

*James Crawford – “God’s Church Is Catching Fire” Pt 2
“The Justice of God Series” - Preached on 5-17-21*

“God’s Church Is Catching Fire”

1. God’s Church Is Catching Fire

Are you bored with life? Suffering church hurt? Disappointed? Tired of the social club and unanointed services? Well get ready for a radical change! You are going to love what God is about to do in His church!

You are right. Most churches are dead and lukewarm. Yes, she has been broken but God loves her, and He is fixing her now. Do not give up on her, she will be fine and so will we.

I want to help God fix her and get her on her feet again. I do not want to criticize her and kick her to the curb. God did not do that to me.

A revival fire is sweeping the nations right now. This will never be quenched. God will have His way and there will be a global revival that spreads as a flame into the church of Jesus Christ, and it will reach every nation on the planet!

We will be a people who resemble the laser-focused powerful church we read about in the Bible. Right now, the church is so much like the world we cannot tell a difference. But take heart because the fire and justice of God is doing a work!

God is raising thousands of Presence-driven churches on-line and off-line and these chosen ones will re-order God’s house on God’s terms.

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There will be pure joy, signs and wonders, healing and deliverance, destiny equipping & anointed prophetic preaching in these end-time houses of prayer! That is what is missing!

In order to accomplish this, there must be a leader-shift. God is raising up David, the man after God’s own heart. Thousands of them. These anointed leaders are selfless, and they seek God and do things His way. They uphold the holy order of God while faithfully serving His precious sheep.

This Divine reordering will require a Divine replacing. David will replace Saul now. Only this will fix God’s broken church.

So, rise up David and take your place! This is your time, and we have work to do!

But God removed Saul and replaced him with David, a man about whom God said, “I have found David...**a man after my own heart. He will do everything I want him to do.**”

Acts 3:22

2. We Are Sorry You Have Church Hurt

You are not alone. We know how you feel. We have designed this church family, with all that we have, to be a healing home & resting place for you and your family. That is the will of your Father in heaven.

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Many of us have been wounded by the church but many of us have been healed here. The healing begins when we accept the hurting ones into our church family.

Then we encourage you to talk about your pain. Next you must forgive. Then you will begin your new relationship with our healthy body and move into your true destiny!

If you have been wounded by false shepherds you will certainly heal here.

Thus says the Lord God...against the shepherds who feed My people: “You have...not attended to them...I will gather the remnant...and they shall be fruitful and increase. I will set up shepherds over them who will feed them; and they shall fear no more, nor be stressed, nor shall they be poor & deficient,” says the Lord.

Jeremiah 23:2-4

“I am sorry that I ever made Saul king, for he has not been loyal to me and has refused to obey my command.”

1 Samuel 15:11

3. Our Vision Is to Restore Order in God’s Church

The Holy Spirit has ordained Father Heart and many other churches to restore spiritual order back to the church of Jesus Christ. In order to

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accomplish this prophetic assignment, we will need to explain how God has ordered the universe. Yeah right!

Let us say that differently. We will attempt to explain how God has ordered the universe.

4. God Created the World and Gave Us Laws

All things are your servants, and the laws you made are still in effect today.

Psalm 119:91

One of the reasons the church has lost her fire and the ability to restore, heal and nurture God’s people is because her leaders have stopped upholding the law of God within the church.

This must be restored. The tenets of this law are found in the Bible and we do not get to omit any of them. We will be disqualified if we do this habitually.

God has delegated some spiritual authority to His anointed church leaders. If we follow them and submit to their leadership, we will have peace and health. For God’s order always brings peace and health.

If we are not in spiritual order, we and our family will suffer greatly.

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5. We Keep Ourselves Healthy by Keeping God’s Order

The quality of our church family is dependent on our understanding of spiritual authority. The Bible has much to say on this subject that is so often neglected. It is essential that every organization, large or small, spiritual or secular understand spiritual authority.

The more we understand & recognize it, the more we will enjoy unity, good morale and effective problem-solving. This determines how we relate to God’s authority, resulting in more blessing or more conflict in our lives.

6. Understanding Delegated Authority

All authority belongs to God, yet He administers some of His authority indirectly through people. When God uses other people to administer His authority, we call this delegated authority. We can distinguish between God’s direct authority and His delegated authority, but to God it is all one authority.

All delegated authority represents God’s authority. When Israel rejected the people that God sent with His delegated authority, they were rejecting God.

He who receives you receives Me, and...receives Him who sent Me.

Matthew 10:40

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God entrusted His authority to weak and imperfect vessels. We recognize people according to who they are in the Spirit. We look past their fleshly weakness and see the spiritual authority and calling given by God. It is biblical to make godly appeals to those in authority over you when you cannot agree with them.

Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh.

2 Corinthians 5:16

7. God Uses Saved & Unsaved People to Govern Us

God sometimes uses unsaved parents, employers and politicians to lead us. God sometimes directs them without them knowing it.

