

A COMPILATION OF ARTICLES

THE
**PASTOR'S
CORNER**

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THE PASTOR'S CORNER

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Come, Holy Spirit



On the first day of the week, in the morning, after Jesus rose from the dead, He appeared to Mary Magdalene just outside the empty tomb. With indescribable joy, she held onto Him, but He said to her, "Do not cling to Me for I have not yet ascended to My Father. Go tell My disciples that I am ascending to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God." (John 20:17)

What a glorious day for all of heaven and all of humanity, Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, rose from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit, having defeated satan and all the powers of darkness, and through His shed blood brought forgiveness of sins and eternal life to all who would believe!

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him would not perish but have everlasting life!" (*John 3:16*)

Jesus had a very busy day after He left Mary Magdalene. (His first day on the job as Savior of the World!) The first order of business on Resurrection Day: the risen Savior entered the Tabernacle in heaven and placed His redeeming blood on the Mercy Seat in the heavenly Tabernacle of God. Eternal redemption for all of humanity had been obtained. "With His own blood, Christ entered the Most Holy Place, once for all, having obtained eternal redemption." (Hebrews 9:12)

I believe the next thing that Jesus did that day was to strip the devil of all the authority that he had as ruler over this world. Jesus told the Apostle John, "I am the First and the Last. I am He who lives and was dead, behold I am alive forevermore. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.

Jesus went into Hades and preached to the prisoners, those who were in the place of torment who died without faith in the Messiah. He then released all the saints of old who were in Paradise, who were waiting for the coming of the Messiah. "He ascended on high; He led captivity captive and gave gifts to men. He first descended into the lower parts of the earth. He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens. (Ephesians 4:8- 10)

The next order of business happened on the evening of the same day. "The same day at evening, being the first day of the week, Jesus came and stood in their midst. Peace be with you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you. When He had said this, He breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit!" (John 20:19) This was the first impartation of the Holy Spirit in which these disciples were born again. Now that Jesus was glorified, the Holy Spirit could now create a new birth within those who believe.



Jesus spent the next forty days appearing to His disciples and speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God. On the Day of His Ascension, He told the disciples to return to Jerusalem and wait for the Promise of the Father. He said, "John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now. And you will receive power after the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be My witnesses." (Acts 1:4-8)

Ten days later, on the Day of Pentecost, (Feast of the First Fruits), the explosive power of the Holy Spirit descended upon 120 disciples in the Upper Room, and the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ was birthed with Pentecostal power. "When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place; and suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind...and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit

and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance." (Acts 2:1-4)

Thousands of Jewish worshippers heard these disciples tell of the wondrous works of God. Peter then stood up, and in Hebrew, preached the first gospel message; 3,000 souls received Jesus as the Messiah.

This Baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues is "for all whom the Lord our God shall call." (Acts 2:38-39)

*Have you received the Baptism of the Holy
Spirit since you believed? (Acts 19:1-6)*



The Power of the Blood of Christ



On the night before their deliverance from Egyptian slavery, God had commanded the children of Israel to sacrifice a lamb and put its blood on the doorpost and lintel of their houses.

"Every man shall take for himself a lamb, a lamb for a household." (Exodus 12:3) The destroying angel was about to go through all of Egypt and slay the firstborn of every family in that country. The blood on the doorposts would be a sign: "When I see the blood, I will 'passover' you and the destroying angel will not be able to enter your homes." (Exodus 12:13)

This was the first Passover and it foreshadowed the Last Passover when Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, would shed His blood at the cross for the forgiveness of the sins of mankind.

"Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin
of the world." (John 1:29)

The most powerful substance in the universe is the blood of Jesus Christ that was shed at the cross. According to God's Word, "There can be no forgiveness without the shedding of blood." (Hebrews 9:22) Blood represents life. "The life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul." (Leviticus 17:11)

Jesus, the Lamb of God, shed His pure, divine blood so that anyone who would confess Him as Savior and Lord would be completely forgiven, cleansed from all sin, and receive everlasting life. The blood of Jesus not only removes the death penalty for sin but imparts to every believer the power of His resurrection life through the indwelling Holy Spirit.



When Christians put their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and acknowledge the power of His precious blood, not only are they saved, but their entire household will be saved. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved; you and your household." (Acts 16:31) "A Lamb for a household!" If you have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, so has your family!! God our Father is a "family man", and He saves the whole family!

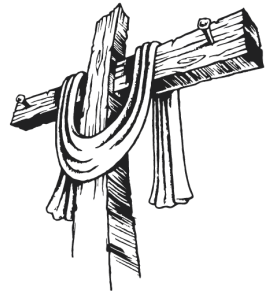
"I will contend with him who contends with you, and I will save your children." (Isaiah 49:25) "All your children shall be taught by the Lord, and great shall be the peace of your children." (Isaiah 54:13) "They shall come back from the land of the enemy...they shall return to their own border." (Jer. 31:17)

As Christian parents, we declare that the blood of the Lamb covers our entire family. We nullify, cancel, and destroy every assignment that satan has against our families. "They overcame him (the devil),



○ by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death." (Rev. 12:11) As we testify to the power of the blood of Jesus, we establish a "bloodline" around our family and all that pertains to us.

Don Gossett tells the true story of an evangelist from Tennessee who was preaching a great revival in Canada. After the first week of the revival, the devil put this thought in his mind: "I'm going to kill your children by sending foxes with rabies on your land and they will bite your children and they will die. The preacher immediately proclaimed a "bloodline" around his property and trusted the Lord for His protection. A week later, his brother called him and told him that as he was walking around his property, he found five dead foxes right on his property line. Upon examination, it was found that they all had rabies. They died instantly when they tried to cross the "bloodline". There is power in the blood!



There is no greater mystery in the Christian life than the worth and power of the Blood of Jesus. Declare that power over your children; establish a "bloodline" around your family, your finances, and all that pertains to you.

God is faithful!



Power of Intercessory Prayer



One of the greatest joys in life is getting our prayers answered, especially when it involves our loved ones and their salvation. Jesus said, "Until now you haven't asked the Father for anything in My name; but now ask and you will receive, that your joy may be full." (John 16:24)

"The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man or woman avails much!" (*James 5:16*)

Our prayers, when asked according to the will of God, will move mountains, and release the supernatural power of God!

