

DESPERATE FOR HIS PRESENCE

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The Western church is struggling with her identity, authority, and purpose. Understanding our true identity in Christ must occur before we can exercise spiritual authority and accomplish our God-given mission as an agent of change on the earth. We need a serious lifestyle change in the body of Christ, from a Westernized culture of Christianity to becoming radical disciples of Jesus. If we are conformed to His image, we can become the "aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing..." 2 Cor. 2:15.

In a declining culture, the church cannot fully recover the presence of God in her midst apart from the catalyst of a true revival from heaven. We are living in an important hour of history! God is challenging the church's self-centered identity, shifting our mindsets, and ineffective methodologies. He is inviting us to respond to one of the greatest challenges we have ever faced - to return to our first love and to step out of our compromised church culture and into His kingdom!

In order to fulfill the purposes of God for our cities, we must hear what the Spirit is saying to the church and be obedient to His voice. As Isaiah prophesied: "Pass through, pass through the gates! Prepare the way for the people. Build up, build up the highway! Remove the stones, lift up raise a banner for the nations!" (Is. 62:10). The Lord is issuing an invitation to His church to pass through a threshold into the reality of His kingdom. He is opening three "gates" or doorways before us.

The first door is the Door of Intimacy. Scripture contains two pictures of this door. The first is found in the Song of Songs: "I sleep, but my heart is awake; it is the voice of my beloved! He knocks, saying, 'Open for me, my sister, my love, my dove, my perfect one'" (Song 5:2 NKJ). A second picture is found in the Book of Revelation: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me" (Rev 3:20 NKJ). Jesus is knocking at the door of His church longing for fellowship and intimacy with His Beloved. This door must be opened before the church can become like Jesus. We can only become what we are beholding in prayer and intimate fellowship. By fixing our gaze on Him, we can be transformed into His image, from glory to glory.

The second door is a Door of Hope. In Hosea we see the response of God to His wandering Bride: "Behold, I will allure her, I will bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfort to her. I will give her her vineyards from there and the Valley of Achor as a door of hope; she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, as in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt." (Hosea 2:14-15 NKJ). The Lord is opening this door to invite His Beloved out of her captivity and compromise and into her destiny. It's a door that leads us out of the Valley of Trouble and into renewed covenant with God. This door will lead the church from her compromise into betrothal and fruitfulness.

Finally, the last door being opened is the Door of Heaven. In the Book of Revelation, John writes: "After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, 'Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this'" (Rev. 4:1 NKJ). The Lord, who invited John to come up higher for the heavenly perspective, is also inviting His Beloved to "come up higher" and sit with Him around His throne. The invitation lifts us out of our compromised state and into the revelation of heaven's perspective. With heaven's perspective, we gain

revelation regarding our identity and destiny in God. This door will help the church realize her transforming purpose.

These "doors" represent an invitation from Jesus to pass through to new places of intimacy, freedom, and destiny. God is giving us keys that will unlock these doors, both in our personal lives and collectively for the sake of our cities. As we accept His invitation and pass through each door, Jesus will lead us into our true identity as His Bride--out of our captivity and compromise and into our transforming purpose! "Lift up your heads, O you gates! And be lifted up, you everlasting doors!

And the King of glory shall come in." (Psalm 24:7 NKJ)

Note: This article is an excerpt taken from "Desperate For His Presence" and is available at Fusion Ministries on-line bookstore..... www.Fusionministry.com