

The Presence of God

By Dianna Cudworth

I believe that I am always in the presence of the Lord my God. I believe this because the Word tells me so. His promise is that He will never leave me or forsake me (Heb. 13:5). Jesus declared that He would be with me until the end of the age (Matt. 28:20). The Holy Spirit dwells within me (2 Cor. 6:16). I am born of God and one spirit with Him (1 Cor. 7:17). I abide in Jesus and Jesus abides in me (John 15:5). Where Jesus is, so I am (John 17:24). Jesus has given me the glory that God bestowed on Him, that is, to be one (John 17:22). Jesus is in me, God is in Jesus, and I am being perfected in one (John 17:23).

Recently I was praying for a believer and one of the strategies of the Lord was for us to pray that the Arch Angel Michael would blow the Shofar from heaven calling forth all the warriors of God to defend her, who was under attack by demonic forces; demonic forces had her bond and she was fighting to get free. At the same time the Pastors of New Promise Ministries Intl were blowing their Shofars here on earth. This was about 7:30 Pacific Day Lights Saving Time. The prayer was answered in its fullness and our marvelous Lord allowed me to experience that oneness. It was a fantastic experience and very humbling. I was called back to the hospital to pick up some belongings for her that had been locked up for safe keeping. She had been moved to another hospital but her wallet was in the safe at our local hospital. Although my flesh told me I was tired and I could put it off another half hour, the Spirit within me prompted me that I needed to go now. So I got in my car and started driving to town, which was a ten mile drive. As I was driving, I started to praise the Lord for what He had done and for the deliverance I was sure in my Spirit she had received. For a brief period I was aware consciously of the oneness of the Beloved. I could see and I knew with certainty that the Shofar had been blown and the result was the entire heavenly Host rising up in a song of rejoicing for this dear woman. At the same time the Heavenly Host was praising the Glory of God, warriors throughout the earth, all around the world was also praising God in one accord for the deliverance and healing of this precious soul. It was a humbling experience to realize that so many souls were praying and praising for her as well as all of heaven. All I could think is how insignificant she believed herself yet thousands, maybe millions of

souls were lifted up in praise for her, and specifically for her and no one else at that moment. Often as an intercessor we are called to pray for people we do not know.

Later that night I was awoken by the Spirit and my first thoughts were I needed to pray for her again, something was happening. I knew that she was hidden by God in the Pavilion of the Lord, the secret place of His tabernacle (Ps. 27:5), for I got confirmation in the spirit when I prayed. I immediately started praising God for her deliverance and praying with the knowledge that it was so, that God was covering her with his feathers (Ps. 91:4), that she was hidden under His wing from the wicked who oppressed her and the deadly enemies who surround her (Ps. 17:9). I know in my heart that she requested of the Lord that I be able to share in what she was experiencing. I know this request was made from a heart of love. As I lay in bed, the Presence of the Lord came upon me. I had been praying throughout the ordeal that she would constantly be covered by the Presence of the Lord and that according to the word of God, anything wicked would perish in His Presence (Ps. 9:3). I can only say that it was the most marvelous experience I have ever had. It was beyond description. As I lay there the Presence covered me from head to toe and my entire body was immersed in the Lord. The experience only lasted a few seconds but the memory will last a life time. I had experienced His Presence once before and although it was different this time (because I am more mature in the Lord) it was the same. It is indescribable!

I was called to serve the Lord in February 1998. I was baptized in water July 1998. I was baptized in the Spirit September 1998. In Nov 1998 I visited my brother's church, The Church of the Northgate, and while I was there Pastor Mash asked me if they could pray for me. I agreed. After the services we met in my brother's office. Four people prayed for me, Pastor Mash, my brother, Daniel Clark, and Richard and Charlotte Escoe. My sister-in-law, Connie Clark, stood to one side praying and covering us all in prayer. My brother Daniel started the prayer, then Pastor Mash, and then Richard. When Richard laid hands on me and started to pray, the Presence of Lord came upon me. It was like I was floating in my Mother's womb, connected to her umbilical cord, being nurtured and fed without ever having to lift up a fork or a spoon, just floating and enjoying the sensation. All the cares of world were gone, all my baggage disappeared. I was as light as a feather, just floating, relaxed from my head to my toe. It was a total feeling of well

being. As soon as Richard took his hands off of me, all the cares of the world, all the baggage that I carried came crashing back down on me, the heaviness of all my sin, all my wrong thinking etc. etc. I was back on the earth. Although the experiences were similar in nature they were not the same. At the time of the first experience I had a lot of garbage to get rid of before I could experience the oneness of the Beloved and the Presence of the Lord.