When it comes to our families and loved ones, most assuredly, God has them in His heart and in His hand, and not one will be lost! He knows the plans that He has for them and He will make sure that they will experience them. (Jeremiah 29:11)

It is God's will to bring entire families into the Kingdom of God: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved; you and your household." (Acts 16:31) When we know in our heart that God loves our children more than we do, we will pray with great faith; and know that our prayers will be answered! "This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will He hears us; and if we know that He hears us, then we have the petitions we requested of Him." (1 John 5:14, 15)

This next year will be a year of great joy in many, many families as the "prodigals" come home to the Father! It is time to focus on the

spiritual battle that will release our loved ones. God has given us powerful spiritual weapons to win our battles; the Word of God, the Blood of Jesus, and the Name of Jesus! "With these weapons, I can capture rebels, bring them back to God, and change them into men and women whose heart's desire is obedience to Christ!" (2 Cor 3-5 TLB)

I was given this word from the Lord several weeks ago and He said now is time to engage in focused spiritual warfare for our families. "Don't be afraid of your enemy; remember the Lord, great and awesome; and fight for your brothers and sisters, your sons, your daughters, your wives (husbands), and your homes." (Nehemiah 4:14) When we focus on the greatness and goodness of our Father, we know that we will see awesome miracles!

The Holy Spirit and the angelic strike force are ready to release supernatural power in the lives of our loved ones, as we declare the word of the Lord over their lives. "You will declare a "redemptive word", and it will be established for you; so light shall shine on your ways. When you see one who is "cast down" you will say, 'Be lifted up...and God will deliver him/her who is not innocent; yes, he/she will be delivered by the purity of your hands.'" (Job 22:28-30) (A "cast down" sheep is one that has fallen over and can't get up without the help of the shepherd.)

In creation, we see that "the earth was without form and void, and darkness covered the face of the deep. And the Holy Spirit was hovering (brooding) over the face of the waters. And God said, 'Let there be light, and there was light.'" (Gen 1:2, 3)

This is the condition of the human heart that has been blinded by the god of this world: without structure, empty, and darkness within. Just as the Holy Spirit "brooded" over the earth, so He is "brooding" over our loved ones, waiting on our prayers of faith and declarations: "Let there be light in the heart of my loved ones!" New creations will be birthed as we cooperate with the Holy Spirit and declare that light shall shine on our ways!

"Your sons will come from afar, and your daughters shall be nursed at your side; then you will see and become radiant, and your heart will swell with joy!" (Isaiah 60:4, 5)

God wants His family to be "bursting at the seams" and our hearts "bursting with joy!" (II Samuel 5:20)

"I wish above all things that you would prosper and be in health, even as your soul prospers." - John the Apostle



Simon's Act of Faith



"Simon, let Me borrow your boat." Simon Peter didn't have a clue as to what the Lord was about to do when Jesus spoke those words to him. What was about to unfold was the beginning of a miraculous provision amid frustration, futility, and failure. The Father and the Son knew exactly what they were about to do with these four weary fishermen. (*Luke 5:1-11*) The Lord always has a plan to bless His children; and within that plan, there usually is an even greater personal revelation that will supernaturally change our lives.

"I know the plans that I am planning for you, says the Lord; plans for blessing and peace, to give you a future and a hope." (*Jeremiah 29:11*)

Peter, Andrew, James, and John were experienced fishermen, but after working all night long, they had nothing to show for their hard work. Empty nets, empty boats, and empty wallets nothing to take home to "Mama and the kids"; let alone paying the bills. Things were looking right for a miracle! Here comes Jesus, walking toward them with a heavenly plan and a miracle from the Father. (Do you realize that God is on time, all the time, and just in time?)

Our Heavenly Father loves to surprise us with the miraculous. A miracle from God can't be compared to magic. A miracle requires divine cooperation between man and God. God will not do what we have to do, and most assuredly, we could never do what only He can do. Every miracle from God requires a seed on our part, just a mustard seed, to start the processing of the miracle. Jesus needed

a seed from Peter, and that seed was the use of his boat. (When Jesus asks to borrow "your boat" — your possessions, your talent, your life—give it to Him! He will fill the emptiness with His fullness!)

After Jesus borrowed Simon's boat, He said to him, "Launch out into the deep and let your nets down for a catch." These fishermen were tired, discouraged, and frustrated; they were ready to go home. Peter said, "But Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing, nevertheless, at Your word we will do so." (By the way, it is almost impossible to catch fish during the day in the Sea of Galilee; the water was so clear, the fish stayed on the bottom until nighttime.)

Contrary to his reasoning and experience, Simon Peter obeyed the Lord; and amazingly, they caught a "boatload" of fish. The Lord did know what He was doing after all! (Really!?)

However, the Lord had more in mind than just a financial breakthrough for these four fishermen; He needed some disciples. (I think that was the plan from the beginning.) After Simon Peter told Jesus what a sinner he was, the Lord simply said, "Follow Me and I will make you fishers of men." (*Matthew 4:10*) What appeared to be a failure ended up being the beginning of the rest of their lives!

When men see your failures, they see your end; when God sees your failures, He sees your beginning!

Many Christians today have the same mental and emotional attitude that those fishermen had: "We have labored so long and

have had very little results; we're just "going to give up." It seems that even the Messiah, Jesus, had to deal with that same attitude of discouragement. "Then I said, 'I have labored in vain; I have spent My strength for nothing; yet My reward is with the LORD, and My work is with My God. (Isaiah 49:4) Aren't you glad Jesus never gave up!? The Lord will ask you to "borrow your boat"; to sow a seed for the miracle you need. Listen for His voice, and obey His directive, even if it doesn't make sense in the natural; it will produce a miracle in the supernatural! Our God is absolutely faithful!!

If you have faith the size of a mustard seed...

nothing will be impossible for you!



Seeking the Face of God: An Epic Epiphany



Seeking the "face of God" must precede seeking the "hand of God". A "face-to-face" encounter with Almighty God will bring a character change, which will prepare us for the "hand of God" - His miracle-working power. God has prepared such a time for every Christian, and He is looking forward to it. He had this appointment with each one of us set up a long time ago. This encounter is called an epiphany - a moment of sudden revelation or insight.

Jacob had such an encounter with the Lord that changed his life and confirmed his destiny. After serving his uncle Laban for 20 years, the Lord told him to "return to the land of his fathers and to his family. The Lord promised to be with him and would bless him. Jacob set out to the Promised Land - Canaan with his family and all his possessions. As they were returning, a messenger came to Jacob and informed him that his brother, Esau, was coming to meet him with a band of four hundred men. Jacob became very afraid because the last words that he had heard from Esau were, "The next time I see you, I will kill you!" Jacob quickly reminded the Lord that it was His idea that he return to his homeland!

Every word from the Lord will encounter resistance - a crisis situation in which Christ will be revealed.

Jacob took his family over the River Jabbok and left them there while he crossed back over the river. "He was alone with God!" There will be times in our lives when will feel all alone. No one seems to understand what we are going through and seemingly

doesn't care. It is a divine set-up. God wants our undivided attention so that He can do something life-changing within us.

