

PRAYER – A BURDEN FROM THE LORD

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WATCH AND PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

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PRAYER – A BURDEN FROM THE LORD

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MESSAGE

To the people of God, there remains urgency in the spiritual realm but unless we are in tuned with the things of God we can never be part of that fulfilling to end with Him. For this to happen, His people must seek the tune of the Heavenly choir above and move by the music of thereof.

INTRODUCTION

Prayer is God's design for man. Prayer enables man to hear from Him. When man calls on God, He hears. More interesting though is that prayer enables man to know God. The more we pray the more we are able to hear from God. When we pray, God speaks.

As we grow in our relationship with the Lord, so shall our intimacy with Him. It is through this intimacy with the Lord that we begin to hear His heartbeat. We begin to know what bothers Him and what is it that grieves Him. As we grow in the Lord we begin to grieve with Him. The burden of the Lord becomes our burden. A burden is given by the Lord. It is initiated by God. What grieves Him begins to grieve us. Many of God's people go through this on a daily basis but do not know how to respond to it.

There are two burdens that the Lord may give us. One is the burden to pray, the other the burden to do. The burden to do is given when all is set. There is no need to pray, just do. It is obvious and does not take much to work out, neither how or when to do. Everything seems in place and you are just required to take the next step.

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God has set up the stage to act out His Will

The burden to pray however may come first for many. It is to give to God what He initially gave to you. He gives us a desire for a task which we bring back to Him. The burden to pray is to give back to God through prayer that which has had His heart's attention in the first place.

When the burden of prayer is fulfilled, the believer has then released to the Lord what the Lord may have given to him only to release it to Him again. The Lord is now able to move in His way because prayer by the believer has initiated that move. **'.....I am the Lord your God, who teaches you what, is best for you, who directs you in the way you should go.'** Isaiah 48.17

Complicated as it may sound, it really isn't. It is God's way of moving Heaven to earth. It is His way of creating Heaven on earth. 'May your kingdom come, may your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.' Matthew 6.10. Ever wondered why prayer is so important to the church?

THE YOKE OF THE LORD

Matthew 11.29-30 'Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light'

Firstly why is the Lord using such an example to explain burdens? To understand this we must learn what a yoke is.

In times gone by the farmer regularly used a yoke attached to his animals to plow his land. A yoke was a frame or a piece of wood that was attached to the heads or necks of two working animals' example oxen. This frame was then attached to the actual plowing device which the animal would pull through the land. In the time of the Lord this was a very heavy piece of equipment that was burdensome to the said animal. Jesus often used imagery related to the times He was in, so that the people He was speaking to would understand what He was saying. Today we have modern equipment that performs similar tasks. The people immediately understood this imagery as burdensome. And many

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related their lives to animals carrying weights. Jesus wanted them to know that by following Him – life was not burdensome. And His very purpose was to take that load away from them. If any, a load from Him would be light and burden less to carry.

Before we go any further it is important to note that not all burdens are from the Lord. The enemy gives to the church ‘burdens’ that are weighty. Its purpose is to see each one of us give up. Quit now and Satan is glad for his purpose has been fulfilled. His burdens are to see God’s people suffer. It weighs the believer down. Emptiness is so often reason the way we feel so as a result. The more we do the more we are going nowhere. We carry so much for the world and so little for God. This is the result we pray so little and may God help us today.

The burden that the evil one carries is for the purpose of the believer. The more he is able to suppress the believer with this weight the less the believer can function as a child of God. Many in the body today are carrying burdens that are not from the Lord.

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1 Peter 5.8 ‘.....Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.’

The burden from the Lord is light. In the early days of the gospel when the numbers of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebrew Jews. Whatever the quarrel was is not as important as being able to see the spiritual link that Satan had regarding this. The enemy’s plan was to divert the mind of the disciples to a task never assigned to them by the Lord. The purpose of the trouble was that the disciples take on a burden that God never intended for them to carry in the first place and thereby deviate from their purpose.

