

“Keeping Charge of His Sanctuary” – Invitation to Zeal for His House

“But the priests, the Levites, the sons of Zadok, who kept charge of My sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from Me, they shall come near to Me; and they shall stand before Me...” Ezekiel 44:15

I. THREE CRITICAL END OF THE AGE MANDATES:

- A. The mandate from heaven to build “24/7 prayer in the spirit of the Tabernacle of David” – **prophetic singers:**

“Sing to the Lord a new song, and His praise to the ends of the earth...let them give glory to the Lord, and declare His praise to the coastlands. The Lord shall go forth like a mighty man of war. He shall cry out, yes, shout aloud; He shall prevail against His enemies.” (Is. 42:10-13)

“And they sang a new song, saying: “You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,” (Revelation 5:9)

“And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. They sang as it were a new song before the throne....” (Rev. 14:2-3)

“They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: “Great and marvelous are Your works (judgments or activity of Your leadership), lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints...For all nations shall come and worship before You, for Your judgments have been manifested.” (Revelation 15:3-4)

1. The prophetic song is one of God’s most powerful weapons He utilizes to release His power on the earth, particularly in the end of the age. The power is not found in the song itself, but these songs are a powerful means of knitting us with the heart of God and then facilitating a dynamic unity in the hearts of believers.
2. The key feature of the new song at the end of the age to understand is that believers are standing in unity with the heart of God, singing in agreement about Him as a judge preparing to loose judgments. This is profound – the end-time church is led by prophetic singers (in concert with the Holy Spirit) *to sing* about the coming judgments of the Lord in *full agreement* with His methodology and leadership. ***“We agree with who you are, O Judge of the earth!”***

3. Anointed prophetic singers trained in sensitivity to the Holy Spirit and skilled in engaging a body of believers with boldness is a critical to usher in a new level of union with the heart of God and the people of God, which is directly related to a release of new levels of power to usher in the Great Harvest of souls at the end of the age.

B. The mandate to call forth and provide a context for Annas – **prophetic intercessors**:

“Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.” (Rev. 5:8)

When He (Jesus) opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar (golden altar of incense) the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God... 10 And they (End-Time martyrs) cried with a loud voice, saying, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?” 11 Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed. (Rev. 6:9-11)

“Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.” (Rev. 8:3)

1. The Book of Revelation gives us a stunning picture of the dynamic relationship between the intercession of the end-time church and the release of the judgments of God. There is a clear picture throughout the book of agreement in heaven and on earth as the purified, mature Bride interacts with the heavenly realm and a God stirred in His zeal to judge wickedness and reveal His delight in righteousness. Daniel gives us another picture of an intercessor who has an incredible impact in the heavens and on the earth as empires shift overnight in response to His prayer.
2. The interplay of the prophetic church participating in the government of God and His judgments through intercession in the ultimate concert of prayer is vital for us to understand if we want to grasp the critical role of the Bride on the earth at the end of the age. The heavens shift and angels move in response to an anointed Bride united with the heart of Jesus partnering with Him to release judgment through prayer. **“We agree with what You want to do, O judge of the earth!”**
3. Anointed Annas empowered to move into their place in the government of God now and throughout eternity is vital in the early stages of a growing, maturing prayer movement that will establish the identity of the church as the House of Prayer for all nations (Is. 56:7; Mt. 21:13); it will be a central reality in the age to come as the primary governing strategy of Jesus as He interacts with both heavenly and earthly realms simultaneously.

- C. The mandate to cultivate and nurture end-time **prophetic messengers**:

“Surely the Lord God does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets.” (Amos 3:7)

“And those of the people who understand shall instruct many....” (Dan. 11:33)

“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night...Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, 12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God...?” (2 Pet. 3:9-12)

