

'You Shall Be Called a House of Prayer'

Do you know your eternal identity and destiny? Are you prepared for it? In one short statement Jesus revealed the eternal identity and destiny of His people. He declared, *"You shall be called a house of prayer"* (see Matt. 21:13). Jesus was quoting Isaiah's prophecy to Israel: *"My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations"* (Is. 56:7).

When God calls us by a specific name, it indicates our character and how we are to function in the Holy Spirit. Isaiah's prophecy and Jesus' statement tell us that God's people are to function as a house of prayer both now and in the age to come. Our greatest place of authority, honor and dignity is found in prayer—that is, in or deep interaction and partnership with Jesus.

What does it mean to be or to function as a house of prayer? It means that God speaks to us and moves our hearts. Then we speak His words back to Him and they move His heart. The result is that God's resources are released on the earth—His power, money, wisdom, creative ideas, unity and favor. This is how the redeemed will operate forever in God's family, being moved by God to ask Him for the things that are on His heart so that He will release them onto the earth.

It is important to understand that the "house of prayer" in a city is the whole body of Christ in that city or region. It is not just the prayer ministries in that city. I tell our Bible-school students that the house of prayer in Kansas City is not made up of only our organization, the International House of Prayer. We are just a small "gas station"—it is as if we take a "cup of gasoline" and throw it on the prayer fires that burn in the whole house of prayer in Kansas City, which is the entire body of Christ—more than a thousand congregations.

The Holy Spirit wants to establish a culture of prayer integrated with worship in the church. In fact, He is currently raising up the greatest prayer and worship movement in history. Why? Because engaging in worship and intercession is the highest calling of the redeemed in the age to come, and it is the primary means by which He releases His power through them to the earth. Worship and intercession are among the few things that we do both now and forever.

Prayer and worship have always been at the center of God's purpose. Central to God's government and the release of His power is His eternal worship sanctuary as described in Revelation 4-5.

Today the Holy Spirit is raising up what will become the most powerful worship movement in history, it will totally defeat the Antichrist's end-time worship movement.

Unquestionably the church's identity as a house of prayer is significant and the Lord desires to use the praying church as His vehicle to release blessing to the nations. We can see Him working now to bring change to the church to prepare it to function in this way now and in the coming hour.

However, the church in the West stands at a critical juncture. The nations are increasing in lawlessness and moral confusion and engaging in escalating conflicts, including those inspired by racism, terrorism and sexual immorality. In addition we are facing the threat of devastating global economic crisis; the breakdown of marriage and the family; the rapid, wholesale acceptance of the gay agenda; and many other pressures. The prevailing sentiment worldwide is one of growing fear, unbelief, and mistrust, as the earth shudders under the weight of man's escalating sin (see Ps. 2 and Is. 24).

The most significant crisis in the world today is in the church itself, particularly in the West. More and more church leaders are promoting a distorted grace message, making light

of heterosexual fornication, celebrating the ordination of homosexuals, endorsing abortion, denying the authority of Scripture, rejecting Jesus as the only way of salvation, discarding the doctrine of hell, and even renouncing the divinity of Christ. Yet some of these congregations continue to grow.

Many leaders have substituted methodology and church-growth mechanics for God's calling on the church to function as a "house of prayer for all nations" (Is. 56:7). They have hidden their barrenness behind the fig leaves of superficial cultural relevance instead of pressing in to walk out the two great commandments—to love God and people (Matt. 22:37-40)—and to deeply engage in the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19).

There will be two great trends in the church as we draw nearer to the coming of the Lord: Many will fall away from the faith, and at the same time many will rise up in wholehearted love for Jesus to participate in the most glorious and powerful time in the church's history.

Where will you stand? Will you give in to compromise or will you rise up in faith, wholly resolve to take hold of what God is saying and then do it with all your heart?

The choice is yours.

 *Adapted from Growing in Prayer by Mike Bickle, copyright 2014, published by Passio, Charisma Media/Charisma House Book Group. By combining biblical study with his extensive experience on pray, the author gives you the tools you need to turn your prayer life into an active and fulfilling one. To order your copy, click here.*

Prayer Power for the Week of April 20, 2015

This week pray for an impassioned heart to love the Lord wholeheartedly as He desires. Ask Him to help you love your neighbor as yourself and put that love into action. Thank Him

that He directs your steps and gives you divine appointments and opportunities to share His love and make a difference in your surroundings. Continue to pray that revival would ignite in our churches and spread across the nation and the world. Lift up our leaders and pray for the protection of Israel, grace for the persecuted church and unity in prayer and purpose among believers (Matt. 22:37-40; Matt. 28:19).