

# The Church's Finest Hour: Burning the Incense of Worship and Prayer

We are in a season of change where the Lord is awakening His people to rekindle the fire of prayer, more specifically a "fire on the altar."

Just recently, we had recommitted ourselves to a mandate to build this fire on the altar. An awesome and beautiful thing happened on the first night of our rededication to this call.

After some time in worship, suddenly I could smell the burning incense fragrance. Initially, I thought someone might have walked by with some strong perfume fragrance but then realized it did not go away. I noticed it smelled like smoke with the fragrance of what seemed like frankincense and myrrh. Then I asked over the microphone if anyone else smelled this. It seemed everyone in the room smelled this strong incense of His presence.

This was the Lord confirming with this manifestation of incense. The message that night was on "The Fire of Worship and Prayer" with a parallel I was drawing between the prayers of the saints and the fragrance of incense as given in the book of Revelation.

What we were experiencing was an amazing, intoxicating and invigorating fragrance of heaven. All of this is just to say God is calling His people to come together with one heart and mind in pursuit of Him. It is the simplicity of seeking God with our whole hearts that brings a unity where God pours out the Psalm 133 experience, even the oil of anointing.

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity! It is like precious oil upon the head, that

runs down on the beard—even Aaron’s beard—and going down to the collar of his garments; as the dew of Hermon, that descends upon the mountains of Zion, for there the Lord has commanded the blessing, even life forever” (Ps. 133:1-6).

## **Fire on the Altar**

“A perpetual fire shall be kept burning on the altar. It shall never go out” (Lev. 6:13).

We see a clear picture and parallel of fire on the altar in this verse. It is God’s heart and intent that this fire never go out. The parallel is that God’s people are burning with the fire of prayer and worship. That fire is the life of devotion that burns continually before the Lord. As we offer our whole heart to God, He pours His holy fire into us with an everlasting burning. We see David speak of worshipping the Lord with “the whole heart.” We don’t want to be a half-hearted people but those who are completely surrounded to Him. God is looking for the consistency and continuum of His glory burning in us. We are the living sacrifices who offer ourselves to God continually. A divine synergy takes place in our corporate times of worship where His glory is released at an entirely different level. This synchronicity of corporate heart devotion also spills over into our personal devotion, bringing acceleration and increase in our lives with God. It is the churning of the fires of worship that carries over with a greater grace to go deeper.

“Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Do not quench the Spirit” (1 Thess. 5:16-19).

## **The Mingling of Worship and Prayer**

*I saw a Lamb in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, standing as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the*

*earth. He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne. When He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of saints.*

*And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests unto our God; and we shall reign on the earth" (Rev. 5:6-10).*

**When we look up different words for worship in the Hebrew, we see that the same words can be used for prayer.** Prayer and worship are not as separate as would seem. You really can't have one without the other. It is the spirit of worship and of prayer that are intermingled. Just as we have the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit, they are one but distinct, yet they do not function apart from one another. Such is the picture we see with the harp and bowl. We have the sound of worship mingled with the bowls of incense around the throne of God. This is throne room activity that the saints engage in. The sound of heaven and melodies of the Spirit play an integral role in bringing forth the incense of prayer out of the hearts of God's people. Fiery worship and prayer rise before the throne of God, creating this amazing fragrance of holy incense. Even as our hearts are engaged in communion with God, there is a rotation of devotion, a cycle that begins. This is the continual communion God looks for in the hearts of His people.

### **Fervent, Hot Prayer of the Heart**

"The effective, fervent (*energeō*) prayer of a righteous man accomplishes much" (James 5:16).

In this verse, the word for fervent here is "like a fire,"

using the same word that we get for energy. God desires this earnest prayer, pressing prayer that pushes into the realm of breakthrough. On the other side of breakthrough is manifestation of heaven's glory and all that accompanies it.

## **Holy Spirit Fire**

"When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like a mighty rushing wind came from heaven, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. There appeared to them tongues as of fire, being distributed and resting on each of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to speak" (Acts 2:1-4).

Here we see that all God's people were together in one accord. They were desperate and hungry for God. They knew that the Lord had said to wait in Jerusalem until they received the promise of the Father, "power from on high" (Luke 24:49). This was a worship and prayer meeting where they were seeking the face of God. It was the only agenda. They had no plan after that, but God worked out the details later.

We see some important points here, the first being that God shows up at the prayer meeting. When we come together to first of all "worship Him," He shows up. As we understand the heart of God concerning the fire that He desires to feed in us corporately, He brings that fire with increase.

Second, we see supernatural manifestation of the Holy Spirit, with tongues of fire resting on each one. In our meetings together, God will come and begin to pour out His glory with manifestations of heaven. In this place of manifestation of heaven, deposits are given, poured out into our spirits. In Acts 2, the first manifestation we see is the "sound" like a rushing mighty wind, then we see tongues as of fire resting upon all present, and then we see a comparison made to the people of God being drunk.

They had to clarify that they were not drunk “as you suppose” (Acts 2:15b) but were filled with the Holy Ghost. Paul makes this comparison as well when he tells us “Do not be drunk with wine ... But be filled with the Spirit” (Eph. 5:18a, c). We see these manifestations of the Spirit are deposits of heaven’s glory into the saints. It isn’t until later that we the miracles, but the deposit was there. The increase had been given from the Lord, and now they were able to go, giving away what they had freely received.

Months ago, I had a dream where I saw a man of God building a huge altar of wood. You can read more about that here. In this encounter, the man would not say a word to me but took a huge tree trunk and slammed it on the altar. Then I looked at him, pointing at the altar and saying, “Fire on the altar!”

God is ready to throw more wood on the fire to grow it, increase it and cause a huge fire of prayer to rise with the fragrance of incense for His glory and the transformation of lives, cities and nations. These altars of fire will be places where birthing of mandates and calls will be released causing the fire to spread throughout the earth. We are living in the “Church’s Finest Hour!” Answer the call to unify around the altar of God before the throne of God and burn for His glory.  
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