1. There is a great eschatological storm coming, which Jesus emphatically states will be the most extreme time in history (Mt. 24:21), which if it was not cut short would see no flesh surviving (v.22). During this Great Tribulation and the final years of this age the church will experience a great “falling away” from the faith (2 Thess. 2:3) in which many will be greatly offended (Mt. 24:10) with a God they do not know, understand, or agree with. The great question of the hour regarding the “great and very terrible Day of the Lord” is “*who can endure it?*” (Joel 2:11)
2. The Lord is fiercely committed to preparing His Bride for the hour that is coming to the earth. According to Peter, He is not willing at all that any should perish (*fall away into apostasy and angry rejection of His leadership*) – His ultimate desire is that all (*the end-time church, particularly the half-hearted and lukewarm*) should come to repentance (*the full “turning” of Joel 2:12 into agreement and delight in His ways while rejecting the Spirit of the Age*).
3. One of His primary vehicles to prepare His Bride for the darkest hours of history is the prophetic messenger. The proclamation ministries in the years to come are vital to move the body of Christ into her full identity before God as equally yoked. The various expressions include the initial invitation into the knowledge of God to experience His affections and emotions (evangelists) to the unfolding of the Word that imparts deeper truths and understanding of His heart (teachers), or the proclamation of His desires and intentions to provoke and stir hunger (prophets / preachers) and the guiding and nurturing of the Bride into purity and obedience, keeping her on course (pastors). ***“We proclaim who you are and what You want to do, O judge of the earth!”***

4. The prophetic church will move in the highest degree of authority and unity at the end of the age while functioning as a witness to the nations, delivering the gospel of the kingdom with great signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth (particularly through the seal and trumpet judgments). These proclamations will serve to warn the nations of the reality of coming wrath and provide context for what is happening and why, revealing God’s mercy and desire for repentance in the midst of these great judgments. This witness to the nations through the gospel of the kingdom (proclaiming the reality of the coming King who will rule the earth with true justice) is just as vital *today* as it will be in hour to come. God is working faithfully through the unfolding of these end-time events to both see a Bride prepared and unshakable as well as the nations won over to His leadership through revival.

II. GOD’S FIERCE ZEAL FOR INTEGRITY AND AUTHENTICITY IN THE MESSAGE

“For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God...”(Col. 1:9-10)

“I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus, that you were enriched in everything by Him in all utterance and all knowledge, even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you, so that you come short in no gift, eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will also confirm you to the end, that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Cor. 1:4-8)

“Now therefore,’ says the Lord, ‘turn to me with all your heart’...who knows if He will turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind Him...?” (Joel 2:12-14)

- A. Our role in this massive end-time drama is to faithfully equip and nurture these three groups in the context of a 24/7 prayer furnace for the hour in which He will use them to greatly influence and prepare the sphere of hearts He sends to this house. We do not care about the size of our sphere of influence, only that we would be faithful to our little part in what He is orchestrating globally. We take seriously whatever our assignment is as part of the whole team of the Body of Christ, being careful not to overemphasize or exaggerate that role.
- B. According to our prophetic history, His plan for this house is to give us a spirit of prayer (“the spirit of grace and supplication” Zech. 12:10) as well as a simultaneous impartation of authority for signs and wonders – “no disease known to man will stand before these people”. He will give us this according to His promise to the degree we are willing to turn to Him – “to a people without mixture He will give the Spirit without measure”.

1. The manifestations of revival power are not the fullness of what we are contending for in prayer – they are not an end unto themselves that are for the blessing of our ministry or methodology. They will undoubtedly happen in many places across the earth and are the strategic means of God to get the attention of the nations so that they can hear the *message of His heart* regarding the coming of His chosen Anointed, His Son and the urgent need to develop a root system of intimacy with Him (Ps. 2:10-12) before His judgments come and sweep many away.
- C. The commitment of the Lord to the message that produces trembling hearts before Him is comprehensive – He has zeal for His messengers to embody the very message they preach to the nations. The message of the end of the age is about more than carefully crafted words with a little bit of authority – it is about messengers who take the content seriously and respond accordingly with a lifestyle that is inseparably linked to the integrity of the message.
- D. It is absolutely vital for the three groups that the Lord is cultivating in this house to lay hold of a lifestyle that reflects the message. When the ones who God is stirring in the days to come are drawn here by revival signs and wonders, what will they see? What will they hear? What will they take with them when they go?
1. Our integrity and authenticity as a people in lifestyle are vital in seeing those who are sent here leave with more than sermon notes and a neat experience in God. We, as a people, must endeavor to walk worthy of the calling that He commissioned us with, working to be fully pleasing to Him – increasing in the knowledge of His will (Col. 1:9).
 2. The message of the prophetic messengers is about more than what people hear, but what they see – and what they will in turn do in lifestyle as a response to the message and messenger. God desires to use both the end of the age prophetic messenger and the prophetic message to cause trembling in hearts and provoke a generation unto wholeheartedness.
 3. The level to which the message is lived out by the messenger is the level to which it will be taken seriously by the hearer. A messenger fully committed to the message will provoke and challenge even those steadfast in hard-heartedness; when adding the anointing unto trembling and the grace of God impacting the heart of the hearer, as well as signs and wonders that authenticate the message to the hearer you have an intense combination of a fully “unified front” in the spirit assaulting darkness and callousness in man.

