



## INTENSE PRAYER

Acts 4:23-31; Acts 16:19-34

**Acts Chapter Four**, records the disciples' first persecution experience. Peter and John were seized by the chief priest and elders of the people while preaching the Gospel. They put them in jail, they tried them before the court, and they threatened them to stop preaching in the name of Jesus. When they got out of prison, they reported to the Church what happened to them and the threat of the religious leaders if they do not stop preaching in the Name of Jesus.

*The bible tells us that upon hearing the threat, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. Their prayer was so strong that even the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.*

Acts Chapter 16 tells us that the Apostle Paul received a vision from God to go and preach the Gospel to Macedonia, the present day Europe. He started with the City of Philippi. Here, Lydia, a godly businesswoman from Thyatira became a convert. Her love for the Lord moved her to beg Paul and Silas to accept the hospitality of her household while they are in Philippi.

In this city there was a slave girl who was very profitable to her masters because of her ability to predict the future through the evil spirit that possessed her. Everyday, this girl followed Paul and Silas shouting "These men are servants of the Most High God who are telling you the way to be saved." This incident troubled Paul so one day he rebuked the evil spirit out of her. She stopped bothering them but her ability to predict is also gone angering her masters. Then an angry mob dragged Paul and Silas before

the magistrates who ordered them to be stripped, beaten, shackled, and jailed.

*While in prison, about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, while the other prisoners were listening to them. In the midst of their prayer, suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. All the prison doors flew open, and everybody's chains came loose.*

These two separate accounts of the Apostles experiences revealed that their prayers literally shook the places where they were praying.

These accounts seem to show us that Prayer and Earthquake have one thing in common and that is, both have intensity. This is the one that links them together.

Thesaurus describes intensity as strength, force, and power. From our texts God is using earthquake as an object lesson showing us one powerful aspect of prayer, "the intensity factor". Prayer has intensity in the same way with Earthquake.

Earthquake shakes the ground. But it is the intense earthquake that is dreaded because it is truly destructive. Experts say that there are thousands of earthquakes that occur each day but most of this goes unnoticed because the intensity is light. We don't know how when and where an intense earthquake happens. We only know that the moment it comes, it leaves a mark of destruction.

*According to some information from the Internet In a typical year there are a million micro tremors, ten thousand minor shocks, one thousand damaging shocks, one hundred destructive shocks, ten major earthquakes.*

Prayer is like an earthquake it shakes the kingdom of darkness. But it is the Intense Prayer that is absolutely dreaded by the devil because its destructive power is too much for him to handle. That is why the devil will use

all available resources under his disposal to stop us from engaging ourselves to anything that would lead us towards intense prayer.

There are three questions that will be to addressed in this lesson

- ❖ What is intense prayer?
- ❖ How is intense prayer developed?
- ❖ What are the results of intense prayer?

## I. WHAT IS INTENSE PRAYER?

Intense means extreme, forceful, and passionate. Intense prayer suggests that it is a strong, powerful prayer. It is a prayer where our body soul and spirit, our whole being is joined with the Spirit of God in a heart wrenching and heartbreaking agonizing cry of the heart because of a life threatening situation, desperate conditions, coupled with hopelessness.

*Romans 8:26* Describe it this way, *In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. 27 And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.*

*Intense prayer is not the kind of prayer that you can pray regularly just like persistent prayer. Intense prayer is always accompanied by deep sadness, the groaning of a desperate soul, and by the Holy Spirit.*

From our texts we see that

- ❖ Intense prayer is the prayer that infuses the power of God into our lives and into our difficult situations. Thus, destroying the power of the enemy over us, setting us free from the bondage of

sin into righteousness, setting us free from all forms of addiction into a disciplined life, setting us free from fear to boldness, setting us free from uselessness to usefulness into the kingdom of God.

Few examples of those who prayed intense prayer:

- ❖ Intense prayer is the prayer that Jesus prayed when He was at the Garden of Gethsemane the night before He was arrested and crucified. This is the same prayer that Jesus prayed while He was dying at the cross of Calvary.
- ❖ Intense prayer is the prayer that Daniel prayed when he was thrown into the lion's den that resulted to his elevation into a higher position at the same time the destruction of those who sought his downfall.
- ❖ This is the same prayer that Jonah prayed when he was inside the belly of a huge fish that resulted to a solid spiritual revival in the whole city of Nineveh.

Intense prayer is a prayer where the supplicant has resigned his fate to God. It is a prayer offered by a person who loses all his self-confidence, self-worth, even the sense of himself...where what he knows, what he has, and what he is don't matter anymore, because the only thing that matters now is Christ and Christ alone.

## II. DEVELOPMENT OF INTENSE PRAYER

- ❖ Intense prayer could not be manufactured, imitated, easily acquired, or develop overnight. This is the result a continues commitment to consistency in prayer.
- ❖ Intense prayer starts with the prayer of faith. This is the seed of intense prayer. Then, it is nurtured and sustained by persistent prayer into

maturity. Then it is brought out by desperation, hopelessness, and anguish.

- ❖ Intense prayer is the result of a continuous, consistent, and regular wrestling with God in prayer. It is not something that you can learn or acquire within a short period of time because it is raised, nurtured, developed, and seasoned by time. Intense prayer starts where persistent prayer ends.

