

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

We are going to talk about prayer as it relates to prophetic promises. One thing I will mention several times is that some prophetic promises are invitations, not guarantees. Through it the Lord is saying, “I want to do this. If you will cooperate with Me, it is going to happen to its fullness of what I ordained in your life.” Some promises are guarantees. They are bigger than our response, but many promises we will look at in a few minutes are invitations. They are not guarantees. We can come up short or we can neglect the promise and the response and live in less than what God had ordained for us.

Jesus made a dramatic statement in the context of His own generation. He said, “Do not fear, for it is the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” In that time of history, the Jewish people did not understand the revelation of the Most High and holy God as a Father, and number two, as One who had pleasure to release the kingdom to them. They understood the kingdom would be released through kings and prophets, but not through the little flock, the everyday people in the kingdom. Jesus makes this startling declaration that the God of Israel is a Father and, number two, He has great pleasure. He is not reluctant. He wants to release the kingdom through the little flock, through the everyday believer in the body of Christ, not just the specially anointed king or prophet.

Martin Luther said, “Prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance, but laying hold of God's willingness.” I think that says it so clearly. Sometimes we have this idea that we are trying to convince God, while He is trying to convince us. He says, “It is My pleasure to give you the kingdom. I want you to cooperate. I want you to press in and relate to Me in the way I have ordained in My Word that you could walk in the fullness of what I am after.”

- 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.

God has plans for every life in every generation. We want to enter into the fullness of that. One of the ways we can experience the fullness of the kingdom as it is ordained in our life and in our generation is we intercede with confidence of God's pleasure for the greater release of the kingdom. We do this is by contending for the full fulfillment of prophetic promises.

When I say prophetic promises, I think of three different categories. First, there are biblical prophetic promises. We are going to look at a few of them. Second, there are contemporary prophetic promises given through ones whom God has raised up, prophetic voices in a particular nation. Every nation in which the body of Christ is growing and going forward has prophetic voices there. Those prophetic voices speak and confirm one another and give confidence of the greater dimension of what God wants to do in that nation and in that generation. Third, there are the personal prophetic words. These are things the Lord has promised you about your life, your family, and your individual sphere of ministry.

When I think of contending for those promises, we want to contend for all of these. Contend means to believe God for them, pray for them, never let go of them, never give up, give in, or say, “Well, I guess it is not going to happen. Forget it.” If the Lord has confirmed His Word, we contend for it. We stay steady in believing for it.

- 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).

When it comes to contemporary and biblical prophetic promises or personal prophetic promises about our own life and family—Contemporary means for our nation, our generation, for the larger sphere of promise. It is very important to know. Most of you are clear about this. We want to be very clear about this—the foundation of our ministry must be on the person of Jesus. It is based on our relationship to Him by His work on the cross and is confirmed by the written Word. I mean that we do not base our ministry on prophetic words. A prophetic word might inspire you not to quit and to persevere when it is hard. You do not base your ministry on a prophetic word. If it is not something that is confirmed in the written Word of God and under the leadership of Jesus, then we are not interested in pursuing it.

Some folks base their ministry on prophetic words. That is a non-biblical concept. Prophetic words can strengthen your resolve so you do not quit when it gets hard. That is the real power of a prophetic word. When you get a prophetic word it is because you needed one, as the assignment is difficult. I have had people say, “I want the angel of the Lord and the audible voice of the Lord.”

I say, “Well, the angel of the Lord does not appear and the audible voice of God is not given for entertainment. If an angel appears, that is because the assignment the angel is going to communicate to you is going to be so challenging that you need the appearance of an angel not to give up over the decades of the unfolding of that assignment.” I tell people, “You want a five-minute visitation of an angel and a fifty-year hard assignment?”

They reply, “Well, on second thought...”

“Because that angel is probably not coming back again. One time. Five minutes. For fifty years you better stay steady in that course.”

“Well, maybe I don’t want an angel. What I really meant was I just want to feel the presence of God.”

“There you have it.”