- E. We do not want to reproduce mediocrity, nor do we want to give courage to inauthentic Christianity marked by prayerlessness and busy activity that produces little fruit. God is continually calling IHOP to “do IHOP” because He longs for an active partnership with human beings in full agreement with His methodology to bring about change and transformation. It is not enough to have a reputation as a people of prayer with little authenticity, integrity, or follow-through on the values we hold as crucial in the hour we now live.
1. The dividing line is this: for those that are not IHOP-KC to not feel pressured by this, but to be free in heart to “not be IHOP” and pursue their individual mandate before the Lord. Those who are called to “be IHOP” to truly do what they have committed before the Lord to do. *This is only in regards to those who are a part of the staff of IHOP-KC Missions Base as an intercessory missionary, NOT those who are a part of our broader spiritual family.* The prayer room and the ministries that have been birthed out of it are for any to freely enjoy – we are glad for any to come and be refreshed in the atmosphere of night and day prayer.
 2. As a spiritual family we are called along with the Body of Christ to the universal standard of “let your yes be your yes” (Mt. 5:37) if we participate in ministry on the base or make any kind of commitment to one another. As a staff, we are called to go beyond the fundamental command and give ourselves radically to keep the charge of the sanctuary.

III. THE MANDATE TO THE BODY OF CHRIST: LET YOUR YES BE YOUR YES (MT. 5:37)

“Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.' 34 "But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; 35 nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. 36 Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. 37 But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.”

(Mt. 5:33-37)

“Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is obliged to perform it.' Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that sanctifies the gold? And, 'Whoever swears by the altar, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gift that is on it, he is obliged to perform it.' Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift? Therefore he who swears by the altar, swears by it and by all things on it. He who swears by the temple, swears by it and by Him who dwells in it. And he who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by Him who sits on it. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.” (Mt. 23:16-23)

- A. In the progression of issues that we struggle with in our hearts, the “toxins that kill the garden” of the beatitudes, Jesus has already highlighted anger, immorality and treachery – and is now speaking about unfaithfulness and deception, which specifically manifests itself as ***the spirit of manipulation***. There is logic to the progression of issues as Jesus unfolds their insidious nature at work within all of us – each one is more difficult to wrestle with and overcome than the last. The implication is that what Jesus is addressing here is more difficult to overcome than anger, immorality, and treachery.
- B. The first title given to Jesus when John sees Him for the first time after He returns to the earth is ***Faithful and True***. (Rev. 19:11) This is remarkable. His first designation by the Holy Spirit is that “*He followed through with His commitment and spoke the truth – He really came like He said He would!*” We never have to wonder with Jesus whether or not He is who He says He is, or whether He will do what He said He would do. He alone is the only man who never fails, and is worthy of all our trust and confidence in His word. This is the first thing said about Him because it is important to Him that we know this, that we believe this about Him. He is completely authentic with total integrity, fully trustworthy. When He says it, we know that it will come to pass exactly as He promises:

“So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void , But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.”(Is. 55:11)

- C. Corporate life by which we are able to go farther in God together than alone (Ps. 133:1-3) is absolutely dependant on this reality – that we are able to count on one another to follow through on commitments when we give our word. David understood this and gives us a picture of the Lord’s zeal for faithfulness when choosing who he would serve with:

“My eyes shall be on the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me; he who walks in a perfect way, he shall serve me. He who works deceit shall not dwell within my house; he who tells lies will not continue in my presence.” (Ps. 101:6-7)

1. This is a value that is of primary importance to the Lord because it is a primary expression of the motivation of authentic love for Him (first commandment) and others (second commandment) – we place value and assign dignity to others based on our zeal to follow through on our commitments to them.

“Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.” (1 Cor 4:1-2)

2. In the broader sense that all in the body of Christ are called to be messengers at some level, or stewards of the mystery of God, it is crucial that we have integrity – we are who we say we are. The great challenge for many is the challenge towards authenticity and reality regardless of personal cost. This is a great test for our pride and our patience to allow ourselves to be perceived as anything less than excellent as we navigate this together.
- D. The Pharisees were reducing the laws of Moses to make them into something man could actually accomplish (*“Again you have heard...’You shall not swear oaths falsely but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.”*); they had “discovered a loophole” in the commandment, interpreting it as “thou shalt not take the name of the Lord in vain.” The prohibition moved from swearing an oath falsely, dishonestly, or with no ability to follow through to making sure you did not give your false word in the name of the Lord. It was okay to give your word falsely if you swore your oath on the “right object” that did not profane His name.
1. Thus they came up with all kinds of strange regulations that permitted searing oaths as long as you picked the temple but not the gold in the temple, the altar but not the gift of the altar, heaven but not the throne in heaven; etc. (Matt. 23:16-23) minimizing the law and “ignoring its weightier matters”.
 2. They did just enough to appease the Lord by finding creative ways to satisfy the requirements of the Law. They continually did “just enough” in the details of their creative exceptions while ignoring the heart of the matter. They would then overly legislate the aspects of the law they were good at – i.e. the Sabbath (doing nothing), hyping the failure of others to present themselves as the truly spiritual ones who have a superior ability to honor God. Another term for this is “job security”.
 3. Christians today manipulate the doctrine of grace like the Pharisees did the law of Moses to empower them to live in compromise without feeling conviction. Much compromise is allowed under the guise of “avoiding legalism” which is seen as nearly anything that hinders our self-indulgent desires. The reason there is so much is in Gospels about the Pharisees is that they represent the common problem today of zealous students of Scripture who manipulate it to valid compromise in their lifestyle. Insincerity looks for loopholes then seeks Scriptures to back up the loopholes in their area of compromise.
- E. Jesus is not forbidding the taking of oaths. God Himself spoke to Abraham in Genesis 22:16 by swearing an oath by His own name to bless him, his descendants, and all the nations of the earth through him. However, even as God made a provision for divorce in the law because of the hard-heartedness of man (Mt. 19:8) He made a similar provision for oaths because of the unbelief of man towards God and the untrustworthy nature of men towards one another. The highest call of God is for men to give their “yes” carefully and honestly while fighting violently to follow through.

- F. There is a violence that goes with keeping our word – the Pharisees and scribes sought to remove that pressure and give themselves a way to present themselves in a false way, to gain honor with false commitments that they had no intentions of keeping. They wrestled the Word to fit their need – they found a way to keep the law while still being free to be deceptive for their advantage in relationships. They legitimized deception, and Jesus removed this “clause” or loophole they found in the law. He does it tenderly at the beginning of His 3 ½ year ministry, and with righteous zeal during the last few days of His earthly ministry (Mt. 23:16-23).
1. We ourselves must be violent about refusing to legitimize deception, justifying a lack of diligence (disorganization) or sloth or laziness in our follow-through with commitments while still keeping the “letter of the law”. One way we can legitimize sloth is to appeal to our heart “not being in our time” in the prayer room – a false idealism that justifies our lack of diligence; our pride will always find other creative ways to legitimize our weakness in this area – others are the mask of “busyness” or importance.
 2. To demand that we show up for our commitment when we don’t feel like it is often framed as a “legalistic demand” or something “we did not have the grace for”. We say this because we do not equate showing up in the room when we say we will be there as a commitment on par with a job, or obligation to ministry on a worship team, or responsibility to one another. If showing up is mostly about us and what we gain by it (and not about the community of believers we have committed to) then what is the big deal when we blow off our commitments?
 3. It becomes easy for us to blow off commitments in the name of how we feel when no one knows whether or not we are there or not. Keeping our word is violent, and difficult! It requires a great expenditure of strength, mental energy, and internal motivation to stay the course when no one is looking, or knows.
 4. Many avoid even making a commitment to others because they want to avoid their weakness in this area, rather than allowing God to deal tenderly with these areas of weakness in the context of community. He will deal with this issue within our hearts tenderly now, but will deal with it far more zealously as we draw nearer to the end. (i.e. allowing oppression and bondage to darkness v. allowing Rev. 9)
- G. The broader point that Jesus is speaking to is our sinful tendency to try to manipulate reality to fit into our insecurities, self preservation, or secret ambition for honor, money, and promotion. This false presentation of ourselves is a tool we use to gain the esteem of man. At our worst this manifests itself as a greater commitment to our own self-esteem, personal gain, and daily comfort than to one another as a community of believers.
1. Because of this it is easy to say yes to things that are asked of us – these little responsibilities are our ticket to lay hold of what we crave, whether it is something as simple as affirmation or as complex as power and control.

