

LIVING IN
LIVING IN
HIS PRESENCE
HIS PRESENCE

PSALM 27:4

SOLEMN ASSEMBLY

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Foreword – One Passion, His Presence

In 1986, David Wilkerson prophesied:

I see a plague coming on the world, and the bars, churches, and government will shut down. The plague will hit New York City and shake it like it has never been shaken. The plague is going to force prayerless believers into radical prayer and into their Bibles, and repentance will be the cry from the man of God in the pulpit. And out of it will come a third Great Awakening that will sweep America and the world.

For the days we are now living, we do not have a choice but to live in FAITH, POWER, AND ANOINTING that bring victories, miracles, and breakthroughs. Such faith, power, and anointing come from hiding in Christ Jesus, that is, to live with one passion, His presence. When we hide under the shadow of His wings, we are covered by Him, anchored in Him, and strengthened by Him (Psalm 91). **THEN WE ARE NOT MOVED BY WHAT WE SEE, FEEL OR EXPERIENCE, WE ARE MOVED ONLY BY THE PRESENCE AND POWER OF GOD.**

Hebrews chapter eleven testifies of those who had found amazing, enduring, and prevailing faith in troublesome times by abiding in His presence. Although weak and limited in themselves, they became strong, courageous, and fearless overcomers through faith in Jesus Christ. They knew their God and were able to defy all odds, triumph in impossible battles, and gain victories. Hebrews 11:33–40 (TPT) elaborates on this:

THROUGH FAITH’S POWER they conquered kingdoms and established true justice. Their faith fastened onto their promises and pulled them into reality! It was faith that shut the mouth of lions, put out the power of raging fire, and caused many to escape certain death by the sword. IN THEIR WEAKNESS THEIR FAITH IMPARTED POWER TO MAKE THEM STRONG! FAITH SPARKED COURAGE WITHIN THEM, AND THEY BECAME MIGHTY WARRIORS IN BATTLE . . .

FAITH-FILLED women saw their dead children raised in resurrection power. Yet it was **faith that enabled** others to endure great atrocities. They were stretched out on the wheel and tortured, and **didn't deny their faith** in order to be freed, because they longed for a more honorable and glorious resurrection! Others were mocked . . . experienced the most severe beating . . . were in chains and imprisoned. Some of these **faith champions** were brutally killed by stoning, being sawn in two or slaughtered by the sword. **These lived in faith** as they went about wearing goatskins and sheepskins for clothing. They lost everything they possessed . . . endured great afflictions, and . . . were cruelly mistreated. They wandered the earth living in the desert wilderness, in caves, on barren mountains and in holes in the earth. Truly, the world was not even worthy of them, not realizing who they were. **THESE WERE THE TRUE HEROES, COMMENDED FOR THEIR FAITH**, yet they lived in hope without receiving the fullness of what was promised them. But now God has invited us to live in something better than what they had—**FAITH'S FULLNESS!** This is so that they could be brought to finished perfection alongside us.

Through the fiery furnaces of afflictions and persecutions, by hiding in Jesus Christ, they were made heroes and champions of faith. They became Christ's glorious and unquenchable lights in the darkest and harshest of times. We too will live in this same passion and faith in these trying end times. We too will stand, persevere, overcome, and glorify His name.

God's Divine Interruptions And Disruptions To Awaken

To understand how far God will go to awaken us, we have to reflect on how far He went to save us. He will stop at nothing. The whole world is being subjected to violent shakings, sudden catastrophes, and unexpected happenings. Matthew 24 speaks of wars and rumors of wars, nation rising against nation, natural disasters such as famines, pestilences, and earthquakes, as well as persecution and lawlessness. Luke 21:25-26 (NKJV) says, "And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; **MEN'S HEARTS FAILING THEM FROM FEAR and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, FOR THE POWERS OF THE HEAVENS WILL BE SHAKEN.**"

The Bible says when these things happen, this is not the end of times

but the beginning of the end. This means there will be more shakings, and then the end will come. Is the Church ready? Are we prepared in holiness and also to arise, obey, do, and finish His work? These shakings are not the makings of God, but He is using them forcefully to jolt and awaken both His Church and the world to Him. God is not using these things to judge but to discipline. Judgment refers to punishment for sins, but discipline is meant to bring correction, change, and transformation. As His Church, we are to arise and obey Him at all costs in glorifying Him and bringing in the last great harvest. God shakes the world that people would stop in their tracks, forsake sins, turn to Him, and be saved.

Is the Church where God wants us to be? Are we walking in lockstep with the Holy Spirit? Is the Bride of Christ spotless and living in first love? Are we doing His will and completing His end-time work? **If not, we need a Holy Spirit shaking and awakening, and we need it now.** There is a time clock that God has set to accomplish His agenda, work, and will. **DO NOT MISS GOD'S TIMING AND WILL. The Church must not be caught in a spiritual stupor or be surprised.** There is a work to be done, the sick to be healed, the captive to be freed, the Gospel to be preached, and the lost to be saved, and the hour is getting late. When everything is being shaken, the Bible says men's hearts will fail from fear (Luke 21:26) because everything and everyone they put their security in will be shaken. **The Church must not be shaken, confused, fearful, and self-serving because our hope, security and life are founded in Christ Jesus alone.** We must stand strong, be courageous, know what to do, and selflessly give, love, heal, deliver, and bring salvation. **WHEN GROSS DARKNESS IS COVERING THE EARTH WE ARE TO ARISE AND SHINE FOR OUR LIGHT HAS COME, AND GOD'S GLORY IS UPON US. THERE IS NO TIME TO LOSE.**

God will not compromise His work, will, and purpose. He will see to it that they are accomplished through His Church. He is undaunted by the global shakings, but He is troubled by the spiritual apathy of His Church. This is not the time for the Church to sleep, slow down, fear, doubt, or withdraw. This is the time the Church must awake, arise, return to first love, and serve Him so that the world may see, believe in Him, and be saved.

Do not concentrate on or fret over adversities, but be in God's presence, focus on Him, hear Him, and know His heart. We are not to ignore any global crisis, be irresponsible or selfish. Such times are the best times to selflessly love and give. Recognizing the season we are in, we

must purpose to live in His presence, be led by His Spirit, and obey Him as He directs. We must not just ride out a season. Every season requires that we hear, know, and follow Him. **UNLESS WE LIVE AND WALK IN THE SPIRIT, WE WILL BE SHAKEN AS THE WORLD IS.** We will think and act like the world, shipwreck our faith, and be destroyed by fear and bitterness. Instead of praying and trusting God, we will be murmuring. Instead of worshipping and serving Him, we will be withdrawing and seeking security for ourselves. We may even blame God, be offended, and feel victimized. We will forget God's Word and follow our own thoughts and feelings. We will be stymied, not by Satan or hardships, but by our own thoughts, ways, and fears. **Only in yielding to God are we able to be transformed and filled with His glory and with great grace to preach His Good News to the ends of the world.**

Choose Obedience, Not Chastisement

Disruptions are unexpected, challenging, and painful. They wreak havoc on the norms of life. Everything is being shaken, be it government, economy, and all man-made institutions, structures, and systems. Every earthly power, dominion, and ability will be found wanting and their impotence exposed. They are powerless to save, resolve, fix, protect, or heal the world's problems. **They are not the answer, but God has raised His Church to bring His answer to the whole world. He is ready to unveil His presence and power through the Church in unprecedented ways, and WE MUST BE READY.** To prepare His Church, the Lord is arresting the attention of the Church that now is the time to arise to love Him first and do His work. We can either be awakened by obeying His warning or by His chastening. Hebrews 12:11 (NIV) says, "No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it." **GOD'S DISCIPLINE IS NOT PUNITIVE BUT INSTRUCTIONAL FOR HIS GLORY AND OUR GOOD.**

God's Purpose For Disruption Is To Change The Status Quo And To Transform

Sometimes God has to wreck the present status quo and paradigm to free us in order to thrust us into the new, fresh, and powerful. Sometimes we hold on to things too tightly until He interrupts and disrupts us. **GOD IS PREPARED TO WRECK ALL THAT HOLDS BACK**

HIS CHURCH, THAT WE MAY ARISE AND DO ALL THAT HE CALLS US TO DO. He will ruin and overturn the familiar and cherished to get our attention and cause us to call on Him and surrender to Him. Should we procrastinate or refuse to let go of the old, God may very well crush the old to free us. **Do not ignore Him and what He is doing. It is time to fall on our faces and seek Him that we hear, know, and obey Him.**

He is not just changing the atmosphere; He is transforming us from inside out that we may be able to contain all that He has in store for us. This transformation will not happen if we are not free from the status quo and the old paradigm. God had to free David, Joseph, and Moses. God had to free them from the status quo and former paradigm to thrust them into the new. They were broken, molded, hardpressed, and shaped into the form and capacity fitting for the assignments God had for them. **In this process, all that is in our hearts will be exposed and revealed. The key question is, “What are we going to do?”** Are we going to respond to Him by seeking Him until we lay hold of His presence? Or are we going to react in confusion, fear, anger, bitterness, and offense? We may not understand these interruptions and disruptions, but if we will trust Him and not resist Him, His Holy Spirit will be able to work in us, enlarge our hearts and instill in us faith, grace, power, and anointing for the end times. He will challenge, expose, purify, and perfect our love and passion for His presence.

Understand The Purposes Of Divine Disruptions

Disruptions are God’s wake-up calls for all hearts to be still before Him to hear Him and prepare to move as He moves. These disruptions cause us to change our course and direction that we flow in His direction according to His leading. When Saul of Tarsus was abruptly interrupted and disrupted by God, he was forcefully thrown off his horse and made blind. God got his attention. He was forced to pause, heed, yield to God, and totally change course. From being a persecutor of Jesus’ followers, he became a believer, devout follower, and a mighty apostle of the Gospel.

For those already walking with God, disruptions build in them an anointing and faith for the greater things ahead. What they are walking through in this season builds faith and anointing for the season to come. The anointing and faith of this present season will be too limited for the season ahead. Anointing and faith that remain status quo will become stumbling blocks in the next season and will suffocate the work

of God. Parents have to prepare new clothes for growing children. What fits a newborn babe today will not fit in a couple of months.

Disruptions help us purge the non-essentials from our lives, ministry, and service according to God's economy. We are forced to examine, evaluate, and eliminate all non-essentials and all that is displeasing to Him. We also need to detach ourselves from the world and all that is offensive to Him.

For those who are blind, stubborn, and proceeding in their own way, disruption is God's grace in action to get them off the wrong track, making them take the exit ramp onto God's highway and helping them to proceed with the Holy Spirit.

The Church Must Move By Revelation, Not Just Information

For such a time as this, we need to move by revelation (hearing from God and discerning His heart), and not just information. Information deals with facts in the natural realm. **Revelation deals with knowledge supernaturally given to us by the Holy Spirit concerning God's will and work in any given time and situation.** Then we are able to look beyond the natural into the spiritual realm and perceive God's intents. For example, when Lazarus died and was buried for four days, his sisters, Jesus' disciples, and the people saw only the facts and were in deep sorrow and despair. Jesus had revelation, and He saw beyond the natural, perceiving the Father's intent. He had divine knowledge from His Father that Lazarus was "asleep," and He was to go and awake (resurrect) him.

In the end times, we must have revelation knowledge of God's agenda and what we ought to do as directed by Him. How do we receive revelation? It is by dwelling, walking, and being in His presence through prayer. Without revelation, the Church is asleep, unprepared, and is as lost as the world is; in fear, confusion, and hopelessness. In this present, global, coronavirus pandemic, and other ongoing upheavals, we need the Holy Spirit's revelation, not just facts and information. We do not ignore the facts, but we must be Spirit-led and empowered, not fact-driven. We must be in prayer and intercession that our eyes might be opened to see through His eyes, and our hearts understand from His heart.

The Church will go through what the world is going through, but our response must be of faith, not of fear. MERE FACTS MAY BRING FEAR, BUT REVELATION INSTILLS FAITH. Information will not

awake, equip, and build up the Church, but revelation from the Holy Spirit will. Nothing catches God by surprise, and nothing can thwart His timetable or plan. All things will move according to God's timing, regardless of whatever may be going on around the world. God is not fazed, puzzled, or anxious about anything. He holds all things in His hands. No pandemic, crisis, earthquake, famine, or war can change anything that God has planned. **The Church needs to know what He has planned so that we can move with Him and be an instrument in His hands and the salt and the light of the Earth.** We must know that Lazarus is asleep, not dead, and we are here to resurrect him.

Prayer: The Powerful Key To Hiding In God's Presence

Prayer was Jesus' most powerful secret to hiding in God's presence. There was never a lapse or break in His intimacy with His Father. He prayed and fasted consistently and about everything throughout His life here on Earth. **PRAYER WAS HIS LOVE, PASSION, LIFELINE, AND THE UNBREAKABLE CORD BINDING HIM TO HIS FATHER.** As a baby is hidden, shielded, protected, and nurtured in the mother's womb, so was Jesus hidden in the intimacy of His Father's presence through prayer. Prayer hides us in the "womb" of our Abba, Father. In that secret place, we love, worship, and serve Him. In that secret place, He loves, protects, provides, and nurtures us. **Prayer causes us to abide in the "womb" of God. PRAYER IS ALSO THE SPIRITUAL UMBILICAL CORD THAT CONNECTS US TO HIM**—heart to heart, spirit to spirit, and mind to mind. Psalm 91:1 (NKJV) says, **"He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty."** This one will say of the LORD (Psalm 91:2 NKJV), **"He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust."**

Through prayer, Jesus was immersed in His Father's presence and saturated with His Father's anointing, power, and knowledge. When He prayed, miracles happened, sicknesses disappeared, the dead were raised, lame people walked, demons fled, storms were calmed, and water was turned to wine. Most importantly, the Gospel was preached with the result that many believed and were saved. Jesus was able to totally reveal His Father to the world, obey even unto death, complete His Father's will and work, and provide salvation for all because He prayed and abided in His Father's presence. He came, lived, walked, and completed His assignment as the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world for the salvation of all.

