

Session 8: Forerunners as Master Builders

I. Called as Master Builders

1. The apostle Paul functioned as a wise master builder.

- a. In 1 Corinthians, the apostle Paul described himself as follows,

According to the grace of God which was given to me, like *a wise master builder* I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it. For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 3:10-11).

- b. The apostle Paul was a wise master builder. As illustrated in the last session, Paul functioned as a messenger to introduce the truth of the new covenant and Christ as the promised Messiah to both Jews and Gentiles. He also functioned as a wise master builder to create *a spiritual environment* in individual lives and churches of those who received his message. He built an environment for Christ to be honored, worshiped, and made preeminent, and for God's eternal purpose to be fulfilled.
- c. You will recall from the last session that on his missionary journeys, Paul went first to the synagogues to invite people to accept Christ as their Messiah and to enter into a new way of relating to God based on the new covenant. When people accepted his invitation, he then worked with the churches that were formed from his messengerial role to build a spiritual environment in which the message of Christ could prosper. At times, he spent only a short period of time with the people in a given geographical area. At other times, he devoted months with a church equipping the believers there to live in the new way of relating to Christ. In addition to his extensive time with the churches he birthed, he also wrote letters to them explaining how to live victoriously in the message he had taught. He taught proper doctrine, corrected problems, and established proper church structure and order. That is, as a wise master builder, he built the proper *spiritual environment* for God's true gospel and His eternal purpose to flourish.
- d. Paul was a forerunner who functioned both as a messenger and a wise master builder. As a messenger, he invited, reasoned, explained, and confronted people in order to lead them to accept a new way of relating to God. As a wise master builder, he laid the proper foundation of Christ and Him crucified and created a spiritual environment in the churches he founded so that his message could prosper.

2. Elijah also functioned as a wise master builder.

- a. Although the circumstances were different, Elijah also was both a messenger and a master builder in the northern kingdom of Israel. We discussed Elijah's messengerial role in the last session, noting how he ministered in that role. Even though he is most recognized as a messenger, he was also a builder. When we think of the ministry of Elijah, we often think of his encounter with the prophets of Baal and Asherah and him calling fire from heaven. His encounter on Mt. Carmel was truly an awesome display of the power of God to defeat God's enemies and the false religion that had been established by Ahab and Jezebel.
- b. Often overlooked in this encounter is that before he confronted the prophets of Baal and Asherah, he restored the altar of the Lord that had been torn down. Note this passage,

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Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come near to me." So all the people came near to him. And he *repaired the altar of the Lord which had been torn down*. Elijah took twelve stones according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the Lord had come, saying, "Israel shall be your name." So with the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord, and he made a trench around the altar, large enough to hold two measures of seed. Then he arranged the wood and cut the ox in pieces and laid it on the wood. And he said, "Fill four pitchers with water and pour it on the burnt offering and on the wood." And he said, "Do it a second time," and they did it a second time. And he said, "Do it a third time," and they did it a third time. The water flowed around the altar and he also filled the trench with water (1 Kings 18:30-35).

- c. We could devote the entire session to discussing the types and shadows suggested in this passage, but for our purposes we will make only a few points about the restoration of the true altar of the Lord. It is important to note that it was *on the restored altar* that the fire fell from heaven resulting in the people turning to the Lord and the prophets of Baal and Asherah being defeated. Preliminary to the confrontation was the rebuilding of the true altar of the Lord that had been neglected and torn down.
- d. Speaking of the types and shadows that the altar illustrates, we see several key points relating to how end-time forerunners function as wise master builders. First, the twelve stones suggest that even though the northern kingdom to whom Elijah ministered only consisted of ten tribes, the focus of Elijah's restoration was on the entire house of God.
- e. Second, the ox on the altar represents Christ and the wood shadows the cross of Christ. In other words, the placement of the wood and ox speak to the absolute necessity of restoring Christ and the cross as the central and preeminent aspect of true Christianity. The trench for the two measures of seed suggest a restored altar from which the word of God can freely flow in abundance from the foundation of Christ and the cross. The water suggests that the true work of the Holy Spirit flows as well from an altar in which Christ is the sole focus.
- f. Therefore, the restoration of the altar symbolizes to us today the need to restore Christ as central and preeminent and the cross as the way for believers to relate to Him. If the altar had not been restored, the fire would not have fallen from heaven to accomplish God's objectives. Thus, Elijah's builder role was crucial to the people turning away from idols back to God.

