

Prayer

Store

**Mending the broken
altar**

Jim Smith

If we are going to pray effectively for our Nations, then we have to go back to the beginning, and ask “What is really wrong?” We cannot just put a bandage on our wounds. We have to get the cause of them. Only then can we pray with true intensity and true accuracy.

I have assumed throughout this material, and “Restoring the Glory” that those reading this material want to pray with great earnestness for the nations. My position in this material is that the altar of intercession - the meeting place for us and the Lord for the health of our land has been broken. Somehow we have to restore it, before we can reclaim the land.

Jesus - our “altar”

Throughout the Bible, the Lord uses pictures and symbols to help us understand his ways of working. The ark taught us that he was a place of safety, the burning bush that he wants to speak with us and the opening of the Red Sea that he able to lead us through any trial. So when we read these verses from Exodus, we have to realise that this is another picture for us:-

“Make an altar of earth for me and sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, your sheep and goats and your cattle. Wherever I cause my name to be honoured, I will come to you and bless you.”
(Exodus 20:24)

The Lord is not asking the New Testament Church to go round building altars - rather he is telling us that at ‘altars’ he wants to speak with us, help us and direct us. For God`s New Testament people, our ‘High Priest’ our ‘sacrifice’ and our altar is Jesus:-

“Such a high priest meets our need - one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted in the heavens. Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifice day after day, first for his own sins and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once and for all when he offered himself.” (Hebrews. 7:27)

“For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God’s presence. Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high Priest enters the Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now he has appeared once and for all, at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself.” (Hebrews 9:24-26)

“Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.” (Hebrews 7:25)

To this altar, to Jesus, we must come, to intercede for our land:-

“If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and forgive their sin and will heal their land.” (2 Chron. 7:14)

Unfortunately, by our actions, we have broken this altar. The meeting place between us and the Lord for the land is in ruins. How has this happened, and what can we do about it?

What breaks the altar?

Each nation must consider this question for themselves. Here are some starting points for reflection:-

*** Apostasy**

“Ahab..began to serve Baal and worship him. He set up an altar to Baal in Samaria.” (1 Kings 16:30)

"My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.” (Jeremiah 2:13)

“Apostasy” is a very hard word. It implies not only a turning away from the Lord, but the positive following of another god. Is this a fair word to use for the church in any land? But everywhere the Christian church is sleeping, while other religions have strategic plans to take Nations. Worse, some within the Christian Faith are actively helping this process - perhaps because they think it makes them look progressive and welcoming. Or perhaps they do not know what the Bible teaches. Or perhaps they are blind, or deaf, or demonic, or dead.

The consequences of apostasy are devastating. For Israel, when Ahab began to follow Baal, and married Jezebel, in a short time there were only 7000 left who had not bowed down to Baal. That which is opposed to the Lord advances rapidly. But there is worse. The Lord will not share his altar.

“You shall have no other gods before me.” (Exodus 20:3)

Apostasy breaks the altar of intercession for a nation between the Lord and the people. This is the inevitable result of the failure of the prophetic stream, and the desire of the people for easy faith. Affluence and comfort, success and prosperity look so attractive. They offer everything that Christians could want, but little of what we need. In the current situation, when we need to be strong, prayerful, persevering, sacrificing and upholding the altar of God in purity of faith, we have become a Laodicean church, neither hot nor cold. To such a church the Lord says:-

“Because you are lukewarm, I am about to spit you out of my mouth.”
(Rev.3:15-16)

Has the church fallen so low that God sees it as apostate, as running after Baal? If so, then we are finished. There is no altar where we can pray, and even if we do pray, our prayer is polluted. God will not share his altar with anyone, especially not an apostate people. The people will blame the others for our situation, but it is not the fault of others. The failure is ours. The sin is ours. The apostasy is ours and the consequences are ours. We have brought this on ourselves, and now the Lord might spit us out of his mouth. How low we have sunk.