The Angel of the Lord met Jacob and wrestled with him all night but could not prevail against him. This Angel was none other than the Christ, the Word of God. This type of appearance is called a "theophany". Why couldn't the Lord prevail over Jacob? Jacob was so full of himself that he would not let go of the control of his life to the Lord. The Lord touched the socket of Jacob's hip, and he was "out of joint". (Just like we are when the Lord deals with us.) When Jacob realized his weakness, he grabbed hold of the Lord and said, "I will not let you go until You bless me!" (Desperation is a major factor in receiving God's blessings).

The Lord then asked Jacob a question, "What is your name?" Obviously, the Lord knew his name, but He wanted to give Jacob a reality check. The Amplified Bible says, "In shock realization, he whispered Jacob!" For the first time in his life, he realized that he was a deceiver, a supplanter, a con man. At that point, the Lord changed his name from Jacob - "deceiver" to Israel- "prince with God". All Jacob had to do was admit that he was bankrupt and did not have it together so that God could put it together for him that's grace!



Jacob called this place of grace, this divine encounter with God, Peniel (Face of God): "For I have seen God face to face and my life is preserved." Seeking the face of God can be hazardous to your carnal life. God told Moses, "No one can see My face and live." Yet the Lord told David to "seek His face." Seeking the face of God will put to death our pride, selfishness, and other character flaws, and

we will come alive with the life-changing grace of God! Not only was Jacob changed in that divine encounter, but Esau was also changed. When Jacob and Esau met each other, instead of wanting to kill Jacob, Esau embraced Jacob and wept.

Our encounter with the Lord at the Jabbok (Hebrew - self-emptying), will not only change us, but it could bring healing to any broken relationship in our life.



He is Risen! The Words of Liberation



Three of the most powerful and liberating words ever spoken on earth: "He is risen!" Jesus Christ conquered sin, hell, and death at the cross. Satan, the evil god of this world, was totally defeated at the Cross of Christ!

Jesus told the Apostle John, "I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold I am alive forevermore. Amen, I have the keys of Hell and Death!" When God the Father raised Jesus from the dead, the forgiveness of sins was obtained, the curse of sickness was revoked, and Satan was judged and condemned forever! The resurrection of Christ sealed His victory forever!

The last words that Jesus spoke as He was dying on the cross was a shout of victory! "It is finished!" (John 19:30) Jesus was the Victor. He had won the Battle of the Ages! Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, had to die and shed His precious blood so that we could live. The curse of sin had to be removed, and His death was required to pay the price for our sins.

"God made Him who knew no sin to become sin for us, that we could become the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Cor. 5:21)

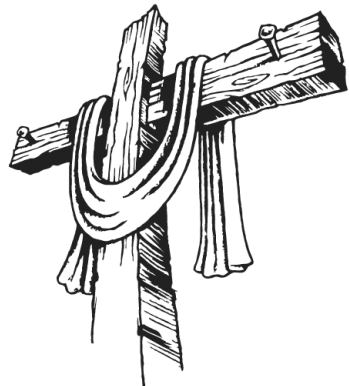
Jesus said, "If I be lifted up (crucified), I will draw all men to Me." (John 12:32). In the context of that passage, it should read, "If I be lifted up, I will draw all judgment to Me." The previous verse says, "Now is the judgment of this world, now the ruler of this world will be cast out."

The Apostle Paul summed up the gospel message in three short statements: "that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, and that He rose again on the third day according to the Scriptures." (1 Corinthians 15:4-5)

Casting Crowns sing a song, "O Glorious Day," that proclaims the glorious message of the Gospel. The chorus of that song is: "Living, He loved me, Dying, He saved me, Buried, He carried my sins far away, Rising, He justified, freely forever. One day He's coming back, O glorious day!"

The resurrection power of Jesus is present in every Christian through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. His power enables us to walk in victory over sin, Satan, and sickness. Romans 8:11 "If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of the Spirit who dwells in you!" Not only was the curse of sin removed and buried forever, but the curse of sickness and disease was removed, and has no power over a born-again believer! The shed blood of Jesus has purchased the forgiveness of sins and eternal life. His broken body has purchased physical healing from all sickness and disease.

"He Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sin, might live for righteousness, by His stripes (wounds that cut deep in His body), you were healed!" (1 Peter 2:24)



(Isaiah 53:4-5) The very first recorded word that Jesus spoke after

His resurrection was, "Rejoice!" (Matthew 28:9) Christians should be in a "celebration mode" continually because we have been "born-again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead!" (1 Peter 1:3)

Happy Resurrection Day!



Start of a New Year Brings Renewed Hope



The beginning of a new year brings a renewal of hope, an expectation that better things are going to happen. In these last two years, we have been overwhelmed with a pandemic of sickness, political upheaval, violence, hardships, and a pervading atmosphere of lawlessness. Many of God's people are weary, frustrated, and very perplexed; crying out to God, "Where are You Lord, and what in the world are you doing? When are you going to bring justice, truth, and righteousness to our nation?"

I hear the Lord saying, "Don't be overly concerned with the affairs and condition of this world; I know exactly what I'm going to do and when I plan to do it. Rather be concerned about your relationship with Me and fulfilling My will for your life. I desire that you draw close to Me with a pure heart, to be zealous for our relationship, and return to your first love." (Rev 2:4-5) The question we should be asking is, "Lord, what do I need to do to grow in faith, and to experience Your love in a greater capacity, and to be empowered to fulfill Your purpose in my life?"



One major decision is to let the past be the past. Paul said, "This one thing I do, forgetting those things that are behind, and looking forward to the things that lie ahead, I press on to take hold of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ." (Phil 3:13,14) Unless you leave the past, the good, the bad, and the ugly, at the cross, you will not be able to clearly see the plans that God has for you. Isaiah 43:18,19 "Don't remember the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I will do

a new thing, now it will spring forth; will you not know it?

The blessings of His people this year, are for those who will hear His voice and surrender to his Lordship.

Along with those verses, I heard this song going through my mind, "A Bright, Bright Shiny Day." I was very excited and I knew the Lord was speaking to me, and not just to me, but to many Christians who had grown weary of the struggles from these last two years. These are the words to that song: "I can see clearly now the rain has gone; I can see all the obstacles in my way. Gone are the dark clouds that had me blind; it's gonna be a bright, bright shiny day. I think I can make it now, the pain is gone, and all of the bad feelings have disappeared. Here is the rainbow I've been praying for: it's gonna be a bright, bright shiny day. Look all around, there's nothing but blue skies, look straight ahead, there's nothing but blue skies."



If we are to clearly see the things that God has in store for us, we must submit our hearts to His grace and totally surrender to His will. There will be dark skies in the world, but for those who hear and obey His voice, there will be blue skies straight ahead. If we believe, we will see the power and the glory of God this year! 2022 is the year of the breakthrough!