3. In a similar manner to Paul and Elijah, end-time forerunners are also to function as master builders.

- a. The gospel of Matthew records this about the transfiguration of Christ and the future coming of Elijah,

Six days later Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and led them up on a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, I will make three tabernacles here, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah." While he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, "*This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!*" When the disciples heard this, they fell face down to the ground and were terrified. And Jesus came to them and touched them and said,

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"Get up, and do not be afraid." And lifting up their eyes, they saw no one except Jesus Himself alone. As they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, "Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man has risen from the dead." And His disciples asked Him, "Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?" And He answered and said, "*Elijah is coming and will restore all things* (Mt. 17:1-11).

- b. In an earlier session, we made the point that at the time Jesus spoke these words, John the Baptist had already been martyred. So, Jesus was not referring to John the Baptist coming to restore all things; instead, He was referring, as the prophet Malachi had prophesied, to an end-time coming of the spirit and power of Elijah upon a company of forerunners. In making this declaration about the future coming of Elijah, Jesus included in His statement one of the functions of forerunners empowered by the spirit and power of Elijah; that is, to bring about the restoration of all things.
- c. In addition to declaring to those present that Elijah would in fact come again, we also get a glimpse of what God wants restored when Elijah comes. When Moses and Elijah appeared on the mountain, Peter wanted to build three tabernacles—one for Jesus and one each for Elijah and Moses. In Peter's defense, he had not yet fully understood who Jesus was. In his ignorance, he equated Moses and Elijah with the glorified Christ. The Father quickly and authoritatively corrected this misconception saying that Jesus was the only one to be worshipped and exalted—not Moses or Elijah.
- d. This encounter gives us great insight into the role of forerunners as master builders. Functioning as master builders, forerunners are to restore Christ to the rightful position in the hearts, minds, and actions of the people so that Christ and He alone is exalted and honored. As the church is transformed to encounter Christ in the fullness of His eternal purpose, it will be prepared for the end times and eternity.
- e. End-time forerunners must function not only as end-time messengers but also as end-time wise master builders.
- f. Just like in the days of Elijah and Paul, there is an urgent and compelling need in today's church for a different spiritual environment. To help us recognize why God is raising up forerunners in our day to function as master builders, let's next look at the need in the church for a major transformation in its spiritual environment.

II. The Need for a Different Spiritual Environment

1. To set the stage for discussing the need for a different spiritual environment in today's church, let's once again review the objectives of the forerunner call.
 - a. In Session 3, we identified five purposes of the forerunner call. We list them again to refresh our memory. You can review Session 3 if needed. They are:
 - Forerunners turn hearts to the Person of Christ.
 - Forerunners turn people to God's eternal purpose.
 - Forerunners turn people from the focus on the external things of God to an internal kingdom.
 - Forerunners turn the hearts of leaders to their spiritual children.
 - Forerunners turn the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous.