*** Arrogance**

“We are Abraham`s descendants and have never been slaves of anyone.”
(John 8:33)

I never cease to be surprised by the arrogance of God`s people. Some nations tell me “God will bless us”, despite what they do or think. Some Nations tell me that “my God would never allow us to fall.” Some nations just don`t seem to care one way or the other. So faith is weak, impure, shallow and worldly. Churches are full of adultery, theft, and man-centred adoration. Selfishness is the rule, not the exception. What is daily offered to God is at best poor, and at worse an insult.

- * Pure worship is missing.
- * Total dedication and utter surrender is missing.
- * The willingness to serve and obey whatever the price and whatever the circumstances is missing.

I wonder what the foundation for this arrogance is? It certainly does not come from an understanding of the Lord or his word. It is a terrible flaw, and those who make it are falling into two huge errors - possibly fatal errors.

1. They do not know their history

God loves of course, but he cannot tolerate sin. In the book of Numbers, he offered the people the Promised Land, but they refused to take it, because it did not suit them at that time. God`s response was simple:-

The Lord replied, “I have forgiven them, as you asked. Nevertheless, as surely as I live and as surely as the glory of the Lord fills the whole earth, not one of those who saw my glory and the signs I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness but who disobeyed me and tested me ten times— not one of them will ever see the land I promised on oath to their ancestors.” (Numbers 14:20-23)

A terrible thing had happened. God's promise of the land had been rejected. As a consequence, an even more terrible thing happened - forty years of death, until a purer generation was born and had grown. The people rejected God's promise, and grumbled against him. Then they discovered the consequences.

All is well? All is far from well. When a nation falls below the spiritual level God expects, and refuse to recognise it or change, he acts to protect his name, his heritage and his plan.

2. They do not know the love of God

“This is love; not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be an atoning sacrifice for our sins.” (1 John 4:10)

If God's people fall into decay or sin, he loves too much to allow it to stay that way. He will judge out of love, in order to bring us back to the right path, his path. His path is the path of true love and blessing. On his path we are secure and loved. On his path we have the power to serve him, and receive the powerful anointing of the Spirit to do the greater works he promised us that we would do. (John 5:20)

I do not have any idea about how this arrogance can be broken. But looking at our spiritual history, I fear that it is going to be a very hard time of purifying so that it can be broken. I can hear voices already saying “Oh yes, but you do not know us. God loves us and he will bless us.” Many Christian countries have said the same, and are now broken. Who will be next?

*** The pretense of religion**

“These people come near to me with their mouth and honour me with their lip but their hearts are far from me.” (Isaiah 29:13)

Stephen was not pretending faith:-

“When the members of the Sanhedrin heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up

to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. "Look," he said, "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he fell on his knees and cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he fell asleep." (Acts 7:54-56)

Stephen was the first to die for his faith, and millions have followed since. The first African martyrs were killed in Carthage in A.D. 180. When called in to swear an oath to the Emperor, they replied, "We recognize not the empire of this world; but rather do we serve that God whom no man hath seen, nor with these eyes can see."

These martyrs did not pretend faith. They were not people of the mouth only. But this commitment is lacking in the church. There`s lots of noise, lots of dancing and lots of the right words. But the essence of faith - commitment, sacrifice, perseverance, struggle even to death - that is missing. It has been replaced by "all is well." "I`m looking for personal satisfaction. Me,me,me!"

How has this come about? Here is a vision I had, and can be found in the material called "The failure of prophetic leadership." (It can be downloaded from the AFRICA 2012 page of www.serving-africa.org)

I saw the Lord. He was so weary and tired. "Lord" I asked, "why are you like this?" "Look" he said.

I saw a man, a very bright and powerful man, calling to God's people - "Come and follow me, and I will give you all that you want. You can have peace. You can have power. You can have wealth. Come - my way is easy, and you will receive all the blessings of an open heaven. Come - I have come from God to lead you into a joyful path."

