

SPIRIT OF LIFE MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL, INC.
MINISTRY SCHOOL 3RD EDITION
SESSION 69 – PRAYER PART 12
THE PRAYER OF PRAISE AND WORSHIP PART 2

God answers believing prayer.

Hebrews 4:3

“3 FOR WE WHICH HAVE BELIEVED DO ENTER INTO REST, as he said, as I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.”

When you pray and really believe, you enter into rest. Then you can sing praises to God. It does not say that when you pray and believe you enter into a state of fretting. It does not say when you pray and believe that you enter into a state of worry, agitation, confusion, perplexity, and anxiety. It says when you are believing God, ***you enter into rest***. The believer’s prayer is the prayer that God hears and answers.

Matthew 21:22

“22 and all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer BELIEVING, ye shall receive.”

In **Acts 16:25** we know that Paul and Silas were believing God – they were in faith. We know they believed because the bible says those who believe enter into rest. Paul and Silas were singing praises to God because they were in faith.

Isn’t it strange how people pray about things, but instead of believing, they will go into a tirade of worry and doubt. Also, many people want to blame their problems on someone else when things do not work out as they planned. Often, they insist on continuing to talk doubt and unbelief and to keep on griping and complaining. But if they do that, their prayers are not going to work. Paul and Silas prayed and SANG PRAISES unto God. That was their faith in action.

Notice something else from **Acts 16:25** that says, ***“...[they] prayed, and sang praises unto God: and THE PRISONERS HEARD THEM.”*** Paul and Silas were not quiet about praising God, were they? If they hadn’t sung out their praises, then the other prisoners would not have heard them. In other words, Paul and Silas did not pray quietly.

Some people might say that they want to pray quietly because the Lord knows they have a song in their heart. The Bible says that out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks. We see that in **Matthew 12: 34**. So, if a song is in your heart, it is going to come out.

Paul and Silas were peculiar folks. They were faithful, because who in the world would praise and worship God like they did in the middle of the night at the midnight hour? Someone might say, Well, I would.

Well, I don't know whether you would or not. If you're not doing much praising God right now where you are, you probably wouldn't do very much praising in the middle of the night or at the midnight hour when the circumstances look bad. If you can't praise God where you are right now, how do you think you would praise God in prison with your back bleeding?

In **Acts 16:25**, it doesn't say what Paul and Silas prayed about. I do not know whether they prayed for deliverance or not, but I hardly think so. I believe they were just praying and thanking God for the privilege to suffer for His name. I say that because there is a significance between prayer and praise in this verse. It says ***“Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises unto God...”*** The word ***and*** is a conjunction. It hooks together praying and praising.

Let's read this verse in the Amplified Bible.

Acts 16:25 (Amplified)

“25 But about midnight, as Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God...”

I like that, don't you? Paul and Silas were singing hymns of praise. That's the kind of hymns they were singing -- hymns or songs of praise unto God. I believe what the Bible says. That in their prayer Paul and Silas were praising and thanking God, and as they did, not only did the prisoners hear them, but God heard them, and they were delivered.

Acts 16:26

“26 Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken, and immediately all the doors were open, and everyone's bands were loosed.”

As I said. I do not know if Paul and Silas were praying for deliverance. One thing I do know according to this scripture, is that the deliverance didn't come while they were praying. The deliverance came while they were praising for it, says Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises unto God, and suddenly there was a great earthquake. (Acts 16:25, 26)

It's no wonder some people's prayers never shake anything. Their prayers don't even move them into faith to believe God. Something happened when Paul and Silas prayed and praised God. If Paul and Silas would have been like most people in similar circumstances, they would have been griping and complaining, and these verses probably would have read like this:

At midnight, Paul and Silas griped and complained.

Silas said to Paul. "Paul."

Paul said. "Yeah,"

Silas asked, "Are you still there?"

Paul responded. "Well, where else could I be?"

Silas said. "I tell you my poor back has hurt me so bad. I don't understand, Paul, why God ever put this on us? I can't understand why God let this happen to us. He knows we've tried to serve Him and do our best!"

