

NEW LIFE CHURCH – IN PURSUIT OF HIM

THE GLORIOUS PRIVILEGE, PLEASURE & TRANSFORMING POWER OF ENCOUNTERING GOD

I. THE GLOBAL END-TIME WORSHIP, PRAYER & MISSIONS MOVEMENT

A. Right now, the Holy Spirit is establishing the most powerful *worship* (Isa. 42:10-13), *prayer* (Lk. 18:7-8; Rev. 22:17) and *missions* movement (Mt. 24:14), culminating with Jesus' return. Jesus doesn't return at any moment or unilaterally, but in direct response to His people throughout the nations singing back their King!

Isa. 42:10 Sing to the Lord a new song, His praise from the ends of the earth... 13 The Lord shall go forth like a mighty man; He shall stir up His zeal like a man of war... He shall prevail against His enemies.

B. Although we typically categorize worship, prayer and missions into *three distinct movements* they are really only *one movement* to God, having *three distinct* expressions that are unified by *agreement* with God.

1. Worship – Agreement with *who God is* (i.e. You are holy, worthy, beautiful, etc.)
2. Intercession – Agreement with *what God plans* to do (i.e. pour out Spirit, kingdom come, etc.)
3. Missions – An *invitation* into agreement with *who God is* and *what God plans* to do.

C. I saw this reality in 1998 (Mal. 1:11). Worship, prayer and declaration will not just be *functions* that God's people perform, but *eternal realities* that we will embody. We won't just *do* it, we will *become* it (Rom. 12:2).

Mal. 1:11 From the rising of the sun, to its going down, My name shall be great... in every place incense shall be offered to My name, and a pure offering; For My name shall be great among the nations...

II. THE COMING CONVERGENCE AND GOVERNMENTAL SHIFT FROM HEAVEN TO EARTH

A. At the core of this global movement is *presence-based worship* and God's desire for *intimate encounter* (Ps. 22:3; 27:4; Mt. 18:20)! His desire has always been to dwell in unhindered face-to-face communion with His people in the paradise-like conditions of the Garden of Eden *on the earth* forever (Rev. 7:15; 21:3; 22:4)!

Rev. 21:3 Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He [Father] will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them [on earth] and be their God... 22:4 They shall see His face...

B. Therefore, the centerpiece of God's eternal plan is the *full convergence* of the heavens and earth, as it was in the beginning (Gen. 1-3; Eph. 1:10). God is releasing grace to establish *kingdom communities* that pray for *missions*, with *music*, from *intimacy* and are patterned after the liturgy of heaven (Mt. 6:10). These *apostolic prayer centers* in agreement "on earth as in heaven" are the *first place* of convergence (Ps. 22:3; 132:1-5)!

Eph. 1:10 that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him.

C. The governmental center of the universe is God's Throne (Dan. 7:9-10; Rev. 4) and worship-driven prayer fueled by the beauty of God is the *primary way* He releases His governmental power (Isa. 42:10-13; Rev. 5:8-10; 8:3-6; 15:3-4; 22:17). The seraphim, uniquely created with capacities to behold, comprehend and declare the revelation of God have led the heavenly liturgy since creation (Isa. 6:1-5; Rev. 4:6-11). Yet, after the Church has fully matured (Eph. 4:13; 5:27) the seraphim's role seems to shift (Rev. 6:1), as the Bride of Christ takes her eternally ordained place of governmental leadership in beholding His beauty and declaring His glory to the rest of the created order from the Throne, eventually on the earth (Rev. 5:8-10; 21:1-8; 22:4)!

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III. UNDERSTANDING THE ETERNAL IDENTITY, FUNCTION AND ORDER OF THE CHURCH

A. Prior to the return of Jesus, the *Church* that He is building (Mt. 16:15-19) will emerge as a mature Bride in *identity* (Rev. 19:7; 22:17), who eternally *functions* as a *House of Prayer* (Isa. 56:7; Mt. 21:13; Mk. 11:17; Lk. 19:46), according to the *order* of the *Tabernacle of David* (Ps. 27:4; Am. 9:11-12; Acts 15:16-17).

1. *Church* – Jesus said, “*I will build My Church*” (Mt. 16:18) and described us as “living stones” built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit (Eph. 2:19-22; 1 Pet. 2:5). The Greek word for Church, “*Ekklesia*” describes to who we are in our *identity* as the “called out assembly” of God’s covenant people.