The Scripture is the final authority on all matters of faith. We all understand that. It is not prophetic words. It is not what angels appear and say. I have had people say that over the years. They have this revelation from God, but it is not confirmed in the written Word. I say, “I would not go in that direction. In terms of your personal ministry and life, I would not receive an angel’s word on anything that is not first clearly laid out in the Word of God.”

Another important point is that all contemporary and personal prophecies should be confirmed by two or three witnesses. I receive, I don’t really know the number, but I am guessing five or ten or twenty prophecies every single week. I mean many every week. Some weeks it is maybe just three, four, five or six, and other weeks ten, twenty, or thirty. I receive some every week, undoubtedly, I am sure a week has gone by that is not true. It is almost every week. I receive a couple prophecies of, “The glory of God is breaking out. The Lord is so pleased with you. A, B, C, all these wonderful things.” The same week I receive prophecies of, “God is displeased. He has written Ichabod over your life. Everything is about to fall apart.” I have received probably two or three,

both sides, nearly every week for twenty-five years. I do not mean the last year or two. This was happening twenty-five years ago.

I learned way back when that if I am going to take a word and let it enter my heart, it has to be confirmed in a supernatural way. A guy says, “The Lord wants to do this and that.”

I think, “Maybe.” I put it on the back shelf. I say, “The Lord has the word there. If He wants me to believe it, He can supernaturally confirm it without any people putting the circumstances together.” I do not want just a story. I want true prophetic words. I have thousands of words, I guess, over twenty-five years. I do not know the number, but so many that have not been confirmed. They are just lying on the shelf. I say, “The Lord has my address. He is up-to-date in His database. He knows how to confirm a prophecy. He is really good about it.” I do not get anxious about a word that is not confirmed. I do not start praying and seeking the Lord and declaring in faith the truth of it, not until He confirms it. I do not mean confirms it by us kind of hinting to a friend and they kind of like echo the prophecy back that they know you want to hear. That is not what I mean by confirmation. I mean something that is real. We need to be sober and alert about this issue of really letting a prophecy enter into our heart and taking hold of it.

- 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.

Again, prophetic promises are often invitations. They are not guarantees. They are invitations. One example, thirty-two years ago the Lord spoke audibly about twenty-four/seven prayer and worship and about having worship and prayer with singers and musicians. That is in the Bible many places. Under the leadership of the kings of Israel they put singers and musicians to worship God night and day. It is a very biblical concept. It has shown up many times through history. The New Testament apostles were committed to prayer far beyond the normal standard of what we consider commitment to prayer today. They were deeply devoted to prayer. Night and day prayer was a norm of the New Testament church. The Lord says, “I want you to do this.” That is an invitation. That is not a guarantee that is going to happen. We can say no. We really can. The Lord says, “I want you to do it.” It is a commission. It is an invitation as well.

It is not like I am thinking about that word personally, individually. I could say, “Well, Lord, I am not going to really bother with the prayer stuff. You make twenty-four/seven prayer pop out of midair somehow. If You want it, You do it.” No, there is a human cooperation that is involved.

I just used that personal and corporate prophetic word because that is a well-known one in our community. I could think of a number of them. The Lord says, “They are not guarantees. You do have to press into what I am saying and doing in your life, with other people involved as well.”

There is a dynamic relationship between prophetic promises and persevering prayer. It may be a biblical prophetic promise as when Jesus said, “I am going to build My church and the gates of hell will not overpower it.” That is a powerful prophetic promise in the Bible. Then there are the contemporary and personal ones that God would speak to a nation or a generation through prophetic voices. There is a dynamic relationship between the promise and persevering in prayer. The promise sustains you to persevere in prayer. The persevering prayer is what releases the promise into everyday life. Without the strong, confirmed promise, you probably would not persevere in prayer. Without persevering in prayer, the promise that was given will not come to pass. Those are deeply connected realities. Our faith is stirred by God’s promises. When we receive a promise from the Word, and we really take hold of it, or the Lord speaks in a dramatic way to your life, it energizes your heart and

energizes you to stay steady. That does not mean you do not have bad weeks and bad months, but in the overall it energizes you to stay steady in that assignment.

