

Kenneth Copeland: Intercession Provides the Holy Spirit With Opportunity

Editor's Note: This article originally ran in the February 1985 issue of Charisma.

The prayer of intercession is prayed on behalf of others. Through His Word, God has called the body of Christ to the ministry of intercession. "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks, be made for all men; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:1-4).

Very recently, during a time of fasting, God revealed to me that He is calling the church to rally around the prayer of intercession. We are to call on Him to pour out of His Spirit in these last days in great, unusual manifestations of His power. God is about to bring forth the grand finale. It will be the greatest production by the Spirit of God in the history of the human race.

We are the most privileged generation to have ever lived on this earth. We are blessed not only to witness these manifestations, but also to be the vessels through which His mighty power will flow.

The miraculous things that occurred in the early church as recorded in the book of Acts will be common among us in these last days. Intercessory prayer is the tool that the Spirit of God will use to bring them into manifestation.

We are entering into the most exciting move of the Holy Spirit

that the church has ever experienced. I believe that this is the last big thrust to harvest the souls of this world into the kingdom of God.

Why are we called to intercession? Because God does not do anything in the earth without the cooperation of a man. He intends that we work together with Him to accomplish His will. Man still is in authority in the earth. God put him in that position by His will.

I believe that we are the generation that will usher in the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ for His church. Before He comes, the Spirit of God will be poured out upon all flesh.

“Therefore be patient, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. Notice how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth and is patient with it until he receives the early and late rain” (James 5:7). John, the 15th chapter, tells us that the husbandman is the heavenly Father. The fruit of the earth is the harvest of souls. The rain is the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Hos. 6:3).

Intercessory prayer causes the rain of God’s Spirit to bring the harvest of the human race into the family of God. Right now, all over this world, God is bringing the body of Christ into unity. As rivers of living water, the believers who are joined together will cause a flood of God’s power in the earth.

Because of the crucial time in which we are living, this move of the Holy Spirit is causing believers everywhere to respond to the call to intercession. This world will not take much more sin! Romans 8:22 says that all of creation groans for the manifestation of the sons of God. Heaven is reverberating 24 hours a day with the intercession of God’s people.

We are at the end of what began on the day of Pentecost. The apostle Peter said:

“But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: ‘In the last days it shall be,’ says God, ‘that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. Even on My menservants and maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy. And I will show wonders in heaven above and signs on the earth below: blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke” (Acts 2:16-19). The result of this outpouring of the Holy Spirit is:

“And whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (v. 21).

In order to be saved, one must be born into the family of God. Jesus said, “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3). He was speaking of the spiritual new birth. “That which is born of flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (vv. 5-6). Intercession is giving birth in the realm of the spirit.

Did you notice the words servants and handmaidens in Acts 2:18? When you are born again, you do not become a servant of God. You become a child of God. In order to become a servant or handmaiden, you must make a choice. W.E. Vine says these words mean “one who gives himself up to the will of another.” Because of your love for God, you choose to serve Him. You yield your will to His will and become a co-laborer with Him. Those who totally give themselves to His service will be God’s mouthpiece in the earth. They will be vehicles of His Spirit.

The apostle Paul called himself a servant of Jesus Christ. W.E. Vine’s expository dictionary defines “servant” as being in “subjection without the idea of bondage; the perfect example being Christ Himself.” Paul had the right to go free, but didn’t. He served his Master out of love and dedication. God is calling us to be the Master’s servants. Jesus said that many are called but few are chosen (Matt. 20:16). In other words, few dedicate themselves to servitude. Upon those and

out of those who are dedicated to Him, God will pour out of His Spirit upon all flesh.

Jesus said, "... but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water that I shall give him will become in him a well of water springing up into eternal life" (John 4:14). The Spirit of God is a well of living water inside you, springing up. A well is for personal use. God's ultimate purpose is that other thirsty souls can partake of that water. He desires to pour out of His Spirit from the inside of you through intercession. "He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7:38). A river is for everyone's use. The outpouring of the Spirit is a flow of the Holy Spirit coming from inside the believer. That flow is the source of all the signs and wonders and miracles! Everyone, the Scripture says all flesh, will benefit. Intercessory prayer is going to play the major role in this outpouring. It is what causes God's power to flow in the earth unhindered.