Through discernment of spirit the first disciples who had walked with the Lord gathered the believers and made it known what their real purpose was. The burden of waiting on tables was certainly not theirs. The Twelve then chose able and Spirit filled men from among the rest for this task. They were men who were full of the Spirit and wisdom. They disciples in turn gave their attention to prayer and the ministry of the word. If

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ever there was a burden from the Lord for the Twelve – this was it. **Acts 6.4 ‘We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.’** I use this as an example from God’s Word because it reveals how easy we may be swayed from the truth of our real purpose. The enemy constantly wants to take us away from the real burden assigned specifically to us. When you carry a burden not assigned to you but someone else, you are then carrying a burden shifted onto you by the enemy. The purpose of a burden is always important. Its purpose must always be God’s. It is important as believers that we are able to distinguish between that which is from God as compared to what comes from the enemy. When the enemy suppresses the believer, the burden may become so heavy that one may not be able to pray. His is just that intent in the first place. Prayer brings forth fellowship and intimacy between God and man. When there is intimacy man is able to discern the task that God has for him. The enemy hates children of God praying. When the news about Jesus spread, the crowds came in their numbers for Him to heal them. Jesus could have immediately taken that yoke upon Him; instead He first withdrew to

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lonely places to pray.

‘Yet the news about him spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear Him and to be healed of their sicknesses. But Jesus often withdrew from them to lonely places and prayed. Luke 5.15-16.

Prayer initiates the purpose of God for the believer. This is simply because the Lord speaks to us when we pray. Satan will do everything in his power to keep the believer from praying. So often the burden is so overwhelming that confusion sets in. We find ourselves unable to do anything including going to God. With that from the Lord however, there is a yearning instead to pray. There comes a desire within to go to God. The Lord’s burden as we mentioned is light not heavy. When we respond as God would have us do, the burden is lifted - it is gone. It returns to Him through prayer. It returns to Him who placed it there in the first place – the Lord Himself. There exists in the burden a yearning for the Lord. It has a destiny and its destiny is God.

With the evil one however his burden is confusing, heavy

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and frustrating. It has no end, no beginning. It loses track of time and place. The burden of the evil one leads to sin even death. Many today live in depression, anxiousness and have very troubled spirits. Yet when asked about it, are not able to specifically address what troubles them. This burden may lead to committing suicide and much grief for loved ones.

The burden of the Lord is the Lord's. It starts with God and ends with Him. It works with God. It labors for God. The Lord places those burdens in our spirit. It is our duty to make sure that our spirit does not suffer when we are given a burden. The only time the burden may be hindered in our spirits is when we allow the enemy to suppress us. We must at all times be at liberty to receive a burden from the Lord. When we have received His burden we then go to task – we pray. We must be able to pray until that burden has been lifted.

If you are burdened by God then you are called to pray.

If you are called to pray then you are called to listen.

Prayer is more about listening than speaking.

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The level of hearing from God is a very high level of prayer. The prophet Elijah was a great man of God. He called down fire from heaven, killed all the false prophets in the land and yet the next day was seen running for His life. It is important to understand what happened.

Though escaping from that woman Jezebel this man was not running as a result of him fearing her. The prophet had the Lord on his side and therefore had no need to fear. Elijah however had become tired. He had a burden but had grown tired. He grew tired because he took on a burden that was not his. When the Lord approached him he was sure that he was the only prophet left and his was the entire burden in the land. So tired was he that he stopped listening to what the Lord was saying at the time. His opinion on matters overshadowed what God was thinking about them. Elijah saw the task ahead as tiring. He looked at himself as the one who was called to finish it and not God.

1Kings 19.3-5 'Elijah saw and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, while he himself went a day's journey into the desert. He came to a broom tree, sat down under it and prayed

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that he might die. “I have had enough, Lord,” he said. ‘Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors.’ Then he lay down under the tree and fell asleep.....’