In Luke 11, His disciples asked Him to teach them to pray because something was stirred up in their hearts as they watched His persistent and powerful prayer life. They too hungered for the same. Jesus lived prayer and, therefore, He taught prayer. In Luke 11:5–8, He taught shameless, persistent faith in prayer that brings breakthroughs. In verses 9–10 (NKJV), He said, “So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. **For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.**” He taught as He had walked because He had asked, and He received. He had sought, and He found. He had knocked, and it was opened to Him. He never ceased praying, and He never lost heart.

He was always with His Father through prayer and was able to trust His Father to the very end. His Father would reveal to Him what was hidden and ahead. He was prepared, strengthened, empowered, and able, without flinching or doubting, to do everything His Father asked of Him. He prayed passionately for every intense battle ahead. He prayed through the night before choosing His twelve disciples. He prayed passionately with vehement cries in the Garden of Gethsemane. He was strengthened to obey His Father even unto death on the cross. He was able to believe that His Father would raise Him from the dead and seat Him at His right hand in heaven. It would not be wrong to surmise that every breath He took was a breath of prayer to His Father.

We, the Church, must pray as Jesus prayed—to walk as He walked in the Holy Spirit and His presence.

Notes:

DAILY PRAYER FOCUS FOR THE WEEK OF SOLEMN ASSEMBLY

| | |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Day 1 (Sunday) | Ministry of the Word |
| Day 2 (Monday) | In His Holy Presence |
| Day 3 (Tuesday) | Following His Presence |
| Day 4 (Wednesday) | Resting In His Presence |
| Day 5 (Thursday) | Reflecting His Presence |
| Day 6 (Friday) | Anointed In His Presence |
| Day 7 (Saturday) | Personal and Family Prayer |
| Day 8 (Sunday) | Thanksgiving and Exhortation |

SOLEMN ASSEMBLY PART I: WEEK OF PERSONAL PREPARATION

Six Steps To Preparation For Solemn Assembly

The week before Solemn Assembly is a time of personal preparation. Like the Levitical priests who carefully prepared themselves before they entered the Tabernacle to minister to God, it is important that we take time to prayerfully prepare ourselves to enter Solemn Assembly in the spirit and posture of heart that is pleasing to God. Record all that God will be speaking to you throughout this season of prayer and fasting on the pages provided in this booklet.

STEP 1: Plan your week's schedule to include times for corporate and personal prayer.

STEP 2: Personal preparation (Psalm 51:1–19 NKJV)

“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.”

1. Prepare your heart to come before God in humility and contrition.
2. Allow the Holy Spirit to do a deep searching of your heart and life. Bring everything to light and let nothing be hidden.
3. Pray through Psalm 51. Repent and ask God to forgive you, cleanse your heart, and renew a right spirit within you.

4. Ask God to open the eyes of your understanding; remove all unbelief, hardness, pride and resistance to His Holy Spirit. Ask God to put truth and wisdom in your inward parts.
5. Make relationships right with God and with others.

STEP 3: Prepare as a family (Joshua 24:14–15; Psalm 133 NKJV)

“Now, therefore, fear the LORD, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the LORD! . . . But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”

1. **Heads of families:** help prepare your family and share the personal application of Solemn Assembly to every person in your household.
2. Minister unity and oneness; bring healing and reconciliation to all relationships in your family, repent of sins committed against each other, and minister love and forgiveness towards one another.
3. **Married couples:** read 1 Peter 3:1–7 and Colossians 3:18–19.
4. **Parents and children:** read Colossians 3:20–21.
5. Have a family communion time to seal the oneness of spirit, love and peace; pray Psalm 133 and Colossians 3 into your family.

STEP 4: Spiritual house-cleansing (2 Chronicles 34:3–27 NKJV)

“For in the eighth year of his (Josiah’s) reign, while he was still young, he began to seek the God of his father David; and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, the wooden images, the carved images, and the molded images . . . in the eighteenth year of his reign, . . . he sent Shaphan... to repair the house of the LORD . . . because your heart was tender . . . and you humbled yourself before Me . . . I also have heard you, says the LORD.”

1. Do spiritual house-cleaning (2 Chronicles 34:1–33); if there is any item in your possession that contains spiritually defiling material and is not pleasing to God, get rid of it.
2. These things defile us and our homes, and become gateways for the enemy to infiltrate.

3. Repair your personal and family altar (daily devotions, prayer and the Word).

STEP 5: Prepare all ministries (Colossians 3:12–15 NKJV)

“Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another; and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.”

1. **Heads of ministries:** prepare all helpers and others under your care, and ensure that everyone is informed concerning the purpose and times of prayer.
2. Exhort all to participate in the blessing of Solemn Assembly.
3. Minister unity, reconciliation and oneness; if there is any rift in ministerial relationships, prayerfully bring reconciliation and oneness.
4. Renew commitments to God and each other; pray Psalm 133 and Colossians 3 into your ministry.

STEP 6: Ask God to infuse great faith in us (Hebrews 11:6 NKJV)

“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”

1. Seek God diligently and believe in Him for great things.
2. Step into the week of Solemn Assembly with a contrite heart and great faith.

What is Solemn Assembly?

The Call To Humbly Seek God In Prayer And Fasting

Joel 1:14 (NKJV)—“Consecrate a fast, call a sacred assembly; gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the LORD your God and cry out to the LORD.”

Solemn Assembly is a corporate and personal call to humbly separate ourselves unto God for a time of Consecration, Prayer and Fasting to seek His face for a specific purpose. It is humbling ourselves before God in repentance and consecration. It is a time to:

- “break up the fallow ground” of our hearts before God.
- repent of all sins and return to God wholeheartedly.
- totally consecrate ourselves to God as His redeemed people.
- wait on God to hear from Him and take heed.
- resolve to obey and please Him alone.

What Is Fasting And Prayer?

Fasting and prayer are spiritual ministries that God responds to. In fasting, abstinence from food (and other things) is an outward demonstration of an inward heart of contrition and repentance toward God. It is a spiritual act of humbling and emptying ourselves before God in submission to His Lordship. Fasting crucifies our flesh and self, enthrones God, and brings us into total submission to Him. We deny all that is of ourselves—our will, needs, appetites, desires, priorities, and motives—to embrace all that is His. There are different ways to fast. Let the Lord lead you at all times. We fast on:

- **Food** (depending on God’s direction)
- **Time** (setting aside time to pray and wait on God)
- **Priorities** (denying personal agendas to make seeking Him our first priority)
- **Pleasures** (abstaining from things we enjoy to devote that time and energy to God)

How Do We Fast?

We are to fast as the Holy Spirit leads us. Let God show you what He is dealing with in your life. All fasting must be accompanied with prayer. There are three different ways we can fast:

- **Partial fast** – abstain from certain meals or reduce normal portion sizes (no snacking to make up for meals).
- **Total fast** – abstain from solid foods and consume only liquids (if you have a health condition, consult with your doctor first).

Sunday: Ministry of the Word

PSALM 27:4 (AMPC)

ONE THING HAVE I ASKED OF THE LORD, that will I seek, inquire for, and [insistently] require: **THAT I MAY DWELL IN THE HOUSE OF THE LORD [in His presence] ALL THE DAYS OF MY LIFE**, to behold and gaze upon the beauty [the sweet attractiveness and the delightful loveliness] of the LORD and to meditate, consider, and inquire in His temple.

EXODUS 25:8 (NKJV)

And let them make Me a sanctuary, THAT I MAY DWELL AMONG THEM.

JOHN 14:23 (NKJV)

Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, **AND WE WILL COME TO HIM AND MAKE OUR HOME WITH HIM.**

PSALM 51:11 (NKJV)

Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.

PSALM 63:1 (NKJV)

O GOD, YOU ARE MY GOD; EARLY WILL I SEEK YOU; MY SOUL THIRSTS FOR YOU; my flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water.

PSALM 84:1–2 (NLT)

How lovely is your dwelling place, O LORD of Heaven's Armies. **I LONG, YES, I FAINT WITH LONGING TO ENTER THE COURTS OF THE LORD. With my whole being, body and soul, I will shout joyfully to the living God.**

PSALM 84:10 (NLT)

A SINGLE DAY IN YOUR COURTS IS BETTER THAN A THOUSAND ANYWHERE ELSE! I would rather be a gatekeeper in the house of my God than live the good life in the homes of the wicked.

EPHESIANS 2:20–21 (NLT)

TOGETHER, WE ARE HIS HOUSE, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus Himself. **We are carefully joined together in Him, BECOMING A HOLY TEMPLE FOR THE LORD.**

Monday: In His Holy Presence

MATTHEW 5:8 (NJKV)

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

PSALM 24:3–5 NKJV

Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

PSALM 139:23–24 (NLT)

SEARCH ME, O GOD, AND KNOW MY HEART; TEST ME and know my anxious thoughts. **POINT OUT ANYTHING IN ME THAT OFFENDS YOU,** and lead me along the path of everlasting life.

PSALM 51:10–17 (NKJV)

CREATE IN ME A CLEAN HEART, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. . . For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering. **The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart—these, O God, You will not despise.**

2 CHRONICLES 7:14–16 (NLT)

Then if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and restore their land. My eyes will be open and my ears attentive to every prayer made in this place. For I have chosen this Temple and set it apart to be holy—a place where My name will be honored forever. I will always watch over it, for it is dear to My heart.

JOEL 2:12–28 (NKJV)

“Now, therefore,” says the LORD, **“TURN TO ME WITH ALL YOUR HEART, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning.” SO REND YOUR HEART,** and not your garments; return to the LORD your God . . . **Blow the trumpet in Zion, consecrate a fast, call a sacred assembly;** gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders . . . gather the children and nursing babes; let the bridegroom go out from his chamber, and the bride from her dressing room. Let the priests . . . weep . . . **“Spare Your people, O LORD” . . . Then the LORD will be zealous for His land, and pity His**

people. The LORD will answer . . . Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice, for the LORD has done marvelous things! . . . **For He has given you the former rain faithfully, and HE WILL CAUSE THE RAIN TO COME DOWN FOR YOU—THE FORMER RAIN, AND THE LATTER RAIN in the first month.** The threshing floors shall be full of wheat, and the vats shall overflow with new wine and oil. “So I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten . . . You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God . . . I am the LORD your God and there is no other . . . **AND IT SHALL COME TO PASS AFTERWARD THAT I WILL POUR OUT MY SPIRIT ON ALL FLESH.**”

..... ROMANS 2:5 (NKJV)

But in accordance with your HARDNESS AND YOUR IMPENITENT HEART you are TREASURING UP FOR YOURSELF WRATH in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.

..... MICAH 6:6–8 (NLT)

What can we bring to the LORD? Should we bring Him burnt offerings? . . . thousands of rams . . . Should we sacrifice our firstborn children to pay for our sins? No, O people, the LORD has told you what is good, **AND THIS IS WHAT HE REQUIRES OF YOU: TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT, TO LOVE MERCY, AND TO WALK HUMBLY WITH YOUR GOD.**

..... READ 1 KINGS 8:38–40, JOHN 13:2; ACTS 5:3

Exhortation – In His Holy Presence

All things are possible in the presence of the holy God. God’s manifest presence is the manifest presence of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, above all else we need to:

- Love and treasure the Holy Spirit.
- Seek and hunger for the Holy Spirit.
- Honor and submit to the Holy Spirit.
- Live and function in the Holy Spirit.

Repentance Precedes Outpouring Of His Holy Spirit’s Presence

God’s heart is drawn to the broken in spirit and contrite of heart—those who have seen God’s holiness and glory and are wrecked by their

own wretchedness. Therefore, they are desperate to be cleansed, forgiven, and revived by God.

Joel 2:23 prophesies God's promise to pour out His Holy Spirit in the double portion of the former and latter rain. He promises to pour out His Holy Spirit upon all flesh in the "last days." These are the "last days," and we desperately need an unprecedented and uncommon outpouring of His Holy Spirit. We need a global awakening and revival that are based on repentance. It is the repentance Joel was calling for in God's people where there is the rending of the heart and the crushing of the spirit being convicted by Truth. God was not looking for casual repentance, soulish regrets, shallow conviction, and lip-service confession.

This was how David repented in Psalm 51 after God confronted Him through Nathan for his sins of adultery, lies, and murder. David saw through God's eyes the horror of his sins and the depravity of his sin-stained soul. **He understood the weight of his offenses against God, and was totally undone.** His heart and spirit were cut, pierced, and crushed by the revelation. With deep groanings of distress, pain, sorrow, and with countless tears, he repented and repeatedly begged for cleansing and forgiveness. The sacrifices of a contrite heart and broken spirit God will accept.

We need to understand David's prayer of repentance (Psalm 51). Why did he not ask to be forgiven for his sins against Uriah? Why did he say it was against God alone he had sinned? He did not deny his many horrific transgressions against Uriah. David was awakened and saw that whatever he had done to Uriah was done to God. Every evil he planned against Uriah, he was plotting against God. The adultery he committed with Bathsheba against Uriah was adultery committed against God. Therefore, he cried out in Psalm 51:4 (AMP), "Against You, You only, I have sinned and done that which is evil in Your sight, so that You are justified when You speak (Your sentence) and faultless in Your judgment." (MSG – **"YOU'RE THE ONE I'VE VIOLATED,** and You've seen it all, seen the full extent of my evil. You have all the facts before You; whatever You decide about me is fair.")

Every sin we commit against someone is a sin committed against God. **IT IS GOD WHOM WE HAVE VIOLATED.** Every offense held against another is an offense held against God. Every word spoken against another is a word spoken against God. Every abuse done to another is abuse done to God. Every abortion committed against an unborn child is an abortion committed against God. (According to Gutmacher

Institute's approximation, since 1973, nearly 62 million babies in the United States were murdered through abortion. Every baby is God's baby). That is why the Bible says it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of an angry God. Looking at the sins of this nation, why should we not tear our hearts in repentance, why should we not weep in contrition? Is it not time to call for a solemn assembly to humbly repent and seek Him? Sound the alarm and let the people gather. Let the fathers and mothers bring their children and nursing babes. Let the bridegroom and bride come out of their chamber, and let the elders weep before the altar for this nation's sins. He will hear us; He will respond in kindness. He will forgive. He will heal. He will restore; He will revive us again with a double portion of His Spirit.