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

(Matthew 5:8)



A Thankful Attitude

A Core Foundation for Christianity



An attitude of gratitude determines altitude and latitude. A thankful attitude will take you higher and farther in life, and it is a major factor in success.

A Harvard study on successful people showed that attitude, not aptitude or education, was the major factor in 80% of successful people.

A thankful heart removes the cloud of self-pity and an "entitlement mentality", which is quite prevalent in our society today. Shifting your focus from yourself and your problems to focusing on God and His goodness, will relieve a lot of stress; and prepare a way for God to pour out His blessings in your life.

"He who offers the sacrifice of thanksgiving honors Me and prepares the way for Me to show him My salvation." (Psalm 50:23)
Thanksgiving will open the windows of heaven for the "showers of blessings" upon you, your family, and your finances.

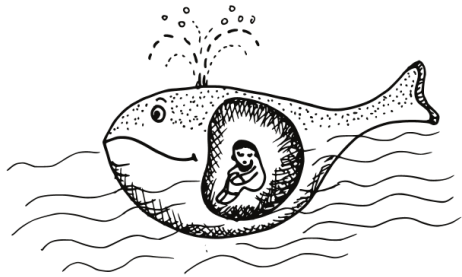
A thankful attitude is a basic foundational truth of the Christian life, and it is a determinant factor for spiritual growth and progress. It is imperative to give thanks if we are to remain in the will of God.

"In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." 1 Thessalonians 5:18

The proposition is not "for" but "in". The circumstance may not be the will of God, but the giving of thanks is always His will.

Thanksgiving is not just a spiritual discipline, but a command from the Scriptures, which releases the supernatural Presence of the Lord in your life. The giving of thanks is the "mustard seed of faith" that effectively removes those mountains that have been hindering you from your destiny. "If you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Be removed from here to there', and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you." (Matthew 17:20) In this context, thanksgiving is a key to the impossible! Your mustard seed of faith is like a catalyst that activates the mountain-moving faith of Jesus, who will obliterate that mountain!

Have you been "down in the mouth" lately, complaining and grumbling about things, and situations that you just can't seem to get resolved? Jonah found himself in a deep pit - the belly of a great fish for three days and nights.



He found himself in that situation because he disobeyed God's call in his life. Some of you reading this article might be in the same predicament right now. What did Jonah do that brought about his deliverance? After complaining and feeling sorry for himself, he said, "I will sacrifice to God with the voice of thanksgiving, I will pay what I have vowed. Salvation is of the Lord. Then the Lord spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land." (Jonah 2:8-10) (The devil can't "stomach" a thankful Christian!) The sooner you start giving thanks to God, the sooner

you will get out of your pit and get about God's business! You may be stuck in the "belly of a whale" right now, and you don't have a clue how to get out. You may not "feel" like giving thanks...do it anyway, in obedience to the Word of God. God will speak to that "big fish" and "out you go"...into the blessing of the Lord!

During this Thanksgiving holiday, take some time and magnify the Lord by giving Him thanks for all His blessings in your life, especially His greatest gift of all the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior!

"I will praise the Name of the Lord with a song, and I will magnify Him with thanksgiving." (Psalm 69:30)



The Power of Praise



Most of you have probably heard these lyrics in this popular song, "I'm gonna sing in the middle of the storm, louder and louder you're gonna hear my praises roar!"

Praise is a powerful weapon that God has given us to defeat the enemy and to come through every storm or trial victoriously. It is important for us to understand exactly what happens in the invisible realm when we sing and praise God with our whole hearts.

Offering up praise to our God brings the manifest presence of God into our midst. God inhabits the praises of His people (Psalm 22:3); and when His presence is manifested, He brings His liberating joy (Psalm 16:11), and mountain-moving power! (Psalm 97:5) God is magnified and blessed when we praise Him with our whole hearts.

"It is good to sing praises to our God; for it is pleasant, and praise is beautiful." (Psalm 147:1)

Singing praise to the Lord not only honors and magnifies God, but there is a literal "Star Wars" effect that is released in the spiritual realm which will bring a victorious breakthrough in every trial, storm, or battle that we will ever encounter on this earth. Two stories in the Bible give us a "behind the scenes" account of the power of praise.

2 Chronicles 20:1-30 records the story of Jehoshaphat and the nation of Judah



when they faced annihilation by a very great army. Jehoshaphat humbled himself and called on the Lord. The prophet, Jahaziel stood up and proclaimed, "Don't be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is the Lord's. Position yourselves, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord who is with you." Jehoshaphat believed the word of the Lord and set the "praise choir" in front of the army as they went out to meet the enemy. "When they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushes against the enemy and they were defeated." The mighty angels of God were just waiting for the praises of God's people to be lifted up so that they could engage in the battle. The power of praise enabled God's angels to completely defeat the fallen angels of satan who initiated the battle to destroy God's people.

Another powerful account of the power of praise is recorded in Acts 16:16-31 when Paul and Silas were beaten and thrown in prison for casting a demon out of a slave girl who was possessed with a spirit of divination. "At midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening. Suddenly there was an earthquake, the foundations of the prison were shaken, and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed." The Philippian jailer cried out, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household."



What actually happened "behind the scenes" when Paul and Silas praised the Lord? "In heaven, an angel, having a golden censer with much incense, offered it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar. He filled it with fire from the altar and threw it to the

earth. There were noises, thundering, lightning, and an earthquake!" (Revelation 8:3-5) I believe the earthquake in Philippi was the result of the praises that were lifted up by Paul and Silas! Instead of feeling sorry for themselves and complaining about their situation, they moved heaven, to move earth.

The power of praise is awesome and is a vital part of experiencing breakthroughs for yourself and your loved ones! If you're in the middle of a storm, start singing praises to God and watch the Lord bring great victory in your life!

"Shout unto God with a voice of triumph!"

Jesus is Victor!



Triumphing Over Evil: The Ministry of Intercession



"If you pray, they will come!" One of the most powerful ministries in the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ today is the ministry of intercession. God has given his people awesome authority and power to "bring heaven to earth," to set the captives free from deception, and to destroy the works of our adversary, the devil.

Peter says, "Be vigilant, because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." (1 Peter 5:8)

Even though Jesus completely defeated Satan through the cross, the devil still has the power of deception by which he rules those who are still in darkness. "Whose minds the god of this world has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ should shine on them." The body of Christ is the most powerful entity in the world today. When Christians rise up to their full potential and stand in the gap as intercessors, the eyes of the blind will be opened and they will see Jesus and be changed by the power of the Holy Spirit! Sons, daughters, spouses, and loved ones will come streaming into the arms of God!