That kind of praying would have just gotten them further into the problem, instead of getting them out of it. If they had been like many Christians, Silas would have said, "I tell you, Paul, I never did get put in jail when I was serving the devil!"

We know what we are talking about! We have pastored for many years and have had church members tell us when they were in a test or a trial "I have never had it this rough when I was serving the devil!"

How do you help folks like that? Well, you just smile and say, "God will forgive you for saying that if you repent." But I believe we can learn something from Paul and Silas here in Acts chapter 16 if we pay attention.

After all, Paul and Silas were in trouble, weren't they? Their backs were bleeding. I'm sure they were hurting. They were in jail, and their feet were in stocks. They'd been cast into the

inner prison. It was dark there. But as someone once said, Paul and Silas were in jail, but they didn't let the jail get into them.

We believe this is the reason many people are defeated. They let the circumstances overtake them. They let them overcome them instead of overcoming the circumstance. After all, the tests and trials of life come to everyone, There are some trials that are peculiar to us as an individual human being living in this world.

Basically, the tests and trials we face are all the same, but it's the attitude we have during times of tests and trials that makes all the difference. How we look at a situation makes all the difference in the world as to how we come out of the test or trial or whether we come out of it at all.

I believe there is real truth in this passage in **Acts chapter 16**, as well as light and instruction to help us in our midnight hour, in our hour of tests and trials. We can do as Paul and Silas did in the midnight hour of our lives, when the storms of life come, and we don't understand why things have happened as they have when we've been trying to do our best.

Being in the Will of God Does Not Guarantee Easy Circumstances

Remember, Paul and Silas weren't in Philippi on a vacation. They were there to do the Lord's work. They weren't out of the will of God. Sometimes when things don't go right, people think, "Well, I must be out of the will of God.

I've had people say to me, what kind of sin, what awful sin, have I committed to cause God to put this on me? I tell them that God didn't send the test or trial they are facing. The devil sent it. **John 10:10** Says. ***"The thief cometh not but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy."*** It wasn't God who whipped Paul and Silas. It was ungodly men who did it. God didn't stir up those ungodly fellows. It was the devil who stirred them up. Some say, well God permitted it. What awful sin have I committed to cause God to permit this to happen to me?

If you think you're going to determine whether you're in the will of God by whether or not everything runs smoothly in your life, then you're mistaken. A life of ease with no rough or difficult places to endure or no sacrifice to make does not indicate whether or not a person is in God's will. If it did, then Paul never did get in the will of God in his entire ministry! He missed it from beginning to end. ***No, you cannot judge being in the will of God by whether or not you have tests and trials in life and obstacles to overcome.***

One evangelist was amused by pastors for many years. They would tell him, If I can't get my Sunday school attendance back up where it was at the highest point I'm leaving. Some pastors were upset because their Sunday school and the church attendance weren't going right.

Well, you don't judge whether or not you're in the will of God just because things aren't going the way you think they should. That kind of thinking would be funny if it weren't so sad.

I've also heard pastors say if I cannot get the finances this church needs then I am going to resign and leave. Many think because their finances are off that they are out of the will of God. Our church was small, and often people said we must be doing something wrong because it wasn't growing. We knew we were doing what God called us to do, regardless of the size of the church.

The church is made up of individual people. And just as individual people go through phases in their life, so do churches. A pastor cannot determine that he's out of the will of God just because his church is experiencing some difficult circumstances.

As for yourselves, never try to ascertain whether you're in the will of God by whether or not things run smoothly. Determine the will of God by listening to your own spirit and by doing just what they did in **Acts 13:2**. Wait upon the Lord, minister to him, until you know in your spirit what God wants you to do.

One pastor, new to the Pentecostal circle missed it one time. He had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit and become a Pentecostal, and he learned about putting out a fleece. He'd never heard about putting out fleeces in any church that he'd ever been a part of before, but he began to hear certain people; preachers and others, talk about putting out a fleece. So, he decided to put out a fleece, too. He decided that maybe he'd like to change churches and pastor another church, so he put out a fleece about whether or not he should take up another church.