Eph. 2:22 in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

2. *Bride of Christ* – Although we relate to our Father as sons and daughters forever, our highest identity throughout all eternity is a *bride* who has fully matured into God’s image and likeness, equally yoked in love and made comparable to Him (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:18, 24; Eph. 5:25-27, 31-32; Rev. 19:7; 22:17). This speaks of a position of privilege in our relationship with God to experience unhindered access to His heart.

Eph. 5:31 “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” 32 This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church.

a. Men *and* women are both “sons”, related to accessing God’s throne – kingdom, power, and glory.

Rom. 8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

b. Men *and* women are both the “bride”, related to accessing God’s heart – emotions, affections, delight.

Rev. 22:17 And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” (Eph. 5:31-32; Rev. 19:7)

c. The Father will present His Son a unified bride (Jn. 17), possessing *divine insight* (Jer. 23:20; 30:24), *godly character* (Eph. 4:11-15; 5:27) and *supernatural power* (Dan. 11:32-33; Mt. 16:18-19; Jn. 14:12).

Eph. 5:27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church... holy and without blemish.

3. *House of Prayer* – Jesus said, “*My house is a house of prayer*” (Isa. 56:7; Mt. 21:13; Mk. 11:17; Lk. 19:46). This describes what we do in our *function* as a kingdom of priests who eternally minister to God by agreeing with *who He is* in worship and *what He plans to do* in prayer (Mt. 6:9-13). The priestly ministry of prayer is the *primary way* God releases His governmental power through Jesus and His people, now and forever (1 Pet. 2:5, 9; Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 20:4; 22:5). This is seen in Jesus engaging in intercession *forever* (Ps. 110:4; Isa. 53:12; Lk. 22:32; 23:34; Rom. 8:34; 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 5:6, 10; 6:20; 7:11, 15, 17, 21; 1 Jn. 2:1).

Rev. 5:8 The 24 elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp [worship music], and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. 9 And sang... “You... have redeemed us... out of every tribe... 10 And made us a kingdom of priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth.”

a. The Church are the *only ones* on the earth with authority to contend against the powers of darkness.

Mt. 16:19 I will give you the keys [authority] of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

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b. Our authority in prayer is founded upon our agreement with *His identity* and *His will* (Mt. 6:10; 16:18-19). Our volume, hype or talent does not motivate or manipulate God to do more. Since God inspires all Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16), praying *biblical prayers* ensures agreement with His perfect will.

1 Jn. 5:14 This is the confidence that we have... if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 15 And if... He hears us... we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

c. God releases a greater measure of grace in each geographic region according to the faith-filled words of agreement from His covenant people (2 Chr. 7:14; Joel 2:12-17; 28-32; Acts 1:4-5, 14; 2:1-4, 16-19).

2 Chr. 7:14 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... forgive their sin and heal their land.

4. Tabernacle of David – The LORD said, “*I will raise up the Tabernacle of David*” (Am. 9:11-12; Acts 15:16-17). This describes the order in which we function as a house of prayer (i.e. Davidic order), which is from the place of encountering God in day and night prayer with worship (prophetic music/singing), that is fueled by the beauty of God and is the primary catalyst for world missions (Am. 9:11-12; Acts 15:16-17).

Am. 9:11 “On that day I will raise up the Tabernacle of David, which has fallen down, and repair its damages; I will raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old... (Acts 15:16-17)

a. A “key” to understanding the restoration of the “Davidic order” is that it is a *governmental movement* (Isa. 22:22; Rev. 3:7) that combines *worship music* and *intercession* as it is in heaven (Rev. 5:8), as the primary means of releasing God’s power on earth to bring in the great harvest and *possess* the remnant of Edom, speaking of the Arab Islamic villages now occupying ancient Edom (Am. 9:12; Acts 15:17).

Am. 9:11 “I will... rebuild it as in the days of old; 12 That they may possess the remnant of Edom [Islamic villages], and all the Gentiles who are called by My name,” says the LORD who does this.

b. Amos linked the *restoration* of the Davidic order to the *acceleration* of the great harvest (vs. 11-12) in the *generation* in which Israel was restored to her land forever (vs. 14-15). We are in this generation!

Am. 9:14 I will bring back the captives of My people Israel [1948]... 15 I will plant them in their land, and no longer shall they be pulled up from the land...

B. The Holy Spirit is setting *prophetic musicians* and *singers* who minister to God day and night, as a full-time occupation of work. The depth of intimate revelation they will release through song will produce the *same response* throughout the nations as when Isaiah encountered Jesus face-to-face (Isa. 6:1-5; 24:14-16).

