

This Letter is to the Church of the Fallen

September 30, 2024

This letter is for those who have worked to build the body and God has used mightily to change lives, but have witnessed or been impacted by one who has fallen. My heart goes out to you, and I am grateful and thankful for your love and dedication through the years.

Grace and Peace to you.

I am writing this letter as one who has watched, witnessed, and experienced many who have fallen throughout my years in church and ministry. While being a leader in churches and ministries, or one just attending, God has carried me through, and I've learned much.

History is full of spiritual leaders who fell or faltered, leaving behind a heap of rubble.

Healing evangelists who are secret alcoholics, strong leaders who became spiritually abusive, even starting cults, secret porn addictions, even one in modern history who was discovered for sex trafficking. Entire denominations and organizations are replete with lawsuits, allegations, and issues when those in leadership didn't follow one biblical standard given by King Solomon.

Ecclesiastes 12:13 NLT -

That's the whole story. Here now is my final conclusion: Fear God and obey his commands, for this is everyone's duty.

This isn't new, Martin Luther in the 1500's changed the world when he stood against the catholic church with his 95 theses. Yet he went from having grace and sympathy for God's people, the Jews, to hating them, believing they were evil and needed to die. He ended up becoming very bitter and angry in his old age and battled many severe health issues.

Even those who had committed egregious sins before or early in ministry were often used by God to build great works and change the lives of many. God never abandoned any of them, regardless of what was done and exposed.

Those who are left behind to pick up the pieces who feel betrayed by the fallen leader, also experience deep grief over the realization as every truth unfolds. Those who leave struggle with questions of belief while the remnant cleans the house, vacuums the floors and re-opens the windows to the fresh air of truth.

Lies stink and while the truth hurts it allows you to breathe again, not realizing the weight that had been bearing down, trying to keep the lie hidden.

Jesus rebuked the ultra-religious pharisees, but what is worse? A staunch religion with no grace or a ministry based on a lie? Only God knows. Both leave people in a sea of doubt, waves of information seemingly continuing to crash around them as it unfolds, tossing each one under, struggling for another breath, continually diving into upheaval.

But dear ones, know that none of this is what God wanted. He had a perfect way for everything, but man got in the way. As the church spread and grew, Holy Spirit would show up. While many were changed and taken to a place of his presence, that shifted the world around them, others saw the mess. The mess of repentance, the mess of relationship and the mess of maturing. We see it all throughout the scriptures.

Human nature is to take control. God gave us that strength to help build structure in order to grow things with a strong foundation. However, many overstep, trying to control the consequence left from the Holy Spirit. That created movements and denominations that eventually left any vestige of the Holy Spirit out of the mix.

They have become dead and unfruitful gardens, full of thorns and thistles, death and lack.

Then, in bodies and churches where a top leader is exposed and fallen, many have found themselves in the midst of a dead garden and they are trying to clean it up and start over, often longing and desiring what was.

Others who had what appeared to be a flourishing garden, found that the ministry could go on because many of those left behind had or have a pure heart for the things of God.

But healing must come first.

God doesn't use perfect people; He just uses people.

Even Paul admits in Romans that he was flawed. But he continued to strive to be healed and whole, while bringing correction and training to others.

How do you survive and overcome this devastation?

In **Matthew 6:22** we are reminded to *Seek first the kingdom and His righteousness.*

Exodus 34 shows us how to be in in God's presence, first thing in the morning, intentionally spending time with Him and in the word.

Then allow Holy Spirit to give you grace to acknowledge the trauma caused. In one experience I had, I didn't realize the trauma created until I was telling a close friend about it a long time later. It felt almost like a bad dream until I recounted the experience. I had to acknowledge just how bad it was first.

Following that, you must ask Holy Spirit to fill the hole of hurt, anger, pain, doubt and fear. Be open to His gentle correction for things you may have done in the midst of this

experience. One of the biggest realizations, and hardest to overcome is recognizing that you may have put this person in a place only Jesus should be.

Remember however, that regardless of what comes next, you must treat others with honor. That may only come through God's grace, but when dealing with God's people, that is what allows Him to honor you.