Well, a certain church opened up and he was invited to preach, so he went. Before he left, he put out a fleece and asked the Lord that a certain sign would occur. He would accept it if that happened and look at it as a confirmation of the fleece, and that he should take this new pastorate, and change churches.

Well, the sign occurred, and he did take the church and by doing so he got fleeced! When he was finally able to leave that church, he was never so glad to get away from a place in all his life as he was that place. He should never have taken that church and should have left

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that church a long time before he did. But sometimes when you miss it, it's hard to get back on the right track again.

Later, that pastor went back to that church to hold the revival meeting and had one of the greatest meetings they'd ever had in the history of the church. But he went that time in the will of God because God had told him to go. He missed it previously when he followed the fleece instead of following God. He should have waited on God, ministered to God, and then he would have known what to do.

However, just because he was in the will of God pastoring the other churches he pastored, doesn't mean everything always ran smoothly. It doesn't mean that they broke records on Sunday, and it doesn't mean that finances had peaked every week above anything they've ever received before.

Yet, in pastoring those churches, this pastor knew that it was in the will of God. He knew it in his spirit. He knew in his heart that it was the right thing to be doing because he'd taken time to minister the Lord and wait upon him. He knew that was where God wanted him to be and at different times he would even speak to the Lord and say Lord, things are not running just right, but I'm not going to worry about it. I'm going to trust you to work it out.

The devil will just try to aggravate you to death with circumstances if you listen to him, but if you learn how to deal with the devil, you will be all right. If you don't, then the circumstances of life will overwhelm you. If Satan can get the least edge upon you, he'll just hound you and try to worry you to death. As believers we don't need to be easy prey for the devil. Rather, we need to spend our time ministering to the Lord.

Acts 13:2 Says they ministered to the Lord and fasted. Now I believe in fasting and I take some time to fast. But we must fast in the right way. One cannot fast under some conditions. If you did, it would be a confession of defeat. And I believe sometimes Christians would fast instead of just believing the Word, they'll do it instead of just taking God at His word. That kind of fasting will not benefit you if it's done from a position of doubt and unbelief in the word.

A certain pastor faced some dark circumstances in his life, but he would say to the devil, I want you to know that I'm not going to miss a meal or lose any sleep because I'm in faith and I'm standing on God's word.

You could also say, Lord, I know I have a certain responsibility because I'm a pastor here. I'm going to preach the Word. I'm going to treat everyone right and visit the sick and do the best I can. But as for the rest of it, I'm going to leave it up to you, Lord.

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When he did that, he had almost a constant revival. People were saved, healed, and filled with the Holy Spirit every single weekend. He could have become disturbed and could have been defeated because of conditions that existed.

One can do that very easily. We believe there is something in praise and worship and ministering unto the Lord that benefits us if we would just begin to practice this in our lives. We don't have to be disturbed, disquieted, or defeated because of tests and trials or difficult circumstances.

Ministering to the Lord in the Early Church

Let's look at a few expressions concerning praise and worship in the Word. We want you to notice a particular characteristic of the disciples in the early church. They were always praising and worshipping God.

Luke 24:50-53

50 And he [Jesus] led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them.

51 And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them and carried up into heaven.

***52 And they WORSHIPPED HIM, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy:
53 And were CONTINUALLY in the temple, PRAISING AND BLESSING GOD. Amen.***

Acts 2:46, 47

46 And they, CONTINUING DAILY with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with GLADNESS and SINGLENESS OF HEART,

47 PRAISING GOD, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

Notice the expression here. ***"... They, continuing daily with one accord, did eat their meat with gladness, praising God."*** This is what I want you to see. With these Christians, praising God was not something they did once in a while or just from time to time. No! because praise and worship were their way of life.