What did it cost God to forgive and save us? It cost Him the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son. Should we repent in a manner that speaks so lightly of the Lamb crucified? Repent as the Prophet Joel prescribed. We must repent—personally, corporately, and nationally—as David did in contrition and brokenness. Nothing must be hidden. See through God's eyes the grief and anguish we have caused Him by our sins and also the consequences thereof. **THIS IS NOT CONDEMNATION BUT GRACE AT WORK. This is agape love extended through the blood of Jesus. He will hear, forgive, and revive.**

Repentance Is The Work Of Grace

Repentance precedes revival. Acts 3:19 (NKJV) says, **“Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.”** If the Church is to fulfill the call of God for global evangelization to bring in the end-time harvest of souls, it must be through the presence, power, and anointing of the Holy Spirit. We must be filled, inundated, and immersed in Him. If we repent, He will revive.

We need the Holy Spirit to search us and show us the true state of our hearts. We may not have sinned in adultery, stealing, or killing, but have we concealed things in our heart that are offensive to God but permissible to us? Is there pride, resentment, unforgiveness, wrongful thoughts, or a judgmental spirit? The list is endless, and only the Holy Spirit can reveal it to us. Cry out to God according to Psalm 139:23–24 (NLT), **“SEARCH ME, O God, and know my heart; TEST ME and know my anxious thoughts. POINT OUT ANYTHING IN ME THAT OFFENDS YOU, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.”** May our hearts

burn with a passion to live pure and clean before God. Let the zeal to be purged and refined by His holy fire consume us. Do not give God rest until our hearts are broken and contrite before Him. Do not stop until He comes to forgive, cleanse, heal, and revive. God is seeking a genuine repentance that surpasses our evaluation and understanding. **It is the work of the Holy Spirit and a WORK OF GRACE.**

Where is the end-time Church at spiritually? Psalm 24:3–5 (NKJV) says, “Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or who may stand in His holy place? **He who has CLEAN HANDS AND A PURE HEART,** who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive blessing from the LORD and righteousness from the God of his salvation.” Are our hearts pure? Can He come and fill us?

We Must Choose To Disrupt All Things To Seek Him In Repentance

True repentance takes time to wait on God until He speaks. It is not according to our convenience. Joel chapter two requires one and all to come forward, be willing to interrupt and disrupt all agendas and activities (no matter how important) to seek God. **There can be nothing more important than repentance,** as Joel 2:12–28 (NKJV) says:

*“Now, therefore,” says the LORD, “**TURN TO ME WITH ALL YOUR HEART,** with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning.” **SO REND YOUR HEART and not your garments; RETURN TO THE LORD YOUR GOD,** for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness; and He relents from doing harm . . . cause the rain to come down for you—the former rain, and the latter rain . . . “And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh.”*

How often we have chosen our own agendas and priorities over worship, prayer, and seeking Him? We would rather stay at home than come for corporate prayer or be involved in sports on Sunday than to honor Him in His house? **IT IS TIME WE DISRUPT EVERYTHING ELSE TO SEEK HIM FIRST UNTIL HE CLEANSSES US AND RAINS UPON US.**

The Necessity Of Living In His Holy Presence With A Clean Heart

It is His holy presence that will draw, convict, heal, and save the world. Without His holy presence, the Church is as empty, futile, and godless as the world. We have nothing to offer. We may have many

words, programs, events, and methods, but we do not have the manifest presence of God or His Holy Spirit. The following are questions we must answer because God is after a pure and clean heart. When the Holy Spirit examines our hearts and lives, what will He find?

- Are there hidden things that are offensive to Him?
- Have we treated His holy presence with total honor, love, and respect?
- Have we ignored His Holy Spirit's voice, conviction, and leading?
- Have we disobeyed His Word in any area of our lives?
- Have we sinned against others and refused to repent?
- Is our life, heart, spirit, and soul ultimately made clean and pure before Him?
- Will He find any reproach in us?

THE TIME TO DISRUPT ALL THINGS TO SEEK HIM IS NOW. The time for the outpouring of the double portion of His Holy Spirit is now. Is our heart pricked with conviction? Is His Truth piercing the spiritual fogginess of our soul, which has blocked discernment of His voice and ways? Do we hear His Spirit speaking?

God is after our hearts. We cannot be treading the kingdom of God with one foot and the world with the other. We cannot selectively choose what to obey and what not to obey. **The time has come for a brutal and honest examination of our spiritual condition.**

We cannot judge our state based on the works we are doing, the success we are experiencing, or the approval we are receiving. **THE PURE WORD OF GOD AND THE WITNESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL JUDGE OUR HEART AND LIFE.** He is the Spirit of Truth, and His Word is Truth.

The Crossroad Of Choice – God's Presence Or "Baal's"

As a nation, we must awake, acknowledge that we are at the spiritual crossroad of either turning to God with all our hearts or continuing our own way as if all things remain the same. Do we continue to disregard Him, or do we turn at His rebuke that He will pour out His Holy Spirit and presence upon us?

In 1 Kings, Israel, God's chosen people, acknowledged God with their lips, but their hearts were far from Him. They had fallen into idolatry and had turned their backs on God. He had been patient with them, but they had not repented. They had become more arrogant, presumptuous,

deceived, profane, and hardened. There was no lack of messengers (prophets) sent by God to speak to them, calling for their repentance and return to God. It all fell on deaf ears and hardened hearts. God sent Elijah to confront them on Mount Carmel. God interrupted and disrupted them to cause them to face Him. Elijah confronted and challenged them to choose God or Baal. His challenge was to awaken them that they would repent and turn back to God. In 1 Kings 18:21 (NKJV), Elijah called out to them, **“How long will you falter between two opinions? IF THE LORD IS GOD, FOLLOW HIM; but if Baal, follow him.’ BUT THE PEOPLE ANSWERED HIM NOT A WORD.”** They had walked so long with Baal in their hearts and God on their lips that they were accustomed to it and felt right about it. They were silent because their hardened and idolatrous hearts could not choose the LORD as their God. Their silence was lamentable and a tragic indictment of the hardness of their hearts through which they had rejected the LORD and the service of Him. There was no contrition or brokenness in them.

Today, we are at this “Mount Carmel” confrontation and crossroad where the Holy Spirit is saying, “How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him.” **Baal is anyone or anything we serve (that is loved, valued, or prioritized) above God. WE CANNOT STRADDLE THE FENCE BETWEEN GOD AND BAAL.** The Bible says that we are citizens of heaven. We cannot have dual citizenship—that of the kingdom of God and that of Baal. The Church must hear God and choose. **WE CANNOT BE SILENT WHEN CONFRONTED BECAUSE OUR SILENCE MEANS WE HAVE CHOSEN BAAL OVER GOD.** When we procrastinate to choose God, we are “silent.” When we justify compromise, we are “silent.” When we refuse to let go of what God is convicting us of, we are “silent.” How long will we falter between God and Baal?

There are those who are on fire for God. They are walking as Elijah did, but God is confronting His whole Church. Pray that we choose God without hesitation. Examine our hearts to get rid of every form of “Baal” that we secretly worship. Choose God and serve Him alone.

What Will God Hear In His Church: Sounds Of Repentance Or Silence?

Will God hear silence, or will He hear sounds of weeping and mourning in repentance from His Church? Will we call upon Him with great remorse and sorrow for our sins? Will we desperately pursue Him until

He forgives and heals us? Remember, we must want His holy presence more than life. We must not grieve, vex, and hurt His holy presence and Spirit as Israel did in the time of Moses. Israel, His chosen people, repeatedly tested and angered Him with their contrariness, defiance, and hardness as they journeyed to the Promised Land. **THEY DISRESPECTED HIS PRESENCE WITH COMPLAINING, REBELLING, AND DEFILING THEMSELVES.** Their disrespect of God came to a head and in Exodus 33:1–3 (NKJV), the LORD declared to Moses, “Depart and go . . . you and the people . . . I will send My Angel before you . . . Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey; **FOR I WILL NOT GO UP IN YOUR MIDST, lest I consume you on the way, for you are a stiff-necked people.**” God will not allow His holy presence to be dishonored or compromised. God was patient with Israel as He is with us, but we are at this juncture where we must choose Him or Baal, holiness or sin, and obedience or rebellion. Pray as David did in Psalm 55:11 (ESV), **“CAST ME NOT AWAY FROM YOUR PRESENCE AND TAKE NOT YOUR HOLY SPIRIT FROM ME.”** Do not be “silent” lest we be guilty of testing God as Israel did. God, in His anger and grief, said of willful and obstinate Israel in Psalm 81:12 (NKJV), **“SO I GAVE THEM OVER TO THEIR OWN STUBBORN HEART, TO WALK IN THEIR OWN COUNSELS.”**

As His Church, this is not the time to point fingers at others. This is not the time for blind self-righteousness and religious smugness. This is the time to humble ourselves in repentance, first for the Church and then the nation. Since judgment will begin in the house of God, repentance must start with His house. The condition of the nation often reflects the condition of God’s people. If the Church does not live in His holy presence, the nation will not experience His holy presence.

God Will Respond To Repentance With The Outpouring Of His Spirit

When God’s people repent, He will respond by forgiving, blessing, and pouring out a double portion of His Spirit. Let us prepare a clean and pure heart for His holy presence to dwell. He will give us revelation, knowledge, and direction. He has anointed us to be a life-giving source, a mighty healing river, a shining light that pierces the darkness, a refuge-giving tree, a chain breaker, a rescuer, a hope-giver, and a mighty weapon in the hands of Jesus Christ to execute His greater works.

Prayer Focus

A. Repent of sins against His Holy Presence and Spirit.

1. **Dishonoring the Holy Spirit and His presence.**
 - a. Not treating them with value, respect, and priority.
 - b. Grieving the Holy Spirit through self-will, presumptuousness, and indifference.
2. **Disobeying the Holy Spirit by refusing His work and grace.**
 - a. Rejecting the voice, conviction, and leading of the Holy Spirit.
 - b. Rejecting God's reproofs and corrections.
 - c. Hardening of the heart and searing of conscience.
 - d. Dullness of spiritual hearing and deception of heart.

B. Carefully meditate on and pray Psalm 139:23–24 (NLT).

“Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends You, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.”

1. Pray for a contrite heart and broken spirit of repentance.
2. Humbly allow Him to examine the true condition of our heart.
 - a. Reveal all that offends Him.
 - b. Acknowledge, confess, and repent; surrender all to Him.
 - c. Ask for a new, pure, and clean heart.

C. Identify, acknowledge and repent of all sins.

1. Be honest and open; obey all that His Holy Spirit reveals.
2. Identify, acknowledge, and repent of all sins, known or hidden.
 - a. Sins of the heart:
 - Idolatry – loving anyone or anything more than God.
 - Stubbornness – willfulness, obstination, and refusal to turn.
 - Rebellion – disobedience in heart, deeds, and acts.
 - Pride – hardness, conceit, and implacable self-will.
 - Indifference – callousness towards God and His Word.
 - Resentment – disdain or dislike for God or others.
 - Unforgiveness – bitterness or hatred towards God or others.
 - Ingratitude – finding fault or blame in God or others.

Tuesday: Following His Presence

PSALM 27:4 (TPT)

Here's the **ONE THING** I crave from God, the **ONE THING** I seek above all else: I want **THE PRIVILEGE OF LIVING WITH HIM EVERY MOMENT IN HIS HOUSE**, finding the sweet loveliness of His face, filled with awe, delighting in His glory and grace. **I want to live my life so close to Him that He takes pleasure in my every prayer.**

PSALM 27:4 (NKJV)

ONE THING I have desired of the LORD, that will I seek: **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.

PSALM 42:1-2 (TPT)

I long to drink of You, O God, **DRINKING DEEPLY** from the streams of pleasure **FLOWING FROM YOUR PRESENCE**. My longings overwhelm me for more of You! My soul thirsts, pants, and longs for the living God. I want to come and see the face of God.

PSALM 42:1-2 (NKJV)

As the deer pants for the water brooks, **SO PANTS MY SOUL FOR YOU**, O God. **MY SOUL THIRSTS FOR GOD, FOR THE LIVING GOD**. When shall I come and appear before God?

EXODUS 33:14-16 (NKJV)

And He said, **"My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."** Then he said to Him, **"IF YOUR PRESENCE DOES NOT GO WITH US, DO NOT BRING US UP FROM HERE.** For how then will it be known that Your people and I have found grace in Your sight, except You go with us? So we shall be separate, Your people and I, from all the people who are upon the face of the earth."

EXODUS 40:34-38 (NKJV)

Then the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting . . . Whenever the cloud was taken up from above the tabernacle, the children of Israel would go onward . . . but if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not journey till the day that it was taken up. **For the cloud of the LORD was above the tabernacle by day, and fire was over it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.**

LUKE 18:18–30 (TPT)

One day a wealthy Jewish nobleman . . . posed this question to Jesus: **“Wonderful Teacher, what must I do to be saved and receive eternal life?”** Jesus answered, “Why would you call Me wonderful when there is only one who is wonderful—and that is God alone? You already know . . . what the commandments teach: ‘Do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not lie’” . . . The wealthy leader replied, “These . . . things I’ve been doing for as long as I can remember.” “Ah,” Jesus said. **“But there’s still one thing you’re missing . . . You must go and sell everything you own and give all . . . to the poor so you will have eternal treasures. THEN COME AND FOLLOW ME.”** When the rich leader heard these words, he was devastated, for he was extremely wealthy. Jesus saw his disappointment, and looking right at him He said, “It is next to impossible for those who have everything to enter into God’s kingdom realm . . . It could be compared to trying to stuff a rope through the eye of a needle.” Those who heard . . . said, “Then who can be saved?” Jesus responded, “What appears humanly impossible is more than possible with God. For God can do what man cannot.” Peter said, “Lord, see how we’ve left all that we have, our houses and our careers, to follow You.” Jesus replied, **“Listen to My words: anyone who leaves his home behind and chooses God’s kingdom realm over wife, children, parents, and family, IT WILL COME BACK TO HIM MANY MORE TIMES in this lifetime. And in the age to come, HE WILL INHERIT EVEN MORE THAN THAT—HE WILL INHERIT ETERNAL LIFE.”**

LUKE 14:25–35 (NKJV)

Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them, “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. **And whoever DOES NOT BEAR HIS CROSS and come after Me cannot be My disciple.** For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it— lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish . . . So likewise, **WHOEVER OF YOU DOES NOT FORSAKE ALL THAT HE HAS CANNOT BE MY DISCIPLE.** Salt is good; but if the salt has lost its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land nor for the dunghill, but men throw it out. **He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”**

Exhortation – Following His Presence

The Passion And Pursuit Of His Presence

Following His presence is all about God, not us. The heart of a follower will cry out to Him as in Psalm 27:4 (TPT):

*Here's the one thing I crave from God, the one thing I seek above all else: I want the privilege of living with Him every moment in His house, finding the sweet loveliness of His face, filled with awe, delighting in His glory and grace. **I WANT TO LIVE MY LIFE SO CLOSE TO HIM THAT HE TAKES PLEASURE IN MY EVERY PRAYER.***

It is a passion that causes a craving to pursue God and will not let up until one is perpetually immersed in His presence, and drunk with His presence. **Nothing on earth will satisfy or be enough but His presence.** It is God alone, nothing else. **A follower seeks Him to live, and lives to seek Him. IT IS ALWAYS ABOUT RELATIONSHIP, INTIMACY, AND PASSION.** There is a cry to know Him by revelation in that secret place. It is not for an experience, encounter, or blessing; it is for Him. **There is only one passion—to know Him, love Him, please Him, and serve Him.** The more we are immersed in His presence, the more we hunger for Him until everything else is obliterated from our focus. Nothing stands between Jesus and us, not people, things, time, or space. They no longer have any significance or hold over us. His passion, priority, and purpose now consume us. **WE ARE FREE TO LOVE, OBEY AND SERVE HIM AT ANY COST.** This is one passion, His presence.

