

PRAISE

IN

INTERCESSION

By Sister Stephen

This teaching was first given at a workshop for intercessors
within the Catholic Charismatic Renewal
in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA during October of 1983.

OPENING PRAISE...

“I will enter His gates with thanksgiving in my heart, I will enter His courts with praise. I will say this is the day that the Lord has made. I will rejoice for He has made me glad.” “This IS the day the Lord has made ... ” Praise You, Lord Jesus! Praise You, Father-God! Praise You, Holy Spirit! Alleluia!

Lord, Almighty, Awesome God! We just rejoice in You. We bless Your Holy Name! King of kings and Lord of lords! Crucified, Risen Lord! Ever-living One! Alleluia, Lord Jesus! Praise You, Lord Jesus! Praise You, Lord! Alleluia! We just lift up Your Name! Alleluia! Glory to You, Most High God! “Bless the Lord, O my soul and all that is within me bless His Holy Name.” Alleluia! Praise You, Lord God! We just love You and bless You and glorify Your Holy Name! Come Holy Spirit! “Set our spirits free that we might worship Thee!” Almighty Father, grant us Your Wisdom to understand praise and worship, and Your Grace to use these gifts for Your Greater Glory. Praise You, Lord Jesus! Alleluia! Amen!

NIHIL OBSTAT :

*PBRO. EZEQUIEL CASTLLO SOLANO
CENSOR
NOVEMBER OF 2003*

IMPRIMATUR:

*MONS. GUILLERMO MORENO BRAVO
VICAR GENERAL*

IN FIDEM:

*PBRO. LIC. JOSE RUIZ VERA
CHANCELLOR
PRIMATE ARCHDIOCESE OF MEXICO CITY, MEXICO
POR DISPOSICION DEL
EXCMO. SR. ARZOBISPO, PRIMADO DE MEXICO*

*GIVEN AT ARCHDIOCESE OF MEXICO CITY, MEXICO
IN NOVEMBER OF 2003*

COPYRIGHT 2003 BY STEPHANIE CULHANE

*PUBLISHED AND PRINTED BY:
THE CATHOLIC MISSIONARY INTERCESSORS OF
THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE BURNING BUSH (FBB)*

*(NO PART OF THIS DOCUMENT
MAY BE COPIED OR REPRODUCED IN ANY MANNER
WITHOUT THE WRITTEN PERMISSION OF FBB.)*

PRAISE IN INTECESSION
TABLE OF CONTENTS

OPENING PRAISE	5
PROLOGUE	9
I. INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS INTERCESSION?	11
A. WHO IS GOD?	13
B. WHO IS THE LORD JESUS CHRIST?	16
C. HOW CAN WE COME TO GOD?	24
II. PRAISE IN THE SCRIPTURES	27
A. THE FIRST GIFT OF THE SPIRIT	27
B. WHAT IS PRAISE?	32
C. THE MEANING OF PRAISE IN SCRIPTURE...	33
D. "PRAISE" WORDS IN THE BIBLE	35
E. GOD COMMANDS US TO PRAISE	40
III. THE COVENANT OF PRAISE - PSALM 81	45
A. OUR PART OF THE COVENANT OF PRAISE	47
1. JOSEPH	48
2. JEHOSHAPHAT	49
3. MOSES	50
B. GOD'S PART OF THE COVENANT OF PRAISE	52
1. RELIEVE YOUR BURDENS	52
2. GOD SPEAKS TO US	54
3. PROVE GOD'S FAITHFULNESS	55
4. NO FOREIGN GODS	57
a. FALSE GODS	57
b. SIN	57
c. SELF	63
5. DEFEAT YOUR ENEMIES	66
6. I WOULD FEED YOU	72
7. OTHER PROMISES	75
IV. SUMMARY: PRAISE AND INTERCESSION	80
PSALM 84	82
APPENDIX A: SCRIPTURAL STUDY OUTLINE	85
APPENDIX B: INTERCESSOR'S FORGIVENESS PRAYER	95
APPENDIX C: INTERCESSOR'S MIRACLE PRAYER	99

PROLOGUE

Some years ago, when Sister Stephen Culhane visited and talked to me about the work of the **Catholic Charismatic Intercessors of the Fellowship of the Burning Bush**, I responded after listening to her carefully:

"Sister, the intercession is the essence itself of the the Church. The Church is Christ, and Christ is The Intercessor yesterday, today, and forever. We do not have another Christ that will reconcile us with the Father but the One Who lives interceding for us in His Own Glorious Existence and Who, from the Father, gives to us His Holy Spirit, the Spirit of New Life. Therefore, to speak of intercession in the Church, is to speak of what His Own Essence as Body of Christ is; even more, as the Christ that the Church is, and that makes Her Lord present in history and in the world." (2 Corinthians 5: 18-19; Romans 5: 10; Colossians 1: 20, 22).

I must confess that in that conversation, I understood more clearly that the intercession prayer is an essential condition, so that the Church will accomplish its mission of salvation of men and women of all nations and of all times.

The work of the **Catholic Charismatic Intercessors of the Fellowship of the Burning Bush** makes reference to this fact, recognized from the beginning in the Church, of the presence and action of the **charismas** that the Holy Spirit gives to the Church for its own edification so that it will fulfill its mission efficiently. The "Catholic Charismatic Intercessors of the Fellowship of the Burning Bush" make an effort to convert intercession to a permanent prayer, lived in community and in groups interrelated by the bonds of charity, within the unity of the Catholic and Apostolic Church. The charisma of the intercession prayer takes place in the communion of a life of prayer nourished by the Fire of the Love of God.

In my opinion, the work of the **Catholic Charismatic Intercessors of the Fellowship of the Burning Bush** provides something new to the mystic experience of the Church. In our times, it is one more manifestation of the permanent Pentecost in which the Church is immersed. It is like a strength that renews, a wind, a fire, a shaking that seeks to renew the conscience of the missionary power and sanctifying power of the intercession prayer in the Church.

+ Francisco Maria Aguilera Gonzalez
Auxiliary Emeritus Bishop of Mexico
México, D.F., June 29, 2001

PRAISE IN INTERCESSION

I. INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS INTERCESSION?

Today we begin part one of a study on praise and worship in intercession called “The Covenant of Praise”. Understanding and entering deeply into praise and worship have become essential for us in this new intercession for the new springtime that we call “Intercession in the Spirit of Jesus”.

“Intercession” means to “go between”. In prayer, an intercessor goes between God and man. Because the Lord Jesus Christ is both True God and True Man, He, better than anyone, is THE “go between” with God and man. In His very Nature, He is our Great High Priest and Intercessor. St. Paul writes,

“Christ Jesus ... not only died for us - He rose from the dead, and there at God's right hand He stands and pleads for us.”

(Romans 8:34)

The Lord Jesus continually carries out His Divine Mission of intercession even now as He stands before the Throne of God our Almighty Father in heaven.

Because the Lord Jesus Himself is interceding, intercession is truly a Divine Work; something God Himself is doing right now. This is tremendous to think about. Whenever we enter into intercession, we have the awesome privilege to join with the Lord Jesus in His Divine Work of intercession ... which He is doing right now. ALLELUIA!

In union with Him, we not only represent others to the Father when we pray for them, but we represent God to His People. We are like a 2-way pipeline ... a 2-way channel ... through which the needs of God's People go up to God and through which the blessings of God come down to His People. If we are going to really be like the Lord Jesus and effective intercessors with Him, we need to know those whom we are representing, and we need to be in a right relationship and agreement with them when we pray. We especially need to know

God, our Father, as He is the one to whom we come in prayer ... and from Whom the answers to prayer come to all.

“It is all that is good, everything that is perfect, which is given us from above; it comes down from the Father of all light; with Him there is no such thing as alteration, no shadow of a change.” (James 1:17)

A. WHO IS GOD?

First let's ask, "Who is God?" Who is the God we come to in intercession? Who is the God we represent and work with in intercession?

First, we find God reveals Himself in all He has made ... in all of creation ... like an artist is seen in his works. (Romans 1:20) The Book of Ecclesiasticus or Sirach in the Old Testament contains a marvelous description of so many things God has done and how His Glory is revealed in all the things that He has made. This description ends with these words,

"We could say much more, and still fall short... to put it concisely, 'He is all'. Where shall we find sufficient power to glorify Him, as He deserves, since He is the Great One far above all His Works ... the Awe-inspiring Lord, stupendously great and wonderful in His Power. Exalt the Lord in Your praises, as high as you may, still He surpasses you; exert all your strength when you exalt Him. Do not grow tired. You will never come to the end. Who has ever seen Him to give a description? Who can glorify Him as He deserves? Many mysteries remain even greater than these, for we have seen only a few of His Works ...THE LORD HIMSELF...having made all things and having given wisdom to devout men." (Sirach 43: 27 - 33)

God is Awesome, Mighty, and Sovereign Lord, the King of all creation. He created everything and keeps it going. Yet everything, magnificent as it may be, is just a shadow of His Own Nature and Life and Power, His Love and Beauty, and His Majesty. Our God Himself, a most Holy God, is so much more than all He has made and done; He is so far beyond us and anything we can imagine Him to be.

"Holy, Holy, Holy" is the cry of all in heaven.

(Isaiah 6:3; Revelations 4:8)

"Who among the gods is like unto You, Yahweh? Who is like unto You, majestic in holiness, terrible in deeds of prowess,

worker of wonders?” (Ex. 15:11)

And yet He says, *“He lives with the lowly.”*... where He is all.
(Isaiah 57:15)

All mankind has been trying ever since the first man to seek, to find and to know God. In the very beginning of creation, God made man in His Very Own Image and Likeness. (Gen 1: 26-27) Following upon the first sin of Adam and Eve that separated man from God, man has been filled with the deepest hunger and longing to know and come back into communion with the Awesome God from Whom he had come. In our time, the search for God has really intensified for many reasons: perhaps because of the lack of the spiritual and religious dimension in the upbringing of so many; or because of the increasing de-humanization of humanity in an increasing technological world; or the dissatisfaction even the younger generations experience with what is temporal and passing; or because God Himself has draw closer to us through the prayers and cries of so many around the world, and in His Presence we are drawn all the more to know Him.

Because God in Himself is such an Awesome and Holy God and because of man’s sin-warped nature, man can never really find God, or come to know God as He is, or come into communion with God by himself. However, the deep hunger remains. And throughout history in every country and culture, man continues to seek to fill that hunger through various means and practices, especially by creating religions. There is a great upsurge of “new” religions and of seeking of spiritual experience in our time. Most often these attempts fall short of their goal and ultimately end up as temporary and unfulfilling. Mankind is also often so easily deceived or misguided and ends up worshipping the creature, including himself, instead of the Creator, or even is deceived into worshipping the devil and his fallen angels. And more often than not, these “new” religions are only a repeat or combination of past religious world-views and practices that are directly opposite and fall far short of the magnificent revelation of God in Christianity.

Yet God Himself wants man to know Him and come into communion with Him so much that He has been reaching out to man Himself.

We also find God revealing Himself little by little, throughout history, especially in the history of His Chosen People Israel. The Sacred Scriptures describe the manifold ways of how God has been reaching out, speaking, revealing Himself to His Chosen People. In fact, God has revealed Himself in a different way to each one of His Holy Ones in the Scriptures. Because God is the Living God, we can actually come to know Him in each of these ways ourselves, through the power and revelation of His Holy Spirit. Is God real to you in your life in these special ways He came to the different holy ones of old? For example, God even revealed Himself to Abraham in three different ways. Have you met the God of Abraham in all of these three ways in your own life? How about the God of Moses...or the God of Elijah ... or the God of David? ... or the God of Isaiah?

And what about God's Son, the Lord Jesus? Jesus says, "*the Scripture points to Me.*" (John 5:39) Do you really know the Lord Jesus?

B. WHO IS THE LORD JESUS CHRIST?

“At various times in the past and in various different ways, God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets, but in our own time, the last days, He has spoken to us through His Son, the Son that He has appointed to inherit everything, and through whom He made everything there is.” (Hebrews 1:1- 2)

The Holy Spirit tells us that ultimately the full revelation of God has come to all through the Lord Jesus Christ, His Only Son ... Who is fully TRUE GOD and TRUE MAN. Through His Only Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, God has spoken most clearly and completely in these last days? Do you really know the Lord Jesus?

The Sacred Scripture contains so many wonderful descriptions about the Lord Jesus Christ and just how deeply and clearly God has revealed Himself and His Plans and Ways to us in His Son.

*“He (the Lord Jesus) is the Image of the unseen God and
the First-born of all creation,
for in Him were created all things in heaven and on earth:
everything visible and everything invisible,
Thrones, Dominations, Sovereignities, Powers –
all things were created through Him and for Him.
Before anything was created, He existed,
and He holds all things in unity.*

*Now the Church is His Body, He is its Head.
“As He is the Beginning, He was first to be born from the dead,
so that He should be first in every way;
because God wanted all perfection to be found in Him and
all things to be reconciled through Him and for Him,
everything in heaven and everything on earth,
when He made peace by His death on the cross.”
(Colossians 1: 15-20)*

“His (the Lord Jesus Christ) state was Divine,

*but He did not cling to His equality with God.
“He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant,
being born in a likeness of man.
He even humbled Himself,
Becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross.”
“Because of this, God greatly exalted Him
And bestowed on Him the Name that is above every name,
that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bend,
of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.”
(Philippians 2:6-10)*

*“Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed
us with all the spiritual blessings of heaven in Christ.
Before the world was made, He chose us, chose us in Christ,
to be holy and spotless, and to live through love in His Presence,
determining that we should become His adopted sons,
through the Lord Jesus Christ for His own kind purposes,
to make us praise the glory of His Grace,
His free gift to us in the Beloved,
in whom, through His Blood,
we gain our freedom, the forgiveness of our sins.”
“Such is the richness of the grace
which He has showered on us in all wisdom and insight.
He has let us know the mystery of His Purpose,
the hidden plan He so kindly made in Christ from the beginning
to act upon when the times had run their course to the end:
that He would bring everything together under Christ, as Head,
everything in the heavens and everything on earth.
And it is in Him that we were claimed as God's own, chosen from the
beginning, under the predetermined plan of the One
Who guides all things as He decides by His Own Will;
chosen to be, for His greater glory,
the people who would put their hopes in Christ before He came.”
“Now you too, in Him, have heard the message of the truth
and the good news of your salvation,*

*and have believed it;
and you too have been stamped
with the seal of the Holy Spirit of the Promise
the pledge of our inheritance
which brings freedom
for those whom God has taken for His Own,
to make His Glory praised.”*

*“That will explain why I, having once heard
about your faith in the Lord Jesus,
and the love that you show towards all the saints,
have never failed to remember you in my prayers
and to thank God for you.”*

*“May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory,
give you a spirit of wisdom and perception of what is revealed,
to bring you to full knowledge of Him.*

*May He enlighten the eyes of your mind
so that you can see what hope His Call holds for you,
what rich glories He has promised the saints will inherit
and how infinitely great is the Power
that He has exercised for us believers.*

*This you can tell from the strength of His Power at work in Christ,
when he used it to raise Him from the dead
and to make Him sit at His Right Hand, in heaven,
far above every Sovereignty, Authority, Power, or Domination,
or any other name that can be named
not only in this age but also in the age to come.*

*He has put all things under His Feet
and made Him, as the Ruler of everything,
the Head of the Church, which is His Body,
the fullness of Him who fills the whole creation.”*

(Ephesians 1:3 - 23)

*“In His body lives the fullness of Divinity,
and in Him you too find your own fulfillment;
in the One who is the Head of every Sovereignty and Power.”*

(Colossians 2: 9-10)

*“Jesus Christ, the Faithful Witness, the First-born from the dead,
the Ruler of the kings of the earth.*

*He loves us and has washed away our sins with His Blood,
and made us a line of kings, priests to serve His God and Father;
to Him, then, be glory and power forever and ever. Amen.*

*It is He who is coming on the clouds;
everyone will see Him, even those who pierced Him,
and all the races of the earth will mourn over him.*

This is the truth. Amen”.