In this arena of spiritual warfare, we must acknowledge that we "don't wrestle against flesh and blood, but against invisible wicked forces of darkness." (Ephesians 6:12) We must never react to people, even those of our own household. We must see them through the eyes of faith and use the mighty weapons that God has



given us to defeat the adversary and set the captives free. "With these weapons, I can pull down strongholds, capture rebels and bring them back to God, and change them into men and women whose heart's desire is the obedience of Christ." (2 Corinthians 10:3-5)

"When you see one who is cast down, you will say (in prayer), 'Be lifted up' and he will save the humble person. He will even deliver one who is not innocent; yes, he will be delivered by the purity of your hands." (Job 22:29-30)

There are four very important steps when interceding for a lost or backslidden loved one. First, you must stand in the gap and build up a hedge (wall) of protection; you identify with the condition of that person and declare that "mercy triumphs over judgment".

Second, you must release unilateral forgiveness to forgive their sins. When Jesus appeared to his disciples after his resurrection, he said, "As my Father has sent me, so I am sending you. Whoever sins you forgive, they are forgiven!" (John 20:21-23) As we speak forgiveness into their lives, we position them to receive the mercy of God and experience his forgiveness.

Third, repent of any word curses (judgments) that you have spoken in anger or frustration against them. Satan, the accuser of the brethren is a legalist, and he will take any critical, judgmental words and hold your loved one in bondage. "You are snared by the words of your mouth." Break every word curse that you have spoken, or that others have spoken.

Fourth, proclaim that they will fulfill their destiny which is written in his or her book in heaven. There is a book in heaven with your loved one's name on it which contains all that God has planned for



their lives. "Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed; and in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them." (Psalm 139:15-16)

"Don't be afraid of your enemy, remember the Lord, great and awesome and fight for your brethren, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your homes." (Nehemiah 4:14)


"Jesus is our High Priest who ever lives to make intercession for them." (Hebrews 7:25) When we come into agreement with Jesus concerning our loved ones, they will be completely delivered and set free "If you pray, they will come!"

"I wish above all things that you would prosper and be in health, even as your soul prospers" John the Apostle

*"I wish above all things that
you would prosper and be in health,
even as your soul prospers." - John the Apostle*



Getting Rid of Religious 'Fluff'

 Many of you may remember the commercial in which a little old lady went up to the counter with the hamburger she had just purchased. She opened the hamburger bun and exclaimed, "Where's the beef?" It seems she had a whole lot of bun but a very small piece of meat.

The people of God today should be asking a similar question concerning the message of the Gospel of Christ: "Where's the power of God?" There is a whole lot of "religious fluff" with good teaching and preaching but with very few, if any, manifestations of the Spirit and power. The Apostle Paul said, "In the last days perilous times will come. For men and women will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, proud, despisers of good...lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power." (2 Timothy 3:1-5)



The Apostle Paul also declared that he "didn't come with excellence of speech or with persuasive words of wisdom, but he came with fear and trembling, and in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that their faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God." (1 Corinthians 2:1- 5)

Many sincere pastors and bible teachers in the Body of Christ have not been teaching about the Baptism of the Holy Spirit with the initial evidence of speaking in tongues (Acts 2:1-4), nor have they been teaching on the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

These gifts are the manifestation of the power of God. (1 Corinthians 12:7-10) The gift of miracles, the gifts of healing, and speaking in tongues are but three of these nine powerful gifts that the Lord has given to His Church.

If you need healing for your body, all the sermons on heaven, discipleship, the love of God, etc. will not provide physical healing for your body.

The power to release divine healing is in the Gift of Healing which the Holy Spirit has given to the Church. If you have been taught that the gifts have passed away, you won't receive any benefit from those gifts.

The doorway into receiving the power of God is the Baptism of the Holy Spirit which God poured out on the 120 disciples on the Day of Pentecost. These disciples had already received the Holy Spirit on the evening of Resurrection Sunday. "He breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit!'" (John 20:22) (This was their born-again experience, the authority of a believer.)

If your traditional theology does not line up with the Word of God, then you need to change your theology. Jesus told the religious leaders in Jerusalem, "All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition, making the Word of God powerless through your tradition." (Mark 7:9, 13)

A powerful wind of the Spirit is coming upon the Church, and along with that wind will come the fire of God, burning up the religious "fluff" and powerless traditions.

*Jesus is calling for you to follow Him in the power of the Holy
Spirit and do the works that He did! (John 14:12)*



A Rich Inheritance

Receive the Abundant Life that Jesus Gave Us



"You're going to get what's coming to you!" How many times did you hear that when you were a child, knowing that something was going to happen to you that you were not looking forward to receiving?

In Romans 8:15-17, the Apostle Paul was sharing about the love of the Father which we have received freely through the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross. When we receive Jesus as our Savior, we receive His resurrection life imparted to us through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. We did not receive a timid or boring life, but a dynamic, adventurously expectant life; full of joy and excitement. Every morning "What's next, Papa?" The Holy Spirit confirms to us who we really are; blood-bought sons and daughters of Almighty God!

The realization of your identity will result in the fulfillment of your destiny!

"When we have a revelation of who our heavenly Father is, and who we are, then we are in position to receive the abundant life that Jesus purchased for us. We are "going to get what's coming to us" - an unbelievable inheritance! God's grace "will build us up and give us an inheritance among the saints." (Acts 20:32)

G-R-A-C-E = God's Riches At Christ's Expense!

Here are some of the covenant benefits of our inheritance in Christ: Forgiveness of sins, eternal life, divine health, the fullness of joy and peace, prosperity, household salvation, and power to fulfill our God-ordained purpose on this earth.

You may have heard the story about the man who purchased a ticket to sail to America on an ocean liner. He has just enough money for the one-way ticket, so he brought a lot of crackers and cheese to eat on the trip. After seven days of staying in his cabin, a steward noticed him walking on the deck and asked him why he hadn't seen him in the dining room. The man said, "I only had enough money for the trip and I couldn't afford to pay for the food."

The passenger said, "Didn't you know that all that fine food was included in the purchase price of the ticket?" All this time he had eaten like a pauper, and he could have eaten like a prince. Many of God's children are living like paupers when, in reality, they are heirs of God, joint heirs with Jesus Christ!



Galatians 4:1-7 says, "The heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a slave, even though he is master of all."

It is time for the children of God to grow up and understand their true identity in Christ; sons and daughters of our Heavenly Father. "God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying out 'Abba', Father. You are no longer a slave, but a son; and an heir of God through Christ." (We are truly "heir-heads".)

In the Kingdom of God, to increase, we must decrease; to live, we must die; to go higher, we must go lower. Jesus said, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Me. If we hold onto our self-life, we will lose it, but if we lay down our life for His sake, we will find it."



True identity in Jesus Christ starts at the Cross. When we become less self-centered and more Christ-centered, we begin to enjoy who we really are in Christ!

