

## LIVING THE PRIESTLY LIFE

### BY EXERCISING THE SPIRIT TO SING AND PRAY

Heb. 4:16 Let us therefore come forward with boldness to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace for timely help.

Eph. 5:18 And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissoluteness, but be filled in spirit,

Eph. 5:19 Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and psalming with your heart to the Lord,

Eph. 6:19 And for me, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known in boldness the mystery of the gospel,

### THE APOSTLES' LIVING BEING FILLED WITH SINGING AND PRAYING

When the apostle Paul spoke of the Christian life in the book of Ephesians, he specifically mentioned **singing hymns** and **praying** (5:18-19; 6:18). Both of these matters are related to our spirit. In order to sing hymns of praise to God, we need to "be filled in spirit," and when we pray, we need to pray "every time in spirit." Paul's writing was based on personal experience, and the book of Acts shows how the apostles lived. On one hand, they sang hymns of praise to God:

**Act. 2:47** Praising God and having grace with all the people. And the Lord added together day by day those who were being saved.

**Act. 16:25** And about midnight Paul and Silas, while praying, sang hymns of praise to God; and the prisoners were listening to them.

And on the other hand, they prayed.

**Act. 1:24** And they prayed and said, You Lord, Knower of the hearts of all, show us clearly the one whom You have chosen of these two

**Act. 6:4** But we will continue steadfastly in prayer and in the ministry of the word.

**Act. 9:40** And Peter put them all outside; and kneeling down, he prayed; and he turned to the body and said, Tabitha, rise up. And she opened her eyes; and when she saw Peter, she sat up.

**Act. 10:9** And on the next day as they were journeying and drawing near to the city, Peter went up on the housetop to pray around the sixth hour.

**Act. 13:3** Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

**Act. 14:23** And when they had appointed elders for them in every church and had prayed with fastings, they committed them to the Lord into whom they had believed.

This is how they lived in ordinary circumstances and in difficult circumstances. When Paul and Silas were in prison, they sang hymns of praise to God; their singing resulted in a great earthquake that opened the prison doors (vv. 19-26). When they encountered problems, they cried out to the Lord. They sang hymns in spirit and prayed in spirit. As a result, their spirit was strengthened and released.

#### LEADING THE SAINTS TO LIVE THE PRIESTLY LIFE BY FELLOWSHIPING WITH THE LORD

We should lead the saints to live a priestly life by praying and fellowshiping with the Lord in the Holy of Holies in a practical way. The Lord's greatest need today is to gain brothers and sisters who will live a priestly life according to grace. [We must come forward to the throne of grace to fellowship with God, and we must come forward with all the saints to serve Him as priests. This will cause God's purpose to be accomplished among us.](#) The leading in the church should be focused on this matter.

Concerning prayer, many saints have a great lack in the exercise of their spirit. In Christianity the situation is even more desolate. Even when hundreds or thousands of people gather together, very few pray in spirit. In Sunday worship services most people are listening, and although some are praying, very few are praying in spirit. We highly regard giving messages and listening to messages, but we pay little attention to praying and singing hymns in spirit; we are lacking in the **exercise and release of the spirit**.

#### THE THRONE OF GRACE BEING IN OUR SPIRIT

Even though we may know spiritual teachings, we can be short in our spiritual exercise. Objectively speaking, the Holy of Holies is in the heavens, but in order to subjectively enter into the Holy of Holies, we need to exercise our spirit. [The throne of grace is in our spirit](#) (Heb. 4:16). In John 4:14 the Lord Jesus said, "Whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall by no means thirst forever; but the water that I will give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into eternal life," and in 7:38 He said, "He who believes into Me, as the Scripture said, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water." [The Lord desires to become a fountain in us so that rivers of living water will flow out from us.](#) This can be seen in the New Jerusalem, which is a sign that relates more to our experience today than it does to prophecies of things in the future. Revelation 22:1 says, "He showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street." This verse speaks of the throne of God and of the Lamb. [God is in His Son, the Lamb, and His Son dwells in us. Hence, the throne of God is also in us.](#) This throne is related both to ruling and to giving grace because the flow from the throne is not a stream of fire for judgment (cf. Dan. 7:10) but a river of water for life. The stream of fire is for judging, whereas the river of water is for bestowing grace, moistening, and supplying. Furthermore, the tree of life that grows on this side and on that side of the river is also for supplying.

The reality of the New Jerusalem is realized in our spirit. God is present in both the New Jerusalem and our spirit. God is on the throne in both the New Jerusalem and our spirit. God as light with Christ as the lamp is shining in both the New Jerusalem and our spirit. Furthermore,

the river of water of life is flowing continually in both the New Jerusalem and our spirit. Today the throne of grace is in our spirit because our spirit is the Holy of Holies.