Prayer is the doorway into the mightiest release of power that is known to man. It brings the very presence of God to and upon man in any part of the world. That power operates as believers allow those rivers of living water to gush toward the dry and thirsty. The torrential outpouring of the Spirit will cause life to spring forth in those who receive the seed of God's Word. The result is the harvest of new creatures in Christ Jesus (1 Pet. 1:23).

Let's study the art of intercession. Isaiah 59:16-17 says, "He saw that there was no man and was astonished that there was no intercessor; therefore, His own arm brought salvation to Him, and His righteousness sustained Him. For He put on righteousness as a breastplate and a helmet of salvation on His head; He put on the garments of vengeance for clothing and was clad with zeal as a cloak."

What is His arm? Jesus. The sole purpose for which Jesus came

to the earth was to be that intercessor. He wore the helmet of salvation and the breastplate of righteousness. That is the same armor in the sixth chapter of Ephesians for the body of Christ. Jesus came as an intercessor.

We are to put on that same armor and enter into the same field of prayer. His arm is bringing salvation again. As intercessors, we are His arm in the earth causing reconciliation between men and God. Jesus said, "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you" (John 20:21). The armor is the same and the calling is the same.

You may say, -Do you mean to tell me that I have the same calling on my life that Jesus had, to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature?" He also said, "The works that I do shall you do also; and greater than these shall you do; because I go unto my Father" (John 14:12).

He went, didn't He? Then you and I are responsible for the works. He provided us with the new birth. God said in Ezekiel 36:26 that a new spirit He would put within us. And that He would put His Spirit in us. That gives us the right and the miraculous power to enter into the intercessory prayer ministry.

Intercession is the highest expression of love. It is loving in the Spirit, applying spiritual power for another person. It will overpower the evil influences that have bound that person. Your prayer may be for salvation, healing or any other area of deliverance from Satan.

Satan has blinded the minds of those who have not received the gospel. Your intercessory prayer wrestles against evil spirits that have deceived them. It is literally giving yourself, your time, your life for others. Jesus said, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." This is the God kind of love. It is unselfish. The world did not know this kind of love until Jesus came to the earth. He

laid down His life to come to earth and live as a man. He emptied Himself of His divine privileges and fulfilled His earthly ministry as a man, filled with the Holy Spirit. "But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil 2:7-8). Love motivated God to send Him. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). Jesus' love for the Father impelled Him to obey. He said, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work" (John 4:34).

Jesus has provided reconciliation between God and man through His substitutionary sacrifice at Calvary. We are co-laborers with Him. Redemption was bought with a high price. Jesus didn't take it lightly and neither should we. God's heart was hungry for a family. Jesus freely gave Himself for this desire. What an act of love!

God's heart is still hungry. He yearns to have every sinner restored unto Himself through the new birth and every believer in close fellowship with Him.

To give your life means to give everything. Jesus came as an intercessor. He is still giving Himself today. Hebrews 7:25 says, "He ever liveth to make intercession." We have said, "Jesus gave His life for us." But, no, He is giving His life for us. He is still interceding. His body in the earth is wearing the same prayer armor He wore. We have inherited His armor to do His work and enter into His ministry of intercession.

We have been given the same love that motivated Jesus to come as the intercessory! Romans 5:5 says that the love of God has been shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. The love that desired to lay down its own desires and to intercede for

someone else is abiding on the inside of us! The love that impelled Jesus to go to the cross compels us to intercede. We pray for others so they can come to the knowledge of the truth.

Through the knowledge of God's Word, we realize that we also have His love that urges us to reach out toward others. It urges us to be soul winners. A soul winner is an intercessor in action. Jesus paid the price and is paying the price to win souls. Intercessory prayer softens their hearts to receive the message of the gospel.

When you are filled with the Holy Spirit, you receive the ability to speak in another language. "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:4). The Holy Spirit gives the utterance and you do the speaking.

Just as English is the voice of your mind, praying in tongues is the voice of your spirit. It is your spirit speaking mysteries to God (1 Cor. 14:2). The apostle Paul said, "If I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful" (1 Cor. 14:14).

The Holy Spirit knows what is needed in the lives of others when you do not know (Rom. 8:26). Praying in other tongues is the most valuable tool you have in intercessory prayer. When you pray in tongues, you operate in the realm of the spirit. The weapons of your warfare are mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.

When you move in this area of intercession, your physical man will be your spirit man's assistant. You begin to speak in a language that comes out of the inner man. The Spirit of the living God can speak to your own human spirit. Out of it will come rivers of living water. You are not just praying mentally limited prayers. When you pray in tongues, you pray beyond your own limited knowledge. You have moved beyond the natural

into the spirit. You have to yield to it as an act of your will.