The Lord gave me a prayer to pray to Him the other day: "Jesus, let me see me as You see me; and as I see me as You see me, then I will see the real me." (I am who the I AM says I am!) When we take our place in the Kingdom of God as sons and daughters, we will really "get what's coming to us" a dynamic, exciting life, an inheritance overflowing with the blessings of God, now and forever!

"It is the Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom!" (Luke 12:32) The benefits of our inheritance don't stop when we receive them; they increase as we give them away!

"I wish above all things that you would prosper and be in health, even as your soul prospers."

- John the Apostle



Close Encounters of the God Kind



You may remember the fictitious movie, "Close Encounters of the Third Kind," in which alien creatures were making contact with earthlings.

Encounters like that are absurd. But a "Close Encounter of the First Kind" is an encounter that everyone on this planet must personally experience before they leave this earth. Almighty God, the Creator, our Father, loves us so much that He sent His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ so that we could experience a close encounter of the God-kind.

This initial encounter is called salvation, a born-again experience, in which one believes and receives forgiveness for their sins and is born from above, receiving Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. "To as many as received Him, He gave the authority to become children of God." (John 1:12) Once a person is born again, (John 3:3), he or she will experience many life-changing encounters with the Lord as they walk with Him on this earth.

"As we behold the glory of the Lord in the face of Jesus Christ, we are being changed into the same image from glory to glory by the Spirit of God." (2 Corinthians 3:18)

In Genesis 32:22-32, we read that Jacob had a "close encounter of the God-kind," a supernatural experience, that changed him forever, and ushered him into his destiny on this earth. After served his uncle Laban for 20 years, the Lord told Jacob to return to his homeland, and He promised that He would be with him to protect

him. On the way home, a messenger came to him informing him that his brother Esau was coming to meet him with a band of four hundred men. Jacob became very afraid and distressed because the last words he had heard from Esau were: "The next time I see you, I will kill you!"

Jacob was desperate and reminded the Lord that it was His idea to return to his homeland! (Almost every "word from the Lord" will encounter some resistance.) Jacob crossed over the River Jabbok, leaving his family safe on the other side. He then returned by himself, and he was alone... with God!



There will be times in your life when you feel that you are all alone and no one understands what you are going through. It is a divine "set-up" by God. He wants your undivided attention so He can do something awesome in your life.

The Angel of the Lord wrestled with Jacob all night long, but He could not prevail against him. This Angel was the Christ, the Word of God. This type of appearance in the Old Testament is called a "theophany." The Lord touched the socket of Jacob's hip and he was "out of joint," just like we get when the Lord deals with us! When Jacob realized his weakness, he grabbed hold of the Lord and said, "I'm not going to let You go until You bless me!"

The Lord then asked Jacob a strange question, "What is your name?" Obviously, the Lord knew his name, but He wanted Jacob to have a "reality check". The Amplified Bible says, "In shock realization, he whispered Jacob!" He realized that he was a deceiver, a "control freak," a manipulator. At that point of self-

realization, the Lord changed his name from Jacob to Israel—a prince with God. Amazing Grace! All Jacob had to do was admit that he "didn't have it together", and the Lord put it together for him. "Yes, he struggled with the Angel at the Jabbok, and prevailed; he wept and sought His favor (grace) there." (Hosea 12:4)

Jacob called the place of his close encounter with God, Peniel: "for I have seen the face of God and my life is preserved." God told Moses, "No one can see My face and live." Yet the Lord told David to "seek My face."

We, as Christians, must have a face-to-face encounter with the Lord so that we can "die to ourselves" and come alive with the life of Jesus!

Not only was Jacob changed in this close encounter, but Esau was also changed on his way to meet Jacob. When Esau and Jacob meet each other, instead of wanting to kill Jacob, Esau embraced him, and they wept together. Your close encounter with the Lord will not only change you, but it could possibly bring healing and restoration to any broken relationship that you may have in your life!

*For whoever would save his life will lose it, but
whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.*

(Matthew 16:25)



Having a Heart Full of Love



Jesus said, "Have faith in God! For whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea', and doesn't doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says." (Mark 11:22-23)

This verse has been quoted multiple times by many Christians when believing God for His promises; confessing words of faith, but never possessing the promises. There seems to be a short circuit somewhere along the line. I'm sure that there are a number of factors that may contribute to unanswered prayers, such as unforgiveness, (Matthew 18:35), not asking according to the will of God, (1 John 5:14-15), or becoming impatient during the processing of the promise. (Hebrews 11:6)

However, according to Galatians 5:6, the very basis of a vibrant life and possessing faith is having a heart full of God's love and releasing that love to others. "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision



nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love. We could say that "love is the birthing place of faith". When we truly know in our heart that God loves us constantly and unconditionally, this love will give birth to great faith. The "love-walk" is actually more important than the "faith-walk".

"Though I have all faith, so that I could move mountains but have not love, I am nothing." 1 Corinthians 13:2

Not only are we to receive the revelation of God's great love for us, but we must also in turn freely give this awesome love to others. Just before Jesus was crucified, He told His disciples: "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, as I have loved you. By this, all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another. The Apostle Paul wrote, "Walk in love, as Christ has loved you." We, as Christians, have received this love, "The love of God has been poured out - shed abroad - in our hearts by the Holy Spirit." (Romans 5:5). We also have received a measure of faith" (Romans 12:3). Walking in faith and walking in love are basically inseparable. We could say that faith without love will accomplish very little in the Kingdom of God. However, faith working by love will produce miraculous results!



One of my favorite passages that express this truth so well is; "A bell is not a bell until you ring it, a song is not a song until you sing it. Love was not put in your heart to stay; love is not love until you give it away." (If anyone knows where this was found, please let me know.)

The Lord gave us nine fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22- 23), and nine gifts of the Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:7- 11). The essence of the fruit is the love of Jesus, and the essence of the gifts is the faith of Jesus. The Holy Spirit will keep us in a wonderful balance as we trust His handiwork in our lives.

If our faith is working by love, we will experience the breakthroughs and the answers to prayer that the Lord has promised. It only takes a "mustard seed of faith", and an ounce of God's love to

produce a miracle! "When love overtakes our hearts, faith will arise to conquer fear, doubt, and unbelief; and the mountains will come crumbling down!"

"Now abide faith, hope, and love, these three; but the greatest of these is love." (1 Corinthians 13:13)



Dry Bones Syndrome



The Lord God showed Ezekiel a valley full of dry bones, very dry. He asked him, "Can these bones live?" Ezekiel wisely said, "You know O Lord." God told him to prophesy to these dry bones; and as he did, there was a noise and a rattling; the bones came together, bone to bone. Then the sinews, the flesh, and the skin covered them, but still no breath. The Lord then told Ezekiel to prophesy to the Breath -the Holy Spirit- to come and breathe upon these dry bones. As he prophesied, "the Breath of Life entered them, and they came to life and stood up an exceedingly great army." (Ezekiel 37:1- 14)

These dry bones were the people of God, His covenant people! They said, "We are very dry, our hope is gone, and we are all alone!" What a terrible dilemma, depressed and without hope! There are many people today who feel that they are in the Valley of Dry Bones. They have lost their joy, their vitality, and their health, and have lost sight of their God-given purpose. They have become discouraged and have given up on themselves, their vision, their church, and even God.

