Session 10 The Church’s Eternal Identity as a House of Prayer

1. The spiritual identity of God’s people as a house of prayer
	* 1. 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).

7“For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.” (Isa. 56:7)

13And He said to them, “It is written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer.’” (Mt. 21:13)

*Well, here we are on session ten of our second semester of* ***Growing in Prayer****, so we have covered twenty sessions on prayer. It is good to hear teaching on prayer, but it does not do a lot if it does not get into our prayer life. The enemy wants to keep that from that happening in my life and in your life. I am not saying that just as a warning. It is a fact of life. The enemy is after this issue, to shut down our life of prayer because nothing is more true to our identity than being a house of prayer. That is a big statement. Here in Isaiah 56:7, Isaiah revealed the eternal identity of the redeemed: that we would function as a house of prayer. He said, talking about the redeemed in this age and in the age to come, that God calls them a house of prayer. That is our eternal identity, though that is not the whole of our identity. There is nothing more true to being a redeemed human than to grow to prayer.*

*I want to say that again. There is nothing more authentic and true to being who God created us to be than to grow and to function and to operate in a spirit of prayer. There is nothing the enemy attacks more in our life than this issue. We were created in the image of God to interact with God. We were saved so that we could interact with God. That is what prayer is all about. That is our identity in this age and in the age to come. Again, there is nothing more truly human for a redeemed human than to operate and grow in this. There is nothing the enemy is resisting more in your life or in my life. Jesus quoted Isaiah. He wanted to strongly affirm what God the Spirit said through Isaiah. In Matthew 21:13 He said, “It is written,”—it is written, thus says the Lord—“ ‘My people shall function as a house of prayer.’ ”*

* + 1. 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.

*What does it mean to function as a house of prayer? For individuals and collectively as a family to operate in the spirit of prayer—that is what it means to be a house of prayer—that as individuals we grow in prayer and also as a collective people. I am talking about the Body of Christ in the whole earth; I am not talking about only here locally.*

*To function as a house of prayer in a very simple definition—I have used this over the years—God speaks and He moves our heart. Then we speak the very thing back to God, and it moves His heart. Then He opens His hand and releases His resource into the earthly realm.*

*Let me say that again. To be a house of prayer God speaks His Word to our heart. We are reading the written Word that God the Holy Spirit impresses upon us. He speaks His Word to our heart, and it moves us. Wow, revival is coming! Wow, there is a breakthrough in my life! Wow, God is going to do this…! It touches us, and it moves us. God speaks His Word; it moves our heart. We speak the Word back, and it moves His heart. Then as the result of that, He opens His hand and releases His resource into the earthly realm. Now His resource is more than just money. It is creative wisdom, it is unity, it is the power to walk in righteousness, and it is favor. There are many, many different dimensions of His resource.*

*Engaging in prayer is the primary means of releasing the power of God into the earthly realm. Why, why did God ordain it this way? Because we are not just a house of prayer in this age, we are a house of prayer a billion years from now in the resurrection. Did you know even with a resurrected body you will still live in prayer? You will speak things to God that He puts in your heart and it will release His resource into the earth even in the age to come. Prayer is not over when you meet the Lord. Prayer goes to a whole other level when you meet the Lord. Jesus even now is at the right hand of the Father functioning in intercession and prayer. I mean here He is fully God, fully Man in a resurrected body, and He still is functioning in prayer.*

*Why is it that God’s power is released most through prayer? Because that is our eternal identity. Again, that is not the whole of our identity. We are His family, we are His Bride, and we are His sons and daughters, His children. We are the Body of Christ; we are a royal priesthood. The reason that prayer releases His power is because that is how He created the human spirit in order to function at its highest. And that is why the enemy is attacking it.*

* + 1. 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.