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- b. In Session 4, we shared three objectives toward which these five purposes are directed. They are:
- Forerunners are called to prepare a corporate mature man who will be made ready as God's partner for the eternal ages.
 - Forerunners are to make ready a people for the end times.
 - Forerunners are to make ready a people for eternity.
- c. Connecting the five purposes from Session 3 with the three objectives from Session 4, we can state the relationship this way: *The five areas from Session 3 in which people need to return to Christ are for the purpose of fulfilling the three objectives identified in Session 4.*
- d. Summarizing, the purposes and objectives of the forerunner call are to turn people to Christ, His eternal purpose, to prepare people to stand strong as we approach the second coming of Christ, and to be made ready for eternity. Whereas this is the agenda for the church age, multitudes in the church have an incorrect focus that will not prepare them for any of these objectives.
- e. Now that we have reviewed the purposes and objectives of the forerunner call, let's next briefly explore several areas where the church's focus is incorrect. Highlighting these things will help us get an understanding of why there is a need for forerunners to function as master builders. For more detail on this subject, you can refer to the Lifeschool class, *The Eternal Purpose Church*, at the following link, <https://radicalpursuit.net/classes/the-eternal-purpose-church/>

2. First, much of the church has man at the center of its ministry rather than Christ.

- a. Even though God's purpose is for Christ to be preeminent and exalted and for Him to be the center of all that believers and the corporate church are to pursue, much of the church has assumed that God's purpose is rooted in the needs of man. Many think of God's purpose as centered around man receiving salvation and living in the blessings of a walk with God. The prosperity gospel focuses on man having possessions, health, and authority. The grace and seeker sensitive movements lead people into believing God is okay with a compromised and passive lifestyle. And the list goes on. Much of the church is focused on the centrality and blessing of man rather than on the centrality and preeminence of Christ and the purposes of God.
- b. Even though salvation is absolutely necessary and living in the abundant blessings of a walk with God are very important, they are not to be the church's primary focus. Rather, God's eternal purpose is for the Godhead to have its full inheritance in a people made ready for Him in fullness. Thus, eternal purpose is centered in the heart of the Father for His beloved Son and for a family for Himself and the other members of the Trinity. This distinction changes everything. Rather than God's purpose being about God meeting every need of man, it is about exalting Christ in and through a people and preparing a people for Him. Rather than man being the center of God's plan, man is invited into God's heavenly Father centered eternal plan so as to fulfill the eternal desire of the Godhead.
- c. Note the following quote from DeVern Fromke in his book, *Ultimate Intention*,

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But let us remember, the eternal Son and His Body of rectified sons are destined to live for one thing—the most complete and supreme honor, glory, pleasure, and satisfaction which they can bring to the heavenly Father. So while the Father is concerned for His Son, the Son is also concerned for the Father...This is the divine rule that governs all heaven. It is His intention that all His sons shall be invited to embrace this divine purpose and philosophy of life.ⁱ

3. Second, a significant portion of the church is focused upon an external kingdom rather than the person of Christ and His internal kingdom.

- a. The primary purpose of the church age is to prepare a mature corporate man comprised of believers from every tribe, tongue, and nation who will be a family for the Godhead—mature sons for the Father, a prepared bride for the Son, and a temple for the Holy Spirit. When this is accomplished in the numbers determined by the Lord, the age will end and the next age will commence. This purpose of the church age requires a deep internal work of the Holy Spirit within a people. It also requires a lifelong devotion in the hearts of believers to allow Christ to be formed in them in fullness as their hope of glory.
- b. Even though this is the primary assignment of the Holy Spirit for the church age, many in the church and many church leaders have set their agendas around external issues. Things like healing, signs and wonders, personal prophecy that make believers feel good and accepted, revival, works of service, and emotional and financial prosperity have become the main driving message of many in the church.
- c. Even though God does want us to experience His blessings and to serve Him, the focus of a believer's life and the focus of the church is not to be on externals but instead on an internal work of the Lord within a people to fill a people with Christ unto fullness.

4. Third, a large segment of the church is focused on the traditions of man and the shadows of old wineskins, believing they are a a major aspect of becoming ready for the Lord.