## **A soldier who had the habit of praying one hour a day in solitude**

A soldier was brought before his commanding officer and accused of communicating with the enemy. This accusation came when his fellow soldiers saw him coming out from an area where their troops were patrolling. The poor soldier cannot do anything but to defend himself. He said the reason he slipped away to that place is to spend time an hour alone in prayer. The commander mockingly said “Have you been in the habit of spending an hour in private prayer?” The soldier replied, “Yes, Sir,” Skeptical, the commander told him, “Never in your life have you been in more need of prayer than now. Kneel down and pray aloud so we all may hear you.”

Expecting instant death, the soldier dropped to his knees and poured out his heart to God. His prayer immediately revealed an intimacy with the Heavenly Father. His earnest fluency, his humble appeal for divine intervention, and his obvious trust in one who was strong to deliver told unmistakably that he came regularly to the throne of grace. After the prayer, the officer told the soldier “You may go,” and he added, “No one could have prayed that way without a long apprenticeship; the fellows who have never attended drill are always ill at ease for the review.” [Daily Walk, February 11].

*We cannot fake intense prayer with the volume of our voice because the loudest volume of our voice is nothing compared to the whisper of the heart*

*that is so in tuned with God. The volume of our voice may fill the room and impress those who hear us but it is the cry of the heart out of intense prayer that moves the heart of God with compassion and mercy sending His power to shake the kingdom of darkness delivering his people from the fangs of death.*

### **III. WHAT ARE THE RESULTS OF INTENSE PRAYER?**

Intense prayer is not measured by the volume of our voice, or by the length of our prayers, or by the eloquence of our words. Intense prayer is measured by the results we see in our lives.

The text reveals several definite results.

❖ The first result of intense prayer is the filling with the Holy Spirit.

*Acts 4:31 After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.*

The bible says in Ephesians 5:18 *Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.*

Spirit filled life is not an option but the only option to a victorious and successful Christian living. We need to be filled with the Holy Spirit, because we need the strength, courage, and the boldness to live the word of God in our thoughts, in our words, and in our actions as well as in our decisions. This is the key to victory and prosperity. Remember Zechariah 4:6 says, *It is not by might nor by power but by my Spirit says the Lord Almighty.*” Never forget that the Holy Spirit is indispensable to the success of all our endeavors.

The Disciples of Jesus lived in constant fear and hiding from the day Jesus’ was arrested till the day of the Pentecost. But after they were

filled with the Holy Spirit at the Pentecost, they were changed from fearful disciples to fearless apostles. They were changed from timid workers to powerful witnesses of Jesus Christ. This happened as a result of their intense prayer.

- ❖ The second result of intense prayer is the release from the control of the enemy. Earthquake is designed to shake the earth in the same way prayer is designed to shake the kingdom of darkness. If the prayer of faith removes obstacles, if the persistent prayer brings justice, intense prayer brings chaos, confusion, and destruction into the kingdom of darkness bending its knee into submission to the power of God.

*Acts 16:25 About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. 26 Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everybody's chains came loose.*

One of the main reasons why we don't progress in life as we should and why we cannot be what God wants us to be is because we are bound by invisible chains of the enemy.

What are these invisible chains? These are the bad habits that the enemy planted, cultured, and fortified in our lives through our passive cooperation. These chains limit our mobility, shut down our productivity, and put us in a box called comfort zone to stagnate and self destruct. Intense Prayer is the only way out of this as Paul and Silas exemplified inside the jail.

- ❖ The third result of intense prayer from our text is the salvation of lost souls.

*2 Corinthians 2:4 The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*

This passage reveals the main reason unbelievers refuse to be born again and that is because they are under the power of the devil. This condition made INTENSE PRAYER extremely relevant to every evangelistic effort. Without it, evangelism is bound to fail.

*Acts 16:25-34 "The Jailer and his household were saved as a result of intense prayer"*

*John Knox is a man of God in the year 1500's, whose intense prayer brought spiritual transformation in Scotland. His famous prayer was "Give me Scotland or I will die". History records tell us that he succeeded in winning Scotland for the Lord Jesus Christ. It was also said that in response to John Knox's imprecatory prayers, Mary Queen of Scots the enemy of the Gospel is reputed to have said: "I fear the prayers of John Knox more than all the assembled armies of Europe." What Martin Luther had done in Germany John Knox did it in Scotland. Their secret was intense prayer.*

## **IV. CONCLUSION**

We are living in an era where the world's political, religious, socio-economic, and financial future is extremely uncertain. But the future of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ is as certain as the sunrise. Through intense prayer we can have a foretaste of this future into our present reality. Intense Prayer is the powerful secret that made the men and women of the Bible succeed in their endeavors and overcome challenges, and so with the leaders of Christian reformation in the dark ages. This is also the secret why there is no amount of persecutions that can prevail over the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The devil is a very dangerous enemy. He is extremely reckless. He does not think of tomorrow. He thinks only of today because he knows pretty well that he has no future to look into. Not only that, he has no



reputation to protect, no victory to maintain, no integrity to uphold, and no interest to preserve. That is why we need to pray intensely because apart from intense prayer, we are no match against him.

My prayer is that may God raise our Church in this generation to be committed to the development of intense prayer.