The particular assignments that God gives through a dramatic prophetic word are typically ones you are going to be tempted to quit. You are going to be tempted to draw back because it is difficult. It is a challenging assignment to the flesh and easy to quit. Therefore the Lord gives a stronger witness to you of how zealous He is that you do this, so in the time of temptation you persevere through the 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.

¹⁸This 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)

In 1 Timothy 1:18, Paul told Timothy, “This charge I commit to you, my son Timothy”—son in the faith—“that according to the prophecies that were given to you in the early days or the previous years, by them wage the good warfare.” Paul told Timothy, “You received prophetic words, real ones, some years ago. Recall those. Let them energize your faith so that you persevere in believing prayer until those promises come to pass.” Prophetic promises are given so that we wage war by them instead of giving up. That is the idea. We value biblical prophetic promises the most. The promise of the Bible, on a scale of one to ten, they are tens. We value them the most.

Still, we do not want to neglect personal promises. Meaning, “If God said it, if He confirms it.” Again, you might receive many promises from people, but they have not been confirmed. It has not been confirmed. If He confirms it, do not neglect it. Do not say that if God wants it, He will do it. He says, “No, I do want it, but I want you to engage with Me. I want you to wage war with that promise in mind.” You wage war by declaring in faith, by staying in perseverance in prayer for the release of that promise. That is one of the ways we wage war.

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.

There are three stages of partnering in prayer with God, in our partnership with God. The first stage is that God initiates what He wants. It is God’s idea first. He initiates it. Then He stirs our heart with it. We read it in the Bible, and we get stirred. Or He gives us a prophetic word from somebody or an encounter in the Holy Spirit. He initiates it. It is His idea.

- B. Second, we respond in obedience and prayer with faith, speaking God’s will back to Him.

Second, we respond. We speak the word back to Him in faith with obedience, living a lifestyle of obedience. It does not mean we are perfect. We fail sometimes and come up short, but we respond. We set our heart to respond. God initiates. We respond.

- C. Third, God answers our prayer by releasing what we pray for into the natural realm.

Third, God answers. He starts the process, “I am sending revival to your city, to your generation...” or whatever the word is.

“Wow! Lord, release revival.” We respond. That is step two.

Step three, He releases it into the natural realm. Typically, often He releases it in stages. Not always is it a one-time release. Sometimes it depends on what the promise is.

- 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.

³⁶From Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be glory. (Rom. 11:36, NASB)

Romans 11:36 sums it up quite well. Paul said that from God, through God, and back to God is everything. He initiates it. That is from Him. It is through Him; the Spirit helps us to pray and to stay steady. The glory is back to Him. So from Him, through Him and to Him is everything. That is the cycle of grace right there. The Lord is over the whole process. He sends the prophetic encouragement by the written Word. Those are prophetic promises in the written Word, by a personal encounter from the Lord, or a word from somebody. He sends the promise. It stirs you to not give up. Then the Spirit helps us while we are praying. I am talking about over the months and years, not just for a really focused season for a few weeks or a month or two. We stay with it. Then He answers it. He gets the glory for it. From Him, through Him, and to Him are all things.

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.

Many could teach many sessions on this subject of biblical promises for a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit. It is not unique to me. There are quite a few verses in the Bible that make it very clear there is a great outpouring of the Spirit scheduled in God's plan for the earth. As a matter of fact, all the apostolic prayers are promises. There are about twenty-five prayers in the New Testament that I call apostolic prayers because they are the prayers God gave the apostles. You study those twenty-five prayers, and you will find they are promises. The prayers themselves are promises. When Paul prayed that the Father of glory would release the spirit of wisdom and revelation, it is because the Father is committed to release the spirit of wisdom and revelation. That is why the Spirit gave Paul that prayer and had it recorded in the Bible. Those prayers are in themselves theology of revival.

I am convinced that the greatest outpouring of the Holy Spirit in all of history will be released just before the Lord's second coming. When I mean by "just before," it might be several decades or more leading up to it, increasing in intensity. I don't necessarily mean the year or two before. It might be several decades or more. The intensity is building. The intensity has been building for a while on a global scale. The body of Christ is growing rapidly, faster than any time in history just because of the demographics of modern population and communication, technology, and all that. The body of Christ is growing so fast right now, and there are so many Holy Spirit manifestations and encounters happening across the earth right now. All through Asia, Africa, Latin America, the islands, and North America. There are so many dynamic things happening. It is clearly escalating every decade. Not that that is the exact measuring. In the seventies it was much more than the sixties. The 1980's, clearly more than the seventies. The 1990's, more than the seventies and eighties. It is growing in observable intensity on a global level.

