

FIXING THE WALL

by Dimas Salaberrios

A quick glance at the news tells you that we are living in seriously volatile times. A close friend saw her 401K take a tailspin as the Dow Jones suffered a wave of crashes. A family member lost almost all their savings on what was commonly called “low risk” stocks. Businesses are closing in NYC in ways that I have never seen before. And the America we know as the economic powerhouse is changing into a country that is harder to recognize as the days go by. Thomas L. Friedman recently wrote in the New York Times that “We are in the middle of an economic perfect storm, and we don’t know how much worse it’s going to get. People all over the world are hoarding cash, and no bank feels that it can fully trust anyone it is doing business with anywhere in the world...And we have not yet even felt the full economic brunt here...we may be at that moment just before the tsunami hits—when the birds take flight and the insects stop chirping because their acute senses can feel what is coming before humans can.” Yet still, in perilous times like these, I thank the Lord for the solace found in God’s Word in Hebrews 13:8 that “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.” Though material things may rise and fall in value, it is encouraging to know that our foundation is built on a God who will sustain His children through famines, recessions and even depression.

The federal government is feverishly trying to apply a financial tourniquet to a cancerous problem, while the ripple effects of America’s economic demise are being felt around the world. What will be our response? As Christians living in the Tri-State area, we are strategically located in one of the greatest mission fields on earth right now. The urgency of the moment is palpable. Will we sulk over our own losses, or will we show compassion towards those in the eye of the storm when the financial bells ring on weekday mornings? Should we gather together and hold a march on Wall Street condemning the people who made poor business decisions and got us into this mess? No, the media is tearing

them to shreds already. Our marching orders can be found in God's Word which speaks to this situation quite well. Jeremiah 29:5-7 NKJV reads:

5Build houses and dwell in them; plant gardens and eat their fruit. 6Take wives and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands, so that they may bear sons and daughters—that you may be increased there, and not diminished. 7And seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray to the LORD for it; for in its peace you will have peace.

The Lord instructed Jeremiah to tell the people to raise their families, become homeowners and intercede for the city's wellbeing— that their own peace was inextricably linked to the overall peace of the city. I strongly believe that the collective NYC church should heed this call and do what it is designed to do, and that is to spiritually lead the city. Sounds simple, but then again Paul did say that the simple things would confound the wise.

During my morning prayer time, I felt an overwhelming presence of the Holy Spirit as God filled my heart with a 30-day prayer initiative to take place on Wall Street through the month of November from 8am to 10am. The more I agreed and submitted my will to obey God saying "Yes, Lord; wherever You lead, I'll go," the more the Holy Spirit's presence of joy engulfed me. I am not a sensationalist, but I do believe that God speaks. That particular morning, the voice of the Lord was speaking to my heart with resounding clarity and power confirming His Word. I learned a long time ago from the book of Jonah that when God speaks, His children should obey with reverence.

God was so gracious that He also sent a confirmation of this missive. During a church meeting, one of our young leaders told us how she and her sister shared a recent subway ride home from work and were absolutely terrified. They recounted that they were the lone women in a

subway car full of drunken “winos.” I immediately assumed they were on an empty subway car surrounded by wild homeless alcoholics. But then they continued to explain that they caught the train in the heart of NY’s financial district and that their subway car was full of humiliated Wall St. businessmen. The stench of liquor reeked from these businessmen, they said, who were on the train drunk, rude, and visibly disheartened by the downturn of the markets.

Spengler – an anonymous, controversial political writer - said in his article entitled When the Gamblers Bail Out the Casino: “[Secretary of Treasury] Paulson’s dreadful scheme will become law, because Americans love their bankers. The bankers enable their collective gambling habit. Think of America as a town with one casino, in which the only economic activity is gambling. Most people lose, but the casino keeps lending them more money to play. Eventually, of course, the casino must go bankrupt. At this point, the townspeople vote to tax themselves in order to bail out the casino. Collectively, the gamblers cannot help but lose; individually they nonetheless hope to win their way out of the hole.” Spengler’s viewpoint here highlights that all the blame doesn’t belong to Wall St. alone.

America has become a big borrowing country with a lot of people abandoning their debts and accepting low credit scores while someone else takes the loss. Back in the day, people saved up to pay for things flat out like cars, property, college, etc. Yet we have morphed into a land of borrowers, and unfortunately, many have fallen prey to predatory lenders. I remember a time when slick Harlem loan sharks were all rounded up and arrested. But these days, it seems like we’re seeing a bunch of legalized loan sharking going on with banks and mortgage companies parading around like sound financial institutions. It is no surprise then that such corruption is now reaping its wage – financial death.

As a country, we must humble ourselves and pray for God's forgiveness. There are many with muddied hands in the financial debacle we now

face. Banks, Congress and Wall Street undoubtedly share a large dose of the blame, but at another end of the spectrum are those in theological circles who have jumped on the debt cancellation bandwagon without the slightest bit of concern for the lender. Instead of showing integrity and keeping an oath to pay back those from whom we've borrowed, many think that merely praying that a debt somehow vanishes away is the only action one needs to take. I've heard of the Year of Jubilee, but that is no basis to knowingly enter into a financial obligation and enjoy the fruits of such an agreement only to wish that your end of the bargain miraculously disappears. As we seek the Lord to overhaul this corrupt financial system, let us also be upright and honest in all of our dealings, striving to keep a good name with everyone-including our creditors.

For years, lower Manhattan has been gripped by a seedy subculture of high priced prostitution, drugs and a proliferation of strip clubs, all supported by greedy “Gordon Gekko” types from the financial district. In this crisis, God has opened a huge door for Jesus to walk through and become the true joy these men have been searching for in all the wrong places. The time is ripe for the Christian community to go out to the streets and lovingly minister to those that are willing to submit to Jesus. Lord, FIX THE WALL and heal our land.

All eyes are on Wall Street right now. I pray we will not miss this season to show the world why God established the church to be the light of the world. We are called to be the ultimate example of community. I pray that the impact of the Lord be felt around the world as we minister effectively to financial executives and witness their hearts being transformed by the power of Jesus Christ.

Let us join together on the cobblestones of Wall Street during the month of November and see the power of the Holy Spirit poured out on those in the business sector there. I pray revival breaks out. I pray that the hearts of those working on Wall Street will be tender to the leading of the Lord, and that a harvest of souls will be won for the kingdom of God.

Throughout the month of November, we'll be on post at the corner of Broadway and Wall Street from 8am-10am. See you there!

For more information, please email us at FixingTheWall@aol.com or call us at 718-231-5555.

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