Isa. 6:1 I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple... 5 So I said: “Woe is me, for I am undone! ...For my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.”

Isa. 24:14 They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing; for the majesty of the Lord... 16 From the ends of the earth we have heard songs: “Glory to the Righteous!” But I said, “I am ruined, ruined! Woe to me!”

C. God’s end time strategy of worldwide redemption two-fold. First, He will *shake everything* that can be shaken (Heb. 12:25-29). Second, He will *magnify the beauty* of Jesus before all nations (Isa. 4:2) and they shall come to Jesus– the Desire of All Nations (Hag. 2:6-9; Zeph. 2:11). We partner in prayer to release both!

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IV. THE HEART OF DAVID – TO DWELL, BEHOLD AND INQUIRE (PS. 27:4)

A. At the heart of this “Davidic restoration” is the relentless desire, like David to encounter God (Ps. 132). His lifelong preoccupation was to *dwell* in His house, *behold* His beauty and *inquire* in His temple (Ps. 27:4).

Ps. 27:4 One thing I have desired of the Lord, that will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple.

B. God doesn’t *need* us to be with Him, as if He has some unmet need or is lonely. He’s been eternally satisfied in the abundant pleasures of the Godhead forever (1 Jn. 5:17). Yet, in the overflow of the intimate communion and love They enjoy together, we are invited into the holy fellowship of the Godhead (Jn. 17:20-26; Rev. 3:20). Why? We are the only beings *created* for it (Gen. 1:26-27; 2:23-24; Eph. 5:30-32), it brings God *pleasure* (Song 2:14; 4:9; 6:5; Isa. 62:4-5) and is the place we experience true *eternal life* (Jn. 17:3).

C. Eternal life is not *only* “living forever” and possessing *quantity of days* , but is centered on the *quality of days* we live, flowing from knowing Him *who is* Eternal Life (Jn. 11:25; 14:6; 17:2-3; 1 Jn. 2:25; 5:11, 20). As grow in the experiential knowledge of God we are progressively transformed into His image (2 Cor. 3:18).

Jn. 17:3 This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ...

D. Jesus corrected the “spiritual” of His day for trusting in eternal life through a purely academic study of the Word apart from cultivating a present-tense relationship with Him (Jn. 5:39-40). We “come” to Jesus by consistently searching the Scriptures with a teachable spirit (Acts 17:11) and asking Him questions (Ps. 27:4). The *written Word of God* was given to us as a great gift, so that we may experience the *Living Word of God* !

Jn. 5:39 You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.

E. Spiritual disciplines alone *do not* guarantee eternal life (Mt. 7:21-23; Rev. 2:1-7; 3:14-22), but merely guide us to the River of Life that we may drink if we choose to (Rev. 22:1). Due to being *immersed* in a culture that appears to be engaged and *overfamiliarity* with language, even the Body can forget the Head!

Rev. 2:1 “The church of Ephesus write... 2 “I know your works, your labor... 3 and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name’s sake and have not become weary. 4 Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. 5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place...

F. Scripture insists that encountering God is the *one thing* needed (Lk. 10:38-42). Mary *chose* the good part. She wasn’t unusually anointed to encounter Jesus, but rather she *chose* it. I remember asking, “But LORD, who will do all the work?” He said, “You will and you’ll bear more fruit, because you’ll work the *right way* ” (Jn. 15:5). People don’t get burned out from doing *hard work* they get burned out from doing *wrong work* !

Lk. 10:38 Martha welcomed Him into her house. 39 And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus’ feet and heard His word. 40 But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, “Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me.” 41 And Jesus answered her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. 42 But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.”

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V. GROWING IN INTIMACY WITH GOD BY ENCOUNTERING JESUS THROUGH THE WORD

A. Scripture reveals *two stages* of receiving from the Word - *milk* and *meat* (Heb. 5:12-14; 1 Pet. 2:2). *Milk* is receiving truth from someone else's digested meat. *Meat* is learning to eat the Word of God and extract the nutrients for yourself through the *experiential knowledge* of encounter (Ezek. 2:8-3:4; Rev. 10:8-11).

Heb. 5:12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles... of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. 13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. 14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age... who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern good and evil.

B. Growing in the experiential knowledge of God is synonymous with growing in *intimacy* with God. I am most *intimate* with those whom I *know* the most. Therefore, the *more I know* about a person the *more intimate* I am with them. However, this is not purely *cognitive* knowledge gained by memorizing facts about Him, but growing in the *experiential* knowledge of how God *thinks, feels* and *acts* by encountering Him. We study God like we would study a flower or a sunset; beholding Him and drinking in the beauty (Ps. 27:4).