I believe the greatest revival in history is going to be released shortly before the Lord returns. It is my opinion, it is not a prophecy, but it is an opinion that there are people alive on the earth who will see it with their eyes. It might be you. It may be your children. Maybe it is your grandchildren. I don't know. I think it is very possible that there are people in this room who will actually see the fullness of this in their lifetime. Again, that not a prophecy, but that is a conviction, a belief I have. It's an opinion I have based on the biblical signs of the times.

The signs of the times are escalating so rapidly right now on a global level for the first time. There are quite a few biblical signs of the times. Signs Jesus gave, signs the apostles gave, signs the Old Testament prophets gave. Many of them are escalating on a global level together for the first time. They are increasing. As I observe that, then it gives me a stronger sense that we are getting closer and close. Nobody knows. It could be drawn out some decades longer or it could speed up overnight. I think it is very possible that people in this very room will see the fullness of this revival in their lifetime, and if not, then your children or grandchildren. I think it is something you should throw your life into, saying, "Lord, I am going to be fully engaged with You and fully prepared in Your Word for what You have promised for that generation and time. If it is not my generation, I will be prepared spiritually to prepare other people for it, if it is the time frame after me."

- 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)

Ephesians 5:27 is one of the great promises. The Lord is returning for a glorious church. The church will be glorious on the earth. It does not mean that only in the resurrection the church will be glorious. Of course in the resurrection everything will be glorious. That is not a new idea, that in heaven we walk in the glory of God. I believe Jesus is talking about Him orchestrating history in the great crisis in the nations called the Great Tribulation and the great outpouring of the Spirit that happens before the Lord returns. They all culminate together and on the earth there will be a glorious church, not just in the sky or in heaven.

- 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:

In terms of biblical promises for a worldwide outpouring of the Spirit, I will give five expressions of this great revival. There are many more than five. Just for the sake of time I am identifying these 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)

Number one, Jesus prayed for the whole body of Christ that, by the release of His glory, the church would walk in unity. Beloved, there is a huge difference between that and what is happening right now. It is going to happen. The church is going to walk in unity. There is going to be a greater dimension of glory and a greater dimension of trouble combined together that will cause a whole new perspective. I want to prophesy to you based on the words of Jesus. The church will be in unity. It is not going to be like it is now. I promise you it is going to happen.

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)

Number two, Revelation 19:7 says that the bride, the wife of the Lamb, the church, the body of Christ, will be ready. You look right now across the nations, and you say, “The church is not ready.” The church is not ready. That is why I think it is still some time down the road, but things can escalate in a moment’s time. A greater measure of outpouring with a greater measure of crisis and circumstances being shifted, and I mean things can get made ready really quickly.

I want to assure you of one thing. The church is moving to become a prepared bride, not a bride that is on the edges, trying to get away with compromise. He is coming for a bride who has given herself fully. That does not mean you do not have weakness, you do not stumble here, and you do not have setbacks there, but it means you have set your heart, I mean fully set your heart, “I am going to obey You all the way in this issue of my life.” It is that spirit, that attitude, which leads to a prepared bride.

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...¹⁴These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes...in the blood of the Lamb. (Rev. 7:9, 14)

Number three. Revelation 7 speaks of the great harvest from every tribe and nation. John saw a great harvest around the throne from every tribe and every tongue. Jesus prophesied it Himself, “The end will not come until the gospel of the kingdom is preached in every single nation of the earth.” John saw a vision of the end time harvest out of every tribe of the earth before the Lord returns. What a glorious reality!

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)

Number four. There is going to be an outpouring of the Holy Spirit and power on all flesh, on every single believer. It started in the book of Acts, but it was not fulfilled completely then. It was only a partial fulfillment. What happened in the book of Acts was only a down payment, a first fruit, a beginning. Every single believer is going to operate in the spirit of prophecy. All flesh, meaning human beings, but it goes on to say who are servants of the Lord. I have talked to guys who say, “I do not believe in prophecy.” I have had guys, different leaders, who want to debate it.