A Follower Is A Disciple

In Matthew 8:22 (NKJV), a man who desired to follow Jesus asked to first bury his father, and Jesus replied, **“Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead.”** The word “follow” (*akolouthei*) means to follow one who precedes; to join him as his attendant, to accompany him; **Also, to join one as a disciple or become his disciple.** Following His presence is pursuing Him to become His disciple.

In Luke 14:25, we are told great multitudes were trailing Jesus. They had heard His words of life, received miracles, had their sicknesses healed, dead raised, captives freed and hungry fed. However, Jesus was neither seeking crowds nor impressed with multitudes. He was zeroing

in on their hearts. **He was seeking what His Father was seeking, disciples who would follow Him as He followed His Father.** Turning, He confronted them, telling them that the purpose of following Him must be to become His disciples. In verses 26–35 (NKJV) He revealed that discipleship would cost them everything dearest to them:

*If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. **And whoever does not bear HIS CROSS AND COME AFTER ME CANNOT BE MY DISCIPLE . . . So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.** Salt is good; but if the salt has lost its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land nor for the dunghill, but men throw it out. **He who has ears to hear, let him hear!***

To those trailing Him for blessings, miracles, and provisions, these words were deeply offensive, calloused, insensitive, and uncaring. **To those who pursue because their hearts burned to be His disciples, THESE WERE WORDS OF TRUTH AND LIFE.**

When Jesus cried out to all and said, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear,” He was urging them not to follow Him ignorantly and blindly because of what He had done and could do for them. He was exhorting them to listen with their hearts that they would understand plainly the purpose and the cost of following Him. He wanted them to count the cost and follow Him to the end, not abort halfway.

Following His Presence As Moses Did, Not Israel

To follow God’s presence is to follow His Person. They cannot be separated. Where His Person is, His presence is. **Until we love God with a whole heart, we will not follow Him with a whole heart.** In Exodus, the presence of God would physically appear to Israel as a pillar of cloud by day and fire by night as they journeyed to the Promised Land. As Israel followed these pillars, God’s presence was leading them to possess all that was promised them. In the forty years of journeying, they were following God more for security, provision, and blessing, not for Him. Moses was following God for Him. **They were consumers of God’s goodness and grace. MOSES WAS A SEEKER AND A LOVER OF GOD.** Moses’ one passion was to see God’s face, but Israel’s was to love themselves.

Following His presence is not about seeking Him as our Blessor. **It is about us being His lover.** It is to love, obey, and serve Him as His disciples. Therefore, we entirely give our lives to be joined with His that we see, understand, and emulate Him in all His ways. We learn to be like Him and live like Him by practicing and using all that we have received from Him. In 1 Corinthians 11:1 (NKJV), Paul describes it, saying, **“IMITATE ME, JUST AS I ALSO IMITATE CHRIST”** (TPT – “I want you to **PATTERN** your lives after me, just as I **PATTERN** mine after Christ”). Disciples cultivate the habit of imitating (patterning after) Him, not mimicking. Imitating is to follow with a whole heart in all that He is and does. **He is our divine model and perfect blueprint we emulate until He is fully formed (duplicated) in us. Imitation is the outward manifestation of an inward transformation.** Mimicking is simply to copy what is outwardly observable. Jesus is calling and seeking those who will imitate Him with their hearts, souls, and minds. They love and live only for Him.

Follow As Disciples Not Consumers

We can follow His presence as Moses or as Israel did. Are we consumers seeking for needs to be met, or are we disciples forsaking all to love and follow Him? Jesus’ heart was focused on the Father’s kingdom and will. He was not looking for adoring crowds but die-to-all disciples who do not count their own lives dear to themselves, except to give them up to serve Him. **If Christianity is all about Jesus, then following His presence must be all about Him.**

Christ’s followers are disciples, not consumers. In Luke 14:25-35, He challenged those trailing Him that if they love their families or themselves more than Him, they were not fit to be His disciples. If they would not forsake all to follow Him, they were unfit to be His disciples. In verses 33–35 (NKJV), Jesus said they would be like salt that had lost its flavor and had become useless and worthless:

So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple. Salt is good; but if the salt has lost its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land nor for the dunghill, but men throw it out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

Christ's disciples are His salt and light of the earth. **LOVING HIM ABOVE ALL AND PAYING THE COST TO BE HIS DISCIPLES IS THE FLAVOR IN THE SALT.** Those who will not pick up their crosses and forsake all to follow Him have lost their saltiness (usefulness and worth as disciples). Jesus said that flavorless salt was not fit even for the dunghill. Dung is useful as fertilizer, but if mixed with salt, it would lose its usefulness— no longer fit to fertilize. Such salt is thrown out as neither fit for land nor dunghill. **Discipleship without the cross is totally useless to Jesus Christ and His kingdom.** As aforementioned, this sounds so harsh, hard, and unloving to consumers. For those who burn with one passion for His presence, these are words of Life.

WE HAVE A CHOICE on how we follow Him as genuine disciples or worthless salt. Disciples love God above all; flavorless salt does not. If we are tasteless salt, then choose to repent and return to follow Him in the manner He requires. We must make a choice. Those who are true salt focus on God's will and business, not on their needs, preferences, or desires. **They are after what Jesus is after. THEY ARE CHRIST-CENTERED, NOT SELF-CENTERED.** Consumers are self-centered and spiritually narcissistic. They always look inward to themselves, be it their need, want, hurt, weakness, limitation, or failure. It could also be their dream, hope, success, and aspiration.

Consumerism is the doctrine of the world, not the kingdom of God. The dictionary definition is "the protection or promotion of the interests of consumers." **IT IS WORTHLESS TO GOD and is the antithesis to Christ's nature and His call to follow Him. FIRST LOVE KILLS THE SPIRIT OF CONSUMERISM.** If we love Jesus, we will want to forsake all to follow Him. If we love Jesus, following Him is what we long to do, not dread to do. If we love Jesus, we rejoice in following, not murmuring. Consumers will complain about the journey, cost, and sacrifice of following Him. They reason and resent when He says, "Let the dead bury the dead, but you come and follow me." It offends their consumers' fleshly sensitiveness, expectation, mindset, culture, and acceptable norms of life. **Jesus confronts us with the cost to expose our hearts. WHEN EXPOSED, MAKE A CHOICE.** Do we leave Him or forsake all to follow Him? Jesus said that the birds of the air have nests, foxes have holes, but the Son of Man had nowhere to lay His head. If His presence leads us to a place where there is nowhere to lay our heads or call home, would we still follow?

The Marks Of Disciples

The heart of a faithful follower knows that life is worth nothing except to follow Jesus. He will give grace, strength, and courage to the willing. It is not about employing all means to save and preserve one's life. **IT IS TO GIVE AND EXPEND ALL IN FOLLOWING HIM TO THE ENDS OF THE WORLD.** We will not hesitate to follow where He is leading. We will not linger where He is absent. Paul, a true follower of Christ, declared this in Acts 20:23–27 (NKJV):

*The Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me. **But none of these things move me; NOR DO I COUNT MY LIFE DEAR TO MYSELF**, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to **TESTIFY TO THE GOSPEL OF THE GRACE OF GOD . . .** Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. **FOR I HAVE NOT SHUNNED TO DECLARE TO YOU THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD.***

Is Paul's radical Christianity (which is normal and acceptable to God) only to be preached, but never to be followed and lived? Is Paul's discipleship too extreme, unreasonable, and drastic, that it is only for a chosen few, not all Christians? Has ministry been so keeled towards pleasing people (this being our love concept), rather than giving all to preach the Gospel and His grace, that we completely miss God's heart and will? **ARE WE REPRODUCING DISCIPLES OR CONSUMERS?** Jesus spoke of Martha that she was troubled over many things, but Mary had chosen the better part—attending to Him (Luke 10:38–42).

We must follow Christ's presence for the purpose He wants us to follow Him: WORLD EVANGELIZATION. Disciples do not major in personal needs being met or being made to feel better, but on God and His kingdom purpose. God is concerned for all needs and will provide through Jesus Christ, but He commands that we seek first His kingdom and righteousness. **Disciples prioritize what God is prioritizing.** The more we follow and be immersed in His presence, the more His kingdom, will, and priority will become ours. **THE MORE WE WILL OBEY HIM AT ALL COST.** The world and all its benefits will lose their significance and hold over us. The zeal for His house and purpose will consume us.

Disciples Will Follow Him Even Unto Death

The song “I Have Decided to Follow Jesus” is not just a Sunday school song, but a song for disciples who will give their lives to follow Jesus to the very end. The lyrics were the words uttered by Nokseng (a Garo tribesman in Assam, India) before his children, wife and he were killed for their faith in Jesus Christ:

*I have decided to follow Jesus . . .
No turning back, no turning back.*

*Though none go with me, still I will follow . . .
No turning back, no turning back.*

*The world behind me, the cross before me . . .
No turning back, no turning back.*

More than 150 years ago, through a great revival in Wales, many missionaries went to India to preach the Gospel. Some went to Assam, where the Garo tribe was, whose tribesmen were violent headhunters. Both missionaries and the Gospel were met with hostility, endangering the missionaries' lives. Through a missionary, Nokseng along with his wife and two children were converted and became followers of Jesus Christ. Through Nokseng's contagious faith, others were saved. This angered the tribal chief who summoned all the villagers and demanded that Nokseng and his family publicly renounce Jesus Christ or be killed. Moved by the Holy Spirit, Nokseng declared, “I have decided to follow Jesus. No turning back.” Enraged, the chief executed Nokseng's two sons. When challenged again to renounce Jesus lest his wife should be killed too, Nokseng's declared, “Though none go with me, I still will follow. No turning back.” They then killed his wife. With his beloved family martyred before his eyes, the chief gave him an ultimatum to renounce Jesus Christ or be killed. To this, Nokseng resolutely responded, “The cross before me, the world behind me. No turning back.” In a fury, they too killed him. Psalms 116:15 (NKJV) says, “Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His saints.” How precious is the blood of martyrs that was shed because they had loved Jesus above all others, denied themselves, and picked up the cross and followed Him. The blood of martyrs still speaks a testimony that will again save many.

Jesus said unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it abides alone. If it dies, it will bring forth a bountiful harvest (John 12:24–25). **The tribal chief who witnessed Nokseng’s and his family’s faith was moved and deeply convicted that the Gospel must be true.** He later converted to Christianity, along with most of the village. Nokseng’s last testimony was made into a hymn by Sadhu Sundar Singh, a devout follower of Jesus Christ and a missionary.

The Reward Of Forsaking All To Follow Him

In Luke 18:28–30 (TPT), Peter had the following dialog with Jesus:

“Lord, see how we’ve left all that we have, our houses and our careers, to follow You.” Jesus replied, “Listen to My words: anyone who leaves his home behind and chooses God’s kingdom realm over wife, children, parents, and family, it will come back to him many more times in this lifetime. And in the age to come, he will inherit even more than that—he will inherit eternal life.”

Consumers will lose the very life they try to secure and save for themselves. **FOLLOWERS WILL KEEP THE VERY LIFE THEY CHOOSE TO LOSE FOR CHRIST.** Whatever “losses” we temporarily sustain in following Christ are investments in His kingdom that will reap everlasting, abounding, and indescribable rewards and returns in the measures of God, not ours. This is God’s kingdom doctrine, ways, and economy and always will be.

Jesus Spoke Of Four Things Concerning Following Him

Jesus’ whole purpose was to offer Himself up to His Father—for His Father’s will and glory. He accomplished this by following His Father unceasingly and relentlessly. When facing His crucifixion, His soul was troubled with deep agony, dismay, and pain. His life of following His Father brought Him to this hour to be offered up as a Lamb slain for the redemption of all humankind. Will we follow Him to the end as He did His Father? **Four things the Lamb slain teaches about following Him:**

- **His promise:** “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Matthew 4:19 NKJV). The main thing Jesus promised His followers was that He would make them **FISHERS OF MEN.**

He did not promise success, ease, achievement, miracles, provisions, or dreams fulfilled.

- **His requirement:** “Whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple” (Luke 14:33 NKJV). Jesus mandated that **HE MUST COME BEFORE ALL ELSE**—even our life, loved ones, and possessions.
- **Our commitment:** “No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:62 NKJV). Following Him requires our **ALLEGIANCE, DEVOTION, AND ENDURANCE** to the end. There is no quitting, bailing out, or looking back.
- **Our eternal reward:** “If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me” (Matthew 19:21, NKJV). Followers will receive their **ETERNAL TREASURE** in heaven for all that they have given up on earth to follow Him.

Will we continue to follow Him if His presence leads us into suffering for the Gospel? Will we go where He leads? Will we say what He says? Will we give as He had given? Are we disciples, or are we consumers? Are we followers or flavorless salt? **IT IS UP TO US. IT IS OUR CHOICE.** The words added on as the last stanza to the song, “I Have Decided to Follow Jesus” say this:

My cross I'll carry, till I see Jesus . . . No turning back, no turning back.