There are three stages for a person to develop a "dry bone" mentality. First, discouragement and disappointment arise because our hopes and dreams have not been achieved. Proverbs 13:10 - "Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but the answer is a tree of life." Secondly, self-pity and sadness burden our hearts. Proverbs 15:13 "A merry heart makes a cheerful countenance, but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken." Thirdly, we become depressed and broken-hearted.

"A merry heart does good like a medicine, but a broken spirit dries the bones." Proverbs 17:22

In this state of hopelessness and depression, spirits of infirmity and sickness have access to afflict our bodies. Proverbs 18:14 - "The spirit of a man will sustain him in sickness, but who can bear a broken spirit?" A deep emotional wounding, a broken relationship, or an unfulfilled dream or vision can easily cause a person to become a "dry bone". This condition will cause our immune system, which is in the marrow of the bones, to become debilitated and weakened.

According to medical authorities, over 23 million people suffer from an auto-immune disease. These diseases are spiritually rooted, and they arise because of a compromised immune system - "dry bones" - (a broken spirit). The healing for most of these diseases, such as arthritis, diabetes, lupus, fibromyalgia, asthma, and many more, can be experienced when the Holy Spirit and the Word of God reveal the root of the problem through the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. Once the root cause of the sickness has been revealed, inner healing, deliverance, and physical healing will come.



Jesus Christ is the Great Physician, and He is the One who heals broken hearts and sick bodies. Matthew 8:16,17 - "They brought to Him many who were afflicted; He cast out the spirits (of infirmity) with a word and healed all who were sick, that the prophecy of Isaiah might be fulfilled: 'He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses.'" He is still healing and delivering people from

sickness and disease. "He is the same, yesterday, today, and forever!" (Heb 13:8)

"Surely He had borne our griefs (sicknesses) and carried our sorrows (pains)...by His stripes, we are healed."
(Isaiah 53:4,5)

Jesus delights in restoring and refreshing "dry bones"! If are struggling with depression, or have been tormented by a spirit of infirmity, there is hope for you! "Whosoever will call upon the Lord will be healed and delivered. God will send His Word and heal you and deliver you from your destructions." (Ps 107:20)

"The Word of God is alive and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, separating the soul and spirit, and penetrating to the joints and marrow of your body." (Heb 4:12) A healed heart and a restored immune system will result in a strong physical body, full of life and health!

God's Medicine Bottle: Proverbs 4:20-22
- "My son/daughter, give attention to My words, incline your ear to My sayings, don't let them depart from your eyes, and keep them in the midst of your heart; for they are life to those who find them and health to all their flesh."



*"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and don't forget all His
benefits; who forgives all your iniquities and heals all your
diseases." (Psalm 103:2-3)*



Rejoice in the Goodness of God

The beginning of a new year usually brings a renewed hope, an expectation that better things are going to happen.

Hope can be defined as the positive and confident expectation of the goodness of God. A living, vibrant hope is not wishful thinking, but a heart belief in the promises of God revealed in the Bible.

"We through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." (Romans 15:4)

David said, "I would have despaired, lost heart unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of God in the land of the living?" Wait on the Lord and be of good courage, and He will strengthen your heart." (Psalm 27:13,14) The realistic assessment of the condition of our nation and the world: "Without God, we have no hope!" We need to remember the inscription on our currency – "In God We Trust!"

For the last two years, many of God's people have been struggling with anxiety, despair, and frustration due to the pandemic of sickness, political upheaval, violence, and inflation, just to name a few of the perplexing problems that we are facing.

The question that God's people in the Old Testament were asking is an age-old question: "Where are You, O Lord, and what in the world are You doing? When are You going to bring justice,



truth, and righteousness to our nation? When will we see the goodness of God in the land of the living?"

I believe that the Lord would say to us, "Don't be overly concerned with the affairs and condition of this world; I know exactly what I am going to do, how I am going to do it, and when I plan to do it. Rather be more concerned about your relationship with Me and



fulfilling My will and purpose for your life. I desire that you draw close to Me with a renewed passion to love Me and to walk in obedience to the things I have told you." I also heard this word from the Lord: "I want My people to laugh with Me! Don't

you know that I laugh at the plans of the wicked? I will have them in derision and bring their plans to nothing.'

The question we should be asking is, "Lord, what must we do to experience Your love and Your power in a greater capacity, so that we can fulfill Your purpose for our lives?"

Paul said, "I press on that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. This one thing I do, forgetting those things that are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus!" (Philippians 3:12-14) Unless we leave the past in the past, we will not be able to clearly see plans that God has for us in the future, nor will we be able to enjoy the present.

"Don't remember the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing, now it will spring forth; will you not know it?" This new year, 2023, the Lord has some awesome

blessings and miraculous breakthroughs for those who surrender to His Lordship, hear His voice, and walk in obedience to do His will.

"We have been born-again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead!" (1 Peter 1:3)

The best is yet to come!



Who Am I?



"Houston, we have a problem!" Forget Houston! "America, we have a problem!" There is a massive problem in our society today: identity crisis! Never have we been confronted with the perplexing and confusing issue of what gender a person is. God made a man and a woman, Adam, and Eve, and they brought forth either a male or female child. Amazingly, that process has not changed in all human history. Gender identity has to do with the fact of being who or what a person is and displaying the characteristics of their anatomy at birth, being a male or female. "God is not the Author of confusion!" However, some confused people on this planet have been manipulated by the "god of this world" - Satan, (2 Corinthians 4:4) who has blinded their minds with lies and deception to destroy them and to rob them of their God-ordained identity and destiny.

When a husband and wife are joined together in marriage and begin to raise a family, they will produce either a male child or a female child, called a son or a daughter. God has a divine purpose for every child. He has encoded that child with a specific DNA, an identity, and a destiny. Our journey in this life on earth is to search out, find our identity, and fulfill God's plan for our lives. Identity and destiny go hand in hand. Unless a person has a solid identity as to who they are and what their God-given purpose is, they will live frustrated and empty lives, going to their graves having wasted the gifts and treasures that God put in them in their mother's womb.



According to the Bible, "God formed my inward parts and crafted me in my mother's womb; I am mysteriously and wonderfully made. Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed; and in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when



there were none of them. How precious are Your thoughts to me, O God, they are more in number than the sand." (Psalm 139:13-18)

There is only one you, created in the image of God and loved by God! You are unique and there is no one quite like you. Who better than you can be you?