I respond, “I do not want to debate it. It is going to happen. When you get it, let’s talk about it. Until then, let’s just talk about Jesus, magnify Him, and fellowship together. I am so sure you are going to prophesy or your children or their children, down your family line a spirit of prophecy. Either you or soon after you it is all going to happen. I am not too worried about debating it.”

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).

**³⁷You shall love the LORD...with all your heart...³⁸This is the first and great commandment.
³⁹The 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...²⁰teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always.” (Mt. 28:19-20)

Number five. The body of Christ will fulfill its primary calling to make disciples as we win the lost and build the church. Jesus said that He is going to build the church. It is going to prevail in power, Matthew 16:18. He will build the church, and the church will walk in love. It is going to happen.

The reason we need to understand these simple, basic ideas is because many people do not have a conviction to pray. It is not a part of their life vision. They do not have a conviction that a great outpouring of the Spirit is coming because it is in the Bible.

I have talked to pastors over the years that ask, “How can we get our congregation praying?”

I say, “Preach on the biblical prophecy of the end-time revival.” The Bible has much to say about revival. It does not use the word revival. It has words that are associated with it, but they are certainly the idea of revival. I answer, “Preach on what God has committed to do in the midst of His people before He returns. It will stir up people to be in the prayer room.” When our conviction and understanding of these simple truths becomes low or diminished, our commitment to prayer is low and diminished. When this conviction is stronger, then we have a greater energy and zeal to lay hold of the Lord in prayer for the things that He promised.

- 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.

There is a tension between the partial release of power that we have now and the fullness to come. We have to walk in that tension. We pray for the fullness of revival. Full power, prophetic anointing, and end-time harvest. **While** we are praying for the fullness, we are **actively engaged** in a partial measure of the promise now. I have heard people say, “When the blind eyes start opening, and the lame start walking, I will start praying for the sick.”

I respond, “That is a completely non-biblical point of view.” We pray for the sick to be healed now.

Someone says, “All that happens is that headaches get healed.”

I say, “Stay with it. You will be surprised. A whole lot more than that will happen. Maybe you will not see steady, big miracles in the next month or two. You never know when the ‘suddenly of God’ will come though.”

We are active, pressing into the partial measure of those promises right now, believing and never letting go of the full measure of what is promised. Pray for the sick. Get impressions from the Holy Spirit. You may think, “Well, they are just little impressions. I would not call them prophecies. They are little impressions of the Spirit.” Stay steady in those things, for a big measure is coming to the whole body of Christ. We do not wait for the big measure while neglecting to be faithful in the small measure today.

Some people say they are going to wait it out “until.” That is a completely non-biblical point of view. Besides that, the Lord says, “If you are faithful in small, you will be faithful in much.” You do not grow in your faith by waiting for the day when all the miracles are happening with other folks, then think you are going to jump in the water, jump in and be involved. No, we have to be faithful through the days and the months and the years. I know some people are so locked into the coming revival that they do not do the work of the ministry today. I know others who are so locked into the ministry today that they do not contend for the full revival. **We want to do both.** We do not need to choose between those two. I want to be involved in the ministry today regardless of the measure of the Spirit’s presence that is in my ministry while always contending for the full promise to be released. It is not either/or; it is both/and.

- 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.

I want to give just a few moments of the experience I had with the Lord thirty-two years ago in September 1982. I was a young pastor. Twenty-seven years old. I was in Cairo, Egypt. I was in a hotel room by myself. I was just spending an evening in prayer. At that time I lived in the St. Louis area. I pastored in St. Louis for seven years before coming to Kansas City thirty-two years ago and beginning the work the Lord assigned me to here. Soon after that is when the Lord talked about twenty-four hour prayer with singers and musicians. It was thirty-two years ago when He spoke that.

