PROPHETIC MANDATE FOR THE CHURCH INTRODUCTION

Throughout Church history, the Holy Spirit has always moved upon individuals or groups of people to bring forth and manifest God's prophetic will for that generation. When the Church gets desperate enough for God, His Spirit begins to draw us to the heart of God for the purpose of receiving His burden and the passion of His heart.

There is desperation of the spirit that is being birthed in the heart of the church in this prophetic hour. The Holy Spirit is burdening the Church with the Spirit of Intercession. There is a world-wide awakening of prayer in the earth today like at no other time in church history. Thousands of Houses of Prayer have been established and the numbers are rapidly increasing every year.

"Surely the Lord GOD does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets." Amos 3:7

"But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God." 1 Corinthians 2:9-10

"That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power." Ephesians 1:17-19

THE REVELATION OF THE HOUSE OF PRAYER

Jesus desires for the Church to come into the fullness of her identity in being what He has declared us to be, a House of Prayer. When His disciples saw the connection that He had with His Father when He prayed, they asked Him if He could teach them on the power and benefits of prayer. ***"Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, 'Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.'" Luke 11:1***

1. The Lord truly **INSPECTS** the work that we are doing in His behalf. Many are deceived into believing that they are about God's business simply because they are busy and active for God. Our works are being weighed in the balance of God's purpose for our lives.

"And Jesus went into Jerusalem and into the temple. So when He had looked around at all things, as the hour was already late, He went out to Bethany with the twelve." Mark 11:11

2. In scripture, our lives are symbolic of trees that are called to bear fruit for God and His Kingdom. God **EXPECTS** us to bear fruit. If we become trees that are planted in God's House, His word and in His presence, then truly our lives will produce fruit that will cause others to be fed with.

"Now the next day, when they had come out from Bethany, He was hungry. And seeing from afar a fig tree having leaves, He went to see if perhaps He would find something on it. When He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. In response Jesus said to it, 'Let no one eat fruit from you ever again.'" Mark 11:12-14

God is expecting that His Church produce much fruit in order that we might do the good works of God. Trees that produce no fruit are as good as trees that are cursed. Our lives are meant to bring forth fruit. The measure of fruit one produces is dependent upon the measure one abides in Christ and His love.

"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing." John 15:5

3. God is committed to present to Jesus His Son, a Church, a Bride, and a Partner that will be prepared and set apart for His glory and for His presence. He is "violently" pursuing the Church to awaken her unto her eternal identity that she may partner with Him in the last days greatest outpouring that is yet to come. There is a cleansing work that is taking place in the Church today. The Holy Spirit CORRECTS the Church in areas it has been neglecting long enough. He intends to correct us in order to bring about the fruit of righteousness we are all called to produce (Heb 12:5- 12).

"***So they came to Jerusalem. Then Jesus went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. And He would not allow anyone to carry wares through the temple. Then He taught, saying to them, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations'? But you have made it a den of thieves.'" Mark 11:15-17***

4. In Matthew's (Mat 21) account of Jesus cleansing the temple, we see four spiritual benefits that take place as a result of God bringing the Church back into her **ETERNAL IDENTITY!**

a. The Church encounters the purification of God's purpose for us. (V.12)
b. The Church begins to walk in her eternal identity- a House of Prayer. (V. 13)
c. The Church will witness and walk in the greatest manifestation of God's power. (V. 14)
d. The Church will see an explosion of praise in the younger generation as a harvest of souls comes into the Kingdom. (V. 15-16)

II. WHY CORPORATE PRAYER IS NEEDED - INTRODUCTION:

We are living in days filled with uncertainty and much fear throughout the nations of the earth. We find ourselves in great need of spiritual awakening and revival in the western church. We can see in our nation that America is on a decline on many fronts; politically, financially, and militarily; we have lost much influence to other nations of the world. The Liberal worldview in America is negatively influencing our nation's Christian roots producing a flood of immorality like we have not seen in all our history. In addition, the constant turmoil in the nations, the ever present threat of wars, the increasing danger of terrorism and the growing escalation of an all-out war in the Middle East is ever so real in our day. The only solution that the Bible clearly defines in times such as these is what has always worked in times past; The Power of a Praying

Church. Our hope cannot be in our governments nor in a political solution but only in a people who choose to look to and depend upon their God.

"Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, The people He has chosen as His own inheritance." Psalm 33:12

I. JESUS INSTRUCTS HIS FOLLOWERS TO PRAY

A. Watch & Pray as the End-times approach us. The Lord gives His people instructions on the necessity of watching and praying in order to be able to escape the pressures and the temptation of our faith failing. As the pressures of darkness and sin increases, the Body of Christ will be forced in having to stand up for the truth and avoid compromising the what the word of God teaches concerning righteousness, holiness and the way of salvation.
"He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will." Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "What! Could you not watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Matthew 26:39-41

"But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man." Luke 21:34-36

B. As the day of the Lord approaches injustice throughout the earth will continue to increase bringing about greater suffering and greater pressure on the people of God. For this reason the Lord counseled His followers to always pray day and night.

"Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart... And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them?" Luke 18:1, 7

C. After having overcome Satan and the powers of hell through the cross, Jesus knew that the church, His disciples would need the empowering of the Holy Spirit in order for the mission of the church to be accomplished in evangelizing the nations of the earth. This is why Jesus instructed His followers to return to Jerusalem and wait for the promise of the Father, the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

"And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me... But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." Acts 1:4, 8

II. CORPORATE PRAYER IS NEEDED IN TIMES OF NATIONAL CRISIS

A. In the book of Acts 12:1-17, the early church was facing incredible persecution from Herod. Herod had managed to martyr the Apostle James, the brother of John, and was now setting his eyes on doing the same with the Apostle Peter. This would have been a devastating blow to the leadership of the church to have lost two of their prominent apostles. The church responded by coming together in corporate prayer.

B. Jehoshaphat in 2 Chron. 20:1-26 faced a large enemy from Moab and Ammon who had come out for the sole purpose of wiping out the people of Israel. King Jehoshaphat knew that his enemies had far outnumbered his own people of Israel. Rather than panicking and looking to other nations the king chose to humble himself before God and called for the entire nation, including women and children to come before the Lord in prayer and fasting. Their prayers included singing songs of praise and adoration to their God.
"***And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. So Judah gathered together to ask help from the Lord; and from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the Lord... Now all Judah, with their little ones, their wives, and their children, stood before the Lord." 2 Chronicles 20:3-4, 13***

C. Revelation chapters 5-6 prophetically reveals to us the hour our Lord Jesus approaches the Father to take from Him the scroll that contains the plan of God to cleanse the earth of all darkness and influence that the devil and the antichrist have had. What is interesting to note is role that the church plays both on earth and in heaven in order for Jesus to be able to enact and enforce His leadership and rule in the world. Only through humble submission from the church is God able to release the power of His kingdom on the nations of the earth.

"Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth." Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing!" And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: "Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, And to the Lamb, forever and ever!" Revelation 5:8-13

III. CORPORATE INTERSESSION IS VITAL TO CONDUCT SPIRITUAL WARFARE

A. To effectively wage spiritual warfare and live and overcoming life we must all remember and keep in mind that true spiritual warfare is spiritual and not natural. In other words, our true enemy are not people, flesh and blood, but spiritual powers such as demons and principalities that operate through people as they choose to yield to their influence and darkness.

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we

do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Ephesians 6:10-12

B. The Apostle Paul continued to teach his disciple and the churches he had established the means to overcome the powers of darkness. He instructs the Corinthian church to understand that all warfare begins in their mind and emotions. Through the authority of Christ and power in His name the church is able to overcome the devil and his tactics that seek to cripple the church and her authority.

"For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled." 2 Corinthians 10:4-6
"...that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth." Philippians 2:10

C. We are given insight into how spiritual warfare operates and works through a praying people. The prophet Daniel had received a series of dreams and visions pertaining to the future of his people Israel. The prophetic dreams and visions left him deeply troubled as he sought to gain greater understanding into the full meaning of the revelations he was receiving. As Daniel fasted and prayed it is revealed to us that his prayers shifted the powers of the air releasing angelic beings into place who therefore gave him greater understanding to the future and how to prepare for it.

"In those days I, Daniel, was mourning three full weeks. I ate no pleasant food, no meat or wine came into my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled." Daniel 10:2-3

"Then he said to me, "Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia. Now I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision refers to many days yet to come." Daniel 10:12-14

IV. CORPORATE PRAYER IS GOD'S STRATEGY TO AVERT NATIONAL JUDGEMENT

A. In Joel chapters 1-2 the prophet Joel was used by the Lord to trumpet the coming judgments upon His people due to their continual backsliding heart. Idolatry and injustice was the rule of life that corroded the moral fiber of the nation. Joel raised his voiced and challenged the nation to repent and turn to God with fasting and prayer.

"Who knows if He will turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind Him—A grain offering and a drink offering For 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." Joel 2:14-16

B. It is possible for the righteous to escape God's wrath when He judges a nation for their continual disobedience. That doesn't mean they will not suffer any hardship consequences for the sins of their nation, but it does mean that God will show mercy upon His people in the midst of judgment. Like Noah, Lot and Israel who were divinely protected from divine judgment, the believer can experience a measure of protection from God's anger. As the righteous seek The Lord for mercy, they not only are divinely protected from God's wrath but their prayers can hold back God's hand from greater judgments being released upon their nation.

"Before the decree is issued, or the day passes like chaff, before the Lord's fierce anger comes upon you, before the day of the Lord's anger comes upon you! Seek the Lord, all you meek of the earth who have upheld His justice. Seek righteousness, seek humility. It may be that you will be hidden in the day of the Lord's anger." Zepheniah 2:2-3

C. The church can play a redemptive role upon a people or a nation by simply fulfilling their priestly role in the place of intercession. Throughout Scripture, incense is symbolic of prayers coming before the presence of God that bring Him great pleasure. It was a mixture of gums or spices used for the purpose of producing a perfume when burned, or the perfume itself of the spices, etc. burned in worship. The incense employed in the service of the tabernacle walls compounded of the perfumes stacte, onycha, galbanum and pure frankincense. It was said to be a sweet smelling aroma to The Lord.

"So Moses said to Aaron, "Take a censer and put fire in it from the altar, put incense on it, and take it quickly to the congregation and make atonement for them; for wrath has gone out from the Lord. The plague has begun." Then Aaron took it as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the assembly; and already the plague had begun among the people. So he put in the incense and made atonement for the people. And he stood between the dead and the living; so the plague was stopped. Numbers 16:46-48