*Now when God names somebody—and in this case it is the whole of the Body of Christ in history—when God names someone or a people, it indicates how they function in the spirit. All of the names in the Word of God, when God gives a man or a woman a name, it is an indication of how they function in the spirit. Our greatest place of identity, our greatest place of power, our greatest place of honor, it is here we will experience the greatest honor–in prayer in the deep interaction with God.*

*That is why growing in prayer is not something only for folks that say, “I want to do this full time,” but not the rest of the people. No! This is the whole Body of Christ. Forever we are to grow in this subject; well, it is not a subject, it is a reality.*

* + 1. 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.

*It is important to say this. I cannot say this enough. The house of prayer in any city of the earth is the entire Body of Christ. It is not just the prayer ministries of that city; it is the whole Body of Christ. The house of prayer of Kansas City is not IHOPKC. The house of prayer of Kansas City is 1,000+ congregations; every born-again believer is part of the house of prayer.*

*I think of prayer ministries like IHOPKC as this; it is like we have a little cup of gasoline, and we are just throwing it on the prayer fires that are already in the city long before we were here. The Lord was wooing His people in prayer in every city of the earth where there is a house of prayer. They are just a catalyst, a servant ministry to throw a little cup of gasoline on the fire of prayer that has already been burning in that city long before that prayer ministry existed.*

1. The Centrality of Worship and Intercession in God’s Plan
	* 1. 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).

*Now let’s look at how central the very fact and subject of prayer is in God’s eternal plan. Prayer and worship have always been at the center of His purpose. They are among the few things we do now and will still do in the age to come. There are not that many things you do now* ***and*** *you do then. I want you to notice as we go through a few examples how central growing in prayer is to God’s government. “God’s government” means the way He releases His power; that is what I mean by His government. The way He rules and releases power is the subject of government.*

*Well, it starts around the throne of God. In eternity past, in the eternal sanctuary of Revelation 4, there are prayer and worship. Prayer and worship go twenty-four hours a day, night and day, and never cease. That is the core reality. That is where this thing begins.*

* + 1. Human history began in a “praying meeting” in Eden, where Adam walked with God (Gen. 3:8).

*Human history began in a prayer meeting in the garden of Eden. It was Adam walking with God in the cool of the day.*

* + 1. 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).

*Israel as a nation began in a prayer meeting. There they are: they are set free from Egypt, they go out into the wilderness, and they are at Mount Sinai. The mountain is a flame of fire, and it is the first corporate prayer meeting in history. There it is! God is talking, the people hear the voice of God, and they are talking back to God. Moses is in between, and the mountain is a fire. I mean it was like the upper-room fire of God on the day of Pentecost on a major level when the nation of Israel was born. They were born in a prayer room. Well, that is not really truly a prayer room, but a prayer meeting with the fire of God. What happened on the day of Pentecost in the upper room was a small version of what happened at Sinai. It is at that hour where one of the first things He ever spoke over Israel collectively as a nation was, “You will be a kingdom of priests,” which means you will grow in prayer, you will interact with Me in prayer, you will pray for the people, you will represent Me to the people. That was one of the very first things God ever said to Israel as a nation. It related to their identity as a house of prayer, that they would be a kingdom of priests.*

*Then notice the very first assignment He gave Israel after they came out of Egypt when they are at the mountain. Moses goes up on the mountain, and God says, “I want you to go tell them to do something. Their very first assignment, tell them to build Me a worship sanctuary so you can have prayer meetings in the wilderness.” That is what He said; that was their first assignment.*

* + 1. 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).

*We covered this in our last session. God’s purpose for His people to be a house of prayer was seen in a premier way in the life of David or his reign as king. One of the first things David did after he became king was to develop a worship sanctuary. He retrieved the ark, and he put singers and musicians around the ark. He released them full time. He established the full-time occupation of the singer, the musician—the intercessor using our language today—he had 4,000 of them.*

* + 1. 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.

25He [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)

*Then after that David said that God commanded him to command all the leaders of Israel after him to do this. Why did David command all the leaders in Israel after him to do this? Because God commanded him. David said, in effect, “It is not just because I am into worship and prayer. God commanded me to command all the kings after me to uphold this, to make this central in the nation of Israel.”*

*Why did God command this? Why was He so urgent and ardent about David commanding the kings after him? Because from God’s point view the people of God are a house of prayer, that is our identity. Again, there is nothing more true to our redeemed humanity than to function talking to God individually and talking to God together. Whether we are singing or speaking or hearing, it is that two-way interaction with the Lord.*

* + 1. 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).