2. Under the internal pressures of our insecurities or lusts we present ourselves falsely to one another, content to have the reputation we build among men mask the realities of our weakness and immaturity (lack of follow-through with our intentions). Again, the technical term for this is “job security”.
- H. The way forward is not to run from commitments or from community, but to allow both to refine us and work humility and meekness in our hearts as we fight our tendency to present ourselves falsely. The first step to winning the fight is to be ruthlessly authentic before one another, meaning that we are quick to own up to our weakness:

“Above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. But let your “Yes,” be “Yes,” and your “No,” “No,” lest you fall into judgment....16 Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed.” (Jas 5:12-16)

1. We must be violent about presenting ourselves truthfully to one another when we stumble on a commitment. This can be brutal to our egos, because the implication is that if we blow it concerning a commitment to an individual, then we have to be intentional about confessing our sin – ***that we might be healed of our weakness in the area of unfaithfulness.*** The difficult part comes when we blow it with a commitment to a team – we must confess our sin to the team and ask for prayer and help. We are doing more than saying “oops!”
2. We are going to war against the pride that would look to justify or excuse our unfaithfulness to our word, or treat it like it was not a big deal. Lack of follow through is a big deal – it hurts the integrity of the team and its commitment to one another, which if left unchecked can lead to a fundamental breakdown in the relational and functional relationships within the team. It is demoralizing and discouraging when someone does not take the team or community seriously.
3. By laying aside some false presentation and humbling ourselves before the community we have committed to we serve them by enabling them to maintain their dignity and integrity – we affirm the value of the team or group by taking it seriously enough to repent of our weakness and sin.
4. To smile and apologize but to continue in inconsistency and unfaithfulness us the evidence of a serious character flaw – this is rebellion that gives dignity to deception instead of the community. (Mike’s term is “sweet rebellion” – Ps. 55:21, *“the words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart.”*)
5. This is why the Lord is so zealous about faithfulness – we cannot be a people that assign dignity to sloth, disorganization, deception, or other failings that some attempt to explain away as “personality traits.” These are not personality traits, they are character flaws and sinful patterns of behavior. To confess them as such is to have integrity while moving forward in the process of finding healing for these areas of brokenness.

6. Continual confession serves to work a deep humility within us as well, cultivating meekness by refusing to present ourselves falsely or manipulate reality to attain our goals. We fight to refuse to even add or exaggerate the fervency of our commitment, or our “yes”; anything more is “*from the evil one*” – the one intimately associated with deception.
7. It is because of our natural tendency towards deception mixed with our own insecurity that causes us to feel the need to add weight to our words – “I swear on...” or “the Lord told me...”. Operating in a spirit of truth mixed with confidence in the leadership of the Lord enables us to say what we mean without adding any additional strength to our words; we are able to make commitments and set our hearts to follow through without the need for any additional oaths to add weight to our commitment.

“You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.” (Jas. 5:8)

- I. A heart settled in identity and affection enables interaction with love and meekness; this inner stability empowers us to speak freely and honestly in the way we present ourselves to others as well as to take on commitments in a servant spirit without regard to the intrinsic gain of the esteem of man. This is our only way forward in light of the coming storm.
- J. Again, all in the body of Christ and all who are part of the spiritual family of IHOP-KC are called as part of normal Christianity to relate to one another in this manner – this is not a radical invitation or extreme call to holiness; Jesus considers this a normal part of our daily interaction with one another in the context of community life.

