather, our YES is to be submitted to the Prince of Peace! Further, it must be understood that we are, first and foremost, citizens of HIS Kingdom.

I cannot help but think of II Chronicles 7:14 and how, at times, this verse can be misapplied: “If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.” (KJV)

I say this because, as one staff member has put it, I believe the Church - big C - has become “dangerously syncretized with political ideologies,” which puts us in grave danger of looking to a nation, a government, and/or a person other than Jesus to be our messiah. This is true, regardless of one’s political persuasion or party affiliation.

Righteousness, justice, and a pure government are found in Christ and Him alone. In fact, Psalm 89:14 remind us that “Righteousness and justice are the foundation of [God’s] throne. Love and faithfulness follow [Him].” Somehow, we have tried to make righteousness and justice the foundation of an earthly throne. As a result, a power struggle has ensued that we have no business being a part of, leading us to trade the Kingdom of God for the kingdom of man.

II Chronicles 7:14 is, quite possibly, less about praying for a righteous nation and more about God’s people checking their hearts to see if we will remain His righteous and just people regardless of the nation in which we live. That requires us, not the nation in which we live, to:

Humble ourselves Pray Turn from our wicked ways Seek His face

I am not saying we should not pray for our nation and those in political leadership, we should. However, I am saying it is our choosing to live as God’s people which will bring God’s forgiveness and healing of the land.

My sense is that the events of January 6th serve to remind us that it is not through the pushing of a political agenda that healing will come. Rather, it is through God’s people acting differently, and walking differently, and living differently that the land in which we live will be healed. Even amid shifting and uncertain times, the call of OUR King has not changed:

“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” (Matthew 22:36-40, NIV)

Love God. Love people. Preach the gospel. Act justly. Love mercy. Walk humbly with Him (Micah 6:8). This is the call of God’s people. Will we say YES to Jesus with uncompromised obedience on these things? Let us lead the way in forsaking the synchronization of our faith with politics, so we can, without hesitation or compromise:

Do ministry and life in the Spirit
Call for Kingdom justice and mercy
Develop our leadership and practice good soul care
Live missionally and advance the gospel globally

I am calling us to a place where we, the Church, no longer allow our faith to be dangerously syncretized with political ideologies. Let us humble ourselves, pray, turn from our wicked ways, and seek His face. As we repent and return to a faith that finds its resting place in Christ alone – a faith that loves God, loves people, preaches the gospel, and does justice – we will see the land healed and the Kingdom of God advance as God intended it to be. May it be so on earth, as it is in heaven.

This is a call for us - *you and me, the followers of Christ!* And, as we answer that call, remember who we are. We are Spirit-filled, renewal seeking, Bible preaching, healing believing gospel proclaiming risk takers who have learned from our founder that people who advance the Kingdom are presence dwellers that say yes to Jesus with *uncompromised obedience*...even if we are called to walk in a way we have never walked before.

Still Giving God My Yes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kelvin', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kelvin