*“‘I am the Alpha and the Omega’ says the Lord God,
‘Who is, Who was, and Who is to come, the Almighty.’”*

“I heard a voice behind me, shouting like a trumpet ...

*“I turned round to see who had spoken to me,
and when I turned I saw seven golden lamp-stands;
and, surrounded by them, a figure like a Son of Man,
dressed in a long robe tied at the waist with a golden girdle.
His Head and His Hair were white as white wool or as snow,
His Eyes like a burning flame,*

*His Feet like burnished bronze when it has been refined in a furnace,
and His Voice like the sound of the ocean.*

*In His Right Hand He was holding seven stars,
out of His Mouth came a sharp sword, double-edged,
and His Face was like the sun shining with all its force.*

*“... He said, ‘Do not be afraid; it is I, the First and the Last;
I am the Living One,*

*I was dead and now I am to live forever and ever,
and I hold the keys of death and of the underworld. “*

(Revelations 1:5-8; 10-18)

Through the Lord Jesus Christ, God has come to us most clearly and completely to us to show us Who TRUE GOD is and Who TRUE MAN really is in a way that we can understand.

In the Lord Jesus, God has fulfilled His plan, “ that He would

bring everything together under Christ, as Head, everything in the heavens and everything on earth.”(Ephesians 1:10)

THERE IS NOTHING OUTSIDE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST!

Through the Lord Jesus, God also has revealed to us His desire for us to come deeply into one with Him, and THE WAY we can do this. The Lord Jesus *“became like us in every way except sin” (Hebrews 4:15);* but then on the cross, *“He became sin for us” (2Corinthians 5:21).* He shared completely in our humanity in every way, even in its sinful, fallen condition, that we might be redeemed to share in His Divinity ... to *“be like Him.” (1John 3:2)* (The Holy Spirit has given us this prayer to pray every day at Holy Mass.) St. Paul speaks of the Way of Jesus saying that He first *“descended right down to the lower regions of the earth”;* and then He ascended, He *“rose higher than all the heavens to fill all things”.* (Ephesians 4:9-10)

The Gospel of St. John is especially beautiful to read and pray about as we seek to know God through the Lord Jesus Christ. This Gospel is a constant unfolding revelation of Who the True God really is as well as Who True Man really is ... in and through Our Lord Jesus Christ. Everything about the Lord Jesus, His Character, every word that He says, everything He does, are a revelation of God ... a personal God ... in fact, three Persons: the Father, and the Son of God, the Lord Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. And He also reveals so many different and special ways of personal relationship that God desires to enter into with us; and how we can come into personal union with God.

For example, in the Gospel of St. John, the Lord Jesus says,

“I am the Bread of Life.” (John 6:35)

“ I am the Resurrection and the Life.” (John 11:25)

“I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.” (John 14:6)

What do these Words mean for you? Have you really met or experienced the Lord Jesus, the Great I AM, in each of these ways in your life and in all the other ways He reveals Himself in the Gospel of John? HE IS ALIVE and you CAN personally meet Him. Is He real for you in each of these ways in your life, so that you can really

say, for example, “Lord Jesus, You are my Life. You are my Truth. You are my Way.”

The Lord Jesus also said, “*Whoever sees Me, sees the Father.*” (John 14:7) Have you met the Father as the Life or as the Way or as the Truth? Can you tell the difference between the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit when you pray? They are different Divine Persons! And the Peace and the Love of the Father are different than the Peace and the Love of the Lord Jesus and than the Peace and the Love of the Holy Spirit. Can you tell the difference?

Think about how it is when you live with someone a long time; you get to know them very well. You can even tell who is coming in the door of your house; you don’t even have to look. And sometimes you can even tell what kind of a mood they are in, whether they are happy or upset about something. You don’t even have to look.

God really wants us to know Him and love Him and live with Him and in Him just as deeply. Then we will be able to tell, when the Father or the Lord Jesus or the Holy Spirit is “passing by” or moving in our midst. God wants us so much to be with Him that as the Lord Jesus was preparing to go back to the Father, He said:

“I will be with you always even to the end of the world”. “I am with you always.” (Matthew.28:20)

And again He said, “*Where two or three meet in My Name, I shall be with them.*” (Matthew 18:20)

One of God’s Names in the Old Testament is “Emmanuel”... “*God is with us*”. That is actually a prophetic name of Who the Lord Jesus is; a Name He is called in *Matthew 1:23*, “*Emmanuel, which means, ‘God is with us’.*”

Even though God is so closely with us, the question is, “Are we with Him?” Do we know Him? The Lord Jesus expresses the desire and invitation of His Heart on this point, “*Make your home in Me as I make Mine in You*” (John 15:4). The Spanish American people have a beautiful way of saying this “*Mi casa es tu casa*”. (“My home is your home.”) “*Mi casa es tu casa*”: “*Make your home in Me as I make*

Mine in You". That is the desire and invitation of the Lord Jesus and also of the Holy Spirit, and of God our Father's Heart for us ... to come into union with Him. This is also a glimpse of the meaning of Eternal Life, as the Lord Jesus explained ...

"Eternal Life is this, to know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent." (John 17:3) And He prayed further, Father, "May they be one as You and I are one, may they be one in Us." (John 17: 21)

John 3: 16 says, (Maybe some of you know this Scripture by heart!)

"God loved the world so much that He gave His only begotten Son so that, everyone who believes in Him, might not perish but might have Eternal Life."

The First Letter of John 4: 19 says, *"God first loved us."* And the Holy Spirit goes even a step further in Romans 5:8 to say:

"What proves that God loves us is that Christ died for us while we were still sinners".

As God is Most Holy, there was no way we could come to Him, or even really desire to do so, and so He came to us. And not only did He come to us to show us His Love but He expressed that Love by becoming so one with us, that the Lord Jesus even became sin and He died for us. He did that in order to break the power of Satan, sin, and death and share with us His Own Eternal Life. God wants us to share with Him the Life He has. He doesn't only want us to come into His Presence, but He wants us to become one with Him. He reveals this to us through the Lord Jesus. Because of the Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit, we can actually meet God in all of the manifold ways that He has revealed Himself...TODAY.... and enter into union with Him.

At the end of this study is a little "Intercessor's Miracle Prayer" that we can pray to open our hearts so we can more deeply welcome and draw close to the God. We can take a definite decision to accept the invitation of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to make our home in Him as we welcome God to make His Home in us.

Also, I want to recommend something else to you a way to open your

heart to the Lord and welcome Him when He comes so you can draw closer to Him. Have you ever been praying and reading the Scriptures, and as you do this, a verse might stand out to you and touch your hearts? God can speak to us in this way. However, these verses are not only meant to be good thoughts for the day. They are a window or door through which God can come closer to us and reveal Himself to us more deeply. The Lord Jesus said, *“The Scripture points to Me.”* (John 5:39) So if a Scripture passage touches your heart or stands out to you when you read it, ask the Holy Spirit to come and help you. The Lord Jesus says *“He will lead us into all the Truth.”* (John 16:13) Ask Him to bring you closer to God through these Scripture passages. Ask God, “Who are You here, Lord. What are you trying to reveal to me about Yourself in this Scripture? Then continue to pray and praise the Lord and listen to Him. You will be amazed at the wonderful revelations God Himself will share with you. Glory to His Holy Name! Alleluia!!!

C. HOW CAN WE COME TO GOD?

How can we come close to God? How can we enter deeper into this relationship that He desires of making our home in Him as He makes His Home ... as He has made His Home ... in us?

At the Last Supper, Thomas asked the Lord Jesus a question,

“Lord, we do not know where You are going, so how can we know the way?” The Lord Jesus said: *“I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one come to the Father except through Me.”*
(John 14:6)

Through the Lord Jesus, God has revealed so completely to us His desire for us to come deeply into one with Him; and how we can come actually do this in a way that pleases Him and is worthy of His Great Glory! The Lord Jesus is saying to us, that He is that WAY.

And later on in that same chapter the Lord Jesus explains how this is going to work. He says, “

“I am going to go back to the Father and we will send you the Holy Spirit... And on that day, when He comes, you will understand that I am in the Father, and You in me, and I in You.” (John 14:16-17)

And He will give us the gift of the Holy Spirit, Who will *“take from everything that is Jesus and give it to us* (John 16:13-15) The Holy Spirit will enable and empower us to enter into the Heart of God and really experience what it means to make our home in Him, just like God makes His Home in us. We become one with God through the power of the Holy Spirit, Who actually comes to live in us. Through the deep personal experience of the Holy Spirit, as at Pentecost, which today is often called today the “baptism” in the Holy Spirit, we will experience the first fruits of this special oneness with God just as the Blessed Mother and the disciples did. We will not only come to know God as He really is, but we will be able to enter into union with Him. And then we will really live and follow the Life and Words of the Lord Jesus.

What the Lord Jesus says in John 14 is that *the way* that He is and *the way* He is giving us to come to the Father is not just a method or some special plan to follow. The Lord Jesus Himself is THE WAY. He is A **PERSON**. He is revealing to us that THE WAY is ...

A PERSON AND A RELATIONSHIP WITH A PERSON.

And He promises to give us “another Person”, the Holy Spirit, the live in us ... Who enables and empowers us to follow The Way of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is what makes Christianity different from every other kind of religion. In fact this shows us that *Christianity is not a religion*. Our God is a Personal God, Who has revealed Himself to us. And that our way to come to Him is a Person, in relationship to a Person; in fact, relationship to three Divine Persons. Christianity is not a set spiritual and moral plan, a program or method of doing things, a set of prayers and religious practices to help us get to God. *Christianity is a Personal God Who comes to us, and enters into personal relationship with us*. In fact, it is Three Divine Persons Who come to us inviting us into total communion with Them, our One Holy God. The Lord Jesus has given us the Holy Spirit to bring us to the Father, to teach us how to come to Him, to lead us to Him, to teach us how to relate and work with Him, to teach us how to pray.

In Romans, St. Paul, says,

“The Spirit helps us in our weakness for we do not know to pray as we ought but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with sighs too deeps for words, and He who searches the heart of men know what is the Mind of the Spirit because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the Will of God.”

(Romans 8: 26-27)

We all have a common problem as human beings: we do not know how to pray. Nobody knows how to pray right. Nobody knows how to come to God. And so the Gift of the Holy Spirit, which again I say, is not a method but a Person ... the Gift of the Holy Spirit is our “way” to come to the Father. That is our WAY to pray. And when the Holy Spirit is praying in us, He is praying according to the Will of God. He knows exactly how to pray, how to come to the Father.

* * * * *

I would like to mention something else about the Holy Spirit here. Have you ever read that beautiful Scripture in 1Corinthians 13 that talks about love ... *“Love is patience, love is patience, love is kind.”* I think sometimes our interpretations of this Scripture really miss what the Lord is revealing to us about Himself here. In Christianity, “Love” is not just a feeling; it is not just an attitude; it is not just a way of acting. Love is a Person.

“The Love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, Who has been given to us ... Gods gift to us.”

(Romans 5:5)

For a Christian, Love is the Presence of God Himself, given to us by the Holy Spirit of God. God is Love! And all those characteristics describing Love in 1Corinthians 13 are really describing God. We see them visibly lived in the Personality and Character of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in all He said and did. And this is how God wants to live in and through us, by the Power and Presence of the Holy Spirit. Yes, God desires to reveal through and in us His Own Personality and Character as in the Lord Jesus ... and reach out through us Himself to others as He did through the Lord Jesus! What an awesome vocation and gift! Alleluia!!!

* * * * *

II. PRAISE IN THE SCRIPTURES

A. THE FIRST GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Now what happens when the Holy Spirit comes to us? How does He bring us to the Father? How does the Holy Spirit pray? What is the very first gift He gives to us when He comes?

As we go through the Scriptures, we remember the first Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was poured out upon our Blessed Mother and all the 120 disciples who were there. (Acts 1 and 2) What happened when the Holy Spirit came? What was the first gift the Holy Spirit gave when He came on Pentecost? When the fire of God came down, this is what the Scripture says,

“They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak foreign languages as the Spirit gave them the gift to speech.”
(Acts 2: 1- 4)

And what did their words mean? The Scripture says that everybody who was around them (the 3000 people who came to find out what was going on) said this, *“we hear them proclaiming in our own languages about the marvels of God.”* (Acts of the Apostles 2: 6,11) The first gift of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost was the gift of tongues.

And what did the tongues mean?

The Scripture says, they were “proclaiming the marvels of God!” They were PRAISING GOD! The first gift of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost was the gift of praise and worship. And it came in the form of other tongues.

In Acts chapter 10, as St. Peter was preaching to Cornelius and his family, the Holy Spirit came on everyone.

“While he was speaking to them, the Holy Spirit came down on all the listeners. Peter and the Jewish believers could hear them speaking strange languages and proclaiming the greatness of God.”

And Peter says, *“How can we keep them from being baptized*

when the Holy Spirit is poured out on them, just like He was on us in the beginning.” (Acts 10: 44 – 47).

Again, here we see that when the Holy Spirit came upon them, the first gift they received was the gift of praise, again in the form of the gift of tongues.

In St. Luke’s Gospel, we find another example of the Holy Spirit coming, at “the Visitation” of the Blessed Mother to Elizabeth. This was just after the incarnation of the Lord Jesus; and our Blessed Mother was carrying the Lord Jesus as she went to visit her cousin Elizabeth. When the Blessed Mother came to Elizabeth’s house and greeted her, Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and gave a loud cry of “*Blessed are you*” to Mary, as the Mother of the Lord, and “Blessed” to the Word-made-flesh in the Lord Jesus. (Luke 1:41-45) Here again we see the first gift the Holy Spirit gives when He comes... *PRAISE!* Elizabeth starts praising God. And the Blessed Mother responds in the Holy Spirit in a most beautiful song of praise and worship, the Magnificat. (Luke 1: 46-55)

A little later in Luke’s Gospel, Zachariah is filled with the Holy Spirit and, after giving John his name, Zachariah receives his speech back. And the first words of Zachariah are “*Blessed be the Lord God of Israel*”. Then he speaks a powerful prophetic word revealing and proclaiming the plan and work of God in Israel and for all the nations through the Lord Jesus and through John, His herald, who is to go before the Lord Jesus. (Luke 1: 67- 79) Again we find here the first gift of the Holy Spirit in Zachariah ... *PRAISE.*

In all these Scriptures and in many others, as the Holy Spirit comes upon God’s people and they are filled with the Holy Spirit, the first thing that happens is that He releases each one of them into praise and worship! They begin to praise the Lord and proclaim the Greatness and the Great Works of God. Perhaps those of you who experienced the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” may remember what happened to you after the Holy Spirit was released in your life. How you loved to praise the Lord all the time and talk about Jesus! We would just say, “Praise the Lord!” ... for everything! Even today, people call us the

“alleluias!” And they even sometimes try to stop us saying, “Don’t say so many “Alleluias!” However, we cannot help it. Praise is a Gift from God. The words of praise just seem to flow out of our hearts and mouths with no effort ... for everything. I want to encourage you to continue to use God’s Gift and to continue to Praise the Lord. And if anyone questions or tries to stop you praising the Lord, I would just say to them, “Oh I am just practicing for the choir in heaven! Alleluia!”