I have been praying and declaring frequently that I am one, just as Jesus prayed in John 17 and that I am accepted in the Beloved just as it is written in (Eph. 1:6). After I experienced the fullness of God, the Presence of God in my being, in one accord with the Beloved, with the warriors of God that had been called, I tarried with the Lord for one hour and together we released the healing of God onto the earth for all those that would receive.

This is not something that just happened. I have been diligently seeking the Lord and His face for nine years. I have spent hours and hours and hours in the Word of God. I have memorized hundreds of scriptures. I have spent hours and hours in prayer. I have been available and answered the call in my spirit to pray whenever and whatever the Spirit directed. Although my flesh rebels, when I am awoken during the night by the Spirit or even by the enemy, I will tarry with the Lord for one hour in prayer before I allow myself to go back to sleep. I have made it a discipline to spend some time every day praying in tongues, building myself up in my most holy faith (Jude 1:20). I have listened to hours and hours of sermons. Not just of the church that I attend, but from all those that the Lord directs me to. I have read book after book concerning the word of God. I fasted TV, worldly music for seven years and I refused to read anything that was not about God during this period. Even the fiction I read was written by Christians and had a message. I avoided the TV, newspaper, radio as much as I could. I kept praise music playing in the background while I worked during these years as well. When my husband turned the TV on I went into the other room and wrote prayers of scripture. I have participated in many other fasts, including a food fast for 40 days. I fasted sweets for two years. I took a Nazarene vow and did not cut my hair for one year, not even a trim. The Lord has led me through one fast after another. I have developed the discipline of spending an hour or more every morning with the Lord doing a devotional, reading

scripture, writing a prayer, doing a Bible study, praying and exercising. I go for long prayer walks and talk with the Lord. I live in the mountains so not only am I blessed with God's beautiful creation but also the peace of the woods to walk and talk to the Lord. I also build myself up by declaring what the Word of God says about me, who I am in Christ. I have trained myself to love praise music and I restrict the music I listen to on a daily basis to be some kind of Christian music. I did not listen to worldly music at all for seven years during the fast and I seldom listen to worldly music now. I have been obedient to the assignments that the Lord gives me even when I am afraid, or have other obligations, plans or desires. I can remember when I first started hearing the Lord and He would ask me to pray for someone. I was so scared that I would shake all over but I would push myself to do it anyway and God was always faithful. Other times everything imaginable would get in the way and although I was tempted to put it off or schedule another time, I never did. I fought my way through all adversity to do the will of the Lord. I make my service to God a priority in my life on a daily basis.

I have worked with the Lord my God to cleanse myself of all filthiness of the flesh and the spirit in the fear of God. (2 Cor. 7:1) The baggage I talked about earlier, together with the Lord our God, as He revealed what we were to overcome, we, God and I together, have overcome, one step at a time, little by little. The very first thing the Lord dealt with was my rebellion concerning my husband; I was not a submissive wife. (Eph. 5:22) If a woman is not covered by her husband, then she is a woman shorn and shamed and the angels of God will not hear her prayers. (1 Cor. 11:3-10) The second thing on the agenda was forgiveness. My motto was to get even. My very first Bible study taught me how to forgive by praying for my enemies. Jesus made it plain, forgive and be forgiven or not (Matt. 6:14) The third lesson was to constantly examine myself for sin (1 Cor. 11:28, 2 Cor. 13:5) and be quick to confess and receive cleansing of all unrighteousness from the Lord (1 John 1:9) God hears the fervent prayers of a righteous man. (James 5:16) I am still working with the Lord my God to be perfected into the image of His Son (Rom. 8:29). At one time the very idea seemed impossible, but now that goal is attainable in my mind and spirit. I know it is happening. I am going from glory to glory (2 Cor. 3:18).