This was Cairo, right before He spoke about the twenty-four hour prayer. I was going to spend the night in a prayer in a dingy, little hotel room. I had the most dramatic experience in my spiritual life in terms of being awake besides being born again. That always has to be number one. I have had a couple of dramatic experiences being asleep. This was the most dramatic one when I was awake. I heard what I call the internal audible voice. I heard it clearly. I did not hear it with my ears; it was not an external audible, but it was not an impression either. It was far more than that.

- 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.

The Lord spoke suddenly. He said, “I will change the understanding and expression of Christianity in the whole earth in one generation.” That sentence just came like an arrow. The dread of the Lord came upon me where I felt His presence. I spend a bit more time in the book describing it. The Lord said, “I am going to change the understanding and expression of Christianity in the whole earth in one generation.”

- 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.

When He said, “I am going to change the understanding of Christianity,” I understood by the Spirit—I did not hear this, but I understood it—it was the way that Christianity is perceived by unbelievers. The example I have here is Acts 5 when Ananias and Sapphira lied in the church meeting and were struck dead. Fear hit the whole community, even outside the church. The unbelievers would only associate with the church carefully. They said, “We are going to inch our way forward.” The power of God was so there and the presence of God. Massive numbers were coming in. The gospel was going forth powerfully. Unbelievers were paying attention. They were not casual about associating with the church when the fear of the Lord and the power of God were moving in that way.

Right now in many parts of the world unbelievers see the church as irrelevant. They say, “It does not affect the nations. It does not affect families. It does not affect cities. It does not affect anything really.” They think of it as irrelevant.

The Lord says, “I am going to change the way unbelievers perceive what is happening. They are going to have a very different mindset when I am finished doing what I am going to do in one 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.

He said, “I am going to change the expression of Christianity.” I knew by the Holy Spirit this meant the way the church expresses its life together under Jesus’ leadership. The unbelievers are going to have a very different view because they will see the power and presence of God in the church. The way that the body will express its life together under Jesus’ leadership will dynamically change. The Church will be a holy, radically committed people who operate in the power and presence of the Holy Spirit in ways that are beyond what most of us are thinking right now, certainly beyond what I am thinking. The Lord would say, “I have ways that you have not understood together yet, the way My people will dwell together. It will not just be that they will come to a meeting and have powerful meetings. There will be a dynamic of the Spirit in the life of the body, not just in a Sunday church meeting, but also in their interaction throughout the community, throughout society. When they gather in twos and threes, or tens and twenty thousand, My presence will be in their midst.”

I believe the days are coming when God is going to fill stadiums. I do not mean just a stadium, a guy preaches, they hear the message, a bunch of people get saved, and go home. I love that. I am talking about where stadiums are filled, the power of God is resting on people, and tremendous signs and wonders are taking place, that sort of thing. I believe that is coming.

- 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.

God’s going to use the whole body of Christ. He does not have a little remnant over here, a little remnant over there. Somebody might ask, “What is a remnant?” It is the group that is faithful. For a lot of folks, the

definition of a remnant is their own group. There are thousands and thousands of ministries in the earth that are radically committed to the Lord. They are weak and broken like we are, but they are sincere. They are pressing in. They want to be faithful, thousands and thousands of them.

I hear all the time, and I do not mind hearing this, but I am just giving you a different perspective. I hear this all the time, “Where revival is going start?”

I say, “Who cares **where** it is going to start? It is going to fill the whole earth!” Usually it is going to start in the group that is giving the story, at least in their mind. It is going to start in our city. It is going to start in our nation. Beloved, God is stirring up things. He is going to have so many revival centers that are catalytic all over the earth. He loves the whole church. He really loves the whole church.

Some groups have written off others with, “Well, that group over there, they are all dead, and they are this, and they are that.” Some of them are dead and they are this and that. I tell you just one prayer meeting where “like a mighty rushing wind” the power comes in, that group is going to be really different overnight. I am not writing off anybody because it is not about how amazing the people are. It is about how powerful and generous God is. He is going to do it all over Asia, Africa, Latin America. It is about the fame of His Son’s name. It is not about this denomination or this group is better than that group. That is absolutely outside the boundary lines of what the Holy Spirit is saying. When someone says, “It is going to start in our group and in our city,” I think, “Good. You and ten thousand other places it is going to start. I am all for you being one of those ten thousand.”

