

Session 10 Prayer and Prophetic Promises

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. It is the Father's pleasure to release the kingdom to and through His people by prayer (Lk. 12:32).
³²***“Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”***
(Lk. 12:32)
Prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance but laying hold of His willingness. —Martin Luther
- B. One way to intercede for a greater manifestation of the kingdom is to contend for the fulfillment of prophetic promises—biblical prophetic promises, contemporary prophetic promises, and personal prophetic words—particularly those related to revival.
- C. The foundation of our ministry must be on Jesus and our relationship with Him as confirmed in the written Word of God. We do not base our ministry on personal prophetic words. We must never receive prophetic promises that do not honor the Word or that contradict it. The Scriptures are the final authority on all matters of faith, including prophetic promises. All contemporary or personal prophecies must be confirmed by the Spirit, as well as two or three witnesses (2 Cor. 13:1).
- D. Prophetic promises are often invitations rather than guarantees. There is a dynamic relationship between prophetic promises and persevering prayer. As our faith is stirred by God's promises, we are energized to sustain prayer for the full release of these promises. Prophetic promises help us persevere in our faith and obedience so that we do not draw back in times of pressure and difficulty.
- E. Paul exhorted Timothy to fight the fight of faith according to the prophetic words that were given to him (1 Tim. 1:18). We value biblical promises most, but we should not neglect personal prophetic promises that are confirmed by the Spirit. Such prophetic promises help us to persevere with faithfulness in our ministry assignments and to not quit when the assignment is difficult or small.
¹⁸***This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare.*** (1 Tim. 1:18)

II. PARTNERSHIP WITH GOD: THREE STAGES

- A. First, God initiates what He wants by declaring it in His Word and stirring our heart to believe for it.
- B. Second, we respond in obedience and prayer with faith, speaking God's will back to Him.
- C. Third, God answers our prayer by releasing what we pray for into the natural realm.
- D. The Lord is over the whole process of releasing revival. He sends prophetic encouragement to stir His people to persevere in prayer and faith, and then the Spirit helps them to pray. The Lord then answers the prayers by releasing His blessing in a greater measure. It is a glorious cycle! Revival starts with Him, prayer is initiated and sustained through Him, and the glory goes back to Him.
³⁶***From Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be glory.*** (Rom. 11:36, NASB)

III. BIBLICAL PROMISES FOR A GREAT OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

A. I am convinced that the greatest outpouring of the Spirit in all history will be released just before Jesus' second coming. The Body of Christ worldwide in the generation in which the Lord returns will participate in the greatest revival ever to occur. In this great revival, the Holy Spirit will release the types of miracles recorded in Acts and Exodus, combined and multiplied on a global scale.

B. The Bible contains many promises related to the end times. Jesus is coming back for a glorious Church that is walking in holiness, without any blemish or compromise (Eph. 5:27).

²⁷ *...that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. (Eph. 5:27)*

C. Promises found in the Scriptures confirm that the Body of Christ worldwide will see various expressions of "revival" that will come to greater fullness in the end times. I identify five:

1. We will see the emergence of a victorious, unified, anointed church that is full of God's glory.

²² *"The glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one." (Jn. 17:22)*

2. The Church will live in love, humility, and purity as a Bride who is fully prepared for the Lord by living according to the Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5-7; Rev. 19:7).

⁷ *"The marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." (Rev. 19:7)*

3. John prophesied a great end-time harvest from every nation, tribe, and tongue (Rev. 7:9). I expect this great ingathering of souls to exceed one billion new souls coming to Jesus.

⁹ *...behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne...¹⁴ These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes...in the blood of the Lamb. (Rev. 7:9, 14)*

4. The spirit of prophecy will operate in the Church and rest on every believer.

¹⁷ *"And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy." (Acts 2:17)*

5. The Body of Christ will fulfill its primary calling to make disciples as we win the lost and build His Church—a kingdom community expressing the two great commandments to love God and people and fully engaging in the Great Commission (Mt. 22:37-39; 28:19).

³⁷ *You shall love the LORD...with all your heart...* ³⁸ *This is the first and great commandment.* ³⁹ *The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. (Mt. 22:37-39)*

¹⁹ *"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations...²⁰ teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always." (Mt. 28:19-20)*

- D. We embrace a tension as we pray for the full release of the Lord’s prophetic promises of revival—we experience a *partial* release of power now, while earnestly praying for the *fullness* of the Spirit.
- E. Some who pray for an historic outpouring lose sight of ministering in God’s power in the *present*, while some who are ministering to people on a regular basis *now* lose sight of contending in intercession for an historic breakthrough of the fullness of all God has promised. They pour out all their energy in ministry and do not have zeal to contend for a greater breakthrough in the future.
- F. We can walk in the measure that God has ordained for us *now* as well as seeking for the fullness of what He has promised. We can heal the sick and win many to Jesus now, even before the time when great multitudes will come to Jesus in the fullness of end-time revival with power.
- G. We are to take hold of God’s power *today* while we contend for the fullness for tomorrow. In other words, we can have a “present-tense relationship” with Jesus and experience His power *now* in our ministry and at the same time pray for and anticipate the fullness of all that God promised.