It doesn't come easy. Since I was called to serve the Lord the enemy has come against me anyway that he could to try to stop me. He tried to kill me several times only to have my God perform miraculous rescues. He attacked my mother whenever I would step out in faith and obey until we, my brother and I, learned to protect her before I obeyed the direction of the Lord. Early on, the enemy convinced me that he had killed my father-in-law prematurely with the help of a coven of witches. Even the Christian doctor was dismayed and disturbed at his death because there was no explanation for it and the circumstances were so bizarre. But in time the Lord revealed the lie, only God determines the time of a person's death. He (the enemy) tried to kill my sister, He tried to kill my son four times. There was a period when there was a hit out on my son's life. Talking about un-nerving, to think that someone wants to deliberately murder your only child. He tried to poison my dog. I have had to face off against witches and even had people break into my office in order to perform occult rituals to curse me. Throughout all these persecutions there was that voice in my mind telling me that if I would stop, he would stop. Thanks be to God because I always came away victorious because greater is He who is in me than he that is in this world (1 John 4:4) and I am more than a conqueror in Him who loves me (Rom. 8:37), and my God always leads me in triumph in Christ Jesus (2 Cor. 2:14) and thanks be to God who gives me the victory in Christ Jesus (1 Cor. 15:57). The more that me and my loved ones are persecuted, the more determined I am to serve the Lord.

When I first began, I was attending a church that had a prayer session before services every Sunday. We would meet in an upper room and we would turn the lights down and just listen to the Lord. Then as the Lord gave us utterance we would pray what was on our heart. I sounded so stupid to my own ears. Everyone else seemed to be very polished in what they prayed and it just flowed from their lips. So I asked the Lord to teach me to pray. He more than answered that prayer. The first thing that the Lord taught me was that if I allowed the Spirit of God to direct my prayer and give me the words to pray then those prayers would be answered because they were the will of God. The problem was that I had such a fear of man that if I tried to do so in the presence of others my mind went blank and my tongue stuck to the top of my mouth. When I was alone the words just poured out of my mouth. Because I wanted to be part of the prayer

session I would lay awake the night before and the Spirit of God would lay out to me what He wanted us to pray the next day. I would then spend hours memorizing what He said. When I was in the Sunday group the words would not disappear because I had spent hours memorizing what the Lord wanted us to pray. To my amazement He would give me an hour of prayer. I would start by praying just a little of the pray and then I would be silent and wait. Sure enough someone else would pray the next part almost word for word. Then someone else would take it up and pray the next part almost word for word. When there was a lag then I would pray a little more and the same thing would happen again. I knew what was from the Lord and what was not. But mostly the prayer sessions went according to the script that the Lord laid out to me the night before. We, the Lord and I, did this for months on end until I finally reached the place where I could overcome my fear of man and respond to Him, the Lord, in the midst of the group without having to memorize the entire session in advance. Then I had a dear friend and mentor explain to me that if I was going to get in the battle I needed to arm myself and start memorizing scripture or I better stay out of the battle. That is when my prayers became powerful. I got obsessed with praying the word of God in every situation. Believe me there is a word in the Bible that will cover every circumstance that exists on this earth. The Holy Spirit would quite often take me right to the scripture that I needed. When I prayed the word of God I had faith and I determined that if the Holy Spirit did not lead my prayer I would not pray. I did not want to just sound good, I wanted results

As I started to intercede and pray the Lord pressed on me the importance of authority. Another jewel of information my faithful mentor disclosed to me was that when the Lord put a burden on me to pray for someone, I should ask them if they minded if I pray for them, thus receiving the authority to make a difference in their lives. The Lord has made me very conscious of the authority that He has given me. From the very first the Lord established my authority and cautioned me not to go beyond what He had established. When I first began to intercede, the Lord made it clear that I was to pray for my hometown, Quincy, and the people of Quincy and my own family only. Some of the people in the group would