Follow His presence. Obey Him in going wherever He sends us for the Gospel—BECAUSE WE ARE HIS DISCIPLES.

Prayer Focus

A. Take time to wait and hear His Holy Spirit.

1. Prayerfully search and examine—bring everything into light.
2. Acknowledge all that He reveals and return to seeking Him.
3. Cry out for a deep and powerful work of His Holy Spirit.

B. Repent of apathy and losing a passion for His Presence.

1. Is God's presence your first love, priority, and pursuit?
2. Have you lost your passion and hunger for God?
3. Do you need a spiritual awakening and spiritual revival?
4. Cry out for your heart and life to be ignited with the fire of His Holy Spirit.

C. Repent of consumerism and self-centered Christianity.

1. Repent of consumerism and self-centered Christianity:
 - a. Loving personal wants, desires, and agendas more than God's.
 - b. Loving self and others more than God.
 - c. Loving the world and things of the world more than God.
 - d. Loving what God can do for us more than loving Him.
2. Repent of not following Him as His disciples because of:
 - a. Failure to put Him first.
 - b. Failure to forsake all.
 - c. Failure to deny self.
 - d. Failure to pick up the cross.
3. Repent of losing usefulness as His disciple.

D. Choose to follow Him as His disciple.

1. Commit to love Him above anyone and everyone, even your own life.
2. Commit to forsake all to follow Him.
3. Commit to deny self and pick up the cross to follow Him.
4. Commit to do His will and finish His work to the end.

E. Build an altar of consecration and commitment.

1. Love Him above all else.
2. Forsake all to follow Him.
3. Pick up the cross and obey Him.
4. Go make disciples of all nations.

F. Commit to wholly follow Jesus—no turning back.

1. Purpose and commit all to follow Him to the end.
2. Consider own life not dear even unto death, except:
 - a. To follow Him and preach the Gospel.
 - b. To fulfill His call and finish His work.

Wednesday: Resting In His Presence

..... PSALM 116:6–9 (NLT)

The LORD protects those of childlike faith; I was facing death, and He saved me. **LET MY SOUL BE AT REST AGAIN, FOR THE LORD HAS BEEN GOOD TO ME.** He has saved me from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling. **AND SO I WALK IN THE LORD'S PRESENCE AS I LIVE HERE ON EARTH!**

..... ISAIAH 30:15 (TPT)

The Holy One of Israel, says: "Come back to me! **BY RETURNING AND RESTING IN ME YOU WILL BE SAVED.** In quietness and trust you will be made strong."

..... MATTHEW 11:28–30 (NLT)

Then Jesus said, "**COME TO ME,** all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and **I WILL GIVE YOU REST.** Take My yoke upon you. Let Me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and **YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS.** For My yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light."

..... 1 KINGS 8:56 (AMP)

Blessed be the LORD, who has given rest to His people Israel, in accordance with everything that He promised. Not one word has failed of all His good promise.

..... HEBREWS 4:1–3 (NLT)

God's promise of entering His rest still stands . . . For only we who believe can enter His rest.

..... HEBREWS 4:9–11 (NLT)

So there is a special rest still waiting for the people of God. For all who have entered into God's rest have rested from their labors, just as God did after creating the world. **So let us do our best to enter that rest. But if we disobey God, as the people of Israel did, we will fall.**

..... PSALM 37:5–9 (NKJV)

Commit your way to the LORD, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass. He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday. **REST IN THE LORD, AND WAIT PATIENTLY FOR HIM . . . DO**

NOT FRET—it only causes harm . . . but those who wait on the LORD, they shall inherit the earth.

..... 2 CORINTHIANS 4:14–16 (TPT)

We do this because we are convinced that He who raised Jesus will raise us up with Him, and together we will all be brought into His presence . . . **For even though our outer person gradually wears out, OUR INNER BEING IS RENEWED EVERY SINGLE DAY.**

..... PSALM 91:1–16 (TPT)

When you sit enthroned under the shadow of Shaddai, you are hidden in the strength of God Most High. He’s the Hope that holds me and the Stronghold to shelter me . . . **Don’t fear a thing!** . . . Even in a time of disaster, with thousands and thousands being killed, you will remain unscathed and unharmed . . . **WHEN WE LIVE OUR LIVES WITHIN THE SHADOW OF GOD MOST HIGH, OUR SECRET HIDING PLACE, WE WILL ALWAYS BE SHIELDED FROM HARM** . . . You’ll even walk unharmed among the fiercest powers of darkness, trampling every one of them beneath your feet! For here is what the LORD has spoken to me: “Because you have delighted in Me as My great lover, I will greatly protect you. I will set you in a high place, safe and secure before My face. I will answer your cry for help every time you pray, **AND YOU WILL FIND AND FEEL MY PRESENCE EVEN IN YOUR TIME OF PRESSURE AND TROUBLE.** I will be your Glorious Hero and give you a feast. You will be satisfied with a full life and with all that I do for you. For you will enjoy the fullness of My salvation!”

..... PSALM 37:5,7,39,40 (NKJV)

Commit your way to the LORD, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass. . . . REST IN THE LORD, AND WAIT PATIENTLY FOR HIM . . . DO NOT FRET—it only causes harm . . . but those who wait on the LORD, they shall inherit the earth . . . He is their strength in the time of trouble. And the LORD shall help them and deliver them; He shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in Him.

..... JEREMIAH 46:27 (NKJV)

But do not fear, O My servant Jacob, and do not be dismayed, O Israel! For behold, I will save you from afar, and your offspring from the land of their captivity; **JACOB SHALL RETURN, HAVE REST AND BE AT EASE; no one shall make him afraid.**

..... READ PSALM 95:7–11 (TPT), 1 SAMUEL 30:6 (NKJV)

Exhortation – Resting In His Presence

Resting in God is an act of faith where we CONTINUOUSLY ENTER AND ABIDE in His presence. IT IS ENTERING INTO COMPLETE DEPENDENCY ON HIM. This we do by seeking and waiting on Him in prayer, worship, and communion. **IT IS IN INTIMACY WITH HIM THAT WE REST.** It is impossible to rest in Him if we do not have a relationship or intimacy with Him. Lovers and seekers of God’s presence are those who rest best in Him. How do we rest in Him?

- When we pray, we are resting in Him.
- When we worship, we are resting in Him.
- When we ingest His Word, we are resting in Him.
- When we meditate on Him, we are resting in Him.

All these take us into the manifested presence of God, where we are one with Him. In this secret place of rest, we receive, soak and drink in His holy presence –all that He is. We do not stop soaking and drinking in His presence until we are wholly and perpetually immersed in Him and drunk with His Spirit. In this intimacy, He is abiding in us and we in Him. We are in a “life–fusion” with Him. 1 John 1:1–3 (TPT) testifies of this:

We saw Him with our very own eyes. We gazed upon Him and heard Him speak. Our hands actually touched Him, the One who was from the beginning the Living Expression of God. THIS LIFE–GIVER WAS MADE VISIBLE AND WE HAVE SEEN HIM. We testify to this truth: the eternal Life–Giver lived face–to–face with the Father and has now dawned upon us. So we proclaim to you what we have seen and heard about this Life–Giver so that we may share and enjoy this life together. FOR TRULY OUR FELLOWSHIP IS WITH THE FATHER AND WITH HIS SON, JESUS, THE ANOINTED ONE.

His eyes are on us, as ours are on Him. **In quietness and trust, we completely yield ourselves into His hands.** He has our full attention, submission, and confidence. All that He is will saturate us. We are intoxicated with His love, refreshed by His tender mercies, and strengthened with His goodness.

As clay rests in the hands of the Potter, so we rest in His hands. Clay, being an inanimate object, possesses no power, ability, skill, agenda, ambition, or plan of its own, except all the Potter has intended for it. **LIKE CLAY, WE ARE RESTING IN GOD’S HANDS WITH NOTHING OF OURSELVES SO THAT WE CAN RECEIVE ALL THAT IS OF HIM.** He has full access to all of us and is able to do all that He desires to do in us and then through us. The more our relationship with God grows, the more we know Him, and the more we can rest in Him. He is no longer just a name we confess; He is the God whom we know, see, touch, and hear. Love is not just a word we hear; He is the love we encounter and experience.

While resting in His presence, we totally cease from depending on self and others to completely trusting and depending on Him alone. We give up on all we are and have to abandon completely to who He is, has and can do. **WE RETIRE FROM IMPOTENT US AND RESIGN COMPLETELY TO ALMIGHTY HIM. Rest is a faith response to all that God is.** Resign means to yield to and accept what we know is inevitable, unchangeable, and bound to happen. In resigning to God, we yield to Him who is unchangeable, we accept His goodness and grace that are inescapable, and we know that His deeds of wonder are inevitable. We retire from natural ability and effort and resign to His supernatural goodness and grace.

Abraham utterly retired from all hope of producing children from his aged body and resigned himself to the goodness of God. He rested in God by faith, and God fulfilled His promise by making him a father of nations. **When we enter into His rest; we are awakened to the truth that God is all we have and need. Corrie ten Boom said, “IF YOU LOOK AT THE WORLD, YOU’LL BE DISTRESSED. IF YOU LOOK WITHIN, YOU’LL BE DEPRESSED. BUT IF YOU LOOK AT GOD, YOU’LL BE AT REST.”**

Jesus Invites Us To Rest In Him

Jesus promises rest to all who will come to Him. In Matthew 11:28–30 (NLT), He gives an invitation:

COME TO ME, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I WILL GIVE YOU REST. Take My yoke upon you. Let Me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and **YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS.** For My yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.

Yokes of weariness and heavy burdens are yokes we create and carry by solely depending on and using our strength, ability, power, and resources to make it. We are resting in who we are, not in who He is. Jesus invites all to cast off the self-made yoke of weariness and heavy burdens to be yoked to Him, who is omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent. **When we are yoked to Him, He gives us rest because we are immersed in and swallowed up in Him. ALL THAT HE IS, HAS AND CAN DO TAKE OVER EVERYTHING THAT CONCERNS US.** In warfare, we are yoked to the God Most High. In suffering, we are yoked to the Comforter and Deliverer. In fear, we are yoked to the Prince of Peace. In weariness, we are yoked to the Sustainer and Redeemer of our soul.

We have assurance, hope, and peace because we have rest in Him. We taste, touch, and see that He is good as Psalm 34:8–10 (NLT) exhorts us:

Taste and see that the LORD is good. OH, THE JOYS OF THOSE WHO TAKE REFUGE IN HIM! *Fear the LORD, you His godly people, for those who fear Him will have all they need. Even strong young lions sometimes go hungry, BUT THOSE WHO TRUST IN THE LORD WILL LACK NO GOOD THING.*

What victories, miracles, encouragement, strength, and boldness have we forfeited and missed because we fail to rest in His presence. What fears, burdens, and worries we needlessly carry. **When we do not rest in Him, He cannot carry us or our burdens.**

The Power Of Resting In His Presence

The most powerful, anointed, victorious, fruitful, and blessed Christian is not the one who is the strongest, most gifted, trained, or knowledgeable (all these are good and needed). It is the one who has learned to rest best in His presence. The spirit and soul of a child of God are amazingly strong, resilient, bold, courageous, anointed, and empowered through life-union with (resting in) Him. All that God is and has, are made available to us in His presence. These we access by faith. This allows the Holy Spirit to take over to minister, fill and anoint. He infuses us with all that He is and all that we need to love, obey, and serve Him and His purpose in these most trying, brutal, and challenging times. Watchman Nee, a powerful and courageous martyr for the kingdom of God, who died in prison in Communist China for his faith

in God, said, **“OUR REST LIES IN LOOKING TO THE LORD, NOT TO OURSELVES.”**

Resting is not passivity, inactivity, or cessation of responsibilities, duties, or diligence. **It is entering into all that Jesus Christ is and has done for us. When we rest in Him, we are enabled to be and do all He has called us to.** In our frailty, we enter into His strength. In our struggles, we enter into His victory. In our limitations, we enter into His provisions. In our failures, we enter into His grace. In our impotence, we enter into His power; and in our confusion, we enter into His peace. **IN ALL THAT WE ARE NOT, WE ENTER INTO ALL THAT HE IS BY RESTING IN HIS PRESENCE.**

In Christ Jesus, we have the fullness of life, love, joy, peace, power, revelation, victory, and revival. Salvation is in His presence. Resurrection is in His presence. Overcoming is in His presence. Miracles are in His presence. Perfect love is in His presence, and the outpouring of His Holy Spirit is in His presence. **There is a grace given so that we neither faint nor falter, but endure and triumph. Resting produces the most prevailing and powerful intercessor, preacher, prophet, pastor, teacher, and minister of God.** Resting makes us most like Jesus, passionate for Him, fruitful and courageous. In resting in Him, the heroes of faith found their life, purpose, enablement, and all that they needed to fulfill God’s call. Anyone who confesses God but depends on their own soul does not rest in Him; they will always be weak, unbelieving, and limited.

The greatest miracle, victory, power, faith, anointing, and revelation are experienced through resting in His presence. The most intense battles are won through resting in His presence. The most impossible assignments are accomplished through resting in His presence. In resting in His presence, the deepest pain and sorrow are healed. The greatest fear is broken. The most troubled soul receives peace. The weakest is made strong. The hopeless finds hope. Many who had rested in His presence, despite their weaknesses, flaws, and failures, had lived mighty, strong, courageous, and successful lives in completing God’s will, purpose, and works. Such were those like Abraham, Moses, Jacob, David, Paul, and Peter.

We Overcome All By Resting In His Presence

When we rest in His presence, we experience perfect love, peace, protection, healing, redemption, and deliverance. In His presence,

no weapon formed against us can prosper. God takes over, and in Him, nothing is impossible! Paul put it this way in 2 Corinthians 4:7–18 (TPT):

We are like common clay jars that carry this glorious treasure within, so that the extraordinary overflow of power will be seen as God's, not ours. Though we experience every kind of pressure, we're not crushed . . . We are persecuted . . . but . . . not forsaken. We may be knocked down, but not out. We continually share in the death of Jesus in our own bodies so that the resurrection life of Jesus will be revealed through our humanity . . . So no wonder we don't give up. For even though our outer person gradually wears out, OUR INNER BEING IS RENEWED EVERY SINGLE DAY. We view our slight, short-lived troubles in the light of eternity. We see our difficulties as the substance that produces for us an eternal, weighty glory far beyond all comparison, because we don't focus . . . on what is seen but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but the unseen realm is eternal.