*Jesus began His public ministry where? In a prayer meeting out in the wilderness talking to God, and the devil was there. Jesus ended His public ministry before the cross in a prayer meeting in the garden of Gethsemane. In between, for His three-and-a-half years of ministry, He spent long hours in prayer. Jesus emphasized prayer as the number one activity when He talked about the end times. We mentioned this a little last week.*

*When the greatest crisis in human history breaks out upon the planet—Jesus addressed this a number of times, several times—the activity that He emphasized the most is to make sure you are watching and you are praying. You know, I have asked the Lord over the years—I mentioned this last week—“But Lord, with all the needs and the crisis and the land and that hour in history, why wouldn’t You give Your people a little more instruction in the written Word of God?” I mean the primary thing He said was to make sure you are praying, you are watching. You know you might have thought He would have said, “Make sure you store up some water, or make sure you do this.” I mean who knows what man would put on that list of what Jesus might or should have said but He did not. He said, “Make sure you grow in prayer. Make sure you are watching.” Because if you are in that place, number one, you will receive divine direction from the Lord. Number two, you will have that sustaining courage. Number three, you are in that posture to release the power of God in the midst of the crisis.*

* + 1. 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).

14These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication. (Acts 1:14)

*The Church was born in a prayer meeting, on the day of Pentecost in the upper room. The fire of God came on the 120. That was only a down payment of where this prayer ministry is going when the Lord meets His people as He comes in flaming fire and the whole sky is filled with fire. I mean we have the fiery prayer meeting on Mount Sinai when Israel was born as a nation, and we have the fiery prayer meeting in the upper room when the Church was born. The Spirit and the Bride cry out and the Lord comes in answer to a global prayer movement. He does not come in a vacuum. He comes as the Body of Christ worldwide in her bridal identity is saying, “Come, Lord Jesus!” They are saying it from the nations, crying out from the nations. He comes in answer to a global prayer movement.*

* + 1. 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).

42They continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine, fellowship…and in prayers. (Acts 2:42)

*Prayer was one of the highest priorities in the responsibility and job description of the New Testament leadership.*

* + 1. 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).

4“But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” (Acts 6:4)

* + 1. 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).
		2. 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.

*As I mentioned last week, many new prayer ministries all over the earth are springing up, little houses of prayer. A lot of these prayer rooms I talked about last week are one person at a time praying in a prayer room. Most of them do not have music. They are like, you know, a guy prays from two to three, the next guy three to four. The number I am getting from the folks who are studying the statistics is that there are like 20,000 of them. The majority of them have sprung up in the last ten years. Many of them, not the majority of the 20,000, but hundreds, and thousands probably even, are now adding music to them and going several hours a day with music. That is springing up all over the earth in the countries of the earth. That is a remarkable reality.*

*Here is my point: it is central to what God is doing. It is not the only thing He is doing. He is preparing the Church to walk in maturity, He is preparing the Church to bring in the Great Harvest, to be salt and light to impact their city and nation, and He is raising up the Church in a culture of prayer. He is doing a number of these things all dovetailing together.*

*It is very clear that one of the central things of these three or four things I just mentioned—they are all central, each of those are central—is that He is calling people not just to start a house a prayer, but far more than that, He is calling the Body of Christ to a culture of prayer. He is raising up houses of prayer to be catalytic in their area, thousands of them. It is a remarkable reality. Again most of them are small with small numbers. One or two in the prayer room at a time, but ten and twenty years ago they did not exist. So it is a tremendous forward movement if you are looking from a big-picture point of view.*

* + 1. 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).