If you are not filled with the Spirit, ask God to fill you right now. Ask the Lord to fill you with His Spirit, and then open your mouth and allow your new prayer language to flow.

Your first prayer assignment is not for yourself. It is to pray for all men; for kings and men in high authority (1 Tim. 2:1-4). When you respond to the call of intercession, the Holy Spirit prays the perfect will of God through you.

Begin praying for a given body of people: a family, village, country, state or nation. You do not need to wait for a burden for this. The Word says that Jesus was moved with compassion (Matt. 9:36). Compassion is not a feeling, it is a person. Separate yourself from the things of this world. Get in your prayer closet alone with God and commit to intercession. Yield to the love of God inside you. All the motivation you need will come that way. The One who “ever liveth to make intercession” is living in you! He’s already motivated! Yield to Him.

Isaiah 64:7 says, “And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee” The Spirit of God will not be able to help you intercede unless you are willing to stir yourself and take that position of intercession. Paul told Timothy to stir up the gift that was in him (2 Tim. 1:6). You stir it up!

Begin to pray by making yourself available to the Holy Spirit. Yield! Allow Him to use you to pray for the man who does not have anybody to pray for him. Stand in the gap for him. Start where you are and allow it to spread to the world. You are literally fighting spiritual warfare in their behalf.

The apostle Paul said, “For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh” (Col. 2:1). This

was the same conflict that Paul talked about in the sixth chapter of Ephesians, when he said that we wrestle against principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this world and wicked spirits in heavenly places (Eph. 6:12). The family of God is not based on selfishness. It is based on love. Intercession is the highest expression of love.

When you commit yourself to pray for those who need Jesus, remember that the Bible says you are going to have to bind Satan in order to spoil his house (Matt. 12:29). You are confronting all the forces of evil that have them bound. Do not stop just because it looks as if they will never receive. Your intercession is placing pressure on Satan and his forces. Do not relent but persevere in prayer. It is up to that person to make his own choice.

Through your intercession, they will be able to make it. They will no longer be blinded by Satan.

Take these Scriptures before the Holy Spirit and give Him the opportunity to reveal them to you personally. He is the teacher. He can show you how they work. You can stir up the gift within you simply by desiring to know how intercession works.

Before spiritual births take place, travail goes forth. In the natural realm, a woman does not give birth without labor. In the spirit, travail is the labor that brings forth the new birth. Intercession is God's heartbeat because it is the labor that births the souls of this world into His family.

We noticed that Isaiah 64:7 spoke of stirring oneself up. Isaiah 66:8 says, "Who hath heard such a thing? Who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children." Let's find out who Zion is and what she does to travail, and how the children are brought in.

In Hebrews 12:22-23 we reach, "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect" Zion is the church of the firstborn. Jesus is the firstborn of many brethren (Rom. 8:29). Zion is the church of Jesus Christ. If you are a member of the body of Christ, you are Zion.

In Galatians 4:19 Paul said, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again" If he is going to travail again, he had to have once travailed in order to bring the little children to birth.

Travail causes others to be born again. Why would it say "birth"? Why would it say "travail"? Why would it compare to birth? Jesus said out of the belly, the deepest interior of a man, would flow these rivers of living water (John 7:38). Stir yourself up and start praying in other tongues. Your spirit is praying. Keep at it. Soon you will notice that the Holy Spirit will take hold together with you. You will begin to travail as if in labor.

You may groan out loud. You are releasing spiritual power. The Word says that the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much (James 5:16). The Amplified version says that the effectual, fervent, heartfelt prayer of a righteous man makes much power available. This is the art of intercession. It is stirring yourself up to take hold with the Holy Spirit to cause eternal changes in the lives of others.

Romans 8:26 says, "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities." The word "helpeth" is translated in the Greek from three words which mean "takes hold together with us against." That verse literally reads: "Likewise the Spirit also takes hold together with us against our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the

Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.” He is telling the body of Christ about the forces that are available through intercession. The Holy Spirit sees to it that God’s will is carried out even in areas where we do not know how to pray. He searches the heart and He knows the mind of the spirit of a man. In other words, you can go beyond your own mental ability and knowledge.

God’s purpose is for us to begin to pray for one another. Intercession gives the Holy Spirit the opportunity to bring the fullness of God’s will to pass on earth.