When resting in His presence, we have hope in the most hopeless situation, we have peace in the most turbulent of storms, we have light in the deepest of darkness, we have comfort in the most tragic sorrow, we have healing in the severe brokenness of heart, and we have new strength in place of fatigue. **When we rest in God's presence no matter what the sufferings, afflictions, and trials we are going through, DEEP IN OUR INNER MAN WE KNOW AND WE CAN TESTIFY, "IT IS WELL WITH MY SOUL."** Until we rest in God's presence, the cross will become too painful, the path too wearisome, denying self impossible, loving Him above others unachievable, and making disciples of all nations unattainable. **WHEN WE REST IN HIS PRESENCE, ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE THROUGH HIM WHO STRENGTHENS US.**

No matter what we may walk through, it will always be well with the soul resting in God's presence. This was the testimony of Horatio Spafford, who inspired the hymn "It Is Well With My Soul." He was a believer, a successful attorney and real estate investor who lost a fortune in the great Chicago fire of 1871. At the same time, he lost his four-year-old son to scarlet fever.

Concerned for the well-being of his wife and four daughters, Horatio sent them on a ship to England for a vacation, and planned on joining them after completing some pressing matters. While crossing the Atlantic Ocean, the ship was involved in a horrific collision and sunk. All

four of Horatio's daughters lost their lives together with 200 people. His wife, Anna, survived. When she reached England, she sent a telegram to Horatio simply saying, "Saved alone. What shall I do?" Immediately he set sail for England.

At one point in the voyage, as the ship was passing over the spot of the shipwreck, the captain, being aware of Horatio's family tragedy, called for him to inform him of the fact. As Horatio thought of his beloved daughters and all that had happened in his life, the love of God enveloped him, and words of comfort and hope filled his heart and mind. He wrote down these words:

*When peace like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll –
Whatever my lot, Thou has taught me to say
It is well, it is well with my soul.*

In Exodus 33:14 (NKJV), God told Moses, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." "Rest" (*nuwach*) here means to settle down and remain, cause to rest, be granted rest, make quiet, lay down, or repose (*recline*). God was with Stafford, and he rested in Him.

Resting Deeper Still For Such A Time As This

Until we learn to rest in His presence, we will not have the ability to accomplish anything spiritual and eternal. We are in seasons where our inner man must be supernaturally built up as never before with the Holy Spirit's strength, courage, and grace. This we do by resting in His presence. Ephesians 6:10 (TPT) says, "Now my beloved ones, I have saved these most important truths for last: **BE SUPERNATURALLY INFUSED WITH STRENGTH through your LIFE-UNION WITH THE LORD JESUS. Stand victorious with the force of His explosive power flowing in and through you.**" Jesus perpetually rested in His Father's presence because He needed Him. He could not do anything of Himself. In resting, the Holy Spirit worked unhindered and unlimited in and through Jesus. God did the impossible, improbable, and incredible to His glory. **RESTING DOES NOT MEAN THAT WE ARE PASSIVE, BUT WE TRUST, YIELD, AND OBEY THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

We are in the beginning of the end of time. These are unusual times of severe trials and hardships both for the whole world and for the church.

In Matthew 24:6–14 (NKJV), Jesus speaks of these times:

You will hear of wars and rumors of wars . . . nation will rise against nation . . . there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake . . . many will be offended . . . betray . . . and hate one another . . . lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved. And this Gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

We must awake to the truth that Christ is all we need, and He is all we have. He is definitely more than sufficient. In resting in His presence, the church becomes the most powerful, impactful, courageous, and trustworthy spiritual entity to advance the kingdom of God in the worst of times. The most intense battles are won through resting in His presence. The most impossible assignments are accomplished. The deepest pain and sorrow are healed. The greatest fear is broken. The most troubled soul receives peace. The weakest is made strong. The hopeless finds hope. **IN RESTING WE LOVE, OBEY, GO AND PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE END OF THE WORLD.**

Prayer Focus

A. Identify, repent and remove obstacles to resting in His presence.

1. Spirit of apathy, indifference, and callousness
2. Spirit of arrogance, pride, and hardness
3. Spirit of anxiety, worry, and fear
4. Spirit of doubt, unbelief, and dependency on self and flesh
5. Sins and transgressions

B. Set your heart to seek and abide in His presence always.

1. Always pray, pursue and seek Him earnestly.
2. Always worship, adore and exalt Him wholeheartedly.

3. Always study and ingest His Word devotedly.
4. Always meditate, abide and rest in Him totally.

C. Rest in Him until we have greater faith in Him.

1. Identify and turn away from our own flesh, ability, and strength.
2. Identify fears, doubts, and unbelief; confess, repent, yield to Him, and be free.
3. Let the Holy Spirit have access to all and be delivered from fear, doubt, and unbelief.
4. Let the Holy Spirit open our eyes to see the truth concerning our:
 - a. Relationship with Him—be in intimate oneness with Him.
 - b. Confidence and trust in Him—be wholly dependent on Him.
 - c. Greater faith—to have boldness, courage, strength, and anointing.
5. With all our heart turn to Him to trust and depend on Him.

D. Exchange the yoke of heaviness for Christ's yoke of rest.

1. Recognize and repent of dependency on self, which creates heavy yokes. Cry out to God and be set free from:
 - a. A heavy heart and burden.
 - b. A troubled mind because of internal issues, conflicts or worries.
 - c. Inward turmoil created by hidden sins and struggles.
2. Be yoked to Jesus who is omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent.
3. Be immersed in all that He is, has and can do—let Him take over.

E. By resting in His presence, receive all You need to do His will.

1. First love that never faints, fades or ceases
2. Obedience in all things, even unto death
3. Faith unshakeable, undefeatable and overcoming
4. Hope everlasting till the end
5. Endurance in all things unto the end
6. Power from the Lord of lords, King of kings, and Almighty God
(1 Timothy 6:15, Revelation 1:8)
7. Love, hope and devotion from the Everlasting Father and Comforter
(Isaiah 9:6, John 14:26 KJV)
8. Grace and redemptive power from the Redeemer and
Horn of Salvation (Isaiah 41:14, Luke 1:69)

Thursday: Reflecting His Presence

GENESIS 1:26–28 (MSG)

God spoke: “**Let Us make human beings in Our image, MAKE THEM REFLECTING OUR NATURE** so they can be responsible for the fish in the sea, the birds in the air, the cattle, and, yes, earth itself, and every animal that moves on the face of Earth.” **God created human beings; He created them godlike, REFLECTING GOD’S NATURE.** He created them male and female. God blessed them: “Prosper! Reproduce! Fill Earth! Take charge! Be responsible for fish in the sea and birds in the air, for every living thing that moves on the face of Earth.”

2 CORINTHIANS 3:18 (NLT)

So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and **REFLECT THE GLORY OF THE LORD.** And the Lord—who is the Spirit—**MAKES US MORE AND MORE LIKE HIM AS WE ARE CHANGED INTO HIS GLORIOUS IMAGE.**

HEBREWS 1:3 (TPT)

The Son is the dazzling radiance of God’s splendor, THE EXACT EXPRESSION OF GOD’S TRUE NATURE—HIS MIRROR IMAGE! He holds the universe together and expands it by the mighty power of His spoken word. He accomplished for us the complete cleansing of sins, and then took His seat on the highest throne at the right hand of the majestic One.

JOHN 1:17–18 (TPT)

Moses gave us the Law, but Jesus, **the Anointed One, unveils truth wrapped in tender mercy.** No one has ever gazed upon the fullness of God’s splendor except the uniquely beloved Son, who is cherished by the Father and held close to His heart. **NOW HE HAS UNFOLDED TO US THE FULL EXPLANATION OF WHO GOD TRULY IS!**

LUKE 6:17–19 (TPT)

Jesus and His apostles came down from the hillside to a level field, where a large number of His disciples waited, along with a massive crowd of people who had gathered from all over Judea, Jerusalem, and the coastal district of Tyre and Sidon. **THEY HAD ALL COME TO LISTEN TO THE MANIFESTATION so that they could be healed of their diseases and be set free from the demonic powers that tormented them.** The entire crowd eagerly tried to come near Jesus so they could touch Him and be healed, because a tangible supernatural power emanated from Him, healing all who came close to Him.

Exhortation – Reflecting His Presence

Jesus' Example Defines What Is To Reflect The Father's Presence

Reflecting God's presence is best exemplified by how Jesus reflected His Father's presence as recorded in Hebrews 1:3 (TPT), "The Son is the **DAZZLING RADIANCE** of God's splendor, the **EXACT EXPRESSION** of God's true nature—His **MIRROR IMAGE!**" Jesus mirrored and manifested the exact imprint, duplication, and essence of His Father in His being and doing. In being the "dazzling radiance," "exact expression," and "mirror image" of the Father's nature and splendor, **HE UNFOLDED "THE FULL EXPLANATION OF WHO GOD TRULY IS" TO ALL** (John 1:18 TPT). Jesus, speaking to His Father, said, "**Father, I have manifested who You really are and I have revealed You to the men and women that You gave to me**" (John 17:6 TPT). These Scriptures concerning Jesus give us the definition and the purpose of reflecting God's presence.

Jesus not only replicated His Father's nature and splendor, He also revealed His will, love, passion, power, and works. Luke 6:17–18 (TPT) speaks of how a massive crowd traveled from Judea, Jerusalem, and the coastal district of Tyre and Sidon to "**COME TO LISTEN TO THE MANIFESTATION so that they could be healed of their diseases and be set free from the demonic powers that tormented them.**" Verse 19 says, "The entire crowd eagerly tried to come near Jesus so they could touch Him and be healed, because a tangible supernatural power emanated from Him, healing all who came close to Him." These crowds came, and they encountered and experienced the Father through the Son. **Jesus perfectly revealed and manifested His Father's will, kingdom, nature, splendor, power, ministry, and works.** He has set for us the example to follow that we reflect Him as He had reflected His Father.

Through the Church, who Christ is—His person, nature, will, love, splendor, power, and works—can be succinctly and powerfully made known to the whole world that they may know Him and be saved. We are to be Christ's "mirror image" through whom others may see, drink, and taste of His love, goodness, and mercy. As we reflect the Lord, we bring His presence to the world, giving others an opportunity to encounter and experience Him. We are His "manifestations" to whom people may gather and press in to encounter His "tangible, supernatural power" emanating from us and healing them. God's presence and

power must flow through us to unfold the “full explanation” of who He is—ultimately, that we may bring others into His kingdom of light.

How Does The Church Reflect His Presence?

To reflect God’s presence is to reflect Him. We are to mirror and reveal Him accurately, truly, and authentically so that He is made visible, apparent, and touchable to others. Reflection is the outward manifestation of the inward life of Christ living and working in us. Its expression is tangible and visible. The Church is to carry, radiate, and minister His presence wherever we go. We are His living and replicated imprints in this world - visible, tangible, touchable, and relatable. All who observe can personally see, hear, touch, and know Him. **THE WORLD MUST ENCOUNTER AND EXPERIENCE GOD THROUGH US.**

When we reflect Him, we unfold and display who He is. Reflection mirrors and expresses Him and makes Him evident and apparent. It points and directs all focus onto God, opening and leading the way for others to be in a personal relationship with Him. Reflection is a language understood by all, and it explains God in authentic, accurate, impactful, relevant, and meaningful ways. He is being made known in a manner that the heart sees and understands. As Christ reflected His Father’s presence, so we are to reflect His presence.

Perceiving God And Reflecting Him

Loving God and reflecting His presence must be a passion in our hearts as it is in His. Where there is a fervor for God, there is a fervor to make Him known. God’s presence in our lives is not just for us but to be manifested that others may know Him. We need to perceive Him and understand His eternal and zealous love towards humanity. He passionately loves every soul and is devoted to bringing all people into an eternal relationship with Him. Therefore, He was unrelenting in making Himself known through His Son, and now through His Church. He created humanity in His image:

- To be the object of His love.
- To bring them into an eternal relationship with Him as sons and daughters.
- That they will reflect Him and make Him known to others.

Therefore, He created Adam and Eve in His image. He formed and fashioned them like Him spiritually and morally to mirror and manifest Him. **This was to be perpetuated through all generations that the knowledge of Him will fill the whole earth.** When they sinned against God, they became defiled. Their relationship with God was broken. They lost their intimacy with Him and His glory in them. They could no longer be that pure, true, and holy reflection of Him. All generations from then on suffer the same consequences. Romans 3:23 (NKJV) says, “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” None is righteous, none has the perfect image of God, none can be in relationship with Him, and none is saved. For this reason, God sent Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, to be the Lamb slain on account of sin and to redeem all people. By His one sacrifice, all who believe in Jesus are washed, forgiven, and redeemed through His blood. They are fully restored into a holy and complete relationship with Him as sons and daughters, carrying and reflecting His image.

Through His Church, the world is to be drawn to Him, drink of Him, and taste Him. As Psalm 34:8 (NKJV) says, “Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good, blessed is the man who trusts in Him!” Jesus is the Way, Truth, and Life. We are not, but we have received the Way, Truth, and Life. God intends that as we have freely received, we are to go out and freely reflect Him that others, too, may receive.