So often when we are carrying a load that is meant for us we look for God in the wrong places. Elijah expected to hear God in the powerful and mighty wind that tore the mountains apart but it was not so. Neither was the Lord in the earthquake that followed. The expectation of Elijah is important for us here. The expectation of the prophet was wrong because he became tired. Elijah then expected God to be in the fire and must have been surprised when God turned up in a gentle whisper. We have to become quiet to hear God. **1 Kings 19.12** ‘Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper.’ **1Kings 19.9-13**

When the prophet Elisha was in Dothan the king of Aram sent an army of horses and chariots with a strong force to

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capture him. The servant of the prophet was afraid but Elisha prayed that God would open his eyes to see instead into the spirit an army greater sent by God. **‘And Elisha prayed..... then the Lord opened the servant’s eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.’ 2 Kings 6.17.**

In the story of Elijah though that which he saw was to enormous to overcome yet if He continued in the Spirit the prophet would have seen as his successor did

The more we spend time in the presence of the Lord, the less tired we become. More time in His presence the more we shall hear from Him. Time with the Lord revitalizes us. Many days later the prophet was able to hear the voice of the Lord again. The key was him being quiet. Elijah had an encounter with the angel of God. Twice he was brought food by the angel that would sustain him for a forty day and forty night journey. Eventually the Lord appears to him in a gentle whisper. God enabled Elijah to hear again – to listen. The burden of the Lord is about His mission. When the prophet eventually heard the voice of the Lord, it entailed him returning from whence he came and accomplishing what

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God had in mind. The Lord's burden was for His people. And so today there is a burden that God has first for the believer. The burden is that believer must discern His voice. It begins with discernment and then works. **'Go back the way you came.....' 1 Kings 19.15**

Elijah had a task to fulfill as a prophet and this he had to do. God's task comes first; God's plans must be fulfilled. That which is in Heaven must be fulfilled here on earth. **Matthew 6.10**

Similar today the enemy has a plan to destroy the purpose that God has for His people. God's purpose becomes His burden for His people. The burden of the Lord for you and me today becomes His burden. The God of Elijah is very much alive and watchful over His people of today. You and I are the running vessels of today. We are the vessels that God uses to accomplish His purpose first in the spirit. The prophet Elijah returned and anointed Hazael as King and Elisha to succeed him.

God's mercy is for us and so is His grace and compassion but His purpose shall prevail. The burden of the Lord has a purpose. The burden of the Lord is always something revealed or about to be revealed. There are always

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burdens of the Lord. How many of us are willing to carry the burdens of the Lord? The burden of the Lord is not something we choose. We are not meant to be burden choosers. Burdens of the Lord are given to us by Him. Today many choose to carry for the Lord but soon become tired and disheartened. We look around and desire after what others have or are doing. We then make it our mandate to do the same. But soon we find that we are unable keep up. Frustrated, tired and sometimes bored we abandon the task. We make excuses like 'that was just for a season.' But the truth be told - we were never called to it in the first place. How come? That which comes from the Lord is different and unique to each one of us.

When the Lord lays a burden on our hearts, He lays with it also His anointing to carry it. Therefore light not heavy is the burden that comes from Him. Where no anointing exists, no burden from the Lord exists. Where no anointing exists no Heavenly purpose prevails. All work is in vain. The prophet Elijah returned the way he came but with the anointing to do what God had now asked him to. And when he was done – when the purpose was fulfilled

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- the prophet was taken up to Heaven in a whirlwind 2
Kings 2

THE CHURCH AND HER BURDENS

Today the burden of the Lord is His Church. Through prayer much prayer that burden is released to the Church of the Lord. God works through His Church. The purpose of the Lord is manifested through His bride. *That which is in heaven shall be revealed to earth through the Bride of the Lord.* This makes prayer an important aspect of the Christ life. The burden of Heaven is one of the Father for His children. We must be able to empathize with the Lord for His Church. As believers we must walk learn to walk the same as He does when it comes to His people and discern His heart for them.

