And if the bugler doesn't sound a clear sound, how will the soldiers know they are being called to battle?
1st Corinthians 14:8 NLV

Prayer Study #331
First Love Ministries of Perry, Georgia
A NEW SEASON HAS BEGUN

THE STATE OF THE CHURCH IN AMERICA

1. **Lukewarm believers:** **"**Where are the courageous, uncompromising firebrands among us today? Sadly, they are few and far between. In the past we were willing to be revolutionary; today we want to be relevant. We used to be principled; today we are pragmatic. Once we were prophetic; today we are professional. We used to follow a kingdom model; now we follow a business model. Put on Christian TV today and watch a few shows. What do you see? A carnal prosperity message. Some carnival-like, huckster fund-raising. Another self-improvement sermon. A pep talk. A teaching on how all your dreams can come true. And some new revelation based on a bizarre misreading of Scripture, now turned into a best-selling book. With a few noteworthy exceptions, that about sums it up, doesn't it? Where are the calls to take up the cross and follow Jesus, regardless of cost or consequence? Where are the calls to courage, to compassionate service, to world missions, to glorify God by life or by death-in other words, to be normal New Testament disciples? Mark this down: What the world calls fanaticism and much of the church calls extremism, God calls normal. No wonder our churches are producing consumers rather that disciples. NO wonder the world is changing us rather than us changing the world."

   Michael Brown

   I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then because you are lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth (Revelation 3:15-16).
2. **The Watered Down Gospel and the Seeker Friendly Church:** "To accommodate means to adapt, to make suitable or acceptable, to make convenient. A gospel of accommodation is creeping into the United States. It's an American cultural invention to appease the lifestyle of luxury and pleasure. Primarily a Caucasian, suburban gospel, it's also in our major cities and is sweeping the nation, influencing ministers of every denomination, and giving birth to megachurches with

thousands who come to hear a nonconfronting message. It's an adaptable gospel that is spoon-fed through humorous skits, drama, and short, nonabrasive sermonettes on how to cope-called a seeker-friendly or sinner-friendly gospel. To begin with, those terms are unscriptural. The gospel of Jesus Christ has always been confronting…" David Wilkerson

3. **The Rise of the Apostate Church:** Apostasy means to fall from truth. An apostate is someone who once believed and then rejected the truth of God. Some of the strongest apostate teachings in the church today are Jesus is not the only way of salvation (John 14:6-*Jesus said to him,* ***"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."***, homosexuality is an acceptable lifestyle (Romans 1:24-28-*Therefore God also gave them up to uncleaness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting…)*, prosperity is what we should be striving for, i.e. the Prosperity Gospel (1st Timothy 6:10 *For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness and pierced themselves through with many sorrows). Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth* (1st Timothy 4:1-3).

Note: A description of the future Antichrist is found in Daniel 11: 36-45. Verse 37 tells us that he will neither regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, which implies he will be a homosexual. That, perhaps, is why there has been a worldwide movement pushing for the acceptance of homosexuality.

WHAT THE LORD IS DOING?

1. **Gathering Together a Remnant Company Who Will Not Compromise or Bow the Knee to the Babylonia World System-** *The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be* (Genesis 49:10). *Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of the Lord is present* (2nd Thessalonians 2:1-2). *And the dragon was angry with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ* (Revelation 12:17).
2. **Sending Judgments on the Earth to Wake Us Up-** Hosea 6:1-3: *Come, let us return unto the LORD; for He hath torn, and He will heal us; He hath smitten, and He will bind us up. After two days He will revive us; in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight; Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord; His going forth is prepared as the morning; and He shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.* Why does the Lord send judgments? 1. Because He loves us. (*For whom the LORD loveth, He chasteneth and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth*-Hebrews 12:6); 2. *Because He wants us to come to Him*. (*I will go and return to my place till they acknowledge their offense and seek my face; in their affliction they will seek me*-Hosea 5:15); 3. Because the wages of sin is death, and He does not want us to die in our sins. (*All thy lovers have forgotten thee; they seek thee not; for I have wounded thee with the wound of an enemy, with the chastisement of a cruel one, for the multitude of thine iniquity, because thy sins were increased*-Jeremiah 30:14); 4. Because of unforgiveness operating in your life. (*And his lord was angry and delivered him to the tormenters, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall My heavenly Father do unto you, if ye from your hearts, forgive not everyone his brother his trespasses*-Matthew 18:34-34); 5. Because you must identify with His sufferings to have a Christ image. (*That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death, if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead*-Philippians 3:10-11, AND *Beloved, think*