The Vessel Matters

The most powerful vessel is not the most talented or gifted, but the most yielded and surrendered. The beauty and reality of God are most effectively revealed through holiness and righteousness. **It is being before doing.** Ephesians 4:24 (TPT) says, “And to be transformed as you embrace the glorious Christ-within as your new life and live in union with Him! **FOR GOD HAS RE-CREATED YOU ALL OVER AGAIN IN HIS PERFECT RIGHTEOUSNESS, and you now belong to Him in the realm of true holiness.**” The Almighty God, who formed, redeemed, called, and chose us is holy. Exodus 15:11 (NKJV) declares, “Who is like You, O LORD, among the gods? **Who is like You, GLORIOUS IN HOLINESS, fearful in praises, doing wonders?**” We know that the Bible repeatedly states that God is holy. **Holiness is one of His intrinsic and distinct attributes, so to reflect Him, we need to be holy as He is holy.**

Without holiness, no one can see God. This means there is no nearness to God, no intimacy with God, and no revelation of God. How, then,

can one represent and reflect His presence? The redeemed, whom He has saved from sin, have become His holy people. Isaiah 62:12 (NKJV) speaks of Israel, God's chosen people, "And they shall call them the Holy People, the Redeemed of the LORD; and they shall be called Sought Out, a city not Forsaken." When Aaron's sons failed to honor God and His holiness by offering up profane fire before God, they were judged for their callous disregard for His holiness. They had chosen not to reflect God in spirit and in truth. In Leviticus 10:3 (NKJV), Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the LORD spoke, saying: **'BY THOSE WHO COME NEAR ME I MUST BE REGARDED AS HOLY; AND BEFORE ALL THE PEOPLE I MUST BE GLORIFIED.'**" To reflect His presence, the vessel matters.

We are temples of the Holy Spirit, and He lives in us. As His holy temples, we are to be saturated with His divine presence to reflect Him. 1 Corinthians 3:16–17 (NKJV) warns us, "Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. **FOR THE TEMPLE OF GOD IS HOLY, WHICH TEMPLE YOU ARE.**" We must be consecrated, sanctified, and purified to be filled by Him and to represent Him. If the world is to see God by seeing us, we need to ask these questions: "What is the world seeing in us now?" and "Who is this God we are representing to the world?" Jesus powerfully reflected His Father's presence in holiness and righteousness. He has set an example for us and has shown us the way to go.

Daniel, a godly man, lived in holiness and magnificently reflected God's presence and glory in a dangerous and difficult time. He purposed not to defile himself but to live holy in honor of God against pressures and threats. He was exiled to a heathen land, facing betrayal and danger, yet he gloriously made known God's presence and Spirit. In Daniel 5:11–12 (NKJV), the queen described him to King Belshazzar:

There is a man in your kingdom in whom is the Spirit of the Holy God. . . . light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, were found in him; and King Nebuchadnezzar your father . . . made him chief of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and sooth-sayers. Inasmuch as an excellent spirit, knowledge, understanding, interpreting dreams, solving riddles, and explaining enigmas were found in this Daniel.

We are to be the “Daniels” in our time and place as 1 Peter 2:9–10 (NKJV) says:

But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

We must be holy vessels who are true to Him and fitting for His purpose.

Our Will Matters

Paul understood what it meant and what it took to live in such a manner that Christ was gloriously, powerfully, and expressly shown to all. His life was a living epistle of who Jesus Christ was. He also ministered and raised others who were **“LIVING LETTERS WRITTEN BY CHRIST, not with ink BUT BY THE SPIRIT OF THE LIVING GOD—**not carved onto stone tablets but on the tablets of tender hearts” (2 Corinthians 3:3, TPT). Anyone reading Paul and his disciples would be able to read Christ. To be such a replicated print of Jesus Christ came with a costly price. Yet, the price could never be compared to the privilege, blessing, and joy to be called to show Him to the world. Paul, having lived it, counsels us in Romans 12:1–2 (NKJV):

*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, **that you present your bodies A LIVING SACRIFICE, HOLY, ACCEPTABLE TO GOD, WHICH IS YOUR REASONABLE SERVICE.** And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

In reflecting God’s presence, our will matters. Adam and Eve failed because they chose their will against God’s will. **Our will, the power and ability to choose, is the essence of who we are.** To offer up ourselves as a living, holy, and acceptable sacrifice to God requires the offering up of our will to Him first. **Unless we yield and surrender our will to Him, we are not quite able to reflect Him.** This surrender is a challenge we have to contend with and win. The natural flesh hates it and will fight it.

This conflict calls for our absolute surrender to God as Lord over our whole being.

The ability to reflect God is not in our talent, gifting, skill, experience, or even knowledge. It is in our submission and obedience to Him. It comes from trusting in Him. When we surrender our will to Him and embrace His will, the Holy Spirit enables us to clearly, powerfully, and gloriously make Him known to everyone with whom we come into contact. **To lay down our will and life upon His altar as a living sacrifice is not a one-time act of worship. IT IS A DAILY ENTERING INTO THIS PLACE OF SURRENDER AND FAITH TO WORSHIP AND HONOR HIM.** Jesus had to face this experience before His trial and crucifixion. He agonized in prayer with sweat and blood in the Garden of Gethsemane to lay down His will and life for His Father's will. Luke 22:41–42 (TPT) says, "Then He withdrew from them a short distance to be alone. Kneeling down, He prayed, **“Father, if You are willing, take this cup of agony away from Me. But no matter what, Your will must be Mine.”** Sometimes we have to surrender our will and make His will ours in the most difficult, challenging, and painful circumstance where everything in our natural self recoils from it. This is the time to seek Him and pray as Jesus did until we can say to Him, "Let Your will be done." **WE MUST NOT LEAVE THE PLACE OF PRAYER UNTIL WE CAN MAKE HIS WILL OURS.** In laying down His will and submitting to His Father's, Jesus powerfully, gloriously and eternally reflected His Father's love, redeeming grace and salvation. He was His Father's humble, faithful, and obedient Servant, opening and providing the way for humanity's redemption. We must be Christ's humble, faithful, and obedient servants, manifesting the path to redemption in Him.

Intimacy With Him Matters

Reflection of God is an outflow of our intimacy and love relationship with Him. **WHEN WE BREATHE AND LIVE TO LOVE HIM, WE CANNOT HELP BUT REFLECT HIM IN WHO WE ARE, WHAT WE DO, AND HOW WE DO IT.** That passion for Him binds us to Him, blending our hearts with His as one until we are inseparable and indivisible. He fills our hearts, thoughts, and day. We will echo Psalm 84:1–10 (AMP) to Him:

*How lovely are Your dwelling places, O LORD of hosts! **My soul (my life, my inner self) longs for and greatly desires the courts of the LORD; My heart and my flesh sing for joy to the living God . . . For a day in Your***

courts is better than a thousand [anywhere else]; I would rather stand [as a doorkeeper] at the threshold of the house of my God than to live [at ease] in the tents of wickedness.

In this intimacy, we extraordinarily experience Him and receive His love, grace, goodness, and power. We then go and reveal Him to others. In this passion, everything loses significance and influence over us except seeing, hearing, touching, knowing, and loving Him. **When our hearts are thirsty for Him, we will run after Him, stay up to pursue Him, and be pleased to forgo all just to be found in His presence.** In His presence, we abide, linger, and remain. All our thoughts are about Him. All our attention is fixed on Him, and our hearts are overwhelmed with longing for Him. He is our life, love, strength, and hope. He is our past, present, and future. **He is more than the nearest and dearest to us. HE IS ALL WE LONG FOR, ALL WE SEEK AND ALL WE NEED.** We do not look to others but Him. We will cry out to Him, according to Song of Solomon 8:6–7 (NLT):

Place me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm. For love is as strong as death, its jealousy as enduring as the grave. Love flashes like fire, the brightest kind of flame. Many waters cannot quench love, nor can rivers drown it. If a man tried to buy love with all his wealth his offer would be utterly scorned.

We are not satisfied just to hear, read, and learn about Him through sermons, books, or seminars. These are all essentials in our lives, but we long for a presence that comes only by a personal passion for Him and intimacy with Him. We understand the heart of the Shulamite woman in Song of Solomon 4:16 (TPT), who yearned for the King. Her heart cried out for Him:

THEN MAY YOUR AWAKENING BREATH BLOW UPON MY LIFE UNTIL I AM FULLY YOURS. *Breathe upon me with Your Spirit wind. Stir up the sweet spice of Your life within me. Spare nothing as You make me Your fruitful garden. Hold nothing back until I release Your fragrance. COME WALK WITH ME as You walked with Adam in Your paradise garden. Come taste the fruits of Your life in me.*

There is a different knowledge of Him that comes only by such passionate intimacy with Him where we personally see Him with our own

eyes, touch Him with our own hands, and hear Him with our own ears. Then we can confess 1 John 1:1–3 (TPT) as our testimony:

*We saw Him with our very own eyes. We gazed upon Him and heard Him speak. Our hands actually touched Him, the One who was from the beginning, the Living Expression of God. **THIS LIFE-GIVER WAS MADE VISIBLE, AND WE HAVE SEEN HIM. WE TESTIFY TO THIS TRUTH:** the eternal Life-Giver lived face-to-face with the Father and has now dawned upon us. **SO WE PROCLAIM TO YOU WHAT WE HAVE SEEN AND HEARD ABOUT THIS LIFE-GIVER SO THAT WE MAY SHARE AND ENJOY THIS LIFE TOGETHER.** For truly, our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus, the Anointed One.*

We know His looks because we have gazed upon His face. We know His voice because He has spoken to us. We know His touch because we have touched Him. In this manner, we reflect Christ’s presence.

Prayer Focus

A. Seek to perceive God’s heart on making Him known.

1. Seek to have such a passion for union and intimacy with Him that you can do these things:
 - a. See, hear, touch, and know Him in an uncommon way.
 - b. Encounter and experience His love in passion and intimacy.
 - c. Love and understand Him and His love for people.
2. Lay hold of His love for people and go reflect His presence to them.
3. Exchange your heart for His, and embrace His passion and plan to make Himself known to all.

B. Present yourself as a holy and living sacrifice acceptable unto God.

1. Be wholly consecrated and sanctified for His presence and glory.
2. Present yourself a holy, living, and acceptable sacrifice unto Him.
3. Identify areas resisting full surrender to Him. Acknowledge, repent, and be free from them.
4. Surrender your will to Him and make His will yours.
5. Pray to be filled with the Holy Spirit to reflect His presence.
6. Pray to be His “exact expression” and “mirror image” to all.

Friday: Anointed In His Presence

ZECARIAH 4:6–7 (NLT)

Then he said to me, “This is what the LORD says to Zerubbabel: **IT IS NOT BY FORCE NOR BY STRENGTH, BUT BY MY SPIRIT, SAYS THE LORD OF HEAVEN’S ARMIES. Nothing, not even a mighty mountain, will stand in Zerubbabel’s way; it will become a level plain before him!** And when Zerubbabel sets the final stone of the Temple in place, the people will shout: ‘May God bless it! May God bless it!’”

LUKE 4:14–21 (TPT)

Then **JESUS, ARMED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT’S POWER, returned to Galilee, and His fame spread throughout the region.** . . . When He came to Nazareth . . . He went into the synagogue, as He always did on the Sabbath day. When Jesus came to the front to read the Scriptures, they handed Him the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and read where it is written, **“THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, AND HE HAS ANOINTED ME to be hope for the poor, freedom for the brokenhearted, and new eyes for the blind, and to preach to prisoners, ‘You are set free!’ I have come to share the message of Jubilee, for the time of God’s great acceptance has begun.”** After He read this He rolled up the scroll, handed it back to the minister, and sat down. Everyone stared at Jesus, wondering what He was about to say. Then He added, **“These Scriptures came true today in front of you.”**

JOHN 7:37–39 (TPT)

Then on the most important day of the feast, the last day, Jesus stood and shouted out to the crowds—**“All you thirsty ones, come to me! Come to Me and drink! Believe in Me so that rivers of living water will burst out from within you, flowing from your innermost being, just like the Scripture says!”** **JESUS WAS PROPHECYING ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT THAT BELIEVERS WERE BEING PREPARED TO RECEIVE.** But the Holy Spirit had not yet been poured out upon them, because Jesus had not yet been unveiled in His full splendor.

JOHN 14:12–18 (TPT)

I tell you this timeless truth: The person who follows Me in faith, believing in Me, will do the same mighty miracles that I do—even greater miracles than these because I go to be with my Father! For I will do whatever you ask Me to do when you ask Me in My name. And that is how the Son will show what the Father is really like and bring glory to Him. Ask Me anything

in My name, and I will do it for you! Loving Me empowers you to obey My commands. **And I will ask the Father and HE WILL GIVE YOU ANOTHER SAVIOR, the Holy Spirit of Truth, who will be to you a friend just like Me—and He will never leave you.** The world won't receive Him because they can't see Him or know Him. **BUT YOU WILL KNOW HIM INTIMATELY, BECAUSE HE WILL MAKE HIS HOME IN YOU AND WILL LIVE INSIDE YOU.** I promise that I will never leave you helpless or abandon you as orphans—I will come back to you!

..... ACTS 1:5–8 (TPT)

For John baptized you in water, but in a few days from now **you will be baptized in the Holy Spirit!** . . . I promise you this—**THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL COME UPON YOU AND YOU WILL BE FILLED WITH POWER.** And you will be my messengers to Jerusalem, throughout Judea, the distant provinces—even to the remotest places on earth!

..... JOHN 4:34–35 (TPT)

Then Jesus spoke up and said, **“MY FOOD IS TO BE DOING THE WILL OF HIM WHO SENT ME AND BRING IT TO COMPLETION.”** As the crowds emerged from the village, Jesus said to His disciples, “Why would you say, ‘The harvest is another four months away’? **Look at all the people coming—NOW IS HARVEST TIME!** For their hearts are like vast fields of ripened grain—ready for a spiritual harvest.

..... MATTHEW 9:37–38 (TPT)

He turned to His disciples and said, **“The harvest is huge and ripe!** But there are not enough harvesters to bring it all in. **As you go, plead with the Owner of the Harvest to thrust out many more reapers to harvest His grain!”**

..... 2 KINGS 2:5–15 (NKJV)

Now the sons of the prophets who were at Jericho came to Elisha and said to him, “Do you know that the LORD will take away your master from over you today?” So he answered, “Yes, I know; keep silent!” Then Elijah said to him, “Stay here, please, for the LORD has sent me on to the Jordan.” But he said, **“As the LORD lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you!”** So the two of them went on. And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went and stood facing them at a distance, while the two of them stood by the Jordan. Now Elijah took his mantle, rolled it up, and struck the water; and it was divided this way and that, so that the two of them crossed over on dry ground. And so it was, when they had crossed over, that Elijah said to Elisha, **“Ask! What**

*may I do for you, before I am taken away from you?” Elisha said, “PLEASE LET A DOUBLE PORTION OF YOUR SPIRIT BE UPON ME.” So he said, “You have asked a hard thing. Nevertheless, if you see me when I am taken from you, it shall be so for you; but if not, it shall not be so.” Then it happened, as they continued on and talked, that suddenly a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire, and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. And Elisha saw it, and he cried out, “My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and its horsemen!” So he saw him no more. And he took hold of his own clothes and tore them into two pieces. He also took up the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and went back and stood by the bank of the Jordan. **Then he took the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and struck the water, and said, “Where is the LORD God of Elijah?” And when he also had struck the water, it was divided this way and that; and Elisha crossed over.** Now when the sons of the prophets who were from Jericho saw him, they said, “**The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha.**” And they came to meet him, and bowed to the ground before him.*

..... READ LUKE 1:13–17 (NKJV) AND JAMES 5:17–18 (TPT)

Exhortation – Anointed In His Presence

Everything that God is going to accomplish through His Church is by the anointing of His Holy Spirit. Just like Jesus Christ, who lived and served His Father in complete reliance on the Holy Spirit, so must we.