* * * * *

PRAISE AND WORSHIP – THE DIFFERENCE

Before we continue, I would like to ask, do you know the difference between praise and worship? Perhaps some of you have experienced the difference between praise and worship in your prayer alone and with others. What does praise and worship mean to you?

Praise is a spiritual relationship with the Lord that is different than the spiritual relationship with the Lord in worship. In praise, we do a lot of “work” to declare the Greatness of the Lord and to proclaim His Wonderful Character and His Wonderful Works. We lift up the Name of the Lord Jesus, Who He is, and seek to draw close to the Lord as we praise Him. For example, if we attend a prayer meeting, we may begin with singing and speaking praises to God. Now if someone is tired from the day’s work, it may seem like “work” to stand up and praise the Lord. But we don’t praise the Lord because we feel like it. We decide to praise the Lord because He is worthy, in obedience to His invitation and command. And as we persevere what happens? By the end of the meeting all that tiredness is gone, and we experience the Love and Peace and Presence of the Lord Jesus and just want to stay with Him all day!

What happened? As we praise the Lord, the River of the Holy Spirit begins to flow through us. And the Holy Spirit through the praise spiritually renews and lifts us close to God. We begin to experience the awesome Presence of God. As we praise the Lord, God Himself takes the initiative to draw us close to Himself ... and to draw closer

to us in all His Glory and Power and Divine Majesty and Love. In a moment, by His Grace, we can enter into a different spiritual realm and closer personal relationship with the Lord, a union with Him. This is actually a different spiritual relationship with God than we experience in praise. We call it worship. In praise, we bless and proclaim *ABOUT* the Name and Greatness and Goodness of God and of all His deeds. In worship we respond to God directly and to His Revelation of Himself to us. We respond to the personal experience of His Presence, of Who He really is in His Awesome Holiness, or of what He has personally done right now in our midst. At this moment, we have entered the spiritual realm of worship.

People who pray the Rosary may experience this process of moving from praise into worship. Think about what you say in the prayers of the Rosary. They are a powerful proclamation of the heart of our Faith: “the Word became Flesh”. We also praise the Holy Name of Jesus over and over, “Blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.” Perhaps when you start praying the Rosary, your mind may be going 60 different directions. But as you persevere in this active vocal prayer of praise, soon your mind comes into focus on the Lord Jesus ... and you often experience His Peace and Love. You enter into a kind of contemplative, worship relationship with the Lord. What has happened is that the Holy Spirit has come to us in our praises and lifted us spiritually from the realm of praise into a deeper personal experience of the Presence of the Living God. We enter the spiritual relationship of worship with God and respond to Him in worship.

* * * * *

God can and will come to us at anytime we are praising the Lord to bring us into worship, if we praise Him long enough. He has promised to do this in the Scriptures. We need to be sensitive to His coming and respond to the Lord accordingly ... especially if we are leading others in praise and worship. As someone once said, music can make or break a prayer meeting. When the Lord comes to us in worship, we need to respond by changing our words so we sing and pray *TO* Him, in conversation *with* Him. If we continue to sing and pray *ABOUT*

Him or what He has done when He is so with us, we actually turn away from Him and block His Grace, breaking the delicate relationship and anointing of Holy Spirit in worship.

B. WHAT IS PRAISE?

Remember how we said that the first gift the Holy Spirit gives to us when He comes is the gift of praise and worship. Why does the Holy Spirit give us this gift first? Whenever God does anything first, it is always very important. So why does He give this gift of praise and worship first?

Our God is a HOLY God ... a HOLY, Mighty, Loving Father, Son, and Holy Spirit ... God with us. This is how He has revealed Himself to us. Just because He is so close to us, we can't presume that we are close to Him or take lightly the way we come close to Him. The Lord Jesus said, "*Make your home in me as I make mine in you.*" (John 15:4) We need to do something to draw us close to God in a way that worthy of Who He is in His Holiness ... in a way that is pleasing to Him. As we read the Scriptures, we find that these first gifts of the Holy Spirit are really "the way" God Himself gives all the Holy People in the Bible to draw close to Him and welcome Him into their lives. Through His gifts of praise and worship, the Holy Spirit actually enables us draw close to the Heart of God *in the way that pleases Him*. And He continues to give them to us today as *the way that pleases Him*. Also, as we study what praise and worship mean to God in the Scriptures, we will also see that they are very powerful weapons of intercessory prayer which God Himself has given us to welcome Him and allow Him to work in the lives of others. Alleluia!

First, let's look at praise. We will pursue the study of worship in Part Two of "Praise and Worship in Intercession" from this series on "Intercession in the Spirit of Jesus". What is praise? What does it mean to the God? What is praise in the Scriptures? How is it described? And how does God desire us to praise Him?

As we search the Scriptures, we find praise essential to a relationship with God. In fact a relationship with God cannot exist without praise. And there is no impersonal way of expressing praise to Almighty God. We are relating to Him person to Person in praise.

C. THE MEANING OF PRAISE IN SCRIPTURE

What does praise mean to God? ... especially in the Scriptures? *Psalm 22:3* says: “*Holy One, You make Your Home, in the praises of Israel.*” Or some translations say, “*God, You are enthroned on the praises of Israel.*”

In *Isaiah 60:18*, in describing the New Jerusalem, the Lord says: “*You will call your walls salvation and your gates praise*”.

In *Isaiah 61:3*, the Lord promises He will give us “*a garment of praise for a spirit of heaviness.*”

Psalm 148:14, speaks of God, “*He is the praise.*” “*He is the praise of all the saints*”. Jeremiah says the same thing, “*Thou art my praise*”. (*Jeremiah 17: 14*)

These Scriptures reveal to us that first of all, praise is a *place* where God can come and dwell ... His *Home* with us. Our praise also becomes a *throne* where God can come and reign as King. Praise is the *gate* or *door* into the new City of God as well as into our hearts. Praise is a *garment*. And finally God Himself *is* praise.

Practically speaking, the Scripture teaches us that we can praise God and, in this way, lift Him up in every situation. It does not make any difference if the situation we are dealing with is a good or bad one. We do not praise God for the situation or the sins of a situation. We praise God because He is God. And through our praise, we can always open a door for Him to welcome Him into any situation. No matter what the situation is, we can always build a throne for Him so that He will have place from which to reign.

For example, are any of you praying for someone who needs to be reconciled with someone else? ... a situation where there is a division? Praise of the Lord Jesus is very powerful in a situation like that. As we praise the Lord, we are spiritually building a throne for the Lord between the two people who are in division. This throne of praises is where the Lord Jesus can come and be what He is called in *Ephesians 2:14*, “*the peace between us*”. Through praise we can welcome Him into the relationship to work His miracles. Praise God!

We also see how gift of praise from God to us is like a *garment* that the bride is given. Isaiah 61 talks about how God prepares the bride. And that chapter ends with a beautiful song of praise of the bride as she comes to meet the bridegroom.

All of the above Scriptures about praise find their completion in a special way in the Lord Jesus Himself. In *John 5:39*, we already mentioned that the Lord Jesus Himself says, *“The Scripture points to Me.”* Remember when we said the gate or the door of the New City of Jerusalem is called “praise”? In *John 10: 7 and 9*, the Lord Jesus says,

“I am the door; I am the gate of the sheep fold. Anyone, who enters through Me, will be safe. He will go in and out and be sure of finding pasture,”

When we praise God, we are proclaiming and lifting up the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. The Lord Jesus Himself is called the *“Praise of all the Saints”*. So, when we are proclaiming the Name of the Lord Jesus with our praises, we open the door to God, welcoming Him. And the Lord Jesus promised, *“If I am lifted up, I will draw all men unto Me.”* (*John 12:32*) What a powerful promise for intercession!

Finally praise is given to us so that we can minister unto the God Himself in a manner that is worthy of Him. Praise is the highest form of love, totally unselfish love. We praise the Lord for Who He is or for what He has done, not because we want something back.

“The Love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit ... and this is God’s gift to us.” (*Romans 5:5*)

As a gift from the Holy Spirit, this Love is a Divine Love. With the gift of praise, the highest form of love, we are enabled and empowered to actually keep the first commandment of God: *“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul and all your mind and all your strength.”*(*Matthew 22:37*) Alleluia!!!

Come, Holy Spirit renew us with the Fire of Your Divine Love!

D.. “PRAISE” WORDS IN THE BIBLE

Right now, we want to take a moment to review some of the words in the Bible that have been translated as “praise”. In fact, throughout the Scriptures, there are at least 250 different Hebrew and Greek words translated in relation to praise and many other words translated as worship. There is some overlapping in meaning between these Hebrew and Greek words, but they fit into some seven groupings. Also, in the Old Testament, the Psalms that generally concern praise can be divided into two groups: The Psalms of *descriptive* praise exult in the Person of God and His Attributes ... in essence, Who He is. The Psalms of *declarative* praise emphasize what God has done for His people. Sometimes the meaning of the Hebrew words reflects that difference. Following are some of the praise words in the Scripture.

1. The first word for praise in the Hebrew is *halal*.

We find this word in the English language in the transliteration “hallelujah.” It means simply, “Praise the Lord”, or “Praise Yah”. Yah is the shortened form of the Old Testament Name for God, Yahweh. The word *halal* means: to be boastful, to be excited, to celebrate, to make a show, to rave, to be clear, and to enjoy.

This word suggests a tremendous explosion of enthusiasm in the act of praising. Very few of us ever praise the Lord in this fashion. We are to boast of God’s exploits and extol His greatness with such enthusiasm and excitement that others would think it foolish. The man who praises in this fashion is so overwhelmed with the love that he feels for the Lord, he is not acting foolishly before the Lord. It is just those around him who think he is. This kind of praise is associated with the overthrow of the wicked.

Scriptures using this word: Ps. 117:1; 1Chron. 16:4, 10; Neh. 12:24; Ps. 32:23; 78:63; Is 38:18 and 45: 25; Gen. 12:15; Job 41:18; and Is. 14:12-14 (brightness of the “star of the morning”)

This last Scripture example on “brightness of the star of the morning” refers to Lucifer or Satan. He is described as leader of worship in heaven. And he took the attributes of his character that reflected

praise, celebration, raving, boasting, and brightness and turned them onto himself rather than to God. His boasting in the Lord was turned to pride and self worship, from which all sin stems. This is a very strong warning especially for leaders in praise and worship and those who serve others. We need to earnestly seek to turn all glory over to the Lord for all He has done in us and through for others; and take care lest we develop the attitude of serving as a prideful performance or a show of our own abilities. To God alone belongs all Glory.

Hymneō in the New Testament is a Greek translation of *halal* ... to hymn, to sing a religious ode, to celebrate God in song. Heb. 2:12

2. The second word for praise is *yadah*.

Yadah means to give public acknowledgment to, to confess, to use, hold out, to extend the hand, to thank, to revere/worship, to set forth, to praise. It is from this word we have the Name, Judah.

Here the soul is caught up with God Himself, all that He is in His Being, and all that He has done in His marvelous works. It means to publicly confess God. This word expresses one of the core meanings of praise. It is telling others what God has done. Thanksgiving is different that this kind of grateful, declarative praise. This verb also has a root meaning of “the extended hand,” or, “to throw out the hand.” It implies worshipping with raised hands ... with an open hand that indicates power as opposed to a closed hand.

Scriptures using this word: Psalm 138:1; 63:4; Gen 29:35; Lev.26:40 and 19:24; Ps. 32:5; 1Chron. 16:4 and 34; 2Chron. 5:13; 2 Sam 22:50

This is the word used in 2 Chronicles 20:19-21, where the Levites go out before the army praising the Lord. The word for praise in the Hebrew is *yadah*. As they went they lifted their hands with all their might. They expressed their praise unto God with their uplifted hands, and of course, we know what happened; the enemy self-destructed.

3. A third word in the Hebrew is *barak*.

The word *barak* means simply to bless, to kneel so as to bless God.

It is one of the most interesting words for praise in the Old Testament. We have all been blessed by God in so many wonderful

ways. We are blessed, but the question comes. How can we bless God? We bless the Lord by not forgetting Him, and not forgetting His blessing. We bless the Lord by remembering all of these things. There is a sense of kneeling and blessing God as an act of adoration in the word **barak**. There is a reflex reaction in all of us that wants to bow in the presence of the Lord, especially in prayer.

Scriptures using this word: Ps. 103: 1-2 and following; Jg.5:2; 2Kings. 4:29; 2Sam. 14:22.

4. The next word for praise is **Zamar**.

This is one of the musical verbs for praise and it means to touch the strings, or parts of a musical instrument, to make music accompanied by voice, hence to celebrate in music and song. It refers to praise that involves instrumental worship. Music was the foremost expression of praise by God's children in the Old Testament. It is impossible to have vocal, extended praise without music being involved.

Scriptures using this word: Psalm 150, Ps 21:13, 108:1, 27:6, 57:9.

5. The next word for praise is **shabach**.

Shabach means to extol, to speak well of in a high and befitting way. It also means to address in a loud tone, to command triumph, to glory in, to shout. There is a time when it is appropriate to give a loud shout unto the Lord. The **shabach** is particularly powerful when many join together in this kind of praise. It is this kind of praise that silences the Devil and applies the triumph of God in a situation.

This reminds us of the joyful shout of praise, victory, and triumph God commanded of Joshua at Jericho. Joshua 6 actually uses the Hebrew word *ruwa'*. (*taruwa'*). *That shout of God's People in the full power and anointing of the Spirit of God became like the "chariot of God" whereby He came in great power as Mighty King with His heavenly host into Jericho to destroy the walls of the city, defeating the enemy and establish His Triumph. It also reminds us of the cries of 'Hosanna' as Jesus entered Jerusalem and how He said that the very stones would cry out if the people were stopped from shouting their praises to the King of Glory. And finally we remember the cry of the Lord Jesus on the cross, the cry of Great High Priest in triumph, as*

His Sacrifice was completed unto the Glory of God.

Scriptures using this word: Ps. 117:1; 63:3-4, 147:12, 89:9, 65:7; 1Chron. 16:35; Ecclesiastes 8:15.

6. Another Hebrew word for praise is ***towdah***.

Towdah means to extend the hand, to give the sacrifice of praise ... also, adoration, and a choir of worshippers.

Towdah is directly related to the concept of sacrifice as it relates to praise. Also it means rejoicing in something that is promised in the Word but which has not yet taken place. There is great spiritual power in the use of the Word this way, especially through corporate praising. And there is great faith released in ***towdah*** praise. It is the sacrifice that God honors by His performing of miracles.

This praise also seems to involve confession: we need to be honest before God to come into His Presence. It is interesting to observe that the Old Testament uses only two words for confession, ***yadah*** and ***towdah***. And both of these words are translated as “praise”.

Scriptures using this word: Ps. 42:4, 50:23, 15:23; Acts 16:25; Jos. 7:19; Ezra 10:11; and Jer. 17:27, 33:11.

7. ***Tephillah*** is another Hebrew word for praise.

Tephillah means exuberant singing, to extol... singing our *halals*, laudation, a hymn. It also carries the idea of intercession for someone, supplication as in Is. 56:7.

This refers to a special kind of singing. It is singing unprepared, unrehearsed songs; probably what we would know today as “singing in the spirit.” This expression of praise brings tremendous unity to the body of Christ. It is used in Psalm 22:3 where we read that God inhabits (sits enthroned on) the praises of His people. God manifests Himself in the midst of exuberant singing. Then in 2Chronicles 20:22, when “*Israel began to sing and to praise, God set ambushes*”.

Scriptures using this word: Psalm 22:3, 34:1, 40:3, 66:2; 2Chronicles 20:2; Deut. 10:21; Is. 56:7.

8. The next word for praise is ***shevach***.

Shevach means to adulate or adore.

Scriptures using this word: Daniel 2:23 and 4:37.

