

## ***Session 10 The Church's Eternal Identity as a House of Prayer***

### **I. THE SPIRITUAL IDENTITY OF GOD'S PEOPLE AS A HOUSE OF PRAYER**

- A. Isaiah revealed the eternal identity and destiny of God's people as being a house of prayer (Isa. 56:7). Jesus quoted Isaiah to strongly affirm the importance of this truth (Mt. 21:13).  
<sup>7</sup>***"For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations." (Isa. 56:7)***  
<sup>13</sup>***And He said to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer.'" (Mt. 21:13)***
- B. To function as a house of prayer means that God speaks His words to us, and those words move our hearts; we speak His words back to Him, and they move His heart. The result is God's resources being released on the earth—His power, money, wisdom, creative ideas, unity, favor, and so on. He releases His power on the earth primarily through His people worshiping and praying.
- C. When God calls us by a specific name, it indicates how we are to function in the Holy Spirit. Our greatest place of identity, authority, honor, and dignity is found in prayer—in our deep interaction and partnership with Jesus. This is how God's people are to function now and in the age to come.
- D. The "house of prayer" in a city is the whole Body of Christ in that city or region. It is not just the prayer ministries in that city. I describe IHOPKC as a ministry that throws a small "cup of gas" on the prayer fires that are burning in the whole house of prayer in Kansas City, which is the entire Body of Christ in the city, consisting of more than one thousand congregations.

### **II. THE CENTRALITY OF WORSHIP AND INTERCESSION IN GOD'S PLAN**

- A. Prayer and worship have always been at the center of God's purpose. They are among the few things that we do both now and forever. Notice how central they are to God's government—He established 24/7 prayer in His royal court, where He reigns on His sovereign throne (Rev. 4:8).
- B. Human history began in a "praying meeting" in Eden, where Adam walked with God (Gen. 3:8).
- C. Israel as a nation began at a "prayer meeting" at Mount Sinai, which was ablaze with God's fire. At that time God called His people to be a kingdom of priests (Ex. 19:6-20). The first assignment He gave Israel was to build a worship sanctuary, a house of prayer, in the wilderness (Ex. 25).
- D. God's purpose for His people to be a "house of prayer" can be seen clearly in the reign of David. David established worship in the house of God, led by singers and musicians (1 Chr. 15-16) who "were free from other duties; for they were employed in that work day and night" (1 Chr. 9:33). David financed more than four thousand full-time, paid musicians and singers (1 Chr. 23:5; 25:7).
- E. David commanded the kings of Israel in the generations after him to maintain worship in the house of the Lord in the way that God had revealed to him. Each time the Davidic order of worship was reestablished in Israel, a spiritual breakthrough with a military victory soon followed.  
<sup>25</sup>***He [Hezekiah] stationed the Levites in the house of the LORD with cymbals...according to the commandment of David...for thus was the commandment of the LORD. (2 Chr. 29:25)***