The people of God listened to this man, and all began to follow him. "Good" they said. "Now we can have all we want." But the man was a liar. He did not lead the people to joy, but led them into a barren and hopeless wilderness, where there was no water of life, and no presence of God.

"Help" the people cried out. "Get us out of here."

They went to their leaders, but every leader had followed the lie, and now were as lost as the people. The people were angry with God, and said "Why have you let this happen to us?" God replied "I tried to warn you, but you did not listen."

The pretense of religion - all the outward forms without the substance is unacceptable to the Lord. It has broken the altar of intercession for the nation. So when the need arises to fight for the soul of a Nation, the very thing most needed, the altar of intercession, the right relationship between the Lord and his church - has been broken. Where can we now turn for help?

Rebuilding the altar

"It was a long time, twenty years in all that the ark remained at Keriath Jearim, and all the people of Israel mourned and sought after the Lord. And Samuel said "If you are returning to the Lord with all your hearts, then rid yourselves of the foreign gods and the Ashtoreths and commit yourself to the Lord and serve him only." (1 Samuel 7.2-4)

The principle is clear - *broken altar, broken nation*. But the Lord loves, and always, leaves us a way back. This is what we see in this passage from Samuel. The altar was well and truly broken. The Ark of the Covenant was lost, and sin abounded. The people had strayed from the Lord, didn't care about the Ark, and were worshipping foreign gods. This would have involved them in paganism, fornication, sexual immorality and the occult. They had truly "sinned against the Lord."

Their first step was to wake up to their situation, and realise that they had sinned against the Lord. Nehemiah and King David both came to the same conclusion:-

“Lord, the God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and keep his commandments, let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night for your servants, the people of Israel. I confess the sins we Israelites, including myself and my father’s family, have committed against you. We have acted very wickedly toward you. We have not obeyed the commands, decrees and laws you gave your servant Moses.” (Nehemiah 1:4-7)

"Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.

For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight.” (Psalm 51:1-4)

Only the Holy Spirit can begin this process:-

“And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days. I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved;” (Joel 2:28-32)

“When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of

them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.” (Acts 2:1-4)

God’s people have to wake up to the position they are in and to the truth that they have sinned against the Lord. This is the beginning of rebuilding the altar. There has to be a move of the Holy Spirit on the people, to open blind eyes and deaf ears. This is not going to be easy. Our human nature does not like to own up to getting things wrong, and the enemy has a strong desire to keep us asleep. So this message will be hard to hear. But if it is the truth, and God’s people truly love their land, the Spirit can move. Samuel saw it. The disciples saw it, and Ephesus saw it:-

Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, “In the name of the Jesus whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out.” Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. One day the evil spirit answered them, “Jesus I know, and Paul I know about, but who are you?” Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding.

When this became known to the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus, they were all seized with fear, and the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honour. Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed what they had done. A number who had practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly. When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the total came to fifty thousand drachmas. In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.” (Acts 19:13-20)

THE NEW ALTAR

Of course nothing is really “new.” The Lord’s sacrifice has not changed, and the truths of the Kingdom have not and never will change. But we have to wake up to the truths of the altar, and in that sense, we have to rebuild. So what makes up the “new” altar? How do we rebuild it? What stones do we use?

NEW DEDICATION

Rebuilding must start with us. We need a fresh dedication to the Lord, and this will bring new fire to the altar. That fire is needed. In Leviticus we read: **“The fire on the altar must be kept burning. It must not go out.”** (Lev.6:12) If it has burned low, or gone out, it must be relit with newly dedicated hearts. Apostle Paul brings this into the New Testament context:

“Therefore I urge you brothers, in view of God`s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God - this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” (Romans 12:1-2)

So where do we begin with a new dedication?

“Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” (Ps 139: 22-24)

The Message translation is helpful:-

“Investigate my life, O God, find out everything about me; Cross-examine and test me, get a clear picture of what I'm about; See for yourself whether I've done anything wrong— then guide me on the road to eternal life.”

Search me Lord! Investigate my life! This is the beginning of the new dedication. We have to be willing to let the Spirit of God into our lives in a new way. We have to be willing to let him purify us, so that we can make a new dedication, not just a refreshing of the old one. New things must be put in new packages.

“And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins.” (Mark 2:22)

We have to find out what things have made us unacceptable to God, and get them to the foot of the cross. But will we? It's easy to say “Search me Lord”, but what happens when he shows us the things which have broken the altar?

“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.” (Mk 8:34)

“You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.” (John 13:13)

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We might reflect on these questions:-

* Have we served the Lord whole heartedly or have we served him when it suited us? The Lord might be very disappointed about this, and our service might have to end. We will have to seek a new heart – the heart of Caleb:-

“My servant Caleb has a different spirit and follows me wholeheartedly.” (Num. 14:24)

* Have we stolen money? Have we become corrupt? Have our morals sunk to an unacceptable level? Is our thinking pure or corrupted? Are we willing to make restitution, to apologise and seek forgiveness? Are we willing to change:-

“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” (Romans 12:2)

* Have we become corrupted by sex? Have we mistreated a woman or a man? Remember sex in the head is as bad as sex in the bed. We will have to be cleansed as with fire:-

“For it is time for judgment to begin with God’s household.” (1 Peter 4:17)

* Have we failed to care for our young, for our youth? Have we allowed them to be stolen from us? This is a very great sorrow to the Lord. How are we going to put this right?

* Have we surrendered to the world or allowed the ways of the world to be our ways:-

“but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful.” (Mark 4:19)

* Have we failed? Have we broken the altar by our prayerlessness, our laziness? Our arrogance? Our apostasy? We need to let the Spirit examine us. We can refuse, but then the altar will not get rebuilt, and our nation will be lost.

All this is just the preparation for a new dedication. Ezekiel gives us the way in which we can show that new dedication.

"The man brought me back to the entrance to the Temple, and I saw water coming out from under the threshold of the Temple towards the east. The water was coming down from under the south side of the Temple, south of the altar. He then brought me through the north gate and led me around the outside to the outer gate facing east, and the water was flowing from the south side. As the man went eastward with the measuring line in his hand, he measured off a thousand cubits (450 metres, 1500 yards) and then led me through water which was ankle deep. He measured off another thousand cubits and led me through water that was knee deep. He measured off another thousand cubits and led me through water which was up to the waist. He measured off another thousand cubits but now it was a river I could not cross because

the water had risen and was deep enough to swim in - a river that no one could cross. (Ezekiel 47:1-6)

*** Are you** walking ankle deep in the Spirit with the Lord? Then dedicate yourself to go deeper.

*** Are you** walking knee deep in the Spirit deep with the Lord? Then dedicate yourself to go deeper.

*** Are you** ready to swim in the Spirit with the Lord? Then dedicate yourself to swim, and let the Spirit take a new hold on your life.

This willingness to go deeper is your new dedication. This will rebuild the altar, and enable us to begin to seek the Lord for the nation. It's time for a new dedication. Are we willing to do what the Apostle Paul says – “in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship”.

CONFESSION AND REPENTANCE

Dedication is the beginning of rebuilding, and as we have seen, it in itself contains a lot of examination by the Spirit, and a lot of change. Buy the next building bricks are confession and repentance. When the Holy Spirit is moving, we must come to the altar in confession and repentance. Fresh confession and repentance are so needed today.

*** Confession**

First we have to recognise our true position:-

To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’ “But the tax collector stood

at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' "I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted." (Luke 18:9)

This is a hard process, but without it, we cannot move on to repentance, which is the real heart of purification. Confession is basic and we see it in the Lost son:-

"I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. ¹I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants." (Luke 15:18-19)

It's time to come before the Lord in humility, and confess our failure. We have to lay aside all arrogance, and, in confessing, throw ourselves on his mercy.