- a. It is really frightening when we think of how many people are trusting in some form of tradition of man to make themselves right with God. Confirmation at the age of twelve, walking an aisle to profess Christ, infant baptism, and other ritual actions, all without an accompanying reality, are examples of how many believers are trusting in some religious act they performed in the past in order to be right with God
- b. Other are focused on pursuing the shadows of Judaism thinking that in part pursuing these things sanctifies them. As we are well aware, there is a major movement within the church to restore Jewish roots and accompanying practices of things like the law, the feasts, and the sabbath in order to be made righteous. Paul clearly debunks this idea in the book of Colossians, calling people out of the shadows to the substance which is Christ.

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5. Fourth, incorrect eschatological views have taken multitudes of believers off the track of pursuing God’s eternal purpose and leaving them woefully unprepared to stand in the pressures of the end times.
- a. Eschatology is a fancy word for that part of theology related to the end times and the ultimate destiny of humanity. Incorrect eschatology is a major issue in the days in which we live because many eschatological views are leaving believers and churches entirely unprepared for what is soon coming upon the earth.
 - b. Other classes will delve into eschatology in great detail so we won’t do it here other than to briefly highlight a few points. For our purposes, I will categorize the different erroneous views into three general categories. Even though there are differences of opinion within these categories, they summarize the views to which millions of people hold—leaving them totally unprepared for what is soon coming upon the earth.
 - c. The first category is what I and others have labeled *victorious eschatology*. The views within this category basically hold that the world will be Christianized before Christ returns. Many holding this view say the seven mountains of culture will be turned to Christ and then a Christianized world will be presented to Christ at His coming. Although there are many errors in this view, a primary issue is that for this view to materialize, a massive world wide revival or third great awakening must take place. We all would love for this to happen; however, the scriptures teach a great falling away will happen rather than a great harvest. Because a revival is crucial to this view, people holding this view place the cry for revival above the need for Christ to fill a people inwardly unto fullness. This is a major deception which is and will lead many to be seduced away from truth.
 - d. The second category is what some call *realized eschatology*. This view would incapsulate the various forms of preterism which state that the end-time prophecies of Jesus and the apostles were all fulfilled in AD 70 when Jerusalem fell. Even though there are many errors in this view, one issue is that it leads people to believe there is no need to prepare for the end times.
 - e. The third category is what I have labeled *irrelevant eschatology*. This category would encompass dispensational premillennialism suggesting that the rapture of all believers will happen before the coming of widespread tribulation, judgment, and wrath. This view has major errors too; however, one is that it seduces believers into a false view of safety and leads them to not pay attention to getting ready so as to endure the end times because they believe they will be raptured before end-time judgments come.
 - f. In the days in which we live, all three of these views are not only wrong, they are extremely dangerous because they leave the church susceptible to being deceived, seduced, and unprepared for what is coming in the earth in the immediate future.
6. In view of these predominant attitudes in the church, forerunners must build an environment centered around Christ and God’s eternal purpose.
- a. If you will recall, in describing himself as a wise master builder, Paul wrote that the only correct foundation that a master builder can lay is Christ—not any of the other attitudes that permeate

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today's church. Consistent with this attitude, when the apostle Paul encountered issues such as listed above, his approach as a wise master builder was to lead believers and churches back to Christ and God's eternal purpose. Repeatedly throughout his epistles, he brought instruction and correction so as to bring churches and the believers in them back to the person of Christ. He called on churches to build an environment in which Christ was preeminent and glorified, God's eternal purpose was pursued, people were not seduced away from truth, and they were being prepared for Christ.

- b. Paul's letters to the Colossians and the Galatians offer excellent examples. The book of Colossians was written to correct what many scholars have labeled the "Colossian Heresy". One of the errors in the church there was that people were following the philosophy, wisdom, and traditions of man (Col. 2:8). In this same letter, he corrected those who were pursuing the shadows of Judaism rather than the substance of Christ (Col. 2:16-17). In the book of Galatians, he addressed an error there in which believers were focused on the external things of God rather than Christ and the cross. You can read about Paul calling churches back to Christ in these books, notably Colossians 1:15-20; 2:8-12: and Galatians 6:15-16.
- c. Paul wrote a good summary of his ministry as a wise master builder in Colossians,

Of this church I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, so that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God, that is, the mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints, to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ. For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me (Col. 1:25-29).