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We believe **verse 47** records the results of the believers' continual praise and worship where it says, ***“And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”***

Too many times, what happens is just about once every six months some believer gets prayed through and they have a high time praising and blessing God. If you were writing about people like that, **Luke chapter 24** in **Acts chapter 2**, you'd have to say, ***“Occasionally they praised God.”*** And for some believers you'd even have to say, ***“Semiannually they praised the Lord.”*** For others you'd have to say, ***“Annually they praised the Lord!”***

Right here in **Luke chapter 24** in **Acts chapter 2**, they praised God continually. The prayer of praise and worship should be a continual thing with us today, too. Then we'd see some of the same results that the early church experienced.

There's something admirable about the late Smith Wigglesworth that can be noticed in reading about him. He said: “The first thing every morning when I get out of bed, I jump out of bed. I don't just drag myself out, but I jump out, and when my feet hit the floor, I say, praise the Lord. And I praise God that way every morning.”

That's a good way to start the day, isn't it?

Someone who knew Wigglesworth said that he got out of bed and danced a jig every morning, praising God. That would be a good way for all of us to start the day. Too many times, we just drag out of bed. But we need to be excited about God and stay so excited that we daily jump out of bed praising Him.

Again, in **Acts 2:46**, we read, ***“...And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple...”*** Notice the phrase ***continuing daily***. They daily gathered together in the temple to praise God. ***Daily***. Also notice the phrase ***“with gladness and singleness of heart praising God.”*** [**vs 46, 47**]

I believe one reason the disciples had such gladness of heart was that they daily praised the Lord. Read the book of **Acts** and you'll see how effective the disciples were in everything they did for the Lord. The reason the disciples were effective was that they had this continual gladness of heart because they were continually praising God.

Acts 5:42

“42 And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.”

In **Acts 5:42**, the word “they” is specifically referring to the apostles. Yet, in the Early Church being effective in the body of Christ and the work of the ministry was not limited to the apostles.

For example, in **Acts 2:46 and 47** which we just read, “**they**” is not talking about the apostles; it is talking about everyone who was a believer in that locality. It included the laity or the lay members – the whole church. EVERYONE in the church was continuing daily to meet in the temple and minister to the Lord.

Developing a Habit of Praise and Worship

If we would just walk in the light of the Word and continually be in an attitude of praise and thanksgiving, we would be a witness to other people for the Lord. People would see our continual gladness of heart and would desire to experience that joy and gladness for themselves.

This is just one area in which the baptism of the Holy Spirit can be a help to us. Although a person can have joy and a thankful heart as a result of the new birth, the baptism of the Holy Spirit can help us in our praise and worship of God and enable us to be a powerful witness for the Lord.

The story is told of a denominational pastor that had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit years ago. After he received it with the evidence of speaking in other tongues, a friend who had been his roommate in seminary wrote to him saying he had heard that he had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit and had spoken in tongues. He wanted him to come over and tell him about it and to present it in his church on a certain Sunday. The pastor agreed to come, but did not arrive early for the service so he did not have a chance to speak with his friend, the pastor of the church.

When he arrived, the service had already begun. As the guest pastor stepped on to the platform, they shook hands and renewed their acquaintances. The visiting pastor wasn’t thinking much about it, but suddenly he shouted out loud, “Praise the Lord.”

The pastor of the church sort of jumped and then just looked at his guest. The visiting pastor began to feel a little self-conscious. After a while they were singing and as a woman sang the second verse of a song, the visiting pastor spontaneously said out loud, “Well, Hallelujah!” The pastor of the church jumped again and just stared at the visiting pastor. It happened a third time, and the visiting pastor said, “Glory to God.”

Then the pastor of the church introduced the visiting pastor to the congregation and explained that they had been roommates together in seminary. He said he appreciated the visiting pastor's ministry and without thinking the visiting pastor again said, "Glory to God."

You see, the visiting pastor did not think anything about it; those praises to God were automatic with him! He had simply gotten to thinking about the goodness of God and what God had done for him and was glad about it. He had this same gladness of heart that the disciples had in the Book of Acts.

The pastor of the church said to the visiting pastor, "I believe this is just a habit with you."