*Before Jesus returns—I already mentioned it—the Holy Spirit will raise up the greatest prayer movement. The Spirit and the Bride, the Church in her bridal identity worldwide, will be crying out, “Come, Lord Jesus! Come, Lord Jesus.” The Lord is going to come in answer to that global cry of one or two billion believers around the world, some big number like that.*

* + 1. 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).

8All who dwell on the earth will worship him. (Rev. 13:8)

*Natural history ends in context of a global prayer movement. The conflict at the end of the age is the house of prayer led by Jesus that prevails over the house of prayer led by the Antichrist. Read Revelation 13. The Antichrist and Satan have one primary objective. I mean they have several primary objectives, but one of the very center focuses is to raise up a worldwide worship movement to the Antichrist and Satan. It is a prayer movement that he is after.*

*The Holy Spirit is raising up a prayer movement that will prevail over this one. The Antichrist will have a state-financed prayer movement. He will tie the economy of all the cities in the earth where he has his dominance to worshipping him. The businesses of the earth that are connected with him will be connected to the worship mandate that the Antichrist has. This is a remarkable reality.*

*The earth is not moving towards atheism; the earth is moving towards a robust spirituality in the dark realm and in the light realm. A robust spirituality is going to fill the earth. The people who hate Jesus will be deeply involved with Satan and worship. They are not going to fade humanity away into a non-spiritual kind of condition. The people of the earth will be profoundly spiritual in the hour when the Lord returns. Spiritual in the negative sense of some deeply engaged in worship of Satan and the power of Satan and some deeply engaged in the right and godly sense with Jesus and the worship movement.*

*Again the whole Body of Christ is called to grow in prayer no matter whatever assignment they have, because all the Body of Christ has assignments in the marketplace and the home and all kinds of different ministries, and there will be a spirit of prayer and worship that will permeate those assignments.*

* + 1. 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).

11Yes, all kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him. (Ps. 72:11)

15So the nations shall fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth Your glory.
(Ps. 102:15)

*One of the primary activities of the kings of the earth in the millennial kingdom, in the 1,000-year reign, as mentioned in Scripture is that they will be worshippers. Yes, they will rule nations. Yes, they will know about economies. Yes, they will know about social infrastructure. Still, one of the primary things emphasized in Scripture in that hour is they will worship the Lord. That will be part of their identity and that will be part of their responsibility. They will carry themselves as worshippers, as the leaders of the nations of the earth in the millennial kingdom.*

1. The Vow That Changed History (Ps. 132)
	* 1. 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.

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

*My point is this: the fact that we are a house of prayer—again I am not talking about IHOPKC right now. I am talking about the whole Body of Christ in all of history—and that is one of our primary expressions of our eternal identity. God speaks and moves our heart, we speak and move His heart, and then He releases His resource into the earth. We are in this vibrant interaction with God as individuals and even corporately as spiritual families. This thread of reality is so clear when you take a big-picture look at redemptive history. Central to redemptive history is this man David, called “the man after God’s own heart.” I have been so inspired over the years by this look into David’s heart in Psalm 132. This is the man God called, “the man after My own heart.” We find in Psalm 132 a little bit about what David carried in his heart, even in his youth.*

*It says in verse 2 that David swore to the Lord, David made a vow to the Holy One. The vow or the oath he made to the Lord was this, verse 3, “Surely I will not go up to my house, I will not go up to the comfort of my bed, I will not give sleep to my eyes or slumber to my eyelids”—here it is—“until I find a place for the Lord, a dwelling place for the Mighty One.” Then he cried out, “Lord, arise to Your dwelling place! Arise to Your resting place.” So at the very center of his life, he made this vow. Even as a young man he made an oath. He said, “Lord, I am not going to make the comfort or the prosperity of my own house number one in my life.” David had a prosperous house, meaning his whole family and not just the residence he lived in. I am sure he had a nice house as well, as king of the nation. He meant house as in his whole family resource and family name and heritage. He said, “I will not give sleep to my eyes. I will not concern myself with my own personal pleasure in a way greater than this.”*