- F. Jesus Himself began His public ministry in a “prayer meeting” in the wilderness (Mt. 4) and ended it in a prayer meeting in the garden of Gethsemane (Mt. 26). Jesus personally spent long hours in prayer (Mk. 1:35; 6:46; Lk. 5:16; 6:12; 9:18, 28; 21:37). He emphasized prayer, or “watching,” more than any other specific activity when speaking about the generation in which He would return (Mt. 24:42-43; 25:13; Mk. 13:9, 33-38; Lk. 12:38-39; 21:36).
- G. The Church began in a prayer meeting in the upper room as Jesus’ followers waited for “the promise of the Father—the empowering of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 1:4, 14).  
<sup>14</sup>***These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication. (Acts 1:14)***
- H. Prayer was a high priority among the leaders in the New Testament (Acts 1:14, 24; 2:42; 3:1; 4:31; 6:4; 9:11; 10:2-4, 9, 30-31; 11:5; 12:5, 12; 13:3; 14:23; 16:16, 25; Rom. 8:26; 10:1; 12:12; 1 Cor. 7:5; 2 Cor. 1:11; 9:14; 13:7-9; Eph. 1:17-19; 3:14-20; 6:18; Phil. 1:4, 9-11; 4:6; Col. 1:3, 9-11; 4:2-3; 1 Thes. 3:10; 5:17, 25; 2 Thes. 1:11; 3:1; 1 Tim. 2:8; 4:5; Heb. 13:18; Jas. 5:13-18; Jude 20).  
<sup>42</sup>***They continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine, fellowship...and in prayers. (Acts 2:42)***
- I. The apostles were very committed to their prayer lives (Acts 6:4). Paul embraced night-and-day prayer in various seasons and called widows to this ministry (1 Thes. 3:10; 1 Tim. 5:5; 2 Tim. 1:3).  
<sup>4</sup>***“But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” (Acts 6:4)***
- J. The Lord has led many throughout the 2,000 years of church history to establish night-and-day prayer ministries. Ministries from all parts of the Body of Christ—Celtic, Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant—have mobilized 24/7 prayer ministries; see *Growing in Prayer* (chapter 27).
- K. There are many new prayer ministries today—see *Growing in Prayer* (chapter 28) for examples of how the Holy Spirit has raised up thousands of new prayer ministries in these days.
- L. Before Jesus returns, the Spirit will raise up the greatest prayer movement in history. There are indicators of this in the prophetic scriptures (Ps. 96:1, 9, 13; 98:1-9; 102:15-22; 122:6; 149:6-9; Isa. 19:20-22; 24:14-16, 23; 25:9; 26:1, 8-9; 27:2-5, 13; 30:18-19, 29, 32; 35:2, 10; 42:10-15; 43:26; 51:11; 52:8; 62:6-7; Jer. 31:7; 51:8; Joel 2:12-17, 32; Zeph. 2:1-3; Zech. 8:20-23; 10:1; 12:10; 13:9; Mt. 21:13; 25:1-13; Lk. 18:7-8; Rev. 5:8; 6:9-11; 8:3-5; 9:13; 14:18; 16:7; 18:6; 22:17).
- M. Natural history will end in the context of a global prayer movement. The conflict at the end of the age will be between two global worship movements—one led by Jesus, which will prevail over the Antichrist’s state-financed worship movement (Rev. 13:4, 8, 12, 15).  
<sup>8</sup>***All who dwell on the earth will worship him. (Rev. 13:8)***
- N. In the Millennium, all the kings of the earth will be saved, worship Jesus, and base their national governments on the Scripture (Ps. 72:11; 102:15; 138:4; 148:11; Isa. 62:2; Rev. 21:24).  
<sup>11</sup>***Yes, all kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him. (Ps. 72:11)***  
<sup>15</sup>***So the nations shall fear the name of the LORD, and all the kings of the earth Your glory. (Ps. 102:15)***

### III. THE VOW THAT CHANGED HISTORY (PS. 132)

- A. Psalm 132 records a vow of King David that is at the heart of the end-time missions and prayer movement. I call it “the vow that changed history,” because dedicated believers throughout the ages have embraced the spirit of David’s vow and set their hearts to live by it. The vow is a commitment to be wholehearted in seeking the fullness of God’s purpose and release of His presence.

<sup>2</sup>...*how he [David] swore to the LORD, and vowed ...*<sup>3</sup>*“Surely I will not go...up to the comfort of my bed; <sup>4</sup>I will not give sleep to my eyes or slumber to my eyelids, <sup>5</sup>until I find a place for the LORD, a dwelling place for the Mighty One”...<sup>8</sup>Arise, O LORD, to Your resting place.”*  
(Ps. 132:2-8)

- B. In principle, a “dwelling place” speaks of a place (a city or region) where God’s purpose is done to the fullest measure ordained by God in any given generation, and where His presence is manifested on earth in a way that is discernible, even to unbelievers.
- C. David vowed to live in extravagant commitment to the Lord by seeking to establish a place where God’s presence would be honored and fully responded to. This was a higher priority to him than building his own house—his own comfort, family, ministry, calling, and finances. David’s “house” refers to his domestic life and personal resources. His “bed” refers to his personal comfort and ease.
- D. David’s vow included establishing day-and-night worship by setting singers and musicians in place to join him in contending for the fullness of God’s purpose in their generation.
- E. The Church is the dwelling place of God today in a spiritual sense, and we can contend for a much greater release of God’s presence through the worldwide Body of Christ. When people speak of seeking “a dwelling place for God,” they are often referring to a place where, in principle, God’s manifest presence is released in an unusual way for an extended period of time, resulting in the commitment of many to love and obey God with all their hearts, live under the leadership of the Spirit, and together experience an unusual measure of His manifest presence on a regular basis.
- F. Remaining faithful to his vow was costly and brought reproach upon David. He described what he endured from his youth related both to his zeal for God’s house and the way he lived because of it.