- He was conceived and born of the Holy Spirit in human form (Matthew 1:18–20).
- He was anointed by the Holy Spirit upon His baptism (John 1:32).
- He was led by the Holy Spirit (Matthew 4:1).
- He was filled with the fullness of the Holy Spirit (Luke 4:1).
- He crushed Satan’s power in the might of the Holy Spirit (Luke 4:1–13).
- He lived and ministered in the strength of the Holy Spirit (Luke 4:14–21).
- He offered Himself as a sacrifice for sin by the grace of the Holy Spirit (Hebrews 9:14).
- He was enabled by the Holy Spirit and went about doing good (Acts 10:38).

The Holy Spirit is central to everything God has done, is doing, and will do. The Bible testifies of this from Genesis to Revelation. Zechariah 4:6 (NLT) says, **“IT IS NOT BY FORCE NOR BY STRENGTH, BUT BY MY SPIRIT, says the LORD of Heaven’s armies.”** This prophetic word was given to Zerubbabel, whom God had called to rebuild His temple. He was not to be disheartened by human weakness or limitation because these were irrelevant to what God was going to effect by His Spirit. Zerubbabel only needed to know and believe that the rebuilding was going to be done by the Holy Spirit working through him. God was not looking for his strength. He was looking for his availability and obedience. When Paul declared in Philippians 4:13 (NKJV), “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me,” it was by the Holy Spirit that Christ strengthened Paul. May we have the mind of Christ concerning the Holy Spirit’s presence and anointing. Before we rush to employ all our human strength, strategies, and resources to do the work of God, firstly thirst and seek the Holy Spirit, drink of Him, and be filled with Him. When we trust and obey Him, we will see and experience that nothing is impossible with God.

The Church Must Know And Relate Rightly To The Holy Spirit

It is absolutely needful for the Church to know the Holy Spirit as a person, not just His power, might, and deeds. We must not just read, hear, or be taught about Him. We need to know Him relationally and intimately through encounter, revelation, and experience. He must be the One we live and walk with daily. He must be the One we love, hear, and obey.

When Jesus told His disciples that He was going to His Father, He promised not to leave them as orphans. He would ask the Father to send them the Holy Spirit, who would never leave nor forsake them. In John 14:16–18 (TPT), Jesus said:

*I will ask the Father and **He will give you another Savior, the Holy Spirit of Truth, who will be to you a friend just like Me—and He will never leave you.** The world won’t receive Him because they can’t see Him or know Him. **BUT YOU WILL KNOW HIM INTIMATELY, BECAUSE HE WILL MAKE HIS HOME IN YOU AND WILL LIVE INSIDE YOU.** I promise that I will never leave you helpless or abandon you as orphans—I will come back to you!*

The disciples were to relate personally and intimately with the Holy Spirit as they did to Jesus. Christ was then living with them, but the Holy Spirit was going to live in them by making them His home. **He would be everything to them as Jesus was and more.** While the disciples were in Jesus' presence, they had everything they needed, but His presence was limited by His humanity—not so with the Holy Spirit. He was omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. For the works the disciples were about to do, they needed the Holy Spirit's presence and anointing. In John 14:12 (NKJV), Jesus declared to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works and than these he will do, because I go to My Father."

Do we truly believe that Jesus has called us to do "greater works?" If we look at flawed human might and strength, this is laughable and ludicrous—in fact, arrogant, presumptuous, and sacrilegious, seemingly to put humans above Jesus Christ. Jesus was not referring to us doing all these in our ability and strength but in the anointing of the Holy Spirit who makes all things possible. **To do these "greater works," God wants nothing from us except faith and obedience.** They are the works of the Holy Spirit. We are only His vessels. It takes humble faith to dare to believe what Jesus has said is true. When the Holy Spirit effects the "greater works" of God through us, we cannot help but give Him all the glory. They are all His doings by His power, strength, and grace.

We struggled to believe as Mary did when the angel Gabriel told her that she would conceive and give birth to Jesus Christ, the Messiah of the whole world. She asked how it was even possible seeing she was a virgin. Mary was focused on the natural. God did not need Mary's help for this miracle; only her obedience. It was solely the work of the Holy Spirit. In Luke 1:35–37 (NKJV), Gabriel replied, **"The Holy Spirit will come upon you, AND THE POWER OF THE HIGHEST WILL OVERSHADOW YOU . . . that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God. . . . FOR WITH GOD NOTHING WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE."** So it was with Sarah when she heard the LORD told Abraham that she was going to have a child, she laughed (Genesis 18). Verses 11 and 12 (NKJV) say, "Now Abraham and Sarah were old, well advanced in age; and Sarah had passed the age of childbearing. Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, 'After I have grown old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?'" Often we are like Mary and Sarah inclined towards thinking in the natural instead of believing and trusting the Holy Spirit. The LORD'S response to Sarah's unbelief in Genesis 18:13–14 (NKJV) was, "And the LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, saying,

‘Shall I surely bear a child, since I am old?’ **IS ANYTHING TOO HARD FOR THE LORD?** At the appointed time **I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.**” Both promises were fulfilled through the power of the Holy Spirit. In Genesis 1, the world was created by the power of God without any human intervention or contribution. This is the faith we must have in the Holy Spirit.

The Church must pursue to know the Lord intimately in His manifold facets—as Savior, Comforter, Everlasting Father, Wonderful Counsellor, Almighty God, Prince of Peace, Healer, and Deliverer; it is a never-ending list. We must learn to love, trust, and obey Him. Be mindful not to ignore, refuse, or reject the Holy Spirit. He is a Person (God), not a power, thing, or force. Treat Him most excellently. Treasure, cherish, and esteem Him above all else.

Jesus Christ Invites The Thirsty To Come, Drink And Receive The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit must be the Church’s utmost love, unparalleled passion, and ultimate priority. Do we thirst, hunger, and yearn to know Him? Is His presence our persistent pursuit? Do we consciously and with great deliberation seek Him always? **What will happen if every believer centers his or her life entirely in the Holy Spirit—loving, hearing, trusting, and obeying Him?**

In John 7:37–38 (TPT), Jesus gives an invitation to all who thirst for the Holy Spirit to come and drink from Him. If they were to believe, He said, concerning the Holy Spirit, that, **“rivers of living water will burst out from within you, FLOWING FROM YOUR INNERMOST BEING, just like the Scripture says!”** Verse 39 explains that, “Jesus was prophesying about the Holy Spirit that believers were being prepared to receive. But the Holy Spirit had not yet been poured out upon them, because Jesus had not yet been unveiled in His full splendor.” There are three key things that will be profitable for us to note about Christ’s invitation:

- **Thirst** (*dipsaō*) figuratively refers to those who thirst, **who painfully feel their want of, and eagerly long for**, those things by which the soul is refreshed, supported, and strengthened.
- **Drink** (*pinō*) figuratively means **TO RECEIVE into the soul what serves to refresh, strengthen, nourish it unto life eternal.**

- **Rivers** (*potamos*) refers to **torrents, violent flows, downpours, outbursts** (gushes, inundations, and surges; e.g. the days of Noah) **and flooding** (deluge, overflow).

We need to eagerly long for the Holy Spirit, drink (by faith receive) from Jesus, and let Him immeasurably fill us with His Spirit that He will gush out of our inner beings like rivers. We see this when the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples in the upper room (Acts 2). He came like a mighty, rushing wind and filled everyone with fire and power. In one encounter of being filled, the disciples were supernaturally transformed, revolutionized, anointed, and emboldened. They became bold, fearless, powerful, and relentless preachers of the Gospel. **BY THE HOLY SPIRIT'S ANOINTING, THEY BROUGHT SPIRITUAL REVIVAL AND REFORMATION TO COMMUNITIES, CITIES, AND LATER NATIONS.** These ordinary, flawed, and limited people were made extraordinary and did amazing works of God wherever they went. They were operating in a level of grace in which nothing could stop, hinder, or prevent them from obeying God. The Gospel was preached. Many people were saved and baptized both in water and the Holy Spirit, and they were added to the Church. **Persecution increased, but they persisted in proclaiming and revealing Jesus Christ in power, signs, and wonders.**

The Church today has the same assignment to go, preach the Gospel, and make disciples of all nations. The only difference is that the scope is significantly more extensive because the world's population has increased. We must believe that the Holy Spirit who was at work in the Book of Acts is the same Holy Spirit at work today. We must thirst and pray for a greater and mightier outpouring of His Holy Spirit upon us. By March 2019, the world's population was estimated at 7.8 billion. According to a report by the Center for the Study of Global Christianity at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, the number of Christians in the world was close to 2.5 billion in 2019. Using these statistics, it would appear that 5.3 billion souls have yet to accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. They must not perish. We must pray for God to send out many more workers to bring in the lost. We need a global outpouring of His Holy Spirit to awake, revive, and thrust out His Church to see the lost come into His kingdom. There must be faithful, anointed, Spirit-filled, Jesus-loving, Jesus-preaching, and Jesus-seeking disciples ministering in the power of the Holy Spirit. The end-time Church must be Holy Spirit seekers and pleasers, not pleasure-seekers and

man-pleasers. Live to please God. Pleasing the world is offensive to Him. He will only release His Holy Spirit's anointing on those who love and please Him.

Elisha Had A Double Portion Of Elijah's Anointing

Elijah, a human being just like us (James 5:17), became a mighty man of God, doing many wondrous things by God's anointing. Nothing was done because he was special or powerful in himself. It was through the Holy Spirit's anointing he raised the dead, multiplied the oil and flour, called fire from heaven, commanded drought, brought rain, confronted 400 false prophets of Baal, ignited a spiritual revival, and did many other wonders in obedience to God. He was an unstoppable prophetic reformer declaring God's word both to a backslidden king and the people of Israel. **HE CAUSED MAJOR SPIRITUAL AND PHYSICAL IMPACT UPON THE WHOLE OF ISRAEL BY THE POWER OF GOD.** Elisha, his servant, was passionately hungry for a double portion of his anointing and spirit. God had earlier instructed Elijah to put his mantle on Elisha, and Elisha left all to follow and serve him. By the time Elijah was to be taken up by God, Elisha trailed him persistently to the end because he was desperately hungry for a double portion of Elijah's spirit and anointing. He knew Elijah was a man of like nature as he, yet God anointed him powerfully. **He believed that the same God was able to give him twice as much.** According to his hunger and faith, God granted Elisha what he asked. With that anointing, he did twice as many miracles as Elijah.

In the New Testament, we also see the disciples, humans like us, did extraordinary exploits for God through the anointing. They withstood the harshest persecution and yet brought many into God's kingdom. How did they overcome their human weakness, limitation, and failure to become such mighty, powerful and fearless servants of God? They were world-shakers, history makers, reformers, and revivalists. Their powerful lives and ministries must not just be a biblical or historical record for the Church today. They are examples for us to emulate. We are to multiply God's mighty deeds everywhere, bringing revival and reformation. **None of these biblical heroes were extraordinary in themselves. They were weak and impotent like us, but rivers of the Holy Spirit were bursting from their inner beings, enabling them to accomplish the impossible according to God's will.** There is so much hope for us today. We do not despair, but we must be hungry.

Like Elisha, we must pursue God passionately for the double portion of their anointing. GOD WILL GIVE, AND WE WILL DO ACCORDING TO HIS WILL.

We are living in difficult and distressing times, yet we are to preach and make disciples of nations. How is this greatest harvest of souls going to be brought in during these last hours of man's history? The same way Elijah, Peter, John, Paul, and others did—through the Holy Spirit's anointing. There must be an urgency, fervor, and passion for more of the Holy Spirit's presence and anointing if we are to do greater things in more desperate times.

The Thirsty, Believing And Obedient Will Be Filled

Be thirsty for the Holy Spirit, and seek Him in unceasing prayer until He fills us to overflowing. We must not wait for somebody to pray for us. Cry out to Him, and He will answer. **Disturb God and give Him no rest. Pray until doubt disappears, faith saturates our hearts, and we are inundated in the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Do not leave the place of prayer until it is done.** Then in His might, and grace go do all He tells us to do: heal the sick, set the captives free, and save the lost.

Prayer Focus

A. Prepare our hearts to be filled with the Holy Spirit to overflowing.

B. Hunger and thirst for the Holy Spirit's presence and anointing.

1. Cry out for all obstruction, apathy, and hardness to be removed.
2. Seek Him with a broken spirit and contrite heart; yield all to Him.
3. Ask for a heart that hungers, thirsts, and pursues Him.
4. Pray to make Him our utmost love, passion, and priority.
5. Believe and drink from Him.

C. Commit to love, please and obey the Holy Spirit above all.

1. Seek a personal relationship and intimacy with the Holy Spirit.
2. Seek to hear, know, and perceive Him in all things.
3. Seek to treasure, cherish, and esteem Him above all others.
4. Seek to trust and obey Him in all things.

ONE THING I HAVE ASKED OF THE
LORD, AND THAT I WILL SEEK: THAT I
MAY DWELL IN THE HOUSE OF THE LORD
[IN HIS PRESENCE] ALL THE DAYS OF
MY LIFE, TO GAZE UPON THE BEAUTY
[THE DELIGHTFUL LOVELINESS AND
MAJESTIC GRANDEUR] OF THE LORD
AND TO MEDITATE IN HIS TEMPLE.

PSALM 27:4 (AMP)