*Here is the issue. He said, “I have set my heart and vowed that you would have a place on the earth where Your presence and Your will would be manifest. Where the will of God and the presence of God would be released to the measure that You have ordained for my generation.” That was an oath David made. He was saying, “I long for You to be in a place where You are not striving with people, but You are resting. Where the will of God is done, the presence of God is manifested, where people are interacting with God.” Again, to the measure God ordains for whatever generation of history that different ones have lived in. It is this oath that has been very powerful. At the very heart of the mission movement, at the heart of the worship movement, is this oath to be radically devoted to the Lord.*

*Lord, we are going to interact with You and we are going to see a people that interacts with You. I do not mean a people like a congregation or one ministry; that is not what I mean. I mean the people of God in the cities of the earth, the nations of the earth. In our region we want to see Your people—many facets, many expressions—dwelling in and embracing the will of God, walking in the power of God, where the worth and the fame of Jesus is being manifested.*

* + 1. 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.
		2. 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.
		3. 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.

*In David’s generation that vow included putting singers and musicians, thousands of them, in place. He had 4,000, and undoubtedly there were more than that in training and in the whole system in the infrastructure. David was contending for the purpose of God in his generation to be fully manifested. He was contending for it in the spirit of prayer and worship. Beloved, we want to be people who are contending together with others in the Body of Christ—whatever part of the Body of Christ God connects us with—contending in worship and prayer, intercession with others, and crying out that the will of God would breakthrough in an unusual measure in our generation.*

*What David invested personally was so extravagant. When I think of what it would cost in time, money, and energy to have 4,000 singers and musicians mobilized for night and day prayer coming forth out of the city of Jerusalem, beloved, that was extravagant! I mean just the administration and the costliness of that kind of interaction with God. I look at him, I look at that, and I say, “Lord, David was serious about this!” This was not a summer inspiration that he had one time. He did it his entire adult life. He stayed with it. He engaged in it.*

* + 1. 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.
		2. 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.

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

*I think it is important to understand this commitment of David to go all the way, to be the man of prayer, to create a place for and to facilitate prayer, to inspire prayer, to help build it up in any way that he could in his generation. Now everyone is not like David. Not everyone has the ability to facilitate it. Whatever measure of influence you do have—you may only have influence over two people, but it is the principle that I am talking about. David used his influence and his resources to facilitate people interacting with God in this deep interchange like this, even in collective ways.*

*It was this zeal that David had, which brought him a lot of reproach. He bore a stigma in Israel, not outside of Israel, inside of Israel. He bore a stigma in the believing community because of his zeal. Look what David said in Psalm 69. He said, “It is for Your sake I bore reproach.” He was saying in effect, “It was not because I had some personal ambition to be king and I did all this political networking to make sure I was king, and so people were mad at me because of my networking.” He said, “No, it was for Your sake I bore this stigma. I became a stranger to my own brothers.”*

*David had seven older brothers, and they looked at him and said, “You are weird!” He said that he was like a stranger. That was negative; he meant they were saying, “David, you are not really like us. You are different and we do not mean that in a flattering way.”*

*He gave the reason in verse 9. He said, “It was zeal for Your house.” Even as a young man he had zeal. I just imagine—I am kind of now just guessing—that David dreamed of the day that would come where the people of God would worship and cry out to God. It was zeal for the house, for that house of God. That is the place, the worship sanctuary. Of course the house of God was and is more than just the sanctuary where they worshipped. The house of God in one way is all the people of God, but he was actually talking even about the sanctuary. He said, “Zeal for Your house has consumed me; it has eaten me up.” One translation says, “Consume me.”*

*Now notice, “And the reproaches of those that reproach God have fallen on me.” He was saying, “I love Your house, and I am going to put my time, my energy into it. I am going to facilitate it in any way I can in whatever way I can make it work. My brothers are mocking me and the very reproaches that You are reproached with God, now they are reproaching me. They are accusing me like they accuse You.”*