IV. THE MANDATE TO IHOP-KC: KEEP CHARGE OF THE SANCTUARY (EZ.44:15)

"And you have not kept charge of My holy things, but you have set others to keep charge of My sanctuary for you...But the priests, the Levites, the sons of Zadok, who kept charge of My sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from Me, they shall come near Me to minister to Me; and they shall stand before Me to offer to Me the fat and the blood," says the Lord GOD. They shall enter My sanctuary, and they shall come near My table to minister to Me, and they shall keep My charge." (Eze. 44:8,15-16)

- A. This is a unique invitation to all who are a part of the IHOP-KC staff – all who have embraced the calling of an intercessory missionary. As we have embraced the identity it is the season to fully embrace the call and all of its implications. This is not simply our vocation or something we do to be helpful – this is our lifestyle. Being a missionary is a radically different reality.
- B. "...but you have set others to keep charge of My sanctuary for you." This is not for others to do for us – if we continually find replacements, then the replacements get the reward. They then are the ones that actually kept the charge.
- a. Problem #1 (big) – they set others to keep charge of the sanctuary for them – ***they did not take seriously the unique charge the Lord had given them.***
 - b. Problem #2 (bigger) – when others are set into place by humans and not by God, the charge is not taken as seriously by those who do not fully understand the charge; when the charge had not been taken seriously by the leaders, who gave it to those who in turn have even less zeal than the leaders: ***the water level goes way down from what the Lord had originally desired.***
 - c. Problem #3 (biggest) – they had brought foreigners into the sanctuary who had no regard for the Lord and let them participate in the offerings, and the reason that they gave the charge to others to keep is because ***they had become too caught up in their own self-importance and were too self-absorbed to attend and lead the prayer meetings.***
2. This is not what we want said of us – that we found others to stand in our place on the wall. This is our sacred trust from the Lord and our commitment to one another. It ***is*** about location – we as a community are committing to one another in regards to coming to a sanctuary and a prayer furnace. It is different than a prayer network or prayer chain. There is a place that we are working together to build and strengthen, that we care about and take care of. It is not for others that we hire or trust to do for us.
 3. If we are inconsistent in our charge now, with little glory and little reputation, how will we handle our charge with much possibility for glory and much reputation to maintain?

- C. This is a higher calling than honoring our commitments to the team – it is about more than assigning dignity and value to the worship teams or whatever teams we are a part of. It is about more than having integrity and authenticity. This invitation of the Lord to keep charge of the sanctuary is an invitation to grow in zeal for His house. Zeal for His house is one of the gifts of grace that will keep us grounded in both great trouble and great prosperity.
1. You know you are being invited into this reality when you feel something more than the desire to honor your commitments – you feel a zeal for the house to have integrity, a fire to see the standards be honored, and a growing desire for the prayer furnace to be excellent.
 2. This is an invitation to those who are “*guardians of the standards*”: those who feel pain over the lowering of standards of the house in regards to the lifestyle of an intercessory missionary. There are different types of people:
 - a. Those who are glad for the standards to relax a little (still faithful, and will do what is required),
 - b. Those who in position to set policies and standards that know they are guardians of the standard,
 - c. ...and those who are discovering this burden to keep the charge in this sanctuary – feeling a new ownership and desire to build this house before the Lord.
 - d. This is the radical invitation, to view our season here differently and reevaluate His charge to us as a people through the Sacred Trust.
- D. “*But...the Sons of Zadok, who kept charge of My sanctuary*” – the Levites who turned from the Lord to idolatry like much of the nation would be, by the grace of God fully forgiven and restored to their former role of “*guardians of the sanctuary*” but would not be allowed to come near or approach the Most Holy Place of the Lord. This is an incredible picture of both the outrageous mercy and kindness of God working intimately with His perfect justice in the manner by which He evaluates their lives and rewards them according to their works – but does not give them a “*promotion*”.
1. The Sons of Zadok, however, because of their faithfulness to keep the charge when no one else would, are given an incredible “*promotion*”: they were to become the “*guardians of the altar*”. They could now minister to the Lord intimately, serving Him daily in close proximity because of their ability to stay steady under pressure.
 2. The corollary is this: if they can stay steady in that time under pressure, then they will stay steady in the age to come under the weight of glory. Their choices before the Lord then trained and prepared them to handle their role in the days to come.