When the Church does not empathize, then she does not know how to burden with the Lord. When the body of Christ is not empathizing then she is not walking in the the Lord. When we are faithfully praying we are then walking in the Spirit. A man who prays discerns the things of God. It is him who walks in the Spirit. Many of us today want to walk for Christ. He does not call us to walk for Him instead we are to walk with Him. Only when

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we are walking in Him and with Him are we able to be effective for the Kingdom of Heaven. We are not called to do for Him but to do with Him. It is in Him that we are able to do. We are to walk in Christ. We are to become sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit and then shall we carry with Him. When we are truthfully carrying with God then it comes naturally to us to give it back to Him. A burden from God is meant to be released back to Him. It is not ours and never was. Even that from the Lord may seem as an enormous task if our eyes are not opened. Our eyes must be opened that we know how to release to the Lord what belongs to Him. Yet the enormity of a task or thing may just be the evidence that this is not ours but God's. It is then that we have no choice but to surrender it all to Him. The Lord loves surrender from the believer most. Where there is surrender, the work of the Lord may begin.

Jesus carried the burden of His Father. He did nothing unless He was led by the Holy Spirit. He carried nothing but that given to Him by the Spirit from His Heavenly Father. He took on no burden until and unless He was led by the Holy Spirit. Let us today pray that we in harmony

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with the Lord. Therefore our timing with the things of the Lord must be genuinely discerned.

Prayer breaks open the door of the knowledge of the Lord. The knowledge from God to man is His will. Too often we are confused with the desires for the world instead for God's. The cravings for this world order can never be the Will of the Father. It is not what the Father wants for His people. The world is doomed and we have been rescued from the world through Christ. King David said the following **'I do not concern myself with great matters or things too wonderful for me. But I have stilled myself and quieted my soul; like a weaned child with its mother like a weaned child is my soul within'** Psalm 131.1-2

David was actually saying that the burden and knowledge of the Lord's was sufficient to him for all life. God reveals to us His plans through prayer. If prayer reveals God's plans, then very little prayer will see very little planning. And so it would be, that we shall have very little of God. The desire to know God and his plans must not allow anything to get in the way. It shall come with much humility because that is what prayer demands. Prayer

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demands much humility. Prayer demands surrender. The life of praying humbles us. Our affairs within community or whatever else must be put aside to seek God first. All else must take second place when a burden is laid on the heart of a believer. Burdens given by the Lord is in line with time and location. It works with the moment. It is given now because its urgency is now. It must not be confused with vision. A vision may take years to bring to accomplishment a burden is more for now. If it was meant for another time then another time would see the burden be given. Its pulse is felt now. Its work is now. Our lifestyle cannot be an excuse that we can't respond to it now. For a great part in our walk with God we have unknowingly substituted 'works' to be the excuse for us not really giving ourselves to prayer and the burdens of the Lord. The closer a man is to the Lord, the more he desires to pray. The more intimate his fellowship with His creator the more he shall encounter the burdens of His God. Intimacy with God is hearing from God. The closer you are to Him, the more you will want to hear from Him. A man after God's heart is a man who prays. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight and so the eyes of the Lord move to and fro in all the earth

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carefully. His purposes to strengthen those hearts fully committed to Him.

2 Chronicles 16.9 'For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to Him.....' God sees a man who uses the initiative to pray and so uses such a man. Prayer is listening to the Master.

We must be careful as there are many in the body busy with 'works' and really have no time for intimacy with God. 'Works' has long been used as an excuse to not pray. It has come to be used legally in the Church. *The Church does not easily see it, for it comes in one of those well-disguised, well wrapped plans of his. It has a name on it called Religion. It has an address on it called works. 'Go to work instead to pray,' it says - And so we go to work before we go to pray.* The duties in the church may become a hindrance to a closer fellowship with the Lord. I say that with the greatest respect but believe it is true nevertheless. It is not easily discovered as our *church duties* can sometimes be a huge cover up for the lack of intimacy we ought to have with the Lord. We are too busy with the work of the Lord and have no time for real

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fellowship with Him. Our work are seen in the flesh and even has a fleshy reward whilst our quiet, behind the 'shut door experiences' may not. We must have our spiritual eyes ready and open to see what comes out of the closet. We opt so often for the former as it is easier. May the Lord, help us we pray!