"God has great plans for you, to give you a living hope and a great future, and an eternity in Heaven." (Jeremiah 29:11)

The first step in finding one's identity is to be reconciled to God through His Son Jesus Christ. "We must be born-again" and receive Jesus as our Lord and Savior. Once we have been born again, the Spirit of Truth will guide us into all truth, (Reality). Secondly, we must study the Word of God, the Bible, which is absolute Truth. We progressively begin to understand the love of God, and our new freedom in Jesus Christ, who is He in us, and who we are in Him! "If anyone be in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away, all things have become new." (2 Cor 5:17)

Having been born again and reconciled to God through the shed blood of Jesus Christ, we then begin our journey to fulfill our destiny. We must daily surrender to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and direct our lives according to the Word of God and the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself daily, take up his cross, and follow Me. Whoever desires to hold onto his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it." (Matt 16:25)



Biblical truth is contra-distinctive; when you lose your life, you find it - (Matt 16:25); when you are weak, you become strong - (2 Cor 12:9); when you humble yourself, the Lord will lift you up - (1 Peter 5:5).

One final word: "Mercy triumphs over judgment." (James 2:13)
God's mercy is new every morning! Receive it!

Freely give it out wherever you go and to whomever you meet.

regardless of gender! Enjoy life!!



Transformation by Restoration



Another year is coming to an end; and for that, many are grateful...that it is almost over! It has been a very trying year for a lot of God's people and many are still waiting for the fulfillment of God's promises. "For yet a little while, that which is coming will come and will not delay." (Hebrews 10:37) God is faithful! He is never late or early, but right on time. (God's delays are not God's denials). Actually, while we are waiting on the Lord, He is "working in us the desire to do His will" and to develop the character that will enable us to fulfill His will.

"The Lord will wait that He may be gracious to you, and therefore He will be exalted, that He may have mercy on you."
(Isaiah 30:18)

Everything we receive from God will be by "grace through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is a gift of God." We can't earn it, we don't deserve it, and we sure can't produce it. That's why it is called Grace - God's unearned favor and blessing. The struggles, trials, and adversity that we have experienced this last year have been used as a preparation for that which God is about to do this next year and beyond.

God will wait until we stop focusing on ourselves and our own strength and trust Him to do what needs to be done. The only requirement that the Lord needs from us is a "little mustard seed of faith" - to believe that He is able to do what He has said! "Abraham was fully convinced that what God had promised, God was also able to perform." (Romans 4:21)

"We believe, He performs!" He doesn't need our help, just our faith.

The Lord is "preparing us for the place He has prepared for us." Jesus said, "Whoever tries to hold on to his life (self-min centeredness) will lose it, but whoever will lose his life (Christ-centeredness) will find it." (Matthew 16:25) Only when we stop living for ourselves and start living for Jesus, will we experience the fulfillment of the promises of God and find our true purpose in this life.

It has been said, "Preoccupation with self leads to insanity." I wonder how many "normal" everyday people, including Christians, are actually "borderline". Living for yourself will drive you "nuts". The Bible talks about a special place for these people: "The Garden of Nuts". (Song of Solomon 6:11)

As we look forward to this New Year, we need to "forget those things that are behind and look forward" to the fulfillment of those things that God has spoken to us. We need to leave our failures, our mistakes, and our regrets at the cross of Christ, and stop focusing on ourselves or our past, but on Jesus, who is the "Author and the Finisher of our faith". (Psalm 138:8) - "The Lord will perfect and complete that which concerns me!"



At the Last Supper, we see that the Apostle Peter was so "full of himself", that he was not fit "for the Master's use". He failed miserably when the time for testing came. Yet his failure was in

God's plan to prepare Peter for the place prepared for Him. He had to be emptied of himself so that God could fill him up with Himself.

On the Day of Pentecost, after being fully restored to his God-given calling by Jesus, Peter stood up and preached a powerful sermon; 3,000 Jews received Jesus as the Messiah, and the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ was birthed! Pretty awesome accomplishment for a failure!

“God uses the devastation of your setbacks as the preparation of your comebacks.”

“When men see your failures, he sees your end; but when God sees your failures, He sees your beginning!”



A Whole Lot of Shaking Going On



One of the signs of the end time that will usher in the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ is that "there will be earthquakes in various places." (Luke 21:11) According to scientific data there have been more earthquakes in this last century than in all of history.

In this article, I want to mention just two earthquakes that happened centuries ago but have profound and significant meaning for every Christian today. It is very interesting to see what initiated both earthquakes; I will share that later in this article.

The first earthquake happened because of a prayer meeting: "When they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the Word of God with boldness!" (Acts 4:31). These disciples had just been threatened by the chief priests to stop preaching in the Name of Jesus. Their response: "We ought to obey God rather than men." Every church should be praying this type of prayer:

"Lord, grant Your servants, that with all boldness we may speak Your Word, by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the Name of Jesus!"

Obviously, the Lord was very pleased with this prayer request! I think He might have done a little dance in heaven! (He does dance, you know – Zeph. 3:17) The immediate result of that prayer: "With

great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and great grace was upon them all." (Acts 4:33)

The second significant earthquake happened when Paul and Silas were imprisoned in a Philippian jail for preaching the Gospel of Christ. "At midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was an earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's chains were loosed." (Acts 16:35-26) The Philippian jailer was about to kill himself, because he thought the prisoners had escaped, but Paul assured him that they had not. The jailer then asked Paul and Silas, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" How did he know to ask that question? I'm sure he heard Paul and Silas singing the songs of salvation along with the prisoners. Then they said, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household!" (Acts 16:31) Immediately he and his family were baptized, rejoicing, and believing in God with all his household. Our Father saves whole households!

Let's take a look behind the scenes and see what caused these two powerful earthquakes. "An 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 before the Throne. The smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand. The angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw it to the earth. There were voices, thundering, lightnings, and an EARTHQUAKE!" (Revelation 8:3-5)



These powerful redemptive earthquakes were caused by Christians praying and praising God! There are many "prodigals" and "prisoners of hope" who are about to be saved, delivered, and set free from the prison of sin and rebellion! Christian parents have a covenant with God: "Because of the blood of your covenant, I will



set your prisoners free from the waterless pit." (Zechariah 9:11). We have God's Word on it! "All our children will be taught by the Lord, and great shall be the peace of our children." (Isaiah 54:13) "There is hope in your future, says the Lord, that your children shall come back to their own border." (Jeremiah 31:17)

God is still in the "earthquake business", and He's still looking for those who have some "fire in their bones" and will pray some earth-shaking prayers! It's time for some more earthquakes!!

"The effective fervent (heartfelt and passionate) prayer of a righteous man or woman avails much!" (James 5:16)