The visiting pastor said, "What do you mean?" He didn't even know what his friend was talking about.

The pastor said, "Well, every now and then you had said, "Praise the Lord" right out loud, or "Hallelujah", or "Glory to God" or "Thank you Jesus." I believe this is just a habit with you.

The visiting pastor said, "Well, if it is, it is a habit I never had before I was filled with the Holy Spirit!"

Praise God, it is a good habit to have! Incidentally, as a result of the visiting pastor's continual joy and praise, his friend was also filled with the Holy Spirit. He wanted the same gladness and spirit of praise the visiting pastor had.

The early church also had that habit of continually praising and worshipping God. The bible says in Luke **24:53** that the disciples were "**continually in the temple praising and blessing God.**" They continued to praise God daily with gladness of heart. [**Acts 2:46, 47.**]

God's Power is Manifested When His People Praise Him

There is a counterpart passage of Scripture to these verses which is found in the Old Testament. In **2 Chronicles chapter 20**, King Jehoshaphat and Judah went out against the enemy, the armies of the Ammonites, Moabites, and the people of Mount Seir. These enemies of Judah had banded together against Judah. From the natural standpoint, Jehoshaphat didn't have enough men or an army big or strong enough to withstand these enemy forces.

Jehoshaphat called a prayer meeting. The children of Israel fasted and prayed. Usually in the Old Testament the Spirit of God will move upon certain ones, like the prophets for

example, to bring a message to his people. The Spirit of God moved upon a young man in the congregation named Jahaziel. And he stood up and prophesied.

2 Chronicles 20:15, 17

“15 and he [Jehaziel] said, Hearken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat, Thus saith the Lord unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God’s...

17 Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you, O Judah, and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them: for the Lord will be with you.”

The Lord told the people not to have any fear, but to go out against the enemy, for the battle was the Lord's. So, the following morning the Israelites went out against the enemy, and the Bible says they put the praisers up front. [2 Chron. 20:21.]

Just picture this. The Children of Israel went out against three enemy armies that had banded together against the people of God. The enemy's armies consisted of trained soldiers with swords, javelins, and spears. Yet, Jehoshaphat sent the praisers out to meet them. The praisers were right up front leading the parade, so to speak. Jehoshaphat didn't have a man leading his army with a sword or a shield or spear, he only had those who were singing and praising the Lord.

2 Chronicles 20:21

“21 And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the Lord, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the Lord; for his mercy endureth forever.”

Notice what the Israelites did. They sang and praised God. They ministered to the Lord and sang praises to God, just as Paul and Silas had done in prison. I want you to notice something here. The children of Israel said, ***“Praise the Lord for his mercy endureth forever.”*** Evidently, they marched along singing, ***“Praise the Lord. For his mercy endureth forever.”*** What happened as a result of the Israelites singing praises to God? This is what happened as a result of the prayer of praise and worship.

2 Chronicles 20:22-25

“22 And when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten.

23 For the children of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of mount Seir, utterly to slay and destroy them: and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir; every one helped to destroy another.

24 And when Judah came toward the watch tower in the wilderness, they looked unto the multitude, and behold, they were dead bodies fallen to the earth, and none escaped.

25 and when Jehoshaphat and his people came to take away the spoil of them, they found among them in abundance both riches with the dead bodies, and precious jewels, which they stripped off for themselves, more than they could carry away: and they were three days in gathering of the spoil, it was so much.”

When the children of Israel began to sing and praise God, God did something. That's when God's power was manifested and the enemy was defeated.

I believe we need to have more praise services where we just take time to minister unto the Lord. Folks need to come to church to praise God and wait upon Him. We need to have services where we minister to the Lord, not just talk to one another. We do not need to come together to talk about one another. No, we need to minister to the Lord and brag upon him.

We need to sing praises to the Lord. I believe we'd have some mighty manifestations of God's presence if we would do that. Christians need to learn the importance of different kinds of scriptural praying, and one very vital kind of scriptural praying is the prayer of ministering unto the Lord, which means waiting upon the Lord in praise and worship.