9. ***Aheenos*** and ***aheeneho*** are New Testament Greek words translated as praise.

Aheenos and aheeneho mean a story, but in the sense of praise of God.

Scriptures using this word: Luke 18:43, 19:37.

11. ***Doxa*** is another Greek word translated as praise.

Doxa comes from the base word for glory. It thus carries with it the meaning of honor and worship and angelic dignity.

Scriptures using this word: John 9:24; Jude 8; Titus 2:13; Rev. 19:7; Luke. 14:10.

12. Our next Greek words are ***epaheenos*** and ***epaheeneho***.

Epaheenos and ***epaheeneho*** mean to laud, to commend, and to applaud. They are used most often in relation to man praising other men for what is commendable. However, in Romans 15:11, the Gentiles are called to “laud” or “praise” the Lord using ***epaheeneho***.

Scriptures using this word: Rom. 13:3; 1Co.11:2; Lk 16:8; Ro. 15:11.

13. The next Greek word is ***Eulogeo***.

Eulogeo means to speak well of (religiously), to bless, thank or invoke a benediction upon, to prosper.

Scriptures using this word: Luke 1: 64, 2:28.

14. ***Aretay*** is the final word for praise we will take from the Greek. ***Aretay*** refers to manliness (valor) or excellence (intrinsic or attributed.)

Scriptures using this word: 1Peter 2:9

* * * * *

Besides the speaking and singing words of praise in our languages and in the languages of the Holy Spirit, the use of musical

instruments helps greatly especially to sustain our praise and worship. The Scriptures also describe various actions that express and accompany praises: clapping, extending, waving, and lifting up of the hands; standing, dancing, jumping and leaping, walking, marching and treading; waving and lifting up of banners; and the presentation of material gifts to the Lord or to His Representatives. And we find that the great power of God is released in different intensity through different levels of corporate praise and worship. Especially, in God's economy, the more people involved in the praise and worship, the more powerfully God can act in intercession and in spiritual warfare.

E. GOD COMMANDS US TO PRAISE HIM

As we already said, praise and worship are gifts that God the Holy Spirit gives to us when He comes into our hearts. Besides being a gift that God freely gives us when He comes, God Himself invites and *commands* us in the Scriptures to praise and worship Him. Psalm 47:5; 42:4; 24: 7-10; 100:4; Philippians 4:6. In fact, this is a written Divine Law ... that everyone and everything give praise and worship to God, especially through, with, and in the Lord Jesus Christ. (Philippians 2: 12)

And God commands us to praise and worship Him in many ways, specific ways that He likes to be praised and worshipped. We can see how the different words translated as “praise” in the Scriptures give us an idea of some of the many ways God desires to be praised. The Psalms especially are just filled with ways of how to praise God ... ways of how God actually likes us to praise and worship Him. We are not able to go through every Psalm here, but here are a few examples of how we can praise God.

PRAISE SCRIPTURES

“O sing to the Lord the new song. Sing to the Lord, all the earth. Sing to the Lord, bless His Name, Tell of His salvation from day to day. Declare His Glory among the nations; His marvelous works among all the people. For great is the Lord and greatly to be praised. He is to be feared above all gods.”
(Psalm 96, 1-4)

Psalm 66: 1 and 2: “Make a joyful noise to God all the earth; sing the Glory of His Name. Give to Him Glory and praise.”

“Clap your hands, all you people, shout to God with loud songs of joy; sing praises to God, sing praises. Sing praises to our King, sing praises ... for God is the King of all the earth. Sing praises with a Psalm.”(Psalm 47:1, 6 and 7)

“Alleluia! Sing loudly a new song. Let the congregation of the

faithful sing His praise. Let Israel rejoice in His Maker and Zion's children exult in their King. Let them dance in praise of His Name playing to Him on strings and drums."

(Psalm 149: 1 – 3)

"You, who lift me back from the gates of death, to You may I recite Your praises one by one rejoicing that You have saved me." (Psalm 9:14)

That verse reminds me of the litanies we find in the Bible as well as in the Church. Remember how we pray the litanies, reciting the Lord's praises, or His Titles one by one, as in the Litany of the Holy Name of Jesus. Psalm 103 is a good example of a litany of the Lord's Blessings.

"Let me sing to the Lord for His Goodness to me, singing songs to the Name of the Most High." (Psalm 13: 5:)

"Rejoice in the Lord all You righteous, praise befits the upright heart. Praise the Lord with the lyre, make melody to Him with the harp of ten strings. Sing to him a new song. Praise skillfully on the strings ... acclaim Him with loud shouts ... hail Him with the war cry."(Psalm 33, 1-3)

"Lift up your heads, O gates, and be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of Glory may come in. Who is the King of Glory? The Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord, mighty in battle. Lift up Your heads, O gates, and be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of Glory may come in. Who is the King of Glory? The Lord of Hosts, He is the King of Glory."(Psalm 24: 7-10)

Remember how Isaiah calls the gate of the new city of God "praise". Here the Lord tells us to lift up those gates. When we praise God, we lift up those gates to welcome into our midst the mighty God, King of Glory, the Lord strong and mighty in battle.

Hebrews 13, 15: "Through Him, meaning the Lord Jesus, let us offer God an unending sacrifice of praise of verbal praise that is offered every time we acknowledge His Name."

That is a powerful message ...every time we even acknowledge the

Name of the Lord Jesus and give God glory verbally, a sacrifice of praise goes up in His Sight.

1Cor 14,15, St. Paul says: "Surely, I should pray not only with spirit, but also with the mind as well, and sing praises, not only with the spirit, but with the mind as well."

So, singing in the spirit and singing in the mind to the Lord are both ways to lift up a prayer of praise unto God. The Lord really desires for us to use all the gifts He has given us to offer praise to Him.

Another way of praise is found in Tobit:

"Bless the God of ages by up right conduct." (Tobit 14:17)

St. Paul summarizes it this way,

"I urge you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual worship." (Romans 12:1)

So even when we are living a holy life, the offering of our life to God can be a blessing, a song of praise unto our God ... in preparation for eternity when we will be a praise to God forever. (1Peter 2:9; Philippians 1:10-11) And in this way, *"I will bless the Lord at all times..." (Psalm 34:1)*

IN PRAISE, WE COME TO GOD, HE COMES TO US

We started today with the words Psalm 100 today.

"I will enter His gates with thanksgiving (towdah) and His courts with praise (tephillah)." (Psalm 100:4)

Praise and thanksgiving is the manner in which God wants us to enter through gates and into the courtyard of the King of Kings.

St. Paul tells us this again in *Philippians 4:6*, *"There is no need to worry; but if there is anything you need, pray for it; asking God for it with prayer and thanksgiving."*

Here He speaks about how we are to approach God in intercession. We need to put the Lord first through praise and thanksgiving. This is the atmosphere of intercession, which the Lord reveals to us here, the

way of drawing close to Him that pleases Him ... especially with praise.

“I am on my way to the wonderful tent, to the House of God, amid cries of joy and praise and an exultant throng.”
(Psalm 42:4)

In these Scriptures we see how God calls us to praise Him. The Lord even calls upon us to use everything He has given us to praise Him ... to shout and clap and dance and sing, to sing His Word, His Psalms to Him, to sing new songs of praise, even to offer our whole life and everything we have as a sacrifice of praise unto God.

As we praise Him, the One who is the King and the Lord of all the hosts of heaven, the King of the Glory, comes into our midst in specific ways:

Psalm 47:5 says: “God goes up with shouts of joy, the Lord goes up with trumpet blast.” Another translation of this verse says, *“God mounts His throne amid shouts of joy.”*

Some of these ways of praising can be very traumatic for some of us Catholics ... who were taught to “pray quiet”. Now there is a time to pray in quiet, contemplative prayer. However, God wants us to praise Him with everything we are and have. And through our praises, we put Him first. This is the way He has chosen to come to us. As I already mentioned, we don’t praise the Lord because we feel like it. We decide to praise the Lord because He is worthy, in obedience to His invitation and command in order to please Him. So we need to die to ourselves, and stir up our love of God, and be willing to praise Him as He desires and as He deserves... even if it is new and a bit uncomfortable for us.

Come, Holy Spirit, enkindle in us the fire of Your Divine Love to a great Blaze for the Glory of God. Alleluia!!!

III. THE COVENANT OF PRAISE - PSALM 81

God commands us to praise Him. Why? Not only, is He totally worthy of our praise, but also, as we praise the Lord in obedience to His command, we are actually fulfilling our part of a covenant relationship with Him. Throughout the Scriptures, we find that God relates to us by means of various covenants. What is a covenant? A covenant is a very sacred agreement whereby someone promises he or she will do certain things and someone else promises he or she will do certain things. When God makes covenant with us, He promises He will do certain things IF we do certain things. He actually sets the terms of the covenant. He is very specific in His covenants ... and He usually waits for us to act before He does what He has promised.

Our Heavenly Father has given us the Holy Spirit through the Lord Jesus as the first guarantee of His covenants with us. (Ephesians 1:13-14) The Holy Spirit gives us the desire and ability to carry out our part of these covenants. (Philippians 2:13) As we study praise and worship in intercession, we will study two specific covenants: one of these is the “Covenant of Praise”; and the other is the “Covenant of Worship”. These are especially important for us in our own lives as well as in intercession. For now we will focus on the “Covenant of Praise”. We will study the “Covenant of Worship” in Part TWO of “Praise and Worship in Intercession.”

For you reference, the “Covenant of Praise” can be found especially in Psalm 81; and the “Covenant of Worship” is especially in Psalm 149, in John 15, and in the whole Book of Revelations. Now people give many interpretations to the Book of Revelations. Perhaps you heard a few explanations as the new millennium approached! However, if we really look at what is happening in the Book of Revelations ... John was praying, worshipping the Lord. Suddenly he saw heaven opened and in the midst of all the worship going on in heaven, he saw the Lord Jesus Christ ... and many things started to happen in heaven and on the earth. I believe that the Book of Revelations is a REVELATION of the Covenant of Worship ... of what can happen as we worship God. Why not read it from that

perspective sometime? As we deeply worship God, I believe we will see the same things happen. Alleluia!

Also, both of the covenant of praise and the covenant of worship are summarized in the beautiful Magnificat of our Blessed Mother.

“My whole soul proclaims the greatness of God, and my Spirit exalts in God my Savior.”(Luke 1:46-55)

Nothing is held back from the Lord. She understood and lived both of these covenants deeply. Alleluia!

Now, let us look at the Covenant of Praise in Psalm 81 and what this can mean in intercession. In Psalm 81, the Lord first calls us to praise Him and then He tells us what He expects us to do in praise in specific ways as our part of the covenant. Finally, He lists all kinds of promises of what He will do, while we are praising Him, or if we do praise Him in these ways. As we praise God in these specific ways, we enter into and fulfill our covenant relationship with Him. Then He, the Faithful One, responds as He has promised.

A. OUR PART OF THE COVENANT OF PRAISE

Let's begin with our part of the covenant of praise ...

Psalm 81: 1 - 3: "Sing aloud to God with our strength. Shout for joy in triumph to the God of Jacob. Raise the song, sound the timbrel, the sweet sounding lyre and the harp."

The Lord is calling us here to praise Him with all our strength; to even shout our praises in triumph and with exuberance, using all our instruments, too.

Psalm 81:4: "Blow the trumpet as at the new moon, as on the full moon and on our feast day."

God says here to praise Him, not just in an ordinary way, but to have a real "fiesta", a celebration of praise as we do on our highest feast days. What is the feast day of the new moon that He refers to? This is none other than the Highest Feast of Israel, the Passover. What a celebration the children of Israel had after God delivered them from slavery and from the angel of death in Egypt and opened up the Red Sea before them in the most awesome miracle of victory over Pharaoh and the armies of Egypt. God is calling for this kind of greatest celebration of praise.

Then, God says, *"This is the statute binding on Israel; an ordinance of the God of Jacob."* (Psalm 81:5)

We are speaking here of Divine Law ... the Divine Law, the statute, or ordinance of praise ... the command of God.

For example, look here as I hold up my Bible. If I let go of my Bible, what will happen to it? Yes, it will fall down. No one says it will fall up! We all know the natural law of gravity at work here. Well God has Divine Laws and spiritual laws as well, which He made, and which He follows. The Law of Praise is one of these Divine Laws. God's invitation to praise in this Psalm is really a Divine Command,

a Divine Law, not something He recommends for us to do because or if we feel like it.

He is totally worthy of all of our praise.

1. JOSEPH

Psalm 81: 6: “This decree he imposed on Joseph when he went to war against the land of Egypt.”

The Lord has says the Divine Law of Praise was the Divine Command that He gave to Joseph to follow when He went to war against the Land of Egypt.

Do you remember the Story of Joseph with his coat of many colors in the Old Testament? How did Joseph go into Egypt? Remember, in Genesis, Joseph was sold by his brothers to traders. Joseph went into Egypt as a slave! But that is not what the Holy Spirit of God is saying in this verse of Psalm 81. He says, “*Joseph went to war against the land of Egypt.*” What is the Lord talking about here?

If we look at the life of Joseph, we see how Joseph was tempted, tested, and tried in many ways in Egypt. However what did he do every time? He lifted up God as first in his life. This is what it means to praise God ... to put God first in our lives, in every situation. By choosing to put God first, Joseph was actually praising God in every situation. And because of his life of praise, God was lifted up in every circumstance above the gods of Egypt. Joseph was in a spiritual war “*against the gods of the land of Egypt*”.

As the fruit of Joseph’s praise warfare and praise intercession, God made the way to save the lives of His People during the great famine ... and many others in the world as well. You remember how Jacob and all of Israel came down to Egypt for food because of Joseph’s work there. Also, God made the way through Joseph to fulfill His prophecy to Abraham, that his son would go down to Egypt for 400 years. God promised Abraham that

“Out of Egypt I will call My Son.” (Genesis 15:13)

All this is a direct fruit of Joseph's spiritual warfare of intercession praise. And Joseph himself must have had some idea of this promise to come. Do you remember how He made the People of Israel promise to take his bones along with them when the Lord would call His People out of Egypt back to the Promised Land. (Gen. 50:24-25)

Joseph was in a spiritual war in Egypt. We can learn much from Joseph of the power of praise warfare. We can also learn a lot about God and His Ways from all the experiences of Israel in the Old Testament. Often they faced real battles whereas we more often face spiritual battles, today, especially in intercession, as Joseph did. Even though, the Lord Jesus has won a complete victory on the cross in the spiritual warfare for all mankind, it does not show up everywhere yet. We are faced with a real, fierce, and on-going spiritual warfare as we work in intercession to apply the victory of the Lord Jesus into the spiritual "egypts" of today ... bringing the Kingdom of God into our own lives and the lives of all around us. And the ways God directed Joseph and His People in battle can be as parables where God can teach us how He may lead us to enter into the spiritual battles today. How we can work with Him to establish His Victory today.

2. JEHOSHAPHAT

As we are speaking about the Divine Law of praise intercession and warfare in Israel, I am reminded of the story in the Old Testament of Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah (2Chronicles 20). "Judah" means Praise and this is a story about Judah's experience with God's "covenant of praise". In this story, we find Judah coming under attack by a great multitude of the enemy tribes around them. Now, the first thing that King Jehoshaphat does is to proclaim a fast for all of Judah and call them together before the Lord. And *ALL* of Judah responds and gathers together in Jerusalem, in the temple of the Lord, very frightened, to seek and consult the Lord. The King cries out to God in total helplessness, yet in a most powerful intercession, reminding the Lord of His promises to defend His People. Then the Word of the Lord comes to one of the Levite sons,

"Do not fear or lose heart at the sight of this vast multitude, for

the battle is not yours but God's." (2Chronicles 20:15-17)

Then God gave them a whole plan through this prophet of what to do in the battle. God tells them to trust, take up their position, stand firm, and see what He will do. So, the King and all of Judah fell down on their faces worshipping the Lord. And the Levites began praising the God of Israel at the top of their voices.