*** Repentance**

Confession is good, but it is only the first step. From it we have to move to repentance. Jesus made this need clear:-

After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!" (Mark 1:14)

The word translated "repent" in English New Testament is the Greek word "metanoeo." Metanoeo means, "To perceive afterwards, to change one's mind and purpose." This change is always for the better, and shows a change of moral thought. It doesn't just mean "to repent of", or "to forsake sin", but also to change one's mind regarding it. Metanoeo leads to a genuine change of heart and the desire to walk in a new way.

Here`s where the problems really begin. *Repentance means change.* We cannot go to the altar and expect to come back the same people. What changes might come? I have been saying for some time now that many

Pastors and leaders will have to give up their ministries. There is so much adultery, greed, self, sexual and personal gratification involved in their work. Many are not called, but claim divine privileges.

Do not be surprised if this includes many in high positions. When sin enters the people of God, it rises very high. The spirit of repentance will show up many for what they are - wolves in sheep`s clothing.

The fire of repentance will not stop with the leaders of the church. Many businesses, led by God`s people, are corrupt, built on fraud and dishonesty. Many of God`s people who are leaders in society - teachers, lawyers, politicians will find the fire of repentance very uncomfortable. Repentance is profoundly uncomfortable. It reveals darkness.

We can resist this process if we want to. There is a price to be paid for this resistance. Our nation.

How do we begin? Repentance needs the stirring of the Holy Spirit, and our willingness to allow the Holy Spirit to examine and challenge our lives afresh. The Spirit is always ready to do this. Are we willing to say, without any reservation "Come Holy Spirit. Examine my life and change me. I am willing for this, whatever the cost."

But we must be aware that the fire of repentance, once lit, cannot be put out. It`s no good saying, when things begin to happen "Stop! That`s enough!" Once the fire is alight, it is beyond our control. We should consider carefully before we ask the Spirit to expose and cleanse us. It is going to be a painful time.

PRAYER

The Spirit is calling us to prayer, with an urgency and a compelling voice. This is what He is saying:-

"If my people, who are called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear

from heaven, I will forgive their sins, and I will heal their land.”
(2 Chronicles 7:14)

But what kind of prayer? I have explained this at some length in the material called “Intercession - into the flow.” This material can be downloaded from the PRAYER STORE page of www.serving-africa.org. Here is a brief quote taken from that material:-

“I urge then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people— for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Saviour, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all people. This has now been witnessed to at the proper time. And for this purpose I was appointed a herald and an apostle —I am telling the truth, I am not lying—and a true and faithful teacher of the Gentiles. (1 Tim 2:1-4)

There are key prayer words here:-

“Petitions”

This is the Greek word **“deesis”**, and it means “deep heartfelt prayers.” Here are some examples:-

“But the angel said to him: “Do not be afraid, Zechariah; *your prayer* has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to give him the name John.” (Luke 1:13)

Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, “Sit here while I go over there *and pray*.” (Matt 26:36)

They all joined together *constantly in prayer*, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers. (Acts 1:14)

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints. (Eph. 6:18)

But to change nations, we have to move to a deeper kind of prayer.

“Intercession”

The Hebrew for intercession, which is the word **“paga:”** This means “to encounter, meet, reach, entreat, make intercession.” Here is one use of this word:-

Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. (Isa 53:12)

The Greek equivalent is the word **“entygchano”** which means “to petition or supplicate.” Here is a N.T. use of this word:-

“Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.” (Hebrews 7:25)

“Enteuxis” (Noun form) began to appear in Greek centuries before Christ, meaning simply “to meet a person.” Through the centuries, the word took on a different meaning. Eventually, it meant, not just “to meet,” but “to meet and converse.” Then, as time went by, it began to take on yet a different meaning: “to have intimate fellowship with the person.”

