

## The Walk of the Redeemed in Christ - Part 3

**TEXT:** *12 And the LORD appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him, I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to myself for an house of sacrifice. 13 If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people; 14 If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.*

**(2 Chronicles 7:12-14)** K J V

Brethren, a somber message and plea from the Lord our God to the redeemed is contained in the above Scripture. It is a firm plea to the redeemed in Christ to humble themselves and to seek the face of the Lord. Certainly, the Bible is *not slack* in such pleas to as many as would turn to the Lord in these perilous times. Prophet Isaiah laments, “*Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near; Let the wicked forsake his ways, the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and turn to our God, for He will abundantly pardon*” (**Isaiah 55:6-7**). In these dark and evil days, the Lord is faithfully pleading with sons and daughters of His kingdom who are living in disobedience to His Word to come out of sin and pursue righteous and holy living.

Last week we discussed how disobedience hinders our *walk* with the Lord. This week, in from our chosen text, “*If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land*” is an unquestionable call for us to turn (repent) from our wicked ways, to *humble* ourselves and to *pray* to the Almighty for forgiveness. These three aspects (repentance, humility and prayer) of our *walk* with God are inseparable; therefore, we need a dose of them daily. Undoubtedly, without humility one cannot truly repent and the prayer of the unrepentant *is an abomination to the Lord* (**Proverbs 15:8**). As we can see in the text, the Lord

will not have it any other way – all three aspects must be employed for God to forgive our sins and heal the land. I will briefly discuss the repentance before moving on to the focal point of this week’s “Bread of Life”, which is the essence of prayer as an integral aspect of our *walk* with the Master.

*Turn from [your] wicked ways* - is not a strange text to Christians. It is a very common plea throughout the Bible. It is one of God’s ubiquitous pleas to the wicked before He visits them with His unbearable wrath. Prophet Ezekiel who was not to be denied his ministry by the death of his wife, sheds some light on the reason why the Lord makes these calculated or measured pleas to all who are living in disobedience; it is because the Lord takes “*no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live*: [please brethren] *turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die*”, [O ye churchgoers] (**Ezekiel 33:11**). “*Turn ye*”, is a plea to repent – it is a plea to return to the Lord, against whom you have rebelled or disobeyed for a good part of your life. May the fear of the wrath of God come upon you now and cause you to return to Him before it is too late, in Jesus’ name.

Repentance is the act of turning to go the opposite direction of an evil course or lifestyle. It is reversing (making a U-turn) from sinfulness to righteousness. For example, it is departing from fornication to celibacy; fleeing from adultery to faithfulness, desisting from drunkenness to being sober and abhorring gambling (lotto) to trust in God. However, we must first come to ourselves (like the prodigal sons and daughters of God), to understand that “*we are all as an unclean thing and all our righteousness are as filthy rags*” (**Isaiah 64:6**) before we can take that first step to reverse our sinful ways. It is the discovery and acceptance of our nothingness that will precipitate our need for God and dependence on Him. The foolishness and the weight of our sins against God should orchestrate humility and desperation for God’s mercy and His grace to forgive and deliver us from all sins or lawlessness. Putting our trust in our own righteousness and sufficiency is simply rejecting and rebelling

against God. The Lord our God exalts the humble, and abhors the proud with utter disdain. Only the humble will  *dwell in the House of the Lord and behold the beauty of the Lord.*

Humility is the *godly sorrow [that] produces repentance leading to salvation.* Now, as we humble ourselves in repentance, crucify the flesh (die to sin) and surrender to Jesus, it is only then that the spirit of God would come upon us and dwell in us to enable us to commune with God who is a spirit. We can only *walk* with the Lord *in truth and in spirit.* The Bible says, “*The Spirit (Holy Spirit) itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God*” (Romans 8:16). Without the Holy Spirit we cannot commune with God. In times of our communion with Him it is the Holy Spirit that quickens our *mortal bodies* and intercedes for us, “*for we know not what we should pray for as we ought*” (Romans 8:26).

Communing with the Lord facilitates a solid relationship with Him. Our communion with God entails talking and listening to Him which, amounts to what we generally call prayer. Besides obedience, prayer is the bedrock of our *walk* with God. I think it would be perfectly safe to say that without unceasing prayer, no individual, family or church can have a genuine relationship with the Lord, because my Jesus was himself a Prayer Warrior which gave him constant communion with God the Father. Prayer is an indispensable discipline of Christianity that must be practiced and maintained for a lifetime. Our prayer life is the foundation on which we grow or wither. With the Word of God, prayer proves to be the deadliest warfare weapon against the devil and his kingdom. A man once said, “The devil laughs at our words, mocks at our toil but trembles when we pray”.