7. To give greater insight of what must be built, we next list several dimensions of a spiritual environment that forerunners are to build in the lives of believers and the church.

- a. There is a great need in the church for a spiritual environment that facilitates the exaltation of Christ and the coming forth of a people who accurately represent Christ. This objective creates the need for a spiritual environment which will accomplish this objective. To get a clearer picture of what specifically must be built, we list eight aspects of a different spiritual environment that master builders must build. As we stated earlier, for more detail you can go to the Lifeschool Class, *The Eternal Purpose Church*, at the following link, <https://radicalpursuit.net/classes/the-eternal-purpose-church/>, especially Sessions 5-11.
- b. First, a spiritual environment must exist in the lives of believers and the corporate church in which Christ is preeminent and central. The spiritual environment that is needed in today's church is one focused on Christ and life in and for Him. This overriding objective creates the need for a specific spiritual environment that highlights some of the following objectives.
- c. Second, a spiritual environment must exist in the lives of believers and the church for the bride to be made ready. A major aspect of God's eternal purpose for the church age is to prepare a bride who will live in full union with Christ so as to be made ready as an eternal partner for Him.

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- d. Third, a spiritual environment must also exist in the lives of believers and the church for overcoming sons to be prepared for the heavenly Father. In a manner similar to the bride being prepared to become the eternal wife of the Lamb, believers are to overcome their flesh, the world, and the devil so as to mature as a son for the heavenly Father. Just as individual believers are to become an equally yoked bride for the Son, these same believers are to become mature sons for the Father. As sons mature and the bride emerges in fullness (the same people), the corporate man will have been birthed and matured, and the age can then transition into the age to come. Therefore, the objective of the corporate overcoming son and the prepared bride must become a predominant pursuit of believers and central to the church's vision, message, prayer focus, and total program. Just like we stated about the bride being made ready, the subject of the corporate son for the Father must be totally integrated into our spiritual journey.
- e. Fourth, for the preceding three objectives to be accomplished, there must be a spiritual environment for believers to grow in intimacy and union with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. One of God's reasons for creating man was to have a family in relationship with Him. He desires a deep love relationship that involves a people seeking Him for Himself not for His provision. He longs for a people who will wait on Him, partake of Him and His word, and fellowship with Him. He desires a love relationship with His creation. God's eternal purpose involves a people in full union with God, possessed by Him with Christ becoming their life. This will only occur in a people who are intimate with their God. Therefore, there must be an emphasis in believers' lives and the church's vision to emphasize intimacy with the Godhead.
- f. Fifth, in addition to intimacy and union with Christ, a spiritual environment must be created for believers to take on the nature and character of Christ in fullness. The mature sons for the Father and the prepared bride for the Son will be a people who have been transformed into the image of Christ in fullness so as to become a representation of Christ in the earth.
- g. Sixth, a spiritual environment must be created for people to embrace the cross of Christ. In order for believers to be prepared as a worthy bride for Christ and an overcoming son for the Father, the cross of Christ must be embraced. The cross is the pathway to intimacy, union, and conformance to the image of Christ. The apostle Paul's predominant message was Christ and Him crucified (1 Cor. 2:2). He proclaimed this foundational message wherever he went. His focus was not just on what Christ did for believers through His crucifixion. Moreover, he proclaimed the cross life for the believer. He regularly proclaimed the idea that believers are to die to sin and self so that Christ may live within in fullness (Gal. 2:20). Although much of the church has forgotten Paul's primary message and the message that prepares a people to be made ready as a bride and as a son, a simple reading of the book of Acts or the apostles' writings reveals that Christ and Him crucified with all of its ramifications is the predominant message of the New Testament. Believers must be prepared to take up their cross and follow Christ and to live by the message written by Paul in Galatians 2:20, "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me."
- h. Seventh, for believers to endure the days in which we currently live, a spiritual environment must be created for believers to stand strong and to partner with God in the uniqueness of the end times. The end times will be unique in all of history. Devastation will be widespread, redemptive judgments will occur like birth pangs, and Christians and Jews will be persecuted globally. In the midst of these