Allow others to handle the exposure according to their level of spiritual maturity or experience. In one instance recently, I was surprised at the reaction of some as the news came out. I quickly realized their reaction was based on unhealed wounds and this issue dug up the hurt and pain again. If you are in their lives, pray for them and encourage them to walk through inner healing or deliverance in order to completely heal those wounds.

Finally, remember, God will always use all of this to grow us up in Him and mature us so we can be more impactful in the future. There is always a spiritual purpose behind everything. Paul writes extensively against covering up sin. The Old Testament is full of stories where Gods people struggled because sin is covered up. Exposure is Gods way of purifying the body.

If you stay with the body of believers, just love people. Realize those in leadership are just as hurt, shaken and surprised as you. They may be as fearful of the future and more so if their livelihood is involved.

Work to be a solution, help, serve and love.

If you feel you need to leave, work through to forgive all involved. It may take years to fully forgive but be intentional. I recently realized that I had not forgiven a pastor who had hurt us many years ago.

Then find a good loving church, or body of believers to come alongside with. Don't run away from the faith, or from God. He didn't do this, man did. Resist the urge to leave the faith you have and go into a totally different type of faith. Often this only brings more problems and soon you may be into something that is antithetical to Gods real truth.

Remember, God gave us all a free will and He won't necessarily intervene in mans decisions. He often mitigates the damages, and he is always there with you, so don't turn from Him.

Resist the urge to bring destruction through your words. Regardless of what was done. God used these people, and He probably isn't through with them. Telling the truth only to trusted confidants may bring some healing, but gossiping and cursing only hurts you. It will come back on you through the law of reciprocity given in **Matthew 7:2** *For you will be treated as you treat others. The standard you use in judging is the standard by which you will be judged.*

Paul speaks in **1 Corinthians** that he never cursed his accusers or those who came after him but blessed them.

For those who use the story to grow their efforts or gain followers, beware. There is a high price to pay.

A recent issue that arose found many who are in ministry with inside information using the exposed thing to grow their church, defend themselves and dishonor those involved. Some of these who participated are often now in a false doctrine and even suffering extreme hardship because of these actions. We are not to celebrate the downfall of others or use them for our benefit.

When Paul turned Hymenaeus and Alexander over to Satan, told in **1st Timothy**, he didn't write in His letter their acts, or even berate them. He corrected them and went back to his work of building the church. Shake the dust off your feet and move on.

Many of those berating these pastors, leaders, or churches, often do this out of jealousy and have little or no ministry themselves outside of this tactic. God will deal with them, so we are to just ignore them and give them no place in our lives.

In life, we all go through times of upheavals and disappointments. We must glean the good and thank God for how He will use the situation in your life. **Romans 8:28** is true...*All things work together for the good of those who are called according to His purposes.*

While you may be in a whirlwind of upheaval, or now in the aftermath, allow Him to set you down in a place where He can use you to make a difference in the lives of others.

1 Peter 4:17 tells us

For the time has come for judgment, and it must begin with God's household. And if judgment begins with us, what terrible fate awaits those who have never obeyed God's Good News?

God brings judgement to His body first, so we can help others as His judgement comes to the rest of the world. Right now, we are seeing exponential exposure both inside and outside of the church. But many are mishandling these things. Using them for their own gain. God will judge them with the same level they are judging others. This is a very slippery slope.

I continue to pray for all involved, the offenders and the remnant. God can use us all but we must have a heart for those who have fallen as well. They are paying a very great price, dreams and families shattered, loss of trust and often loss of hope and even lives ensue.

We are to always be a dispenser of HOPE.

Conviction brings hope, condemnation does not. Condemnation is evil and will only bring condemnation on those who condemn. Paul explains that he writes to bring conviction, not condemnation.

2 Corinthians 7:8-10

I am not sorry that I sent that severe letter to you, though I was sorry at first, for I know it was painful to you for a little while.

Now I am glad I sent it, not because it hurt you, but because the pain caused you to repent and change your ways. It was the kind of sorrow God wants his people to have, so you were not harmed by us in any way.

For the kind of sorrow God wants us to experience leads us away from sin and results in salvation (conviction). There's no regret for that kind of sorrow. But worldly sorrow, which lacks repentance, results in spiritual death (condemnation).

So, for now, I will close, praying for you all and believing that we will see God's glory in all of this, just as others have seen throughout history.