So whenever we come across the word “enteuxis” (noun) or “entygchano” (verb) in relation to the Lord, it means that we are not talking with him from a distance. We are intimately associated with Him: -

From “paga” and “enteuxis” we can get an idea of what intercession really is - the entering into the flow of the intercession between Jesus and the Father. We step into that flow, and from within it, we can make powerful prayer, “enteuxis” prayer. We intercede from a very powerful place, and a

very different place from that which we occupy when we make “deesis” or everyday prayer.

Now this verse from Hebrews brings it all together:-

Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office; but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them. (Hebrews 7:23-25) (“Intercede” here is “entygchano.”)

This is a very challenging place to be, but it gives us great power in prayer because we are praying exactly and precisely into the will of God - we are standing in that flow so we will know exactly what is being prayed, and can join. Our prayer will be precise, targeted and effective.

Such prayer is sacrificial - deep, emotional, hurtful, challenging, frightening, powerful. To pray like this changes the life of the one who prays, and changes it forever.

If we are going to come again and rebuild the altar, then we are going to have to start praying entygchano prayer. Where are the people who will pray like this, and go on doing so for years and years until they see the fruit of their sacrifice? We are a long way back. Serious prayer is needed. But it is possible. The promise is there in Chronicles, but it waiting on us to begin to pray.

COVENANT

“This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.”
(Mark 14:24)

What can we do at the new altar? I believe that we have to enter into a covenant and we have to act quickly.

*** Covenant**

The Greek word here is “diatheke”, which is the word used to describe God’s covenant with Noah and Abraham. It is a very strong word - a very serious commitment between two people which is legally binding. It is like a will - once agreed it is seriously binding.

In the Last Supper, Jesus tells us that he has made a covenant with us - a covenant sealed by his blood. His side is guaranteed by his blood. The altar is, in fact, his blood, his sacrifice. God is calling his people who are concerned for this land, to come to the altar again, in confession and repentance, and to commit again to the power of his blood, and call on the power of that blood.

"Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses...the blood will be a sign to you on the houses where you are; and when I see the blood I will pass over you."
(Exodus 12:7-13)

** We have to enter into a covenant for our land. A serious commitment to prayer and a new way of life and a new way of thinking.*

** We have to commit ourselves to giving everything, even our lives, for the name of the Lord.*

** We have to commit ourselves to his service, without any thought of reward. We have to be prepared to do whatever he says in the way he says it.*

** “Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.” (Hebrews 12:24) We sign this covenant by the power and in the power of his blood.*

REDEMPTION

“Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Matthew 20:28)

The Greek word for “ransom” is “lutron” which means “a ransom that is paid to set slaves free.” This is the basis for the word “redemption”. The blood of Jesus has paid the price for every slave to be free. He has paid the price for our nation to be set free from the slavery into which it is coming. How do we live at and pray at the redeemed altar?

***Believe it:**

Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?” (John 11:25)

*** Claim it:**

“For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.” (1 Peter 1:18-20)

*** Live by it:**

“If my people, who are called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, I will forgive their sins, and I will heal their land.” (2 Chronicles 7:14)

We have to claim, believe and live by this redemption. We have to make it a reality in our lives, and commit to it until we see the outpouring of the Spirit in this land which was God`s plan and is our desire. Can this happen? Let`s remind ourselves of this verse again:-

"If my people, who are called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, I will forgive their sins, and I will heal their land." (2

Chronicles 7:14) This is a profound promise of the Lord. But it is not automatic. It begins with the word "IF".

We are facing very difficult and dangerous times as God`s people. We may have delayed too long already, and our arrogance might have already been our downfall. But God is always ready to respond to us, even if the way he opens is a very hard and challenging one.

In the end it all hangs in the balance - our balance. It all hangs on one word - "IF".

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jimsmithghana@yahoo.co.uk

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