

first responders

in crisis: the people of God



Note: upon hearing the message this Sunday, it seemed more appropriate to release the sermon notes in the form of letter from Pastor Carr. We encourage you to listen, read, and reflect on how we can better fulfill our call as first responders in the body of Christ.

*With love,
CHTC Ministry Team*

The people of God (the body of Christ) should be the first responders in crises. In the natural, during crises, we have first responders.

Consider the **ER doctors and nurses**, who put their lives at risk to save others. Many are overworked, but they honor their commitment. They go to school to learn their obligations so that they will be prepared to handle the crisis as a first responder. Consider the **firefighters**. They are the first to climb ladders, go into burning buildings, look for those in need of saving, and much more. Their call is to go in and save lives.

Police officers are called to protect, with their own lives, those at risk. Many do not come home. Consider our **mail carriers**. Rain or shine, snow or sleet, they deliver to your mailbox. Many are chased by dogs, but they do their job because it is their calling.

Not even to mention our **armed forces**, who pay the ultimate cost of their lives, the list could go on and on about those who are first responders in the natural. Now let us look at some of our spiritual first responders.

Abraham had a call. He was comfortable at home, but he got a call to go to a place he didn't know anything about and take no one except his immediate family (Genesis 12). **Joseph** was another first responder, sold by his brothers, whom he trusted, into a land that he knew nothing about. Even in this land, as a first responder, he stayed faithful to God under all circumstances, until he was brought from the pit to the palace (Genesis 39-41).

Moses also had a call to be a first responder. He thought when he was trained by his mother in Pharaoh's house that he was ready to take on the Egyptians, but he had not yet been prepared for his assignment by God. He later returned to Egypt to deliver the children of Israel. **Joshua** was one of the only ones who left Egypt that was able to go into Canaan. He was called as the new leader to take the young people, untrained in war, and go into battle.

Esther had a call on her life to save the Jews in a time of crisis. With the mindset of, "if I perish, I perish," she went before the king and saved the Jews from Haman's noose. **Ruth** had a call on her life to make Naomi's God her God. In the process of fulfilling her call, she was able to marry Boaz and become part of the lineage of Christ.

John had a call. He was exiled to the isle of Patmos, not murmuring and complaining, but staying in the quietness of the Spirit, until God revealed to him the message we know as the book of Revelation. **Paul** was called by God on the road to Damascus. One of the greatest missionaries to ever live, he took his call seriously as a first responder to the Gentiles. Paul watched the Jews destroy Stephen (Acts 7). But after God broke him, his outlook became, "for Christ I live and for Christ I'll die" (Galatians 2:20; Philippians 1:21). He had an understanding as a first responder that his life was not his own, willing to die for the sake of the Gospel even when the prophet Agabus warned him he would be killed if he went to Jerusalem (Acts 21:10-14).

Rosa Parks and **Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.** were also first responders. They responded to a call and paid a price, King with his life, so that today, we could have greater civil freedoms.

The most prolific first responder we have is **Jesus**, who gave His life that we might be able to have salvation.

What are *we* doing as first responders? God has called us believers to help build the kingdom of God. In Matthew 28:19, we are called to “go,”; to go out into the world and tell people the good news. He gave some to be evangelists, some pastors, some teachers (Ephesians 4:11). In these calls, are we being first responders? Are we building God’s kingdom?

In order to be first responders, we cannot be enraptured with everything in the world, but we must quiet down and study the Word to show ourselves approved (2 Timothy 2:15). We must be prepared: we are moving into a cashless society. Who controls your bank account? We are moving into a situation where you will not be able to buy or sell unless the Babylonian king says so. We must keep pushing into battle and pulling down strongholds.

COVID-19 is like carbon monoxide. You can’t see or smell it, but it is spreading and people are dying. We must heed the words of Jesus to stay in Jerusalem until we get power. As we see the fulfillment of Matthew 24 and 25, we must prepare to be a first responder. We are not putting on armor just to sing songs and read the Bible, but to stand against. When we understand why we are putting on armor, we will be able to properly fulfill Ephesians 6:10-20.

The world is like Namaan the Syrian (2 Kings 5). Even with all his resources, power, research, and connections, he had no answer to the ailment that plagued his body. He had to go to the first responder of God, Elisha, to be healed. After some travail, Naaman finally heeded the instructions of Elisha to dip in the muddy Jordan river seven times, and he was delivered. We should be as Elisha, first responders with power and with an answer to the unsolvable problems of the world through God.

When we, as believers in the body of Christ, stand up as first responders, we will gain the respect that God told us to have. We must fulfill the Scripture, not just talk about it. Let each one ask ourselves: are we prepared? Are we answering our call? Are we being a first responder? We are living in a world where people of God need to stop, think, and look around (Mark 13:37). God has the answer to everything, and He takes care of His children. If you walk in the ways of God, you have no need to fear, no matter what happens.

People in the world are living in great fear. They are afraid to go to the store or walk down the street if there is another person there. They are stocking up and hoarding. God is using this crisis to make a point. The body of Christ should stand and resist, praying and pulling down every stronghold. We have the answer through God!

We are living in a time and in a world that is in chaos. Everyone is trying to find the answer. The virus affects the lungs, yet some will walk down the street with their masks down, smoking. If you don’t know Jesus, find Him. Get in the Word for yourself and find out what God is saying. Get into a teaching ministry and find out what “thus sayeth the Lord.”

We must be first responders in these times of crisis. Our lights must shine in our lives. We must demonstrate the peace that passes all understanding. When people question how we are able to be so peaceful, we will be able to tell them, we know God. Do you know Him today? He is still alive and moving in the earth today. Make your declaration of faith in Jesus Christ today. Follow Him. Render to Caesar what is Caesar’s, but follow God!

A word of wisdom: cover yourself with the blood of Jesus. It is not a rag or a mask over your mouth that keeps you, but the blood of Jesus. Read **2 Chronicles 7:14** and **Jonah 3**, where Jonah didn’t want to answer God’s call. But when he finally preached, the Ninevites humbled themselves, fasted, and prayed until God relented of the disaster that was intended for them. We are called to be the first responders in crisis! ■

-Dr. Mary T. Carr, PhD