*He got really specific in verse 10, “When I wept, when I chastened my soul with fasting; that became my reproach.” In other words, “They looked at me, and they said, ‘Stop it, David! Dial down, settle down, and draw back.’” He continued, “I made sackcloth my garment. I became a byword to them; they mocked me.” He went on in the next verse, “The drunkards in the taverns sing their songs about me to mock me.” They sang songs about David in the taverns mocking him. He said, “It is because of my zeal for You.”*

*I have seen people under the banner of zeal for God do so many eccentric and bizarre, off-the-wall things they should not be doing in the name of zeal. I could spend an hour telling you examples of people who were exhibiting their flesh and carrying on in a religious spirit in the name of zeal, and they bore reproach. That is not what I am talking about. I have so many examples I could entertain you for a full hour with them.*

*Here I am talking about the real thing. I am talking about doing this with a humble spirit, with a responsibility about life but refusing to back down, pressing in. The culture was saying to stop. I mean in David’s day it was the redeemed that were telling him to stop. He said, “No, I am consumed with zeal, and I will bear the reproach.”*

* + 1. 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.
		2. Find out what God is doing in your generation and fully throw yourself into it.

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

1. REsponding to the growing Crisis in the World
	* 1. 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).

1Why do the nations rage…? 2The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying, 3“Let us break Their bonds in pieces and cast away Their cords from us.”…7“The Lord [the Father] has said to Me [Jesus], ‘…8Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance.’” (Ps. 2:1-8)

*Again I am not talking about having a house of prayer ministry. You understand I am talking about a global reality of the whole Body of Christ functioning in their prayer identity, the house of prayer identity.*

*The greatest crisis of human history is yet future; the greatest crisis of human history is down the road. We do not know how far. It could be a little bit further than we think, or it could be a little sooner than we think. We do not know. We know the signs of the times that are written in the Bible, and many of them are escalating on a global level, but still it might be a little while yet and it might not be a little while. We do not know. It may stretch out some decades. It may stretch out longer than that, or it may not. Nobody knows.*

*I know this; that in that crisis, when it comes to a full intensity, the solution for the planet is for the people of God to function as a house of prayer. Because when it is functioning as the house of prayer, they will be in interaction with God, and they will get divine direction. They will get His creative wisdom for their situation. Functioning as a house of prayer, in that interaction, they will be supplied with courage instead of wilting in fear and all the crazy things you do when fear dominates your life. They will be emboldened with courage, a supply of courage, an ongoing supply. Then, in that place of interaction, they will be releasing the power of God in the place where the crisis is.*

*Well, it is not an accident or nor is it surprising that David is the man who built the house of prayer in his generation in that unique way with the singers and the musicians, the 4,000 of them. David prophesied about the end-time crisis. Now this crisis has some application throughout church history, but it comes to a crescendo in the generation the Lord returns. David said in Psalm 2:1—we have gone over Psalm 2 many times but we will just spend sixty seconds on it or so—he said, “Why are the nations raging?” Beloved, it is going to go beyond reproach and stigma! The nations will rage against the leadership of Jesus much more than mock Him. The kings of the earth and the leaders of society will use their resource against the Lord and against His Christ far more than mocking, far more than a few laws where they take away our tax status. Some folks worry that they might take away our tax status. I think that is a given. I mean eventually those things are probably going to happen. I believe that is the least of our concerns if you believe where this thing is going. Let’s not worry and start negotiating how to nuance our speech and keep ourselves from really being bold because we are afraid we are going to lose our tax status. Beloved, the kings of the earth will be raging, and they will have financial resources, legal systems, and military authority over their armies. They will have so much authority to operate against the Lord and His Christ.*

*In verse 3, they want to drive the Word of God and the influence of the Word out of culture. They see the Word of God as bonds that enslave them. They think that if we can get rid of the Word of God, we will be liberated as humans. We will be finally set free into our human potential. They see the Word of God as slavery, as bonds and chains. They want to cast it off. We see this thing emerging right now.*

