

Prayer Energized by Intimacy with God

I. MY JOURNEY INTO 24/7 PRAYER

- A. In May 1983, during a Solemn Assembly (21 days of fasting and prayer), the Lord spoke audibly in context to Ps. 27:4, saying: “I will release 24-hour prayer in the spirit of the Tabernacle of David.” David gave leadership to a prayer and worship ministry in his generation that was led by 4,000 full-time musicians and 288 full-time prophetic singers (1 Chr. 23:5; 25:7).

⁴ ***One thing I have desired of the LORD...that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in His temple. (Ps. 27:4)***

- B. In July 1988, the Lord spoke saying that He would release the anointing of the Spirit according to Song 8:6-7. The Lord wanted the message of Song of Solomon to be foundational at IHOP.

⁶ ***Set Me (Jesus) as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm; for (God’s) love is as strong as death, (God’s) jealousy as cruel (demanding) as the grave; its flames are flames of fire...⁷ Many waters (persecution, sin, pressures, etc.) cannot quench love... (Song 8:6-7)***

1. In the ancient world, kings put a “seal of wax” on important documents. They encased them with wax then stamped it with the king’s signet ring. God sets a “seal of fire” on our heart. It is the fire of divine love or the anointing to experience the love of God.

2. This love is as strong or as comprehensive as death. Death claims all. Its grasp is comprehensive. Nothing in the natural order escapes the power of death. So also, God’s love will not allow any areas of brokenness to escape its grasp. God’s love poured in our heart will conquer every area of sin that we continually yield to Him. This love is also described as being “as jealous as the grave” or as demanding (unyielding) as death.

⁵ ***The love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit... (Rom. 5:5)***

3. Water always puts out fire (unless it is God’s supernatural fire). The enemy will send the waters of persecution, temptation, apathy, disappointment, pain, etc. to put this fire out.

¹⁵ ***The serpent (Satan) spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman (End-Time Israel), that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood. (Rev. 12:15)***

- C. Abraham was promised many great things from God.

¹ ***The LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country...to a land that I will show you. 2 I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great ...3 I will bless those who bless you...and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." (Gen. 12:1-3)***

- D. The Lord Himself was Abraham’s primary reward. Being blessed as a great nation with a great name was his secondary reward. In other words, God’s promises to us to receive a breakthrough of His Spirit in ministry, healing, finances, relationships, etc., are our secondary rewards.

¹ ***The word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward." (Gen. 15:1)***

II. THE REVELATION OF JESUS AS THE BRIDEGROOM GOD: ‘OIL OF INTIMACY’

¹ *Then the Kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet (encounter) the Bridegroom...³ Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, ⁴ but the wise took oil in their vessels...⁵ The Bridegroom was delayed...⁸ and the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' (Mt. 25:1-8)*

A. The Kingdom of God is likened to people who encounter Jesus as a Bridegroom God. We refer much to the bridal paradigm of the Kingdom of God. The word paradigm means perspective or view. The Bridal paradigm refers to the “bridal perspective or view” of the Kingdom of God. We see the Kingdom through the eyes of a wholehearted Bride with loyal devoted love.

B. The Bridegroom message is a call to active intimacy with God.

¹⁰ *The Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God...¹² we have received...the Spirit...that we might know (experience) the things that have been freely given to us by God. (1 Cor. 2:10-12)*

C. The Bridal message speaks of God’s invitation for us to experience the deep things of His heart (emotions, affections). To enjoy active intimacy with Jesus includes feeling His heart for us.

You may be able to comprehend...the width and length and depth and height-- to know (experience) the love (affections or emotions) of Christ... (Eph 3:18-19)

D. As sons of God, we are in the position to experience God’s Throne as heirs of His power/authority (Rev. 3:21; Rom. 8:17). As the Bride, we are in position to experience God’s heart (emotions, affections or desire for us). Both are unique positions of privilege before God.

E. As women are the sons of God, so men are the Bride of Christ. Both describe our position of privilege before God, rather than pointing to something that is intrinsically male or female. Most Christian women do not struggle with the idea of being sons of God because they do not see it as a call to be less feminine. However, often, men struggle with being the Bride of Christ because they wrongly conclude that it is a call to become less masculine.

F. Some of the greatest men of God functioned in the essential reality of the bridal identity. King David was Israel’s greatest warrior king, yet he was a lovesick worshipper, ravished by God’s desire for him and fascinated by His beauty (Ps. 27:4). One of the central issues of David’s life, as a man after God’s own heart, was in being a student of God’s emotions. John the apostle was called the Son of Thunder and he described himself five times as the one whom Jesus loved (Jn. 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20). John the Baptist was a prophet that Jesus called the “greatest man” (Mt. 11:11). He understood Jesus as the Bridegroom God (Jn. 3:29).

G. Experiencing the reality of being the Bride of Christ does not undermine one’s masculinity, but rather it strengthens and establishes it.