- 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...¹⁹I will show wonders in heaven and signs in the earth...²⁰before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD.’”
(Acts 2:16-20)

In Acts 2, Peter quoted Joel 2. Here he is in Acts 2 on the day of Pentecost. They are, 120 people, praying in the daytime. Like a mighty rushing wind, the power of God rests on these 120 people. I mean in a moment things are very, very different in that little prayer group. They go out in the street, the power of God is on them, and 3000 people get saved. Soon after, another 5000 people get saved. I mean things are happening.

Here is a very interesting statement in verse 16. Peter said, “This is what Joel said.” It is very important. He explained that this that is happening in Jerusalem is what Joel said. “It will come to pass in the last days, I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh. Your sons and daughters prophesy. The young men and women, the old men and women.” The idea is it is young and old, male and female, Jew and Gentile; all flesh includes all of these. He continued to quote Joel in verse 19, “I will show miracles in the heavens”—that means the sky—“I will show miracles on the earth.” There will be signs in the earthly realm, the created order. There will be miracles and wonders in the sky, in the atmosphere. Verse 20, “This is going to happen before the second coming.”

This is not a prophecy concerning after the second coming. This is before the second coming. That is pretty amazing. Outpouring of the Spirit on every single believer on the earth. Miracles in the sky on a regular basis. I am adding “regular basis.” It is going to happen in a way that is startling. This is going to be part of the transformation of the church in the “suddenly of God.” When I think about transformation, there is a progressive shifting of things over the decades. Then there are some dynamic “suddenlys” of the Lord where things change dramatically. There will be signs in the heavens, miracles on the earth, outpouring of the Spirit, a

great crisis and persecution and plagues and the Antichrist rising up, all these different unique dynamics all working together. It is going to happen before the Lord returns.

- 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.

When Joel said the Holy Spirit is going to be poured out on all flesh, it was a brand new idea to Israel. Let's say Joel is 600 BC. That is my estimation of when Joel was prophesying, about 600 BC-ish. There are two to three main datings of Joel. This is the one I think is most accurate. So 600 BC-ish, though no one knows for sure. Joel says, "The spirit of prophecy on everybody." That was radical. Up until that point and time, the Spirit only came on kings and prophets. The Spirit came almost only on men, with a couple exceptions, on Jewish men, and mostly older Jewish men. Joel said, "No, it is going to happen on children too."

The leaders of Joel's day might have said, "Really? Holy Spirit on the children?"

"Holy Spirit on the women."

"Ah, the women?"

"Yep. Worse than that, Holy Spirit on the Gentiles. Not just the Jews." That is unthinkable. That was really bizarre. How could the Holy Spirit be on Gentiles? How could the Holy Spirit be on a Gentile, female child? My goodness! Joel said, "You wait and see."

- 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).

Here is the point I want to mention. Peter said, verse 16, “This is what Joel spoke.” What Joel spoke, yet only 120 people were touched. Joel talked about all the nations. What Peter saw was 120, then 3000. That is exciting. Up to that time it was only 120 so far who had been touched. Peter said, “This is the prophecy of Joel.

We might say, “Excuse me, Peter, Joel prophesied the power of God on Gentiles, young and old, male and female, all nations of the earth, signs in the heavens, miracles on the earth, and you had an anointed prayer meeting. What are you talking about, that this is what Joel said?” I mean he took what Joel said and really narrowed it down to one little portion of what Joel said, but that was the beginning is his point. That was the beginning. Do not read the book of Acts as the ceiling of where the church is going. Read the book of Acts as the floor from which the church is launching. The church is going to go beyond the book of Acts. There are going to be miracles in the sky, in the heavens, and the anointing of God on all believers. That is far beyond anything Peter saw in his day, certainly on the day of Pentecost.

Beloved, we take these prophetic promises and turn them into persevering prayer. We take the biblical promises, and we take the contemporary promise given by prophetic voices to our nation or the nations, to our generation. That is what I mean by the contemporary ones. We take the personal ones, and we turn them into prayer. Prophetic promises are not guarantees; mostly they are invitations. Some promises are, but most of them are invitations. Amen and amen.

- 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.