C. There are *three stages* to growing in intimacy with God:

1. *Invitation* (menu): Intimacy begins with His *desire* for dynamic relationship with us at a deep heart level not just *positionally* through salvation or *functionally* as anointed laborers (Mk. 3:13-15; Jn. 15:9, 16; 17:24-26). God doesn't need us, He desires us! God not only loves us, but He really likes us!

Jn. 17:24 Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me...

2. *Substance* (meat): The "heart of intimacy" is the *relational knowledge* of God gained by experiencing Him through encounter (Ps. 27:4). God doesn't hide things *from* us, but *for* us to discover (Pr. 25:2). Therefore, Holy Spirit was sent to escort us into the deep things of God's heart and mind (1 Cor. 2:9-11).

1 Cor. 2:9 "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor entered the heart of man the things God has prepared for those who love Him." 10 But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God... 12 that we might know the things... freely given to us by God.

3. *Overflow*: As we encounter the LORD through the Word our hearts are not only awakened unto *eternal life* (Jn. 5:39-40; 17:3) and receive spiritual *impartation* (Jn. 6:63), but we experience deep *interior pleasure* (Ps. 36:8), holy *fascination* (Ps. 27:4), the delight of *discovery* (Pr. 25:2), eternal *rest* that flows from our authentic identity (Mt. 16:18), end time *preparation* (Jer. 23:20), personal *transformation* – minds renewed, emotions restored, motives purified, bodies healed, as we delight to do God's will from the heart (2 Cor. 3:18), lasting *character development* (Eph. 3:16-19), and radical acts of *selfless love* (2 Cor. 5:14).

Jn. 14:23 "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word"

D. As often as the *invitation* is given, so also the *overflowing benefits* are taught as a motivation to persevere. However, without engaging in the *substance* of intimacy we can never attain to the overflow! Unfortunately, after receiving the invitation and failing to experience the overflowing benefits as quickly as desired, I've watched many sincere well-meaning Christians wrongly conclude: 1. The message is *false* and it doesn't work or 2. They are the *problem* and it just doesn't work for them. The truth is they need to persevere in substance!

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VI. HOW TO PRAY-READ THE SCRIPTURES

A. There are two broad categories of Scripture related to pray-reading the Word – *promises to believe* and *exhortations to obey*. We use both as our conversational material when we “come to Jesus” (Jn. 5:39-40).

Jn. 5:39 You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.

B. All Scripture is like a “neon sign” that is meant to point us toward a deeper relationship with Jesus.

Lk. 24:27 And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He [Jesus] expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. (Jn. 5:39-40)

C. The Holy Spirit is our Helper to guide us into all truth (Jn. 14:26; 15:26; 16:13-14) and reveal the deeper things of God to us (1 Cor. 2:9-11).

Jn. 16:13 When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth... 14 He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine [thoughts, emotions, etc.] and declare [reveal] it to you.

D. We have confidence that the Holy Spirit who *inspires* us delights to also *empower* us (Phil. 2:13).

Phil. 2:13 It is God who works in you both to will [inspire] and to do [empower] for His good pleasure.

E. Category #1: *Promises to believe*

1. When we read a *promise to believe* in the Word, such as “God loves us” or “God forgives us” or “God will provide, protect or direct us”, the truth becomes our conversational material with Jesus.

2. First, we *thank* God for that particular truth – turn it into a declaration of thanksgiving or trust. Example, “Thank you Jesus that You love me with the same intensity with which the Father loves You.”

Jn. 15:9 “As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.”

3. Second, we ask the Holy Spirit to give us *deeper understanding* of that truth. Example, “Holy Spirit give more understanding of how Jesus loves me with the same intensity with which Father loves Him.”

F. Category #2: *Exhortation to obey*

1. When we read an *exhortation to obey* in the Word, we turn it into conversation with Jesus just as we do a promise. There are many verses in the Scripture that exhort us to obey God in our time, money, speech, service, attitude, eyes, sexuality, relationships, etc. Jesus exhorted His people to abide in His love.

Jn. 15:9 “As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.”

2. First, we *commit* to obey the truth – we make simple declarations of our resolve to obey it. Example, “Jesus I commit to abide in Your love by setting my heart to search it out in the Scripture and live in it.”

3. Second, we ask the Holy Spirit to *empower* us to obey the truth by giving us wisdom, motivation, and strength to obey in specific areas. Example, “Holy Spirit help me to abide in Jesus’ love for me.”