III. WHAT IS THE BRIDEGROOM MESSAGE?

- A. The Bridegroom message includes the revelation of Jesus' emotions for us as a Bridegroom God. Jesus the Bridegroom is filled with tender mercy. He is gentle with our weakness. Some confuse rebellion and immaturity. God is angry at rebellion, but He is tender towards sincere immature believers that seek to obey Him. He enjoys us even in our weakness (Ps. 18:19, 35; 130:3-4).
- B. Jesus the Bridegroom has a heart of gladness (happy heart). Jesus had more gladness than any man in history (Heb. 1:9). Most of Church history has viewed God as mostly mad or mostly sad when He relates to us. Jesus is mostly glad when He relates to us, even in our weakness. Jesus the Bridegroom has fiery affections or has burning desire and longing for us. Jesus the Bridegroom also possesses indescribable beauty as He fascinates our hearts (Ps. 27:4).
- C. The Church will be cleansed by experiencing the cherishing heart of Jesus (Eph. 5:26-29). To understand Jesus as a passionate Bridegroom is to soon see ourselves as a cherished Bride. As we experience the 'oil of intimacy' with Jesus we feel loved and in love. Without this, we more easily compromise or become discouraged and wounded and spiritually bored.
- D. We can lose perspective by becoming focused more on our secondary blessings (circumstances). If we lose the 'oil of intimacy' then our heart gets wounded and burned out. Some of our wounds and disappointments are a signpost that our secondary rewards have become first place in our heart. Some of our pain that results is designed to let us know that our heart must return back to the place where our focus is again on Jesus as our primary reward.
- E. When Jesus is our primary reward, there is no guarantee that we will live pain free. However, when our spirit is invigorated by encountering Jesus, our disappointments are much more manageable in the grace of God because we see things differently. I have prayed, "Lord shock me now not at the Judgment Seat. Wake me up, even if You use the pain of disappointments."
- F. The End-Time Church will be in deep unity with the Holy Spirit in saying and doing what the Spirit is saying and doing. What is the Spirit doing? He is interceding for Jesus to come. What is the Spirit saying? He is revealing the Church's bridal identity (who we are as Jesus' Bride).
¹⁷ And the Spirit and the Bride say, "Come!" (Rev. 22:17)
- G. This prophecy describes the highest function of the Church in 4 ways: 1). anointed with the Spirit, 2). engaged in intercession, 3). established in our bridal identity and 4). effective in the Harvest. This will be the first time in history, that the Church world wide will be in dynamic unity with the Spirit. The Spirit will rest on and move through the Church in great power.
- H. The three fold prayer of the End-Time Church for Jesus to come:
1. Come NEAR US in intimacy (individual breakthrough of my heart in God)
2. Come TO US in revival (regional or national breakthrough of the Spirit in revival)
3. Come FOR US in the sky (historical breakthrough by the Second Coming of Jesus)

IV. THE REVELATION OF GOD'S DELIGHT IN HIS PEOPLE

- A. In November 1995, I had a prophetic dream exhorting me to call God's people "Hephzibah."
⁴ You shall no longer be termed Forsaken...but you shall be called Hephzibah...for the LORD delights in you...⁵ For as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.⁶ I have set watchmen on your walls...they shall never hold their peace day or night...⁷ give Him no rest till He establishes...Jerusalem a praise in the earth. (Isa. 62:4-7)
- B. The "Hephzibah message" is that God delights in us and rejoices over us as a Bridegroom rejoices over a bride. It is the same as the Song of Solomon message or David's beauty of God message. They all point to the reality of intimacy with God and a revelation of God's emotions.
- C. Jesus as our Bridegroom is ravished with desire and has passionate affection for His people.
⁹ You have ravished My heart...My spouse; you have ravished My heart with one look of your eyes... ¹⁰ How fair (beautiful) is your love... (Song 4:9-10)
- D. The "watchman message" is the call to seek the breakthrough of God's blessing through persistent prayer. I labored in prayer for years for a breakthrough of revival without experiencing the "Hephzibah" message. One of the main reasons that intercessors get burned out is the lack of encountering Jesus during the years of waiting for the breakthrough of revival.
- E. When God delays the answer to our prayers, we can become disappointed. When our hope (expectation) is delayed or deferred, then our heart becomes sick with despair.
¹² Hope deferred makes the heart sick... (Prov. 13:12)
- F. Our prayer life can only be sustained and energized by active intimacy with Jesus. God desires that we experience our greater reward (inside of our heart) as the way to sustain us while we wait on God's blessing and power in outward circumstances.
1. Our primary reward is the Lord Himself fascinating and tenderizing our hearts.
 2. Our secondary reward is the breakthrough of God's blessing and power on our ministry, physical body (healing), family, finances, relationships, etc.
- G. Intimacy causes our hearts to be lovesick for Jesus (inflamed; enraptured by His love).
⁵ Sustain me...refresh me...for I am lovesick. (Song 2:5)
⁸ If you find my Beloved (Jesus)...tell Him I am lovesick! (Song 5:8)
- H. The Holy Spirit will soon emphasize God's plan to call the Church into her bridal identity as the way to sustain persistent intercession for the great End-Time revival before Jesus' return. The Spirit is raising up forerunners who will walk out and announce this plan to prepare the Church.