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massive events, Jesus said that he who endures to the end will be saved (Matt. 24:13). These are frightful words for all of us since we quite possibly will be alive in those days. In the midst of these end-time events, the scriptures say that many will fall away (1 Tim. 4:1). While intense pressure is being put on the faithful and many are falling away, God desires His remnant, His bride, His overcoming sons to be strong and partner with Him. Therefore, an environment must be created in the hearts of people and the message of the church that prepares people for what is soon coming to the earth. Erroneous eschatology must be confronted and true eschatology proclaimed. Believers must be made aware that they are likely to have to go through many tribulations, persecution and opposition before Christ returns.

- i. Eighth, a spiritual environment must be created in the hearts of believers and the vision of the church to give believers an accurate vision of the judgment seat of Christ, eternal rewards, and eternity. Most Christians know that every believer must stand before Christ and give an account of their life. They know they will be rewarded or not rewarded based on how they lived their life. Believers also are keenly aware of heaven and eternal life and the hope that it offers to us all. What people do not adequately understand is how important it is to prepare for the most important appointment of their life—to stand before the Creator of the universe and give an account of how they lived. This understanding should cause believers to work out their salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12). Most people do not understand the magnitude of the differing degrees of eternal reward that await the believer. Certainly, there is a vast difference for one in hell forever than one in heaven. However, even for believers who will spend eternity with the Lord, there is a vast difference in glory, intimacy, and eternal authority. Some will be in the outer court forever whereas others will be seated with Christ on His throne.
- j. With the above in mind, forerunners functioning as wise master builders must help create the spiritual environment in the lives of believers and the church so as to accomplish these and other similar objectives. If lives are to be transformed in relation to these eight objectives, the spiritual environment in the lives of most believers must be radically changed. Old ways of relating to God must be thoroughly replaced with new priorities. As Jesus' parable of the wineskin and clothe states, believers must replace old wineskins with a totally new and different spiritual environment. It will not be sufficient to merely patch the old here and there. Many will be required to totally abandon their old way of doing church and begin to create a completely different spiritual environment.

III. Approaches of a Master Builder

- a. In this final section, we list five principles to guide a forerunner functioning as a wise master builder. Even though there are other approaches to building a different spiritual environment, the following list should give us a good idea of how a forerunner should operate in the role of a master builder.
1. First, forerunners functioning as master builders must provide knowledge of the topics they are calling on people to pursue.
 - a. As master builders, forerunners provide *knowledge and insight* to those who are eagerly seeking to be all God desires. Note this passage about John the Baptist,

And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go on BEFORE THE LORD TO PREPARE HIS WAYS; to give to His people the *knowledge* of salvation by the forgiveness of their

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sins, because of the tender mercy of our God, with which the Sunrise from on high will visit us, *TO SHINE UPON THOSE WHO SIT IN DARKNESS AND THE SHADOW OF DEATH, to guide our feet into the way of peace* (Lk. 1:76-79).

- b. Prior to Jesus' appearing as Israel's Messiah, many were expecting the Messiah to come in a way much different than He came. In His tender mercy, God sent John the Baptist as a prophetic voice before Jesus' coming to shine the light of knowledge and understanding so that the people would understand that Jesus was the promised Messiah and be prepared for His coming.
- c. This same idea will transpire before the second coming of Christ. Daniel offered this explanation of the end times. He wrote, "By smooth words he [the antichrist] will turn to godlessness those who act wickedly toward the covenant, but the people who *know* their God will display strength and take action. Those who have insight among the people *will give understanding to the many...* (Dan. 11:32-33).
- d. Not everyone will receive the message that forerunners announce. Many will reject the challenges the forerunner message unveils. However, there will be many who *will* accept what is being announced by end-time forerunners. For those who hear and receive the call to change, there is a need for forerunners not only to tell the people what changes are needed, but also to provide knowledge to help them understand and be transformed.