The next morning, they marched out to battle, as the Lord had directed. Verse 21 says that the King set the cantors of Yahweh in sacred vestments at the head of the army to sing praises to God as they went forth. Now you realize that the armies in those days fought in hand- to-hand combat. And here the King puts the choir in the front of the army to sing praises to God as they march into war. How would you like to be in that choir? But they obeyed the direction of the Lord. Verse 22 tells what happened.

"As they began to sing jubilant praises to God, Yahweh Himself laid an ambush against all those coming against Judah and they were vanquished ... all of them destroyed."

So by the time Judah got to the battle, the battle was over. And the Lord said, now you can go in! Praise God! And they all began to bless the Lord, because the Lord had won the war for them. Alleluia!!!

3. MOSES

I would also like to recall briefly here the celebration of praise at the Red Sea. I especially love the way that Moses describes the Lord in praises. After the Children of Israel came out in battle order from the land of Egypt and crossed the Red Sea, do you remember how they had a tremendous celebration of praise and worship of God at the Red Sea celebrating God's victory. For this victory to happen, Moses was the one whom God commanded to raise His arm and His staff all night in praise and worship and obedient intercession over the Red Sea. After, to celebrate the victory, Moses sings this beautiful song of praise and worship of God.

"Who, among the gods is like You, Yahweh? Who is like You,

Majestic in Holiness; fearful ... terrible in praises; Worker of wonders.” (Exodus 15:11)

One translation says: “Creator in praises”. “Creator in praises” is our God! Alleluia!

* * * * *

Over and over in the Old Testament, we see the Lord working directly for and with Israel in the midst of their praises, as He did with these holy men of old. Now the God of Joseph and the God of Jehoshaphat and the God of Moses is our God too. And God has not changed. *He has not changed.* For example, this account of Jehoshaphat can say a lot to us in our world today ... about how God can and will work even today ... especially if we apply His Divine Law of praise intercession and praise warfare in both natural and spiritual warfare. One very important point that He is saying to us for intercession in this psalm is that He desires us to enter into the spiritual work of intercession and the spiritual warfare with much celebration and jubilant praise ... and follow Him in the battle ... for the battle is the Lord's! Alleluia! Glory to God!!!

B. GOD'S PART OF THE COVENANT OF PRAISE

Now, let us go back to Psalm 81, and look at that some of the promises of what God tells us He will do as we praise Him. This is God's part of the Covenant.

1. RELIEVE YOUR BURDENS

*"I relieved their shoulders of the burden; their hands put down the basket. In distress you called and I rescued you."
(Psalm 81:7-8)*

Here we find the first promise of what God says He will do as we praise Him: He will lift our burdens.

Originally this referred to God delivering His People from the burdens of Egypt ... the oppression of slavery in Egypt where they carried the laborer's baskets. (Exodus 3:7-10) But there is a much larger spiritual significance to this promise for us in intercession praise.

Perhaps some of you have experienced this already. Did you ever come to pray, for example, in a prayer meeting, and you were feeling very tired. Then you join with everyone and start to praise the Lord, even though it may take some effort. But what happens by the time the meeting is over? Don't you feel like a new person? God has lifted your burdens!!! You see, the Lord has kept His promise, even when you didn't realize He had made this promise, to lift our burdens when we praise Him. Glory to God!!

St Paul summarized this promise of God, "There is no need to worry; but if there is anything you need, pray for it, asking God for it with prayer and thanksgiving, and that peace of God, which is so much greater than we can understand, will guard your hearts and your thoughts, in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7)

Another example of God working out this promise, is through the

prayer of the Rosary. The Rosary, as I already mentioned, is a powerful prayer of praise of the name of the Lord Jesus and the proclamation of the heart of our Faith ... the Word become Flesh! Perhaps, sometime as you start to pray the Rosary your mind is going in about 60 different directions. But as you persevere and continue to pray, what happens? Pretty soon all those thoughts come into quiet and you are right there with the Lord Jesus in His Love and His Peace, focused on Him completely. And maybe you would like to stay there with Him all day!! Praise the Lord! Here again the Lord has kept His promise to lift our burdens when we praise Him. Alleluia!! And He will do this every time we praise Him, if we praise Him long enough. He promised! Alleluia!

* * * * *

TRAVAILING PRAYER AND PRAISE

I would like to mention another example that perhaps you have experienced in your life. Have you ever been in such a difficult situation that when you went to the Lord all you could do is cry. You had no words, only tears. This kind of prayer experience is what we call “travailing intercession.” Jesus Himself experienced this kind of intercession in John 11:33-44; and St. Paul speaks about his experience of travail in Galatians 4:19.

If the Holy Spirit has given you a burden and tears to pray in a situation, I would encourage you to try to pray by surrendering all to the Lord Jesus. As we cry out in tears and try to surrender all to God, we are really putting Him first ... which can become a kind of praise intercession.

Also, if you have the gift of tongues from the Holy Spirit, try to praise the Lord by praying in His prayer of tongues as soon as you can. If others are there, I encourage them to begin to praise the Lord and pray in tongues. Soon, by these praises you will find the Lord lifting the burdens and bringing you into His Victory and Peace, keeping His covenant promise. Because of God’s covenant promise here, you will

always experience this release if you persevere long enough in the travail and praise.

You may also experience a deep confidence that God is acting in the situation. This is called the charismatic Gift of Faith. This is a specific kind of faith that the Holy Spirit gives for a specific situation. If you experience this gift, you can give it away. Just say a little pray and ask the Holy Spirit to put this confidence that you experience into the hearts of the people you are praying for so they can receive God's miracles. And then praise Him. The Lord will really do this. Alleluia!!!

* * * * *

As we praise God, He not only lifts our burdens but He clothes us and fills us with precious gifts from heaven. In Isaiah, God promises, I will give you new clothes to replace your old clothes ... "a garment of praise instead of a spirit of heaviness". (Isaiah 61:1-3) As we praise God in intercession for others, the Lord will also lift the burdens off those we are praying for and surround them with His Presence and Peace and Love. God can work long distance!!! His covenant promise not only works personally for us who are praising Him, but He can reach out through intercession praises granting the effects of His Covenant of Praise to others as well. Praise the Lord!!

* * * * *

2. GOD SPEAKS TO US

Psalm 81: 8 "... unseen, I spoke to you in thunder.

Here God gives His second promise. Originally God spoke to the People of Israel in thunder at Mt. Sinai and from the cloud of His Presence with them through the desert. Here He promises the not only will He lift the burdens and problems from our shoulders, but also He will speak to us loud and clear to guide in the midst of the storms in our lives, when we praise Him.

There are some marvelous examples of this covenant promise in the Scriptures. Look at the story of the three young men in the fiery furnace. (Daniel 3) As they praised God, God sent His Angel to be with them and protect them in the fire. He gave them a miraculous way out of the situation and this great miracle resulted in the conversion of the pagan King.

Then, there is Jonah in the belly of the whale. (Jonah 2: 1-11) In the New Testament we find St. Paul and Silas in prison experiencing the many fruits of this covenant for themselves and others. (Acts 16: 16-39) In both of these situations, as the “captives” started praising the Lord, they not only were delivered themselves by a miracle of God, but all those to whom they were sent experienced the saving power of God as well ... the miracle of salvation. Alleluia!!!

As we intercede for others in their storms, God will effect His covenant on this point for them as well. We have often seen this promise happen. For example, in past meetings, we have sought to follow the Holy Spirit in praise intercession asking Him to lead us in how to pray in various difficulties related to specific leaders in the Church and in the nations. It is amazing that very often, we have actually seen repeated in the newspapers or in the words of others the exact words we were lead to pray for them in our intercession. God Himself was speaking directly to these people in an “unseen” way in the midst of their storms even as He had promised. Glory to God!

* * * * *

3. PROVE GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

Psalm 81: 8 “ At the waters of Meribah, I tested you..”
Here is another of God's promises.

Meribah was a place where God was waiting for His People to prove His Faithfulness (Exodus 17) ... a place where His testing revealed what was really in their hearts. It was a place of the dealing of God

with Moses and His People. That dealing of God uncovered the true condition of the faith of Moses and the People and also the unredeemed rebellion in their hearts. Meribah was also a place where God proved His Faithfulness by some amazing, creative miracles.

As part of His Covenant of Praise, the Lord promises that He is waiting to prove Himself to us as well. And He will deal with us in the midst of praises. As gold is tried in the fire, so we will experience the dealing of God ... especially to uncover the true condition of our faith and the unredeemed rebellion in our hearts. How do we respond to the dealings of God? As we praise Him and continue to choose to put Him first, the Lord can work creative miracles in our lives today. And St. Peter tells us that through all this we will actually become a living praise unto our God. (1Peter 1:6-7)

For us in intercession, we need to understand something about God from this covenant promise. When God looks at us, He never sees problems as problems, the way we usually see them; He only sees “opportunities for miracles.” How do we see the people and the situations we intercede for? Do we see as the Lord sees ... every situation as the opportunity for His miracles, for Him to make a new creation and reveal His Glory in us and in others?

In order for us to catch His way of seeing and His expectations for intercession, He has been teaching us to seek Him earnestly in the midst of praises to find out how He sees the people and the situations we are praying for, and what are the miracles He would like to do in these situations. Just ask Him to speak to you and tell you what He sees and what He wants to do. And what can we expect of Him in our intercessions? As we praise Him for others in intercession, the Lord will help others experience His purifications and dealings of faith as a preparation to enter into and receive His greater miracles. We need to ask the Lord how to pray for others and cover this purification experience of the dealings of God in their lives so the deeper will of God can be done on earth as it is in heaven.

* * * * *

4. NO FOREIGN GODS

Continuing with Psalm 81:9, the Lord says, “Listen, my people, I give you warning! If only you will obey me, Israel!”

Here the Lord is especially speaking about obeying Him in relation to practicing the Divine Law of praise. Then He gives the next Covenant Promise, which is also an explanation of what happens as we continue to go deeper in praising the Lord.

Psalm 81:10: “... Tolerate no foreign god among you; you must not worship an alien god.”

The Lord promises here that He will set us free from the false gods in our lives as we praise Him. How does He do this? And what are these “false gods” He is referring to in this Scripture?

a. FALSE GODS

First, let us remember what happens as we begin to praise the Lord. As we praise the Lord, the Lord comes closer to us. *Psalm 22* says that God “*makes His Home in the praises of Israel.*” And Who is God? Who is the Lord Who draws so close to us in praises? The Lord Jesus comes close to us, Who said, “*I am the Light of the world*” ... the Light that “*enlightens the minds of men*”. And the Holy Spirit draws close to us, Who carries the Light of the Lord Jesus to us; Who will leads us into all the Truth; and Who brings revelation from Heaven. (*John 16:7-15*). As the Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit come closer to us in praises, God’s Light begins to shine very brightly in our hearts so that anything that is not of God has to be revealed ... especially “false gods”.

What are the “false gods” that can be in our lives?

One of the “false gods” in our lives is everything that we think about all the time that actually takes the place of the Lord Jesus ... maybe

it's our family or our work or money or something we need for ourselves or for others. These may even be good and necessary things. But they can become a "false god" in our lives when we are so preoccupied with them that they take the place of the Lord Jesus in our lives. What happens to all those things we think about and worry about all the time when we start to praise the Lord Jesus? Don't they just seem to go away out of our minds, after a while, so then we are focused again on and thinking only about the Lord Jesus. He becomes first again. Praise the Lord! God Himself sets us free from these "false gods" as we praise Him. Alleluia!!

b. SIN

Another "false god" in our life is sin.

Did you ever notice, that when we begin to praise the Lord, often we remember someone with whom we have had a problem. Normally we respond by trying to push that problem person right out of our minds ... to "get rid of the distractions so I can pray now." Priests and religious especially are trained in "getting rid of the distractions so we can pray now". Did you ever wonder why you think of the people you have problems with when you begin to pray and praise the Lord?

Well, remember what happens when we begin to praise the Lord. God draws close to us and begins to shine His Light into our hearts more brightly. And if there is anything not right or not of God He will show us very quickly. If anything is not right in our lives or relationships, if anything is blocking our relationship with Him, we will remember it. If we remember specific people with whom we have a problem, perhaps the Lord is reminding us about these people because there is something He wants us to do right now. Maybe the Lord wants us to forgive someone or have us give him or her up to God. However, if we just go ahead and try to push these thoughts out of our minds, to "get rid of the distractions so I can pray now", then we may miss what God really wants in relation to them and us.

* * * * *

In their book, Distractions from Destiny, Harry and Cheryl Salem summarize some key distractions that can deviate us from the Presence of God and the goals He has for us.

1. Broken focus; thoughts and emotions are powerful forces that can easily break our focus and distract us from our destiny.
2. People: We already mentioned this. But we add on those relationships with “dream stealers” or those who don’t share the same dream and thus can destroy our destiny.
3. An offended heart: will drag us down and cause us to stumble on our way to our destiny.
4. Double-mindedness (James 1:7 - 8)
5. Lack of direction: if we don’t have a goal or a good road map, we may find ourselves wandering on every back road along the way.
6. Time: we must be patient as we wait for our destiny to be fulfilled. (However, we need to remember God is outside of time. He actually waits on us to grow, or change, or to move into the right position in relation to Him so we can receive what He wants to do or give and so fulfill His plans for us as He desires. (James 5:7-8)
7. The comparison trap; jealousy and discontent sidetrack many from reaching their full potential
8. Fear

* * * * *

Besides distractions, God may also remind us of un-forgiven sin or unhealed consequences of sin in our lives. 1John 5:17, “*Every kind of wrong-doing is sin*”. Then He gives us this tremendous promise,

“If we acknowledge our sins, then God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and purify us from everything that is wrong.” (1John 1:9)

In dealing with these distractions as well as all kinds of sin, God encourages us to praise, to put the Lord Jesus first,

“With so many witnesses in a great cloud on every side of us, we too, then, should throw off everything that hinders us, especially the sin that clings so easily, and keep running steadily in the race we have started. Let us not lose sight of Jesus, Who leads us in our faith and brings it to perfection: for the sake of the joy which was still in the future, He endured the cross, disregarding the shamefulfulness of it, and from now on has taken His place at the right of God's throne. Think of the way He stood such opposition from sinners and then you will not give up for want of courage. In the fight against sin, you have not yet had to keep fighting to the point of death.” (Hebrews 12: 1-4)

As we praise the Lord Jesus, we do put Him first. As we praise Him, instead of trying to just push out of our minds any “distractions” and sins we remember, why not just push them to the Lord Jesus, and ask Him what He wants us to do with these memories. Put Him first in every way. He will set us free as He promised. Alleluia!

* * * * *

Forgiveness is especially important in intercession prayer. I remember one situation that we experienced during intercession prayer. We had began to praise the Lord, and He started to show someone in the group that they needed to forgive the person they were praying for. They had a lot of resentment about things this person has done. And if they were going to intercede, then, their heart needed to be right. When it comes to intercession, we are representing God AND man, and it really does not matter what the person has done, whether it is right or wrong. If we are going to be an intercessor, our heart needs to be right with both God and man.

“The earnest fervent prayer of a righteous man has great power can accomplish great and wonderful results.”

(James 5:16)

This is why the Blessed Mother is such a powerful intercessor. She is “Full of Grace.” There was never ever anything evil that came into her or latched on to her. Therefore, God can reach out through her and

touch others with His Love with no hindrances of any kind ... with no change ... just as He really is. Come Holy Spirit transform us to be holy as our Blessed Mother is holy ... as the Lord Jesus is Holy.