3. In the outrageous, gracious pay scale of the Lord, those that go astray find themselves chastened yet thankful; and those who set their souls with conviction to take care of the things that are precious to God will be trusted by Him to take care of the things that are *most* precious to Him in the age to come. ***“...and they shall keep My charge.” (Eze. 44:16)***
- E. *“when the children of Israel went astray”* – the violence of the charge, the difficulty of the social, internal, and spiritual pressure to do this is unbelievably intense. It is a daily fight to do this, and we have signed up for something that is unbelievably hard – a lifestyle of prayer in conjunction with building this house in an hour in which the nations are going astray. The church is going astray. Everyone is getting off track and applying pressure to the system to pull the faithful from their charge – not just the charge of IHOP, but other mandates that many of our friends carry – it is difficult labor to stay steady.
1. This specific verse is not speaking of the broad mandate that others carry. It is speaking of Annas who keep charge of the sanctuary, who are not called to go but to stay, to gather, to minister to the Lord and birth a kingdom reality of government that will permeate the earth. Everyone plays their part, and no part is elite or special or more necessary – we value them all. We just haven’t been called to a very common one. It’s odd, and hard, and intense – to gather and stay when everyone else is called to go.
 2. It will not get easier to keep charge as the years unfold, but much, much harder. Pressure will increase and test our motivations. Success and prosperity will tempt and inflate our sense of importance. Staying steady now helps us gain the courage and perspective then to hold fast to the charge we have been given.
 3. All of the seasons to come will culminate in the ultimate hour in which many across the earth go astray at levels never seen before in church history: the nations spinning away in rage against God and saints buckling under the pressure of it. We can not be so disconnected from reality as to think we will be able to keep charge of the sanctuary then if we cannot keep our charge now when it is easy. Growing in faithfulness and zeal for His house today will give us immeasurable courage tomorrow.
- F. *“they shall come near Me to minister to Me”* – this is the incredible promise that waits for those who take the charge of the Lord seriously. If we have been called as true “intercessory missionaries”, it signifies a radical thrust into the reality of a perpetual solemn assembly. It runs contrary to the methodology of the world to get out of trouble or navigate a crisis or even deliver those in trouble. It embraces the methodology of Jesus in prayer and is focused in zeal to come into unity with His heart through intimacy.

1. In other words, it is a violent rejection of every other thing to lay hold of one thing – to draw near to God. The beauty of His perfect leadership is that He gives to all what they desire most. Those that are called in lifestyle and vocation to draw near to God that are radical about laying hold of Him in this age will love His answer in that age.
2. We must not confuse a zeal for one thing to mean that we only *do* one thing (sit under the shade tree and enjoy His affections). The pursuit of a “one thing” reality points to a holistic life in which *everything we are about* and *everything we give our time to* reflects the zealous pursuit of our heart, in prayer, in service, and in community.
3. “...they shall **stand before me**” – the life of a true Anna is different and distinct from others who will come and enjoy the presence of the Lord; there is an active, aggressive stance that mark the servants of the Lord in the sanctuary – they are there to build the house and lead by taking their position (standing) and their place (servant’s role as part of the team) before the Lord. This is much different than those who will come and sit before the Lord for a season and move on. There is a sense of permanence to the one who is called to stand before Him.

V. THE NEW TESTAMENT EQUIVALENT OF THE SONS OF ZADOK:

A. The promise of God to the church of Philadelphia, “*The Faithful Church*”:

***"And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, 'These things says He who is holy, He who is true, 'He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens': I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name....Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. And I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name."* (Rev. 3:7-12)**

B. The little church with little influence, little wealth, and a little strength stays steady under pressure:

1. Jesus identifies Himself to them by the designation “**true**” or “**genuine**”: “*real*” or “*reality*” – Greek context; “*faithful and trustworthy*” – Hebrew context.
2. The One who is fully authentic, the very essence of reality itself, is the very definition of faithfulness and trust and has evaluated this little church with little influence and found it ***real, authentic, and faithful and true to their charge*** (His word and His command).

3. Thus, their incredible reward – while others will come and go in the assignments He gives, they will become an immovable pillar in the temple of His Father and “*go out no more*”; where the eternal assignments of others may change, theirs will never change – they will belong to God as a key part of the city, enjoying incredible honor, priestly dignity, and intimacy stewarding the very secrets of the heart of Jesus.