The king’s heart is like a stream of water directed by the LORD; he guides it wherever he pleases.

Proverbs 21:1

God delegates His authority to aid in establishing unity and protection throughout society to direct and coordinate the labors of those under them according to the corporate vision and values.

Authority and unity are two sides of the same coin. We cannot maintain unity without authority. Thus, God set up guidelines in His Word to protect the unity of all people by commanding His people to honor His delegated

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authority. We must cooperate with leaders’ decisions and avoid slandering them.

I plead with you...that you all speak the same thing...that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

1 Corinthians 1:10

²Being like-minded...being of one accord, of one mind.

Philippians 2:2

Keeping the unity of the Spirit requires lowliness, suffering long, and bearing with each other. Paul called the leaders to invest much work into cultivating a like-minded spiritual family.

This involves teaching on unity, providing opportunity for two-way communication of ideas, developing appeal structures, and continually strengthening and repairing relationships.

One reason I require all our staff to come to our all-staff meetings and FHC services is to strengthen unity (our vision, values, current emphases, policies, etc.)

It is not good for our staff (especially those on the front lines) to become disconnected spiritually or theologically from where the Spirit is leading this movement. If they do, divisions will inevitably occur.

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Authority is a central issue in all of life. We honor it out of respect for God, His authority, and His purposes. We seek to be free from all forms of dishonoring authority because of our love and reverence for our Father.

Therefore, at every sphere of life, we want to know what authority we possess, who is over us, and who is under us. Submission to authority is a spiritual issue. A spiritual person can see God’s hand in weak people who possess delegated authority.

Dishonoring authority is one of Satan’s primary principles of operation. Sacrifice without obedience to authority seeks to serve God in the same spirit in which Satan operates his kingdom.

Cain & Saul offered sacrifices to God while neglecting God’s authority.

(Gen. 4:1-8; 1 Sam. 13:8-14; Lev. 9:22-10:3)

Their sacrifices were rejected. Obedience to God, His Word, and authority is more important to God than offering our sacrifices in ministry. Without understanding this, many seek to sacrificially serve God before they settle the issue of obedience and honoring His authority (in the home, job, church, or government).

Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.

1 Samuel 15:22-23

Lawlessness is powerfully at work, seeking to bring strife and destruction to every order of society. There are overt forms of lawlessness such as murder, war, and theft, but subtle forms of lawlessness also undermine

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God’s authority in every sphere of society. Refusing to honor God’s authority in weak people is an expression of lawlessness.

For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work...

2 Thessalonians 2:7

Jesus prophesied that the spirit of lawlessness would climax in the generation in which the Lord returns. Lawlessness produces strife and undermines health & love in the home, church, and all society.

And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.

Mt. 24:12

8. Leaders Eat Last

The New Testament calls those who are first in authority to be last in privilege. Authority in the home and church only properly functions with a servant spirit. God appointed apostles to be first in authority in the church, but last in privilege.

God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues.

1 Corinthians 12:28

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God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world...We labor working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; being defamed, we entreat.

1 Corinthians 4:9-13

The basic function of the eldership or leadership in the NT was to rule, which consisted of shepherding and leading God’s people. Paul spoke of the elders who rule.

Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor...

1 Tim. 5:17

To rule speaks of bringing direction to the church. Direction includes establishing vision, values, and action plans, bringing correction, and problem solving in spiritual, financial, and administrative issues related to its ministries.

Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you...Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you...Greet all those who rule over you, and all the saints.

Hebrews 13:7, 17, 24

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To watch over or to oversee the souls of believers is a great responsibility. The eldership is responsible to watch over the flock, which includes feeding them from the Word, addressing areas of sin and blind spots, providing counsel for spiritual direction, watching for wolves (Acts 20:29-31), and ministering to the weak (Acts 20:35; 1 Thes. 5:14) and sick (Jas. 5:14-15).

9. What Is Spiritual Abuse?

It is abused:

- ~ When it seeks to direct issues in one’s domestic life (unless sin is involved).
- ~ When those in authority take more privilege and embrace less sacrifice.
- ~ When those in authority manipulate by promising exaggerated benefits of being “covered” by them (promising that their mantle will be passed on to faithful “armor-bearers,” etc.)
- ~ By failing to adequately communicate requirements by not giving the *why* behind the *what* (leaving the people under them feeling exasperated).
- ~ By operating with an authoritative spirit that is rigid and leads without kindness.
- ~ By being a leader who does not embrace the things that they require of others.
- ~ By not having an adequate appeal system in place for differences to be expressed.

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10. How to Respond to Leaders Over Us

Scripture calls us to obey the eldership. Submitting means being teachable and having a cooperative spirit to the corporate directions of the ministry (as long as they do not violate the Scripture). Elders do not direct the domestic issues of individual believers.

Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls...Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

Hebrews 13:17

There are always varying opinions on practical issues in ministry. Yet, God ordained leaders (elders) to determine the corporate direction, which includes administrative direction (organizational policies, time of meetings, etc.), financial direction (building issues, distribution of finances, etc.), ministerial direction (vision, values, outreach ministries, church discipline), spiritual direction (teachings or prayer focuses, etc.).

We esteem leaders by having a teachable spirit that seeks to be helpful. We seek to cooperate for conscience’s sake without being forced into compliance by ultimatums. Cooperation makes the leader’s task joyful instead of burdensome. To resist, criticize, or simply ignore the direction that leaders establish will cause them unnecessary grief and turmoil.

One way we esteem a leader is by embracing the policies and procedures related to being involved in their sphere (i.e., financial office, ministry teams, FHC procedures, prayer room policies, showing up on time for

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services or team meetings, etc.).

When we come up short, we should acknowledge it to the one in authority over that service.

We urge you to recognize those...over you in the Lord...and to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake. Be at peace among yourselves.

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13

Dishonoring: We dishonor authority by quietly disregarding what a leader asks of their team (until we are caught), by having a resistant spirit with a disagreeable attitude that regularly challenges the values and policies or by undermining the leader with our words to others.

11. Never Speak Against Authority

We are commanded by God to not speak evil of our leaders in the home, church, or society (Ex. 22:28; Lev. 20:9; Acts 23:5) without going through a proper biblical process.

²⁸You shall not revile God, nor curse a ruler of your people. (Ex. 22:28)

God commands this because He honors His own authority that He delegated to them and the unity in the family, job, church, or society. To sin against a leader is to sin against the unity. To sin against the unity is to sin against God’s purpose for that group.

Jesus answered the unsaved high priest to honor God’s authority (Mt. 26:62-64). Jesus encouraged paying taxes to Caesar as a statement of

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submission to ungodly authority (Lk. 20:25).

Paul respected the same unsaved high priest who helped orchestrate Jesus’ crucifixion. Paul repented of speaking sharp words to him because he represented God’s authority.

Paul said, “I did not know, brethren, that he was the high priest; for it is written, ‘You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people.’”

Acts 23:5

When any feel mistreated, they should make an appeal first to the Lord, then to the brother who mistreated them, and then to the leaders who have authority to help with the solution. To share an offense with a friend who is not a part of the solution is slander. (Mt. 18:15-20)

God commands leaders to remove slanderous people from the community after giving them opportunity to repent (Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 5:11, 13; 6:10; 10:10; Jas. 4:11; 5:9; Titus 3:10).

This command is given because they sin against the unity of the body. The church is not allowed to receive an accusation against a leader except on the basis of two or three witnesses (1 Tim. 5:19).

This prohibition is for the sake of the elder and for the sake of the unity of those under them.

Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition...

Titus 3:10

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I urge you...note those who cause divisions and offenses...and avoid them.

Rom. 16:17

12. We Are to Protect the Flock Against Sexual Perversion

I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral...or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person...Therefore put away from yourselves the evil person.

1 Corinthians 5:11-13

13. God Sharply Disciplines Rebellious Christians

When Korah spoke against Moses, he angered the Lord. It is not about obeying a leader, but it is God’s authority in that leader that we respect.

They [led by Korah] gathered together against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, “You take too much upon yourselves, for all the congregation is holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them.

Why then do you exalt yourselves above the congregation...?” Moses said: “By this you shall know that the LORD has sent me...If the earth opens its mouth and swallows them... you will understand that these men have rejected the Lord.”

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Numbers 16:3-3

14. David Refused to Dishonor God’s Corrupt Authority

David refused to strike Saul because he recognized God’s authority in him (1 Sam. 26:9-11).

He [David] said to his men, “The LORD forbid that I should do this thing to...the LORD’s anointed, to stretch out my hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the LORD.” David restrained his servants with these words, and did not allow them to rise against Saul...

Let the LORD judge between you and me...but my hand shall not be against you...Let the LORD be judge...and plead my case, and deliver me out of your hand.”

1 Sam. 24:6-15

15. God Is Raising End-time Moses Generals

There will soon be anointed apostles and prophets who lead God’s church through the most exciting days of revival as well as the most terrible days of His judgment.

There will be Goshen churches & Goshen cities who will provide a canopy of glory & protection as the Lord pours out plagues on the entire world.

The children of Israel were in Goshen. Studying this you can see what we call the Goshen principle. Goshen was a geographical area in Egypt where

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the children of Israel lived. It was the slave camp.

The Scripture says clearly that in Goshen, God’s judgments fell on the land of Egypt, but not in Goshen. In these last days, there will be a similar distinction.

This is what the Lord told Moses, “I will make a difference between the Egyptians and the children of Israel” (Ex. 8:23)

There will be a distinction between the believers and unbelievers in terms of the release of the judgment of God.

And I will sever in that day the land of Goshen, in which my people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there; to the end thou mayest know that I am the LORD in the midst of the earth.

Exodus 8:22

Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, was there no hail.

Exodus 9:26