When it comes to forgiveness, we do not even need to feel like forgiving others. It is simply a decision that we can make asking the help of the Lord Jesus. As we make the decision, the Lord Jesus will meet us and give us His gifts of repentance and forgiveness of sin. (Acts 5:31) We can either pray like the Lord Jesus prayed on the cross "*Father, forgive them. They do not know what they are doing*". Or we can pray St. Stephen's prayer: "*Father, lay not this sin to their charge*". These two prayers can open the way for God to first work His Grace in us. And at the same time they are both especially powerful prayers of intercession to set others free to the Lord Jesus.

The forgiveness prayers of the Lord Jesus on the cross and of St. Stephen are really intercession forgiveness prayers that can set others free. Through forgiveness, these prayers release the grace of God within the lives of those we are praying for. If you are thinking of someone right now you need to forgive and give to Jesus, why not turn to the "Intercessor's Forgiveness Prayer" at the end of this little book and pray right now with our Lord Jesus and give them to Him. Also, it might be good if you consider going to the Sacrament of Confession, and pray to forgive and release and give them to the Lord Jesus through this powerful Sacrament of Reconciliation. As you intercede for them through this Sacrament, God also brings healing to others and to us; and enables us all to make a new beginning in life.

* * * * *

I would like to say something else about sin before we continue this teaching. As intercessors, we are often taught that we need to repent of all our sins before we can really start to pray. And so I hear people often begin their intercession meetings with special prayers asking God to forgive them for all their sins. But I have a question about this? How do you know if you really repented of everything that needs repentance? I believe the praise of God is especially important

on this point. When we are praising God, we put Him first, not ourselves. Through the praises, His Light is shining in us, so He can very clearly show us whatever we need to repent of. We can ask the Lord to let us see ourselves as He sees us. Then we can really repent in truth before the Lord and He can really set us free and really purify us from our sins. Praise is also important for us on this point in another way. When we praise the Lord, He will also show us when we are at peace with Him. And that is important too. Amen!

* * * * *

As we started this study, I mentioned that God has made this Covenant of Praise with us. And He honors this covenant personally with whoever praises Him. However, God also honors this covenant when we are praising him in intercession for others.

One time we had a wonderful experience of this covenant promise of conviction and liberation from sin for someone we were praying for. The Lord had led me to pray together with three ladies for their husbands for three months. We offered everything in our lives to God for those 3 months as intercession for the husbands ... so that everything we did was a prayer for them. We also met at a different home one time each week for about 1 to 2 hours to praise the Lord and seek Him on how to pray more deeply in intercession. We really praised the Lord Jesus a lot in those meetings.

One morning, I will never forget, one of the ladies came running over to see me. She said, "Sister, I just have to tell you what Brian said this morning." I said, "Praise the Lord Jesus! What is the Lord doing now?" She said, "This morning Brian came out for breakfast and he said, "I just hate to go over there to work. All they do is get me in trouble." Well, his work is where he was getting and selling drugs. What had happened? As we were praising the Lord in his house, the Light of the Lord Jesus began to shine more brightly in his life and he began to see his situation at work as it really is, from God's viewpoint. He didn't like what he saw and he wanted out. Now isn't

that the first step to repentance? ... that you don't like the condition you are in and you want to change? Praise the Lord Jesus! At the end of the three months, he lost his job, and he saw this as the Hand of God. However, because he was so involved in the mafia, he had to leave his house as protection for his family. But God gave him a Christian family to live with who could help him get his life in order with the God. Praise the Lord. Here God kept His covenant promise of praise as we praised the Lord in intercession for Brian. Alleluia!!!

* * * * *

c. SELF

There is one other false god we need to talk about here ... the biggest one of all ... the big "I"! "I like this...." "I want this...." "I think this....." I ... I ...I !!! the big "I" !!

Now what happens to the big "I" when we praise the Lord Jesus? Doesn't it just bow down before Him where it belongs? You know, we are often taught about the importance of humility in our lives if we are to really follow the Lord Jesus. And this is very true. Humility is fundamental to the Christian life. But sometimes what happens is this ... some people work so hard to be humble ... and then they say, "Look how humble I am!!"

As we speak here about praise, I believe that praise is God's way that He has given us, to keep us humble. When we praise God, what do we do? Don't we lift up the Lord Jesus and put Him first in our hearts and in our minds and in our spirits? Well, if the Lord Jesus is first, we are at least second! What is humility, but being in right relationship with God. I believe that if we could really live in praise of the Lord, He would keep us humble, by keeping us in right relationship with Himself. Alleluia!

* * * * *

PRAISE AND SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT

In these past years, I have noticed that there are various “do-it yourself” type of teachings going around connected with some of the new religions of our time, like the New Age movement, as well as some of the old religions that are basically non-Christian sources. The methods taught by these teachings for ministry or self-knowledge or prayer include emptying yourself out before you pray ... healing yourself by your own thoughts ... or saying some kind of mantra to bring you into “peace” so you can pray. In other words, do-it-yourself! People who practice these methods can actually have spiritual experiences ... for example, a kind of spirit of bliss and quietness. The question is: where is that spiritual experience coming from?

The problem with these methods in ministry, even exercise, and prayer forms is the focus on self ... the big I! The focus on self is actually the point of danger. The danger is an open door to the enemy. Satan is focused on himself ... self-centered. If he sees people so focused on self, he feels right at home and welcomed to enter right into their hearts and lives. And he comes. The Lord Jesus, on the other hand, died to Himself and was always glorifying the Father.

As we praise the Lord Jesus and put Him first before ourselves in prayer, He comes to us and fills us with the true Peace of God, which is Himself. (Micah 5:3-4) And the Holy Spirit will come and fill us with joy. (Romans 14:17) This is all part of His promise in the Covenant of Praise. We cannot set ourselves free from ourselves. We cannot really bring ourselves into peace, especially by trying to empty ourselves of everything. Only God can do this. And often He does it following His Divine Law of Light casting out darkness. (John 1:1-5) This is an important point of spiritual discernment for us in relation to all these new methods of prayer and ministry and self-knowledge and living a better life that are going around. What is the focus? Where does this experience lead us ... closer to the Lord Jesus or away from Him ... and Who gets the Glory? If the Lord Jesus is first, and He gets the Glory, we can have more trust that we are not being deceived by the enemy and his ways. We can have more trust that we are on the

right path with the Lord Jesus Christ. And we can have more trust that the Lord Himself is protecting us. Alleluia!!!

* * * * *

As God frees us from our false gods according to this covenant promise, He is purifying and preparing us to receive a most precious gift ... the “Robe of Righteousness”. In order to enter the Presence of our Most Holy God, we have to be holy. Do you remember when the Lord Jesus spoke about the wedding garment we need to wear to enter into the wedding banquet of the Lamb? (Matthew 22:1-14) Did you ever wonder what that wedding garment is? ... How can we be clothed in the garment the Lord desires? This garment is a gift that the Lord gives when which we are washed in the Blood of the Lamb and our sins are forgiven. (Isaiah 1:18) God has made the Lord Jesus to be our Righteousness, our Holiness. (1 Corinthians 1:30.) As we praise the Lord more and more, sin in our life is revealed; and the Lord Jesus draws nearer to us in His Great Divine Mercy to wash us by His Word and by His Blood. As we recognize and continually turn back from our sins to the Living God in praise, He Himself clothes us in the garment that is a share in His Own Glorious Presence, His Goodness, and His Holiness. (Zechariah 3: 1-7) He does this to prepare us to enter more deeply into His Presence in the throne room, into the wedding feast of the Lamb, and offer Him the deeper worship of our calling that shares in His Own Royal Priesthood. We will study more about this when we cover the Covenant of Worship in Part Two of this series.

* * * * *

5. DEFEAT YOUR ENEMIES

Another covenant promise God gives us in praise ...

Psalm 81: 13 to 15 “If only my people will listen. If Israel would follow my ways (He is speaking here about His way of praise) at one blow, I would defeat their enemies and strike all

who attack them. In a moment I would subdue their foes, against their enemies unleash my hand. Those who hate the LORD would tremble, (They will be afraid of you.) and their doom will be sealed forever.”

Here the Lord says that He Himself will defeat our enemies and set us free from all who attack us. For how long? He says, “Their doom will be sealed forever.” FOREVER!!! That’s a long time to be free!!!

Now, who are our enemies? Well, we only really have one enemy ... the same one who is God’s enemy is our enemy too ... the devil or Satan. We are not enemies of each other. In this covenant promise, the Lord Himself promises that if we praise Him, at one blow, He will defeat our enemies ... In a moment, He Himself will subdue our foes. I believe that about 90% of our deliverance God Himself does or will do directly when we praise Him. This covenant promise is extremely important for us in intercession as we often face spiritual warfare personally and as we pray for others.

For over 30 years now, I have been a fulltime missionary in the renewal work of the Holy Spirit in the Catholic Church in some 23 nations. I have found that so many people do not really understand how God Himself can work in spiritual warfare in praises. Most people don’t really understand because they have not been taught and they have not personally experienced this covenant promise of God’s direct liberation in the midst of praise. For example, in many places as people prepare for a prayer meeting, the first thing the leaders often do is pray some prayers to bind all the spirits of the air and water and fire and whatever else is on their list. Then, they can begin to praise the Lord. I have also seen some people coming for prayers every week at the prayer meetings ... always asking prayers for the same point of deliverance and healing. They don’t seem to ever get really free or healed. Why?

Also, I find that as people become more aware of the spiritual realm and spiritual warfare dimension in their lives especially after they receive the “baptism in the Holy Spirit”, they tend to react to problem

situations in the following manner: for example, let's say they are experiencing some problems or difficulties. Their first response to the problem often is, "I rebuke it in the Name of the Lord Jesus." It is as if they see all their problems or difficulties as an attack of the enemy and they use this special formula to get free from of it.

Let me ask you something. What does it mean to you to say, "Jesus is Lord"? What does it really mean to you? Perhaps, it means that He is Number One ... He is totally in control ... the He has all authority in heaven and earth. It really means that ...

**NOTHING ... ABSOLUTELY NOTHING ... CAN HAPPEN
IN HEAVEN OR ON EARTH UNLESS THE LORD ALLOWS IT
FOR A REASON ... HIS REASON!**

Not even the enemy can make a move unless the Lord allows it for a reason ... **GOD'S REASON!** Jesus Christ **IS** Lord! If we are in some difficulties and problems of life, it could be that God is trying to tell us something. However, if we just rebuke the situation in the Name of the Lord Jesus, as if it is all the enemy's doing, we may miss what God is trying to tell us in that situation. King David, one of the greatest praisers and worshippers of God in the whole Scriptures, was so close to God, he could even hear God speaking to him through his enemies. Can you hear God speaking to you through your enemies? It's amazing to think about this, but it is really true.

The Lord Jesus really is Lord!!

* * * * *

Once I heard the story of a dear Pentecostal brother who had a small Church. This was many years ago. When they started, there was always so much commotion and noise in his Church before the Sunday meeting that he had developed a pattern of some special prayer before the service. He would say, "Now everyone bow your heads and shut your eyes " and then he would pray a special long prayer of deliverance against the enemy. Then they would start the service.

One day, as he was preparing for the Sunday service, the Lord spoke

to him, “Son, why do you worship the enemy in your Sunday service?” The brother promptly replied, “I rebuke that thought in the name of the Lord Jesus.” But the words kept coming back and back again into his mind. So finally he said, “Lord is that You talking to me? We don’t worship the enemy in our Sunday service, we worship You. What do You mean?” So the Lord said to him, ”Tell Me what you do in your Sunday service.” So, he explained the little pattern they had developed ... of how he would tell everyone to bow their heads and close their eyes; and then he would pray the special deliverance prayer in the Name of the Lord Jesus. After that they would begin their praises of the Lord. The Lord listened patiently to the whole story. And when the man finished the Lord said, “Why do you put him first? He understands that as worship.” This man understood immediately what the Lord was saying and he was determined to put the Lord first in the Sunday meeting.

When Sunday came, he went to his Church for the service. When he stood up to begin, he said, “Now everyone stand up and we are going to praise the Lord. “ Well, there was such commotion and so much more noise than usual, that the deacon came over to him and asked, “Don’t you think you should say that deliverance prayer first?” The pastor said, “Today we are going to put the Lord first and praise Him first.” Now it took some doing to get everyone to praise the Lord *first*. But he persevered and after some time, they all were deep into the praise of God and worship of the Lord. And the Lord really broke through from heaven with His Glory on the congregation in a way they had never experienced before. They have been praising the Lord first ever since and have become a forerunner in the ministry of praise and worship in the Body of Christ! Praise the Lord!

* * * * *

The Lord really makes a powerful promise to us here in *Psalm 81*,

“*If you follow my ways*” ... that means His ways of praise ... of putting him first ... of loving Him first and lift Him up as Lord by our praises, He promises,

“I would defeat their enemies and strike all who attack them ... and it will be a permanent deliverance.”

I Myself will set you free.

And *“if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.”* (John 8:36)

Acts of the Apostles has some wonderful examples of God covenant promises of deliverance working in the midst of praise and worship.

In Acts chapter 16, we find St. Paul and Silas in prison, beaten and locked up put in the stocks...most probably an experience inspired by the enemy Himself. In the middle of the night, Paul and Silas were the singing praises to God at the top of their voices, and everybody in jail was listening. In the middle of those praises, a great earthquake shook jail to its foundations; all the doors in jail were opened; and all the chains were loosed and fell to the ground. Do you remember this story? And the jailer woke up and thought everyone had escaped and he would be blamed for not doing his duty. So he was going to kill himself. But Paul calls out, “Hey, wait. Don’t harm yourself! We are all here!” And the first question that the jailer asks, trembling in fear, is, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” In the middle of the praises, the Lord comes, set the prisoners physically free, but even more He set the jailer spiritually free, giving him and his whole family the grace of salvation. Alleluia! Because of and as the fruit of the praise intercession of Paul and Silas in the spiritual warfare, God not only defeats the enemy and his plans, but He also and turns everything around and reaps a great harvest for the Kingdom of God. Alleluia!!! ... God’s Covenant of Praise!

* * * * *

SPIRITUAL WARFARE AND PRAISE

I would like to mention two other important points about praise and spiritual warfare. Now, I believe in and have experienced this covenant promise God has given us in Psalm 81, that as we praise Him, He will set us free from our enemies. In fact, I really believe that

at least 90 % of our spiritual freedom, God will give to us Himself as we praise Him. And this is also true in intercession for others. I have heard many testimonies of people serving God in various ministries around the world who have experienced the miraculous liberation of others and a tremendous moving of God in others as deep praise and worship preceded their ministries of evangelization or healing and miracles. The battle is the Lord's!!!

But then there is that other 10% we need to deal with in another way. The Lord Jesus has given us authority over the enemy. ... to bind and to loose ... to trample underfoot the whole power of the enemy. And this is true. And I will talk more about this in the Covenant of Worship. However for right now, I want to emphasize first that when we enter into direct spiritual warfare against the enemy, we are no match for the enemy. The devil is a fallen angel and we are human beings. There is no way we can compare in wisdom or strength against a fallen angel. And as he is a liar, he will do everything he can to deceive us. Only the Lord Jesus has been raised up above the angels to stand in front of the Father's Throne. Only in the Lord Jesus do we have the power and wisdom and strength to be able to defeat the devil. Only in the Lord Jesus is there victory over the enemy and his evil troops.