You may ask, but where is my burden? The believer must show the evidence that he is able to carry a burden for the Lord. A life of prayer begins to see the heart of God for others. ***Even when there is nothing specific, just bringing them to Him in prayer opens a door of trust that God will have with you. If we pray for loved ones in general, God will see our hearts and make known to us the burden that He already has for them. The burdens of God are not just dropped from Heaven for any to receive, but are carefully placed in the believer who is found praying and whose heart is willing to carry such burdens.***

THE BURDEN OF A LEADER

The leader who does not pray cannot be effective for God. A leader who does not pray cannot be burdened with the things of God. A leader who is not burdened cannot be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit. It saddening thought today of how candid we are about not spending time with the Lord. It is spoken of with so little regret. It is spoken of so openly and little remorse. If there is any regret then there must be a great deal of conviction to make right. It is here we need the Holy Spirit. *Before we can carry the burden of the Lord for a nation, for a person or a people we must learn to have a burden for how we ourselves offend the Lord.* May God help us, in this great task ahead of us! Every word I speak, every place I must go, must be God inspired. This calls for a close walk with Him. It calls for a close encounter with Him and even more so today if you are a leader of His flock. The leader of the Lord's flock must have a burden for His sheep.

Burdens placed on you by God are your responsibility to do with it what He expects of you. You cannot give it to another whilst you stand by the way side. A pastor may

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not give the burden of his church to his wife whilst he goes on working on his sermons. Sermons and teachings must not take precedence over the burden from the Lord

I have seen through the years even more powerful sermons come through acknowledgement of the burden.

When the burden from the Lord is given priority He will take care of the sermon no matter how late the Word may come. When there is a burden in the spirit to pray, one must note that only prayer can release that burden.

The solution does not have to materialize for the burden to be lifted. The answer does not have to be present for the burden to be released. The Lord relieves us from the burden long before. We accept in faith that God has taken care of it. We receive the answer in faith. The lifting of the burden is the answer. We now move on in faith. If it is in God's hands, it is resolved. The Holy Spirit comforts us and the more we pray the more we shall experience His comfort. Burdens from the Lord indicate that the Lord trusts us. God desires to reveal His heart but He won't to all. When a believer is given a burden there comes with it the same pain and suffering that the Lord Himself feels for that person or circumstance. That pain is birthed in

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the heart of God first. The more we pray, the more we come to know the burdens of the Lord. The more we pray the more we shall know the intensity of that burden carried by the Lord. And many times we shall be surprised by the things that burden the Lord. We may be surprised also of the people the Lord is burdened for. We may be surprised at how God sees a situation and his urgency or desire to have it resolved. When the entire world may be against it, God instead is burdened for it. When the entire world has given up hope for it, God in His perfect wisdom may have another opportunity for it. Oh how often this happens in our daily lives. Ours is simply to discern it.

For most part the burden is a personal one between you and the Lord. Yet there are burdens that after a while may have to be shared with responsible people. The burden may have to be carried by two instead of one. But you may only know this after you have taken the burden to the Lord having not found release. The Lord on the night of His arrest took three disciples with Him to pray. He desired that they pray with Him but they grew tired. **‘Then He returned to His disciples and found them**

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sleeping. “Could you men not keep watch with me for one hour?” he asked Peter. “Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing but the body is weak”’ Matthew 26.40-41.

Matthew 11.29-30 ‘Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.’

May you be burdened with the things of the Lord! For this you will have to make way for the Lord to pass by. And like that great man Elijah again you to may hear the gentle whisper of the Lord. Amen.

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