Prayer always goes hand in hand with study and application of the Word of God. You cannot over-emphasize one and deemphasize the other, for there is no serious prayer without the Word of God and vice versa. The Bible

implores us to “*study to show thyself approved*” and to “*pray without ceasing*”. But I do not suppose that God has called us to spend the entire twenty-four hours of the day in prayer. The Bible says, “*To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven*” – [A time to pray and a time work] ([Ecclesiastes 3:1](#)). However, all things being equal, our spiritual development and growth is in direct proportion to the amount of time that we put into prayer and Bible study. I am confident that God has called us to put in more quality time of devotion to Him than we do now. He is tired of us putting Him last in our so-called busy schedule.

Without doubt, prayer is hard work. Real prayer, the sort that our Lord Jesus and the apostles in the book of Acts engaged in, is surely hard work. Their prayer availed much with God. Jesus’ prayer life is well chronicled in the Bible. On numerous occasions, He was found praying in solitary places early in the morning before sunrise and occasionally *continued all night in prayer to God*. Before His death, He went up to Gethsemane to pray for three hours with His disciples, who could not keep up with Him as they fell asleep. There at Gethsemane, the Bible describes our Lord as praying “*earnestly and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground*” ([Luke 22:44](#)). Also, as if not to be out done by their Master, the Bible says, “*When the apostles had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together*” ([Acts 4:31](#)).

Brethren, do you get the picture of how “*the effectual fervent prayer of [the] righteous [could avail] much*” [with God] ([James 5:16](#))? This is the pattern that we all must strive to attain as an individual or as a church. No ministry is worth a moment’s consideration that does not make prayer the main part of its existence. Today, the call for prayer is much-ado about nothing. Lip service is paid to prayer but very little effort is made to *tarry* or wrestle in prayer before the Lord’s presence until we receive power to do His work. The scripture “*Tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from*

*on high*” (Luke 24:40) is largely ignored and taken for granted by many men and women of God who mount the pulpits on Sundays. Was this not the Lord’s very last command to his disciples? Did they not fully obey this command until the advent of the Pentecost? Had they been like some of us who are preaching with complete disregard and disobedience to this command, would the Day of Pentecost have fully come? The disciples *tarry*ed in prayer as they were instructed knowing that without the impartation of the Holy Spirit they could do nothing. The devil would’ve whipped them as he is doing to many of us today. And their miracles would have been fake as it is in some cases today.

The disciples’ decision to wait until they were endued with power proves that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a prerequisite for any ministry work that would impact lives as did the early apostolic church. How many lives are present-day churches really impacting today? Could even a casual Bible reader dispute the fulfillment of the following verses in the lives and the ministries of the apostles: “*And these signs shall follow them that believe [and are baptized with the Holy Ghost]; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover*” (Mark 16:16-17). Brethren are any of these signs following you? Are you simply satisfied with much preaching and church programs with no manifestations? Don’t you care that some children of God are turning to the world for solutions to inexplicable failures and demonic attacks in their lives? Therein lies the problem with many of today’s ministries! Many are carrying on with no power, a circumstance which is owed to nothing but little or no prayer for Pentecost. Surely, without the power of the Holy Spirit, prayer will yield little or no result. And the power comes only by tarrying in prayer for however long it takes on a daily basis.

In today’s hustle and bustle ministries, the essence of prayer as the catalyst to ignite the undeniable power of the Holy Spirit with signs and

wonders has been replaced with man's expertise. The use of our human skills in the form of consultants, legal teams and ad agencies, skits, mimes and interpretive dances are now doing the work of the Holy Spirit to attract and retain members. Indeed, the church is *having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof*. Obviously, it is easier, quicker and fancier to hire a consultant, or have a mime show or interpretive dance than to wrestle in prayer with God's command - *If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and **pray**, and seek my face, and turn from their* [human skills, man's efforts and confidence]; *then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their* [church and add to their number daily].

Sadly, the present-day church hasn't heeded this command of the Lord our God, hence, a severe case of prayerlessness plagues the church today. Prayer has been deemphasized while missions, evangelism, and membership, and of course tithes and offerings have been pursued with vigorous zeal and intense passion. Some churches allocate a lot of money to build huge state of the art gymnasiums and kitchens but only dedicate a 12x10 dingy space as a prayer room. In some mega churches, almost every ministry in the church is headed by a paid minister (including the musicians) but the prayer ministry is led by an unpaid layman who may not even be Holy Ghost filled. Many Christians have quietly decided that having a prayer life is not for them with the horrendous notion that a prayer life is a special gift like the gift of prophecy or evangelism. Many believe that being a prayer warrior is a calling by God. Also, the fact that prayer is a direct characteristic of a consecrated life, many do not want to pay the price to become true prayer warriors. Consecration is voluntarily setting oneself entirely apart (holy) purely for God's use. In this end time, it is only such redeemed men and women that the Lord will use to accomplish all His purposes. Surely, the life that prays, matters to God. My brothers and sisters I beseech you today to consecrate yourself and be a *battle axe* for the Lord. Amen.