When we praise the Lord, the Lord brings us into one with Himself. So then when we are "*IN* the Lord Jesus", we are really *IN* His protection. You know how some people will "plead the blood of the Lord Jesus" or pray a prayer to put on the armor of God. Well, these prayers are good prayers, but sometimes people use them like a magic formula. They say the words and then try very hard to believe that they will work. Well when I go into the spiritual warfare, I do not want to say only words and hope they will work, but I want to really experience and know that I am in the protection of the Lord Jesus. When we are praise and worship of the Lord, He brings us into a relationship with Him where we become one with Him. We *know* is real and true ... that we are *IN* Him ... and really in His Protection.

And when we are united with Him like this, then He can lead us so

much more clearly in the spiritual warfare. The battle is only the Lord's! And we need to follow Him in that spiritual warfare. Through praise and worship we are in a much better spiritual condition where we are able to follow Him. And He will empower us and equip us to be effective in the spiritual battle. We will speak more on this at another time when we study the Covenant of Worship in the Scriptures.

As we begin to live in praise of God, we will experience a permanent deliverance. No longer will we have to fight off the enemy today, and again tomorrow have to fight again with the same enemy, and the next day again. No, the Lord will come to be with us in a special way, to fill us with His Presence and be our Shield. The enemy will not want to be around.

We will be living in the Kingdom of God even right now ... living in the Lord Jesus.

St. Paul, in *Rom 14:17* speaks about how the Kingdom of God is "*righteousness, joy and peace in the Holy Spirit.*"

And the Lord Jesus says, "*The Kingdom of God is within you.*"
(*Luke 17:21*)

He is here ... right now.

As our Blessed Mother appeared to the Young people in Yugoslavia, one of the things she said to tell everyone is that the Kingdom of God is the most real thing that there is. That is the reality. That is what she says. That is what IS! We need to realize this and enter in to it. And we can experience the Joy and Peace of God right now and His Righteousness, His Holiness. Praise is the real key of how to enter in and experience in the Kingdom of God right now ... and also the way to remain in Him in Whom we have believed.

* * * * *

If you have never praised the Lord Jesus deeply enough to personally experience what we have been sharing here in the Covenant of Praise, I would like to challenge each one of you to take at least two or three

hours or more and just praise the Lord at the top to your voice, with all your strength, and break open heaven above your own life, and see what He will do. And if there are some burdens of prayer you have for others, why not try to do the same for those burdens...to go before the Lord and praise Him for however long it takes until you know that heaven is opened and the answer has come from heaven into the earth for those people and their intentions. I think we not only need to get serious with God and earnestly, desperately, perseveringly come before God in praise and worship and intercession, but we need to be committed to the point of saying to the Lord, 'I am not leaving You until I really find you and until You and I really get all these matters worked out ... until I experience your Covenant of Praise in my own life and in this situation.' I believe if we can come before the Lord as individuals in God's way of praise and worship, we will start to grow up spiritually in the Body of Christ and see God working more clearly and directly everywhere as He promised. Alleluia!!!

* * * * *

7. I WOULD FEED YOU....

Let us continue now with the last promise of Psalm 81. The Lord says that He is not only going to lift our burdens, empty us out of our false gods, free us from our sins, and from our very selves, and free us from our enemies.

He says, *"I would feed you on pure wheat and fill you with wild honey from the rock."* (Psalm 81:16)

What are the pure wheat and the wild honey from the rock? On one hand, the pure wheat reminds us of the miracle of the manna in the desert ... the manna that the God sent down from Heaven to feed His People. In John 6, The Lord Jesus says that this is really Himself.

"I am the Bread of Life ... the manna that God has sent down from Heaven that gives life to the world." (John 6: 33, 35)

Do you remember that beautiful chapter 6 of St. John's Gospel on the Bread of Life? The Lord Jesus says it over and over again. He says:

"He who comes to me will never be hungry. He, who believes in me will never be thirsty"... "I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats is bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world."
(John 6:35, 54-58)

The Lord is promising us here that if we lift up the Lord Jesus in our praises, He is going to feed us with the best of wheat. He is going to feed us with Himself! We are going to experience being fed that Spiritual Food of the Lord Himself, and the blessing of God's Own Presence will come upon us and bring us into one with Him.

And what is the promise of the honey from the rock?

Honey is the choicest portion, a most precious fruit. In the Israel and in the Middle East, honey was often found in a crack in the rocks. The eating of honey helped to make someone more beautiful. Often honey is associated with good words of one we love, especially the Word of God, and with Wisdom, and with the Promises of God.

In the Song of Songs, the bride says this: "Your lips drip honey, my bride, sweetmeats and milk are under your tongue." (Song of Songs 4:11)

"Pleasing words are a honeycomb, sweet to the taste and healthful to the body." (Proverbs 16:24)

"Eat honey, my son, since it is good; honey that drips from the comb is sweet to the taste: and such is knowledge of wisdom for your soul: find it, and there will be a morrow, and your hope will not be in vain." (Proverbs 24:13-14)

The Lord Jesus is called the Rock of our salvation. And even as Moses struck the rock and water flowed out, so when the lance struck the side of the Lord Jesus on the cross, blood and water came out ...

water being a sign of the Holy Spirit being poured out. What is the honey from the rock if not the sweet Holy Spirit and all His sweet Fruits and Gifts ... given from the Heart of the Lord Jesus through His Words and ministry and on the cross to be for us Eternal Life...like the River of Life flowing from the Throne of God and of the Lamb ... the wellspring of Eternal Life.

What the Lord is saying that He will fill us with Himself as we praise Him. This covenant promise is just another way the Lord says that He will “*make His home in the praises of His People*”. (Psalm 22:3)

* * * * *

This covenant promise is a good test for us in our own ministry to see if we are really ministering in God’s way, with God’s strength or if we are serving with our own strength. How do you feel when it is done? How do you feel? When we are working in the Lord’s Strength and Wisdom and in His Power, He is going to fill you up with Himself, so you won’t be tired. He will renew your strength. However, if you do feel worn out after ministering or serving the Lord and His People, that means you did not pray long enough. Go back before the Lord, in praise and worship, until the Lord renews you in His strength. Alleluia!!!

8. OTHER PROMISES

God confirms and reveals these promises and other promises in relation to the Covenant of Praise throughout the Scriptures.

In Tobit, it says: “Praise the Lord for his goodness, thank the Lord as He deserves and bless the King of the ages, that Your temple be re-build with joy and within You.”

“Praise the Lord for his goodness, and bless the King of the ages, so that His Tent may be rebuilt in you with joy. May He gladden within you all who were captives; all who were ravaged may He cherish within you for all generations to

come.” (Tobit 13:10-12)

As we praise God, this prophesy of reviving, of renewing, of rebuilding begins to happen, first of all in us ... that we may become the temple of the Holy Spirit. All of us have areas in our lives that never grew right, which are “withered”; there are areas in us that got destroyed or blocked by sin, by the world, the flesh and the devil. But as we come to the Lord and He begins to really be the Lord in our life, there is a process of revelation and changing that happens ... a true conversion wherein we begin to put on the Lord Jesus Christ and the mind of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are emptied out of the old man and the “new creation” in Christ Jesus begins to grow, to live and be built up within us. (2Corinthians 5:14-21) St. Paul prays for this,

“May the God of peace make you perfect and holy; and may you all be kept safe and blameless, spirit, soul and body, for coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. God has called you and He will not fail you” (1Thessalonians 5:23-24)

As we come to know the Lord and enter into union with Him through praise, every part of us will become the temple of the Holy Spirit, the dwelling place of the Most High (Ephesians 2:21-22). Through a life of praise and worship, we will grow and become a spiritual House of Prayer (Isaiah 56:6), where God can live and we can truly “worship the Father in spirit and in truth.” (John 4:23-24) As God’s Throne is established in us ... a fruit of His Covenant of Praise ... the River of Life will flow through us freely and bring forth the good fruits of Eternal Life in our own lives and for others as well.

The Body of Christ is also rebuilt and united in the midst of praises. For the Spirit of the Lord builds unity as his People praise the Lord together. And God promises that when “the brothers are united ... God commands His blessings of Eternal Life.” (Psalm 133)

When we praise the Lord deeply, the spiritual heavens are opened above each of us and above the place where we are praising. Thus the way is open for the Lord to come in and do His Good for us

personally and for those for whom we are praying. The praise welcomes God into our lives and the lives of others. As we praise God in intercession, He enters the lives of those we are praying for and begins to do good for them as well, implementing all the covenant promises of praise that we talked about earlier. He will not only do these promises for us, but He will also do these promises for others as we intercede for them.

* * * * *

PRAISE SILENCES REBELLION

One time I was visiting a community of priests and brothers who had made a small “house of intercession” within and for their community. They had invited me to come and give them some training on intercession. Their community worked with the inner-city people and the poor. They actually lived in the inner-city area of a large city in the USA. And they also staffed a high school for boys of that neighborhood in their same building complex.

One day, we were all praying the Evening Prayer of the Church together. When it came time for the intercessions, one of the brothers who was teaching the second year of the high school burst out saying, “Lord, I just can’t take it anymore in that class. All the boys do is fight and use bad language. They refuse to sit down. They don’t obey or do their work. I can’t take it anymore. I quit.”

Now this was really serious, because this brother was about the 4th teacher these boys had in their first 6 weeks of school. All the others had also quit. And he was ready to quit also. So I was asking the Lord in my heart, Lord, how can we pray about this situation?

The Lord reminded me of His promise in *Psalm 8: 2*:

“Your Majesty is praised above the Heaven and on the lips of children and of infants you have fashioned perfect praise to spoil Your enemy, to silence the foes (and the rebels).”

I realized these children were in rebellion; and the brother, who was

going to quit was also heading in the direction of rebellion against the situation. Although it may be true that we cannot handle a situation, the response of just quitting, instead of taking it to the Lord and following Him through the situation, is one form of rebellion.

The Lord especially reminded me of the part of *Psalms* 8:2, where He promises, “*Praise silences rebellion.*” I asked the Lord how we could pray to silence this rebellion with praise. The Lord showed me that praise is Loving God ... a perfect, unselfish Love for the Lord because of Who He is. And then the Lord directed me to pray prayers in intercession related to that Love. I started to intercede out loud, praying for the Lord’s Divine Love from different Scriptures to come upon the brother and the children and the whole situation. As I was lifting up the children to the Lord, I also began to speak His Love in the form of forgiveness for them in the Name of the Lord Jesus, because “*Love forgives all things*”. (*1 Corinthians 13*) I prayed for God’s Love to bring healing and peace into all of those in this situation. As I was praying in obedience to the leading of the Holy Spirit, the Love of the Lord flooded into the room so strongly ... it seemed to be flowing directly out of every word the Lord was giving me to pray. Alleluia!

The next afternoon, I received an urgent message. “The Brother from the school wants to see you urgently ... right now in the chapel. It’s really urgent!” I was wondering what happened. As I passed the Father’s office who was in charge of the House of Prayer, I said, “Father, please come with me. We have an emergency. “ As we came into the chapel, the Brother from the school rushed over to me; threw himself down on his knees in front of me; and said, very strongly, “I don’t know what you’ve got, but whatever it is, I want it.” I said, “Wait a minute. What is happening? Get up from your knees. What’s happening?” He said, “Do you remember that prayer you prayed yesterday at Evening Prayer? Well, today I went back to school. And do you know that all day long, every one of those boys in my class sat down in his desk and did his work for the first time this year. There was not even one bad word from them, no fighting, no problems. And toward the end of the day, when I started to get a bit tired and upset

about something, one of the boys said to me. Hey, Brother, cool it.” The Lord had done a miracle for the boys and for the Brother ... to silence the rebellion on every level because of the praise! Alleluia!!

Then the Brother said, “Now, Sister, I don’t what you have. But whatever it is, I want it. And he grabbed my hands and put them on his head and said, “Please pray for me right now.” I said, “That wasn’t me that did this miracle, that was the Holy Spirit of God. He did this. He’s the One you need to ask for.” We shared with him about the Holy Spirit and then prayed with him for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Alleluia!!!

“Praise silences rebellion.” (Psalm 8:2) Isn’t God wonderful in His praises and in His promises! This is so important for us in intercession. How many of you are praying for someone who is somehow in rebellion against God or man? ... for someone who is caught by the spirit of rebellion. This Scripture tells us that, if we praise the Lord, rebellion is silenced. That is God’s Word to us. He is just saying to us in another way, the covenant promise of Psalm 81: 13-15 as it applies to intercession ... that, as we praise Him, He Himself is going to deliver us from our enemies. As we praise Him for others, He will do the same for them.

V. SUMMARY: PRAISE AND INTERCESSION

God has given us so many wonderful promises in His Covenant of Praise. As we obey His command to really minister to Him by celebration praises, He has promised to lift our burdens; to speak to us in the storms; to set us free from our ‘false gods’ of sin and self and so many things that keep us from the Lord and his will in our lives; to deliver us from our enemies; and to fill us with the best of wheat and honey ... with Himself. We can expect that all of these promises will happen to us personally as we enter into the praise of God, because God is faithful to do what He has promised.

However, God’s covenant promises in praise are not only for us. When we praise the Lord in intercession for others, He will cause all of these promises to happen in the lives of those we are praying for. God can work long distance! Glory to His Holy Name!! Alleluia!!!

Perhaps the greatest of all these promises that God gives in praise is that He will “*make His home in the praises of His people*”. Also, the Lord Jesus says again, “*When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men to Myself*”. (John 12: 32) When He was speaking here He was speaking about being lifted up on the cross. However, we can lift the Lord Jesus up also every time we praise Him! When we are praising the Lord Jesus for others, He personally goes to them and draws them to Himself. When we praise the Lord, He comes. When we praise Him in intercession, He personally comes to those we are praying for. And when Jesus comes, He brings all the answers for everything in heaven and on earth with Him. Alleluia!!!

* * * * *

I remember one day, in a retreat, a Sister said to us, “So often when we go to God, we tell Him how *BIG* our problems are.... over and over and over again.” And then ... we tell Him all the answers! She continued to say, “I think today it is time for us to go to our problems and tell them how *BIG* the Lord Jesus is!” ALLELUIA!!!

“How *BIG* is the Lord Jesus for us? How big of a Jesus do we

need? ... do our people need? Then how big should our praises be so we can really PUT THE LORD JESUS FIRST in intercession and in every situation and welcome Him as He really is, our Great and Awesome God! ALLELUIA!!!

* * * * *

As we started this study, we prayed from Psalm 100:4, *“I will enter His Gates with thanksgiving in my heart; I will enter His Courts with praise.”* I just want to point out that all of these magnificent covenant promises related to praise happen in the courtyard ... on the way to God’s house. We are not even in His Throne Room yet. Think about what will happen when we get into the Throne Room, right there next to our Father in Heaven, where Jesus stands and intercedes for us. That is where the Covenant of Worship begins... in the Throne Room of Heaven. As we praise the Lord, He prepares us to enter into His Throne Room where we worship Him. And as we worship God, so many other wonderful promises begin to work in our lives and in the lives of those we are praying for. We will study these in PART TWO of “Praise and Worship in Intercession”.

The Scriptures have so much to teach us about God and His Ways. We have only touched on a few points here in relation to praise. I hope you will not only just read about praise in this little book. I hope you will take the time to actually enter deeply into the praise of the Lord and experience these covenant promises for yourself. I pray the Holy Spirit Himself will teach you more as you enter into the praise of the Lord. I hope you will be better able to recognize what God is doing as you praise Him in your personal life and in intercession, to recognize the signposts of God’s praise covenant, so you can cooperate with Him more completely in what He is doing. And I hope this study might equip you with some new spiritual weapons for intercession. Ask the Holy Spirit to open your spiritual eyes and give you revelation to see God implementing His Covenant as you praise Him in intercession.