it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to test you, as though some strange things happened unto you, but rejoice, inasmuch as you are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy-1st Peter 4:12-13); Because He does not want us in love with the world. (*Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth*-Colossians 3:2, AND *But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly, wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He hath prepared for them a city*-Hebrews 11:16); 7. Because we learn His ways by being afflicted. (*It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes*-Psalm 119:71, AND *Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept Thy word*-Psalm 119:67).

3. **Making Us New Wine Skins**- ***"No one puts new wine into old wineskins; or else the new wine will burst the wineskins and be spilled, and the wineskins will be ruined"*** (Luke 5:37).
4. **Purging Us of Fear, Especially the Fear of Man-***There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love* (1st John 4:18).
5. **Causing Us to Decrease So That He Can Increase-***He must increase, but I must decrease* (John 3:30).
6. **Knocking at the Door-*****"Behold I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me"*** (Revelation 3:20).

WHAT IS OUR PART TO PLAY?

1. **A Call to Righteousness**: *If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him* (1st John 2:29)
2. **A Call to Forgiveness**: ***"For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses"*** (Matthew 6:14-15)
3. **A Call to Release What He is Birthing in You:** *My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you* (Galatians 4:19). ***"A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come; but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world*** (John 16:21).

4. **A New Call to Come and Follow Him**: *Then Jesus said to His disciples,* ***"If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me"*** (Matthew 16:24)
5. **A Call to Heal the Wounded**: *The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit, who can bear?* (Proverbs 18:14).
6. **A Call to More Intense and Specific Spiritual Warfare**: *Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places* (Ephesians 6:11-12). *The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool"* (Psalm 110:1; Matthew 22:44; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:43; Acts 2:35; Hebrews 1:13; Hebrews 10:13)
7. **A Call to lay down our idols:** *Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen* (1st John 5:21).
8. **Speaking Life instead of Death:** *Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit* (Proverbs 18:21.) *You are snared by the words of your mouth…*(Proverbs 6:2).
9. **Walking in Unity:** *I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace* (Ephesians 4:1-3). *Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!* (Psalm 133:1). *And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you , are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?* (Corinthians 3:1-3).

WHAT WILL BE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THIS NEW SEASON?

1. **A Falling Away**: *Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition* (2nd Thessalonians 2:3).
2. **A Great Harvest at the End of the Age:** "*Behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "when the plowman shall overtake the*

reaper…" (Amos 9:13). *Then he said to His disciples,* ***"The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers in to His harvest"*** (Matthew 9:37-38). ***"…the harvest if the end of the age…"*** (Matthew 13:39).

3. **Activation of Spiritual Gifts:** *Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands* (2nd Timothy 1:6). *But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way* (1st Corinthians 12:31).
4. **A Heart of Worship in the Body of Christ:** ***"But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and turth"*** (John 4:23-24)
5. **A Cry for More Intimacy with the Son:** *Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish in the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him* (Psalm 2:12).
6. **Separation from the World and from the Lukewarm Believers:** *Therefore, "Come out from among them and be separate says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty"* (2nd Corinthians 6:17-18).
7. **A Resolution in the Remnant to Not Turn Back:** *Friends, don't get me wrong. By no means do I count myself as an expert in all of this, but I've got my eyes on the goal, where God is beckoning us onward to Jesus. I am off and running, and I am not turning back* (Philippians 3:13-14 The Message Bible).
8. **A Time of Counting It All Joy and Rejoicing in Persecution**: *My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience* (James 1:2-3). *In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ…*(1st Peter 1:6-7). ***Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for so they persecuted the prophets who were***

before you (Matthew 5:11-12). *Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution* (2nd Timothy 3:12).

9. **One Way Missionaries:** *And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death* (Revelation 12:11).
10. **Holiness:** *Give to the Lord the glory due His name; bring an offering, and come before Him. Oh, worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness* (1st Chronicles 16:29-also see Psalm 29:2 & Psalm 96:9). *Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord…*(Hebrews 12:14).