#### ALL SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES BEING REALIZED THROUGH PRAYER

If a person hears the gospel but is not willing to pray, what he hears and what he feels will not become real to him, no matter how much he has been touched. This can be likened to wrapping a package with string but not tying a knot in the string. Without securing the string with a knot, the package will not be secure. A person who hears the gospel but never prays is like an unsecured package. As soon as he encounters some difficulty, all the content in his “package” will be lost. However, if he prays, “O Lord, I am a sinner,” his salvation will become firm and secure; he will have a feeling that he has tied a knot. Similarly, [when we listen to a message, read the Bible, or read a spiritual book, we must tie a knot by praying about the things that have touched us](#). If we do not pray, we will be like an unsecured package.

[Our spiritual experiences become solid and firm within us when we pray](#). Consider the experience of consecration. We did not have an experience of consecration merely because we thought about consecration, saying to ourselves, “I have been purchased by God, and I belong to the Lord. I should consecrate myself, and I will.” [Instead, we prayed to the Lord, saying, “Lord, You purchased me with Your blood, and now I belong to You. I consecrate myself to You.”](#) With a few simple words we “tied the knot” in the matter of consecration. In the same way, [we need to pray in order to deal with our sins](#). If we do not pray, we will not experience the matter of dealing with our sins. [Whenever the Spirit touches us concerning any matter, we need to pray in order to gain the reality of this experience](#).

We hear messages, read spiritual books, and study the Bible, but we rarely pray. We have not tied many knots in our spirit; as a result, we have not been solidly constituted with spiritual experiences. Many of the messages that we hear reach our mind but do not enter into our spirit. Our problem is not that we need to listen to more messages but that we need to pray more. We have not received the content of the messages we have heard into our spirit because we have not tied the knot with prayer. Some saints have been listening to messages for many years, and even though they have a clear understanding of the truth, their spirit is weak. Their mind has been trained because they exercise their mind to understand, but their spirit is weak because they have not exercised their spirit through prayer. We urgently need to rise up to exercise our spirit by praying more. We must exercise our spirit until it becomes strong, living, and released. Then our spirit will be released when we go to a meeting or to visit the saints.

#### EXERCISING OUR SPIRIT TO SING AND PRAY

In our meetings we should lead the brothers and sisters to exercise their spirit more. The prayer meeting should involve less speaking of messages and more praying and singing. We are short of priests who burn incense and who sing; that is, we are short of praying and singing, which strengthens our spirit. Not exercising our spirit in the meeting is like trying to drive a car without turning the key. Every time we come to a meeting, we must first use our “key” to start the “engine.” [Singing and praying will kindle our spirit. If our spirit is weak when we sing a hymn, we must sing until our spirit rises up. The most important matter in the prayer meeting is to open our](#)

spirit and exercise our spirit. As long as the saints learn to turn to the spirit and pray from the spirit, we do not need to restrict the topics for prayer. We also do not need to consider and compose our prayers or be influenced by our environment. We should pray only according to our spirit.

The saints who can sing should help other saints to learn to sing. If our singing is not focused, the spirit of the hymns will not come forth. We should spend much time to learn how to sing hymns so that we can sing at any time and in any place. Singing hymns will cause the brothers and sisters to rise up, and it is not necessary to sing every stanza. For example, we can sing stanza 1 of Hymns, #250 repeatedly: "Spring up, well, with water; / Dig Thou, Lord, completely; / Dig away all barriers / That Thy stream flow through me." When a couple goes home after singing this stanza, they will be able to sing it together at home. Then the husband may ask his wife, "Are you springing up with water?" and the wife may ask her husband, "Are you digging within?" This kind of singing and speaking to one another will stir up and release their spirits.

The saints are active in their thoughts but not exercised in their spirit. We must increase our exercise of the spirit, digging a well in our being until the living water flows. There is a spring of living water in us. This spring is full of grace, mercy, peace, and power. Because it is easy for this spring to be plugged up, we need to continuously dig so that the Holy Spirit can flow out. As priests, our service is to dig a well to reach this spring of living water so that living water can flow out from the throne of grace. In this spring of living water there is life, light, mercy, and grace for our timely help; there is everything that we need.

We do not need to ask God to pour out the Holy Spirit upon us. Rather, we need to know the God who is indwelling us. All the fullness of the Godhead dwells in the Son bodily (Col. 2:9), and the Son is the life-giving Spirit dwelling in our spirit (1 Cor. 6:17; 15:45b; 2 Cor. 3:17; Rom. 8:16). All the riches of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are in our spirit; we only need to dig and let Him flow. In the meetings there is no need for a long message; rather, we should lead the saints to exercise their spirit by singing and praying. Furthermore, we should leave some time for the saints to pray at the end of the meeting so that they may realize the preciousness and the secret of prayer. We should pray in the meetings, and we should also pray at home and in other places. We must realize that we are New Testament priests. We should pray not only by ourselves but also corporately with other brothers and sisters.