As you recognize the covenant moving of God, ask Him for Wisdom to understand what He is doing. And ask His leading on how to pray

in agreement with Him in His praise promises, so His Holy Will can be done on earth as it is in heaven. And may God Himself lift you deep into the heavenly realms of worship, close to His Heart, so you can truly give Him all the Glory due His Most Holy Name and enter into the deeper workings of God in the covenant of worship. AMEN.

As we finish PART ONE of our study on “Praise and Worship in Intercession”, I would like us to pray with Psalm 84.

PSALM 84

*How I love your palace, Yahweh Sabaoth!
How my soul yearns and pines for Yahweh's courts!
My heart and my flesh sing for joy to the living God.
The sparrow has found its home at last,
the swallow a nest for its young,
your altars, Yahweh Sabaoth, my king and my God.
Happy those who live in your house
and can praise you all day long; and
happy the pilgrims inspired by you
with courage to make the Ascents!
As they go through the Valley of the Weeper,
they make it a place of springs,
clothed in blessings by early rains.
Thence they make their way from height to height,
soon to be seen before God on Zion.
Yahweh Sabaoth, hear my prayer, listen, God of Jacob;
God our shield, now look on us
and be kind to your anointed.
A single day in your courts
is worth more than a thousand elsewhere;
merely to stand on the steps of God's house
is better than living with the wicked.
For God is battlement and shield,
conferring grace and glory;
Yahweh withholds nothing good
from those who walk without blame.
Yahweh Sabaoth, happy the man
who puts his trust in You!*

APPENDIX A:

PRAISE

IN INTERCESSION

SCRIPTURE OUTLINE

FOR THIS STUDY

APPENDIX A:

PRAISE IN INTERCESSION

SCRIPTURE OUTLINE FOR THIS STUDY

I. INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS INTERCESSION?

Intercession means to “go-between”. Jesus as True God and True Man is the Perfect Intercessor. Romans 8:4

We are privileged to share in the Divine Ministry of the Lord Jesus, representing God and Man in intercession ... a 2-way pipeline to God the Father from whom all good comes.

James 1:17

A. WHO IS GOD?

1. God reveals Himself through creation Romans 1:20

* so much more than all He has made: Sirach 43: 27 – 33

* God is Holy ... Isaiah 6:3; Revelations 4:8; Ex. 15:11

* He lives with the lowly, where He is all. (Isaiah 57:15)

Man created by God (Gen 1: 26-27) but separated from God. Man searching for God has resulted in many “religions” throughout history. All fall short of really knowing God.

2. God reveals Himself through history, especially the History of His People ... in different ways in the Scriptures. Have you met God in all these ways He has revealed Himself to us?

Do you know the Lord Jesus? John 5:39

B. WHO IS THE LORD JESUS CHRIST?

1. In Scripture, the fullest revelation of God comes through His Son, the Lord Jesus, TRUE GOD AND TRUE MAN: Heb. 1:1-2
Colossians 1: 15-20; Philippians 2:6-10; Ephesians 1:3 - 23
Colossians 2: 9-10; Revelations 1:5-8; 10-18

*God desires to bring all into one in Him. Ephesians 1:10

NOTHING OUTSIDE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

Hebrews 4:15; 2Corinthians 5:21; 1John 3:2

Ephesians 4:9-10

2. Gospel of St. John -- revelation of God in Jesus Christ ...

The Great I AM: John 6:35; 11:25; 14:6

“Whoever sees me sees the Father.” John 14:7

Matthew 28:20 and 18:20

Emmanuel: “God with us” ... Matthew 1:23

3. *God invites us to come into union with Him.

“Make your home in Me.” John 15:4; “mi casa es tu casa”

John 17:3 John 17: 21; John 3: 16; 1John 4: 19; Romans 5:8

*As God is Most Holy, there was no way we could come to Him by ourselves, or even really desire to do so, and so He came to us ... to become one with us and show us the way to become one with Him.

4. The Scripture points to Me. John 5:39

5. Holy Spirit “leads us into all Truth.” John 16:13

C. HOW CAN WE COME TO GOD?

1. Jesus the Way ... Jn.14:6

2. The gift of the Holy Spirit ... Jn. 14:16-17 John 16:13-15

THE WAY is A PERSON AND A RELATIONSHIP WITH A PERSON.

Christianity is not a religion.

Christianity is a Personal God Who comes to us, and enters into personal relationship with us.

3. The Holy Spirit who knows how to pray (Romans 8:26-27)

* * * * *

The meaning of the Love of God in 1Corinthians 13; Rom. 5:5

* * * * *

II. PRAISE IN THE SCRIPTURES

A. THE FIRST GIFT OF THE SPIRIT ... praise and worship:

Pentecost: Acts 2: 1- 4; Acts 2: 6,11:

Cornelius: Acts 10: 44 – 47;

Elizabeth: Luke 1:41-45;
Blessed Mother: Luke 1: 46-55;
Zechariah: Luke 1: 67- 79.

* * * * *

PRAISE AND WORSHIP: THE DIFFERENCE

* * * * *

B. WHAT IS PRAISE?

First gift of Holy Spirit

God is HOLY; we need to come to Him in a way worthy of Him.

John 15:4

When the Holy Spirit fills us with Himself, God gives us the way to come to Him that pleases Him ... praise and worship.

C. THE MEANING OF PRAISE IN SCRIPTURE

1. Psalm 22:3: a place ... a Home or a throne

2. Is. 60:18; Jn. 10:7, 9; the door; the gate of the New City of God, of the New Jerusalem

3. Is. 61:3: a gift from God ... the Garment of the bride

4. Psalm 148:14 ; Jer. 17: 14 God or Jesus Himself

We can praise God in any situation. We praise Him because He is worthy, not for the situation. By our praises we welcome Him into every situation. (Ephesians 2:14)

Scriptures fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Himself: John 10:7, 9

“If I am lifted up ... “ John 12:32

5. Highest form of Love to minister unto God: Romans 5:5

D. “PRAISE” WORDS IN THE BIBLE

1. Some Hebrew and Greek words translated as Praise and some Scriptures where they are used.

2. Summary of ways of praising God in the Scriptures

E. GOD COMMANDS US TO PRAISE HIM

Psalm 47: 5; 42:4; 24: 7-10; 100 :4; Philippians. 4:6;

Especially through, with, and in the Lord Jesus ...

Philippians 2: 12

* * * * *

PRAISE SCRIPTURES

Psalm 96: 1:4; 66: 1-2; 47:1, 6-7; 149: 1-3; 9: 14; 103;
13:5; 33: 1-3; 24: 7-10; Heb. 13:15; 1Cor. 14:15
Living praises: Tobit 14:17; Romans 12:1; Psalm 34:1

IN PRAISE, WE COME TO GOD

AND HE COMES TO US.

Praise and worship is the way God wants us to come to
Him: Psalm 100:4; Philippians 4:6; Psalm 42:4

As we praise God, He comes in different ways: Psalm 47:5

* * * * *

III. THE COVENANT OF PRAISE - PSALM 81

God commands us to praise Him ... in a covenant of praise

Meaning of covenant.

Holy Spirit guarantees and enables God's covenants: Ephesians
1:13-14; Philippians 2:13

Covenant of praise: Psalm 81;

Covenant of worship: Psalm 149; John 15; Revelations

Our Blessed Mother in praise and worship: Luke 1:46-55

A. OUR PART OF THE COVENANT OF PRAISE

Psalm 81: 1 – 3 ... praise in every way with exuberance

Psalm 81: 4 ... a fiesta of praise

Psalm 81:5 ... a Divine Law

1. JOSEPH - Psalm 81: 6; Genesis 15:13; Gen. 50:24-25

2. JEHOSHAPHAT - 2Chronicles 20 (15-17; 21 – 22.)

3. MOSES - Exodus 15:11

Their God is our God. God has not changed.

B. GOD'S PART OF THE COVENANT OF PRAISE

1. Psalm 81:7-8: RELIEVE YOUR BURDENS

Exodus 3:7-10; Philippians 4:6-7

Rosary

* * * * *

TRAVAILING PRAYER AND PRAISE

John 11:33-44; Galatians 4:19

Gift of Charismatic Faith for intercession

* * * * *

Isaiah 61:1-3

2. Psalm 81: 8: GOD SPEAKS TO US

Daniel 3; Jonah 2: 1-11; Acts 16: 16-39

3. Psalm 81: 8: PROVE GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

Exodus 17; 1Peter 1:6-7

Opportunities for miracles

4. Psalm 81: 9 and Psalm 81:10: NO FOREIGN GODS

God reveals our "false gods" as we praise Him.

Psalm 22; John 16: 7-15

a. False gods in our lives

b. Sin

* * * * *

Distractions from Destiny: key distractions (James 1:7 – 8)

Hebrews 12: 1-4)

Forgiveness and removal of our blocks to God sets others free ...

James 5:16

Forgiveness: a decision

True repentance, forgiveness of sin;

The revelation of being at peace with God

God convicts others of sin through praise intercession

c. Self

Living Praise: the way of continual humility

* * * * *

PRAISE AND SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT

John 1: 1-5

* * * * *

God clothes us in Righteousness as we praise Him to
Prepare us for the wedding banquet of the Lamb.
Matthew 22:1-14; Isaiah 1:18; 1 Corinthians 1:30
Zechariah 3: 1-7

5. Psalm 81: 13 to 15: DEFEAT YOUR ENEMIES
God Himself is our deliverer in praise
Meaning of “Jesus IS Lord”
John 8:36
Liberation and salvation.(Acts 16, Paul and Silas)
Permanent deliverance (Rom 14:17)

* * * * *

SPIRITUAL WARFARE AND PRAISE

Rom 14:17; Luke 17:21

* * * * *

6. Psalm 81:16: I WOULD FEED YOU
Pure wheat and wild honey (John 6:33; *John 6:35, 54-58*)
The Lord Jesus our Spiritual Food, blessings, Bread of life
His Word is as Honey; Sweet Holy Spirit
Song of Songs 4:11; *Proverbs 16:24; Proverbs 24:13-14*

* * * * *

A TEST OF MINISTRY IN THE LORD OR NOT

* * * * *

7. OTHER PROMISES

Tobit 13:10-12 ... Reconstruction of the temple
Psalm 133

* * * * *

PRAISE SILENCES REBELLION

Psalm 8:2; *1Corinthians 13*

* * * * *

IV. SUMMARY: PRAISE AND INTERCESSION

In praise, the Lord is welcomed to come and fill us personally with every Good from Heaven. In intercession praise, God enters the lives of those we are praying for and begins to grant to them the same Good blessings promised in His Covenant.

John 12: 32

* * * * *

HOW BIG JESUS IS!

* * * * *

Closing Prayer, Psalm 84

APPENDIX B:

INTERCESSOR'S
PRAYER OF FORGIVENESS

APPENDIX B:
INTERCESSOR'S PRAYER OF FORGIVENESS
(TO RELEASE OTHERS TO THE LORD JESUS)

As the Holy Spirit leads, after a time of praise and worship, we pray with The Lord Jesus our Lord:

For those who have hurt us, for those who are not doing or have not done what we think they should have done, for those who are not doing what God wants: "Father forgive them, they do not know what they are doing." For those who are in sin: "Father, do not hold their sins against them." And I choose to forgive them and release them in the Name of the Lord Jesus.

Father, forgive me for anything I said or thought or felt or did to others that could keep them in bondage, especially repeating the negative things even if they were true. I ask for the Mind and the Heart of the Lord Jesus Christ. Lord Jesus, help us to see one another as You do. Help us to speak about one another as you do. Holy Spirit, show us how to pray for one another. Amen.

After praying this prayer, we lift the person or persons up to The Lord Jesus and place them in His Sacred Heart. Then we sing praising the Lord, calling on the Name of The Lord Jesus, and praying in the Holy Spirit until the Holy Spirit brings to our mind how to think and pray for them, or until the burden we feel for them lifts from our hearts and we experience God's Peace and Love toward them. We end with praise and thanksgiving to God for all He has done in our time of intercession.

+ + + + + + +

Nihil Obstat: Father Pelin D'Souza, Censor

Imprimatur: His Eminence Maurice Michael Cardinal Otunga

Given at is Eminence's Residence

Archdiocese of Nairobi, Kenya, East Africa

25th November 1994, Feast of St. Catherine, Martyr

APPENDIX C:

INTERCESSOR'S MIRACLE PRAYER

APPENDIX C:

INTERCESSOR'S MIRACLE PRAYER

(RENEW OUR COMMITMENT OF LOVE TO THE LORD JESUS)

*“The Love of God has been poured forth in our hearts
by the Holy Spirit; and this is God’s Gift to us.” (Romans 5:5)*

“Come, Holy Spirit, Come.” (We sing and pray for a time to welcome and invite the Holy Spirit to come and fill us even more with God’s Divine Love and all of His Gifts right now.)

As the Holy Spirit is filling our hearts even more with God’s Divine Love right now, we do not want to keep this Love just for ourselves. But we give it back first of all to Our Father in Heaven. Our Almighty Father has loved us with all of His Heart and we see this especially in the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us renew our commitment of love to Our Father in Heaven together. And then renew our love to the Lord Jesus.

Let us pray:

“Dear Father in Heaven, thank you for loving me with all of Your Heart, especially through our Lord Jesus Christ. I love you with all of my heart too. And I also love you in reparation for all those who do not love you today. “

We sing and pray a while, loving Our Father in Heaven ourselves. Then, as we love Our Father for others, especially in reparation for those who do not love God, we lift them up in our hands to the Father. “Abba Father, how I love you.”

Let us pray to renew our commitment of love to the Lord Jesus together:

“Lord Jesus Christ, thank you for loving me with all of Your Heart and all of Your Life. Thank you for even shedding Your Precious Blood and dying on the cross for me. Thank you for forgiving all of my sins through your Holy Cross.

“Lord Jesus, come more deeply into my heart right now. Fill me more with your Divine Love, with Your Divine Life. Please forgive me all my sins. I ask you to forgive me especially for all the times I was “God’s little helper”, telling You what to do. Forgive me when I did not come to You first and ask You first what You wanted me to do, even when I pray. I DO want to follow You, Lord Jesus. Heal me, Lord. Fill me more with your Holy Spirit and Your Divine Love. Live out Your Life in Me.

“Come, Holy Spirit. Fill me more with Your Divine Love. Make the Lord Jesus the Lord of my whole life. I surrender my whole life to You. I give you my way of thinking I give you my way of doing things. I give you my way of praying. I renounce all the ways of the world. I renounce all sin. I renounce Satan and all his evil ways and all his evil spirits.

“I choose You, Lord Jesus. I choose Your Ways. Come, Holy Spirit. Fill me more with Your Divine Love. Make the Lord Jesus the Lord of my whole life and the Lord of my prayer. Release in me all of Your Gifts. Help me to love other people as the Lord Jesus does. Teach me how to pray. Help me to follow the Lord Jesus. Help me to be faithful to the Lord Jesus, so I can live in God’s Family forever. Amen.”

We can now take some time to sing and pray a love song to the Lord Jesus. As we pray, remember how the Lord Jesus came to Thomas after the resurrection. He said, “Look Thomas. Here are the wounds in My Hands and Feet and Side. Put your finger there. Doubt no longer, but only believe. This same Lord Jesus is here with us right now. As we pray, close your eyes and look at the Lord Jesus as Thomas did. And maybe somehow you can reach up and put your finger into the wounds of the Lord Jesus today. Let His Precious Blood wash through you with all His Love and Mercy and Healing and Miracles. Then let us lift up our people to the Lord Jesus. Place them in His Sacred Heart so His precious Blood can wash through them, too, with all His Grace and Miracles.

Let us sing and pray, “Precious Lord Jesus, how I love You.” Amen.