*Here is the part I want to look at: verse 7. David by the spirit of prophecy looks at the response of the Lord, of the Messiah, of Jesus. At that time, 1000 years BC, he did not know His name was Jesus, but he saw the Messiah by the Spirit of God, by the spirit of prophecy. What is the Messiah doing in the hour of the crisis? He is asking the Father in intercession for His authority over the nations to be loosed. As the Head of the Church He is leading His people in unity with Him. “Father, release My inheritance, My rightful authority over the nations.” Jesus is pictured in the drama in the place of intercession.*

*Beloved, talking about central! Prayer is central. I mean Jesus could have been pictured in any kind of way here. There are many, many different ways that would be biblical and wholesome and helpful. By the Spirit of God He was pictured in the place of intercession. We know from the New Testament perspective He is leading His Church as the head of the Body in prayer. He is causing His people to cry out for His authority to be released in a greater way to be seen and known in the natural world.*

* + 1. 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.

12“Turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting…and with mourning.” 13…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. 14Who knows if He will turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind Him…? 15Blow the trumpet in Zion, consecrate a fast, call a sacred assembly…28It shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh. (Joel 2:12-15, 28)

*Well, in the great Psalm 2 crisis, the kings of the earth and leaders of society are seeking to cast the Word of God out of the culture with rage, using their resources, “We want the name and influence of Jesus gone from the nations.” Jesus is interacting in intercession. We know from Joel, the book of Joel, what God wants us, His people, to do in the hour of crisis. This is of course true throughout history, but in the hour of the greatest time of crisis that is yet down the road—and again we do not know how far down the road. It could be a ways down the road, but we do not know—it is true, and even before the crisis comes to a full pitch. There is plenty of crisis now in order to engage in the way that Joel says. Here is what Joel says. In the midst of the crisis, people of God, here is what you need to do: function as the house of prayer. That is what he is saying in essence. In the crisis, do not run for the hills, do not cower in compromise, but function as the house of prayer crying out to God in wholeheartedness. Use your place in covenant with God. When there is no human remedy, bring God into the situation through your covenant relationship.*

*The Body of Christ in this place, this is the dignity we have: He calls us the house of prayer. That is what Joel 2 is really saying. Function as the house of prayer. He says, “Turn to Me in fasting, prayer, and mourning. Turn away from your sin.” Read the whole passage in context. “Return to Me” because prayer meetings without a wholeheartedness towards God at the heart level, prayer meetings without sincerely seeking to connect with God are just religion; that is just a religious exercise. God is not into prayer meetings; He is into sincere interaction with His heart in prayer meetings.*

*So He says, “Turn to Me.” He is saying to the whole Body of Christ, “This is about relationship. It is you and Me together. It is us together, talking, interacting. Shut some things off, turn your attention away from some things, and talk to Me. Settle some issues; settle the compromises. Prioritize interacting with Me, and I will break in in power.” He says, “Turn to the Lord,” verse 13.*

*Here is our confidence; here is why we can turn to Him. He is very gracious; He is very merciful. Look at this. He has great kindness. Here is a setting where there is a national crisis coming to Israel—that is the context—because of their sin. The Lord is saying, “If you will turn, I will be very kind to you.” Beloved, this is amazing! I mean Israel was in deep sin when this passage was written. The Lord says that you can be sure if you turn to Me I will respond to My people with great mercy, great kindness. Look at this, “I will relent”—I will cause the harm that is coming to be delayed, to be reduced, to be removed—There are different ways that the Lord relents from the harm, different measures. Sometimes it is delayed, and sometimes it is greatly minimized. It would have been much worse if the people of God did not cry out. Sometimes it is completely removed; the harm does not come, or it is completely lifted.*

*In verse 14, the prophet Joel says, “Who knows?” You do not know the measure or the timing or the way God would relent. You do not know how He is going to do it. Is He going to do it this hour? Next hour? The next decade? This decade? This way? That way? This region of the earth? That region of the earth? You do not really know. You know He is a God who relents. Relents means He changes what was coming, what was about to be released. The harm, He causes it to be reversed. Joel says, “You do not know exactly how or when, but you know this: He is a God that relents. What is in His heart is to leave a blessing behind Him.” I mean we have a God with whom we are in covenant who, when crisis comes, says, “I am so kind! My desire is to turn the disaster zone into a place of blessing”—a revival center if you want to use those terms.*