2. Second, forerunners functioning as master builders must patiently teach on the topics pertinent to what they are calling people to pursue.

- a. The apostle Paul, the original wise master builder of the New Testament Church, devoted an extensive amount of time to teaching the truths that he invited people to pursue. Note these verses about his teaching ministry,

But Paul and Barnabas stayed in Antioch, *teaching* and preaching with many others also, the word of the Lord" (Acts 15:35);

You yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, how I was with you the whole time, serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials which came upon me through the plots of the Jews; how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and *teaching* you publicly and from house to house, (Acts 20:18-20).

And he stayed two full years in his own rented quarters and was welcoming all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God and *teaching* concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness unhindered (Acts 28:30-31).

- b. Near the end of his life, Paul summarized his ministry, writing these words to Timothy, "for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a *teacher*" (2 Tim. 1:11). Often when people think of the forerunner ministry, thoughts immediately turn to Elijah and John the Baptist as messengers preaching fiery sermons calling people to turn from their ways back to God. This is most definitely an essential component to the forerunner call. However, in addition, forerunners as master builders must also teach people the way in which they should walk. Whereas preaching as an end-time messenger can be strong, forceful, and brief, the building function often takes months and even years for people to understand and begin to walk in the truths being taught.

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3. Third, forerunners functioning as wise master builders must devote considerable time to show people *how* to become what the messenger calls them to be.

- a. Note what is written about Paul as he ministered in Corinth, “And he settled there [Corinth] a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them” (Acts 18:11). From our own experience of transforming our home church from a traditional church to a forerunner ministry, we can testify that it has taken a lot of time to awaken, teach, and equip people to walk in a new truth. I have said on a number of occasions that turning a church is a lot like turning around an ocean liner. Both change slowly.
- b. Therefore, forerunners as master builders must be prepared to devote much time and energy to teach by not only saying what the Lord desires but also devote much energy in showing people *how* to walk in the truths that will transform them into *what* God wants.

4. Fourth, forerunners functioning as wise master builders must be patient with whom they are working.

- a. Also from personal experience, over the almost thirty years I have pastored a church, I have learned that patience is an essential trait in transforming people into a new way of living. As a full-time pastor over that period of time, I deal with biblical truth day in and day out. But the people I have led do not. Many have an hour or two a day to drive to work and then work an 8-10 hour day. Housewives spend hour after hour taking care of kids and the home. The time frame we think it should take for people to catch on to a biblical truth is rarely how long it actually takes. Most of the time, it requires months or years for the people we are ministering to get it. Therefore, as master builders, we must be patient—taking the necessary time to help those who are willing to walk in the message we are communicating.

5. Fifth, forerunners functioning as wise master builders must also have discernment as to where the people to whom they are ministering are in their journey.

- a. The first pastor I served under had a saying he used a lot. He would say “if you get too far ahead of the people, they will mistake you for the enemy”. These are true words. If we try to teach deep truths to people who are not at a place to receive them, they reject the message and the messenger. Therefore, it is important that as a builder we discern where the people are in their journey and take them from that point on to where the Lord desires them to go. On every part of the journey, builders must hear God for the next step and follow His lead.
- b. Summarizing this session, forerunners as wise master builders are to create an environment where Christ is preeminent, central, and the way, truth and the life. They must also create an environment in which the cross life is the pathway to life in Christ. We must call believers and churches out of lower, external, and erroneous ways so as to lead them on the path toward the person of Christ, the cross as the way, and Christ in them in fullness as their hope of glory.

ⁱ vii DeVern Fromke, *Ultimate Intention* (Indianapolis; Sure Foundation Publishers, 1998), P.45.