IV. GOD’S WORD TO ME IN CAIRO, EGYPT, IN 1982

- A. My confidence in an end-time outpouring of the Spirit became a very personal issue to me one night in September 1982 in Cairo, Egypt. I experienced a life-changing encounter in the Holy Spirit.
- B. The Lord spoke to me in what I call the “*internal, audible voice.*” I was overwhelmed with a sense of God’s presence. It came with a powerful feeling of cleanness, power, and authority. I wanted to leave, but I didn’t want to leave. I wanted the experience to be over, but I didn’t want it to be over.
- C. The awe of God flooded my soul as I felt a bit of the terror of the Lord. I trembled and wept as God communicated to me in a way I had never experienced before and have not experienced since.
- D. The Lord simply said, “***I will change the understanding and expression of Christianity in the whole earth in one generation.***” I received the Spirit’s interpretation—God Himself will make drastic changes in Christianity across the whole world, and this reformation-revival will be by His sovereign initiative and for His glory.
- E. I knew by the Holy Spirit that the phrase “the understanding of Christianity” meant the way Christianity is perceived by unbelievers. In the early church, people were afraid to associate casually with believers, partly because of the displays of supernatural power (Acts 5:13). Today many unbelievers consider the Church irrelevant. God will change the way unbelievers view the Church. Once again they will witness God’s wonderful yet terrifying power in His Body. They will have a very different understanding of Christianity before God is finished with this generation.
- F. I also knew by the Spirit that the phrase “the expression of Christianity” meant the way the Body of Christ expresses its life together under Jesus’ leadership. God will bring about dramatic change so that we function as a unified, holy people in the power and love of God. What happens when we gather together as the Body of Christ will change over the course of one generation.
- G. He will use His people who are serving in many different denominations and ministry streams in the body of Christ. He loves the whole Church and will use all who want to be used by Him.

- H. In Acts 2, Peter quoted Joel’s prophecy (Joel 2:28-32), saying that in the last days God will pour out His Spirit on all flesh—on all the nations.
- ¹⁶“***But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel...***”¹⁷“***It shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams...***”¹⁹“***I will show wonders in heaven and signs in the earth...***”²⁰“***before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD.***” (Acts 2:17-20)
- I. ***Pour out My Spirit:*** This great, final global revival will have multidimensional expressions. It will not be a *movement* characterized by one activity, such as an evangelism movement, a healing movement, a prayer movement, a unity movement, or a prophetic movement. It will be all of these and more. This progressive outpouring of the Spirit will change many things. Above all, the Spirit will impart passion for Jesus as the first commandment is established in first place in the Church.
- J. ***All flesh:*** At the time that Joel gave this prophecy, many of its ideas were new to Israel. The anointing of the Spirit had been given to only a few people in the Old Testament era, usually older Jewish men who were kings, judges, or prophets. However, Joel prophesied that the Spirit would be poured out on all flesh: Jew and Gentile, men and women, young and old.
- K. ***Wonders and signs:*** Prophetic ministry will involve more than inspirational prophecies. There will be angelic visitations, visions, signs and wonders in the sky, and more. The Spirit will be poured out in power as foretold in Joel 2 and cited in Peter’s first sermon on the Day of Pentecost.
- L. ***Last days:*** To understand God’s end-time promises in the Scripture, it is important to differentiate between the terms *the last days* and *the end times*. The *last days* began on the day of Pentecost and will continue until Jesus returns. I use the phrase *the end times* to refer to the final decades of *the last days*, and I use it synonymously with *the generation in which Jesus returns*.
- M. Many Old Testament prophecies about God’s kingdom are fulfilled in at least two ways and two time frames. First, a partial, local fulfillment like as occurred in Acts 2. Second, a total, global fulfillment of all that was promised in the generation in which Jesus returns.
- N. ***This is what was spoken:*** Peter quoted the prophecy, saying, “This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel” (Acts 2:16). Yes, the outpouring at Pentecost was “that which was spoken by Joel,” but it was not **all** of “that which was spoken by Joel.” The Spirit fell on *only* 120 people in Jerusalem and touched 3,000 more (Acts 2), while Joel spoke of the Spirit being poured out on *all flesh with great signs and wonders* that would be seen in both the earth and the sky (Joel 2:28-31).
- O. Jesus spoke of the kingdom as if it had fully come and as if it were still yet to come. As George E. Ladd puts it, the kingdom of God is both “already” but “not yet”—it is already here but not yet fully here. The Bible teaches that the kingdom came to earth *in part* with the first coming of Christ, but that the complete manifestation of biblical prophecies concerning the kingdom of God will occur at the end of this age when Jesus Christ returns again to reign as King over the nations of the earth.