*Verse 15, Joel says, “Blow the trumpet! Blow the trumpet.” In other words, make this message known. That is what I am doing right now. That is what you do. You do not need a pulpit to blow the trumpet. You can do it, you know, on Facebook. You can do it in one-on-one fellowship. You blowing the trumpet does not necessarily mean you have a thousand people listening to you. You might only have two people listening to you, but you are blowing the trumpet in your way. You are sounding the alarm that trouble is at hand and there is an answer.*

*When they blew the trumpet, they were saying, “Trouble is coming!” When they blew the trumpet, they were saying, “Gather together the people of God and cry out.” They blew the trumpet to gather the people to cry out to God. They blew the trumpet when the enemy army was approaching. So they blew the trumpet on two occasions, well, actually a few more occasions than that.*

*Verse 15, “Blow the trumpet.” Make it known. “Call a solemn assembly. Call a fast.” There are times you add fasting to the prayer meeting. We do not have our confidence in fasting; we have our confidence in Jesus. Fasting in our weakness and our brokenness sets us in a place in the grace of God where we are positioned before Him, where our hearts are tenderized, we receive more at the heart level, we receive more, and we receive it faster.*

*Verse 28, the prophet says, “And after this it shall come to pass afterwards”—after you blow the trumpet, after you repent, after you cry out to Me. Read the whole passage—afterwards My Spirit activity will increase. It is not just a one-time outpouring. He is saying that My Spirit will move in a greater dimension; that is the practical application for this.*

* + 1. 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.

18Who is a God like You, pardoning iniquity…because He delights in mercy. (Mic. 7:18)

* + 1. ***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.

14“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)

*God relents. He desires to leave a blessing behind* ***if*** *His people will cry out to Him. Not a one-time prayer meeting, although I believe in one-time prayer meetings and that was what Joel was talking about there. You know it might have been a couple of days. I do not know the setting there, exactly how they did it, but it is the principle. God wants His people to function in their true eternal identity as a house of prayer. That is what we do in this age and that is what we do in the age to come.*

*Again, back to Adam, the human race was born in a garden in context to a prayer meeting when Adam was walking in the cool of the day. Israel was born at a mountain, flame of fire in a prayer meeting. The book of Acts was born in a prayer meeting. Jesus birthed His ministry in the prayer meeting. He is going to return to a global prayer meeting. The kings of the earth and all the redeemed in eternity will continue in prayer. This thing is core to who we are as humans, redeemed humans.*

*There is nothing more true to who we are than this. It is not the calling of that guy over there. I have heard this over the years, “Well, I am not really called to the prayer thing.”*

*I say, “Wow, you know I actually understand,” and I hug them and I bless them. They are discouraged so I do not give them a sermon. Once they get encouraged and they ask me what I think, I answer, “Of course you are called to prayer. You know that does not mean you are called to do it as your job, but if everyone is called to prayer, are you kidding? It is not your duty. It is our glory! That is how it operates. That is how humanity operates at its highest. It is how the power of God is released. It is the interchange with the glorious God.” I say, “Of course you are called to prayer.” You do not have to tell them that the first time they tell you they are not. They normally have something else on their mind, so love on them a little bit. You do not have to tell everybody everything you know every time you talk to them.*

* + 1. ***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
		2. ***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.

*Well, let’s end it with this, 2 Chronicles 7:14. If My people who are called by My name, if they will humble themselves, if they will seek My face, pray, turn—but pray too. Not just turn, but turn and pray. Not just pray, but pray and turn. Do both—God says, I will hear. It is My nature to hear. It is the nature of My people to pray; that is the nature of the relationship. The healing, restorative power will be released in families, individuals, businesses, churches, and cities. Healing will flow, but you have got to do it My way because I am a God of relationship. I want to interact with you. Amen and amen. Let’s stand before the Lord.*