<sup>7</sup>*Because for Your sake I have borne reproach...<sup>8</sup>I have become a stranger to my brothers...<sup>9</sup>Because zeal for Your house has eaten me up, and the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on me. <sup>10</sup>When I wept and chastened my soul with fasting, that became my reproach. <sup>11</sup>I also made sackcloth my garment; I became a byword to them.* (Ps. 69:7-11)

- G. David was mocked because he boldly stood for what God was zealous for in his generation. He bore reproach for his zeal in fasting that God’s house would one day be filled with glory (v. 10). He became a byword to his family and friends (v. 11). Some sincere believers draw back from zealously seeking God out of fear of receiving criticism from others.
- H. Find out what God is doing in your generation and fully throw yourself into it.

<sup>35</sup>*“For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep.”* (Acts 13:36).

#### IV. RESPONDING TO THE GROWING CRISIS IN THE WORLD

- A. The church in the West stands at a critical juncture. The nations are increasing in lawlessness and moral confusion and engaging in escalating conflicts, including those inspired by racism, terrorism, and sexual immorality. They want to remove the influence of God's Word from society, because they see His ways as bonds and cords that enslave them (Ps. 2:3). David described Jesus responding to the crisis by praying, or *asking the Father*, for His rightful inheritance in the nations (Ps. 2:8).
- <sup>1</sup>Why do the nations rage...? <sup>2</sup>The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying, <sup>3</sup>“Let us break Their bonds in pieces and cast away Their cords from us.”...<sup>7</sup>“The LORD [the Father] has said to Me [Jesus], ‘...<sup>8</sup>Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance.’” (Ps. 2:1-8)***
- B. The book of Joel gives insight into the response that God desires from us in the growing crisis. The good news is that the crisis can be delayed, minimized, or sometimes averted when we respond to God in the way He desires; He will pour out His Spirit to release a greater measure of His activity. Joel told the leaders to blow the trumpet and call a sacred assembly, to turn to God with all their heart, repent of their sin, and cry out for God's mercy and a greater measure of the Spirit's power.
- <sup>12</sup>“Turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting...and with mourning.”<sup>13</sup>...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. <sup>14</sup>Who knows if He will turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind Him...? <sup>15</sup>Blow the trumpet in Zion, consecrate a fast, call a sacred assembly...<sup>28</sup>It shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh. (Joel 2:12-15, 28)***
- C. The response God is looking for in a national crisis is for His people to turn to Him with all their hearts and repent for compromise in their life. Joel summoned the people to return to the Lord with confidence, knowing that He desires to respond in a way that is merciful and filled with kindness.
- <sup>18</sup>Who is a God like You, pardoning iniquity...because He delights in mercy. (Mic. 7:18)***
- D. **God relents:** The Lord desires to relent and leave a blessing behind (2:14). He is willing to transform a disaster zone into a revival center of blessing, to make a way of deliverance and bring restoration, if His people will cry out to Him in a loyal relationship of love. By turning to God, we bring His power, wisdom, and blessing into the crisis. When there is no human remedy, the Lord can still release blessing to heal and restore a person, a family, business, church, city, or nation.
- <sup>14</sup>“If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear...and will forgive their sin and heal their land.” (2 Chr. 7:14)***
- E. **Blow the trumpet:** God's people are to “blow the trumpet” (2:15) in time of crisis—that is, to boldly proclaim the necessity of a sacred assembly by speaking of the coming restoration that is available in times of crisis and judgment
- F. **Sacred assembly:** This is a time set aside for the people of God to gather in corporate prayer with fasting and turn to the Lord in repentance for all the compromise in their lives. Fasting and prayer are expressions of our wholeheartedness. Fasting positions us to receive more from God, enhances our ability to give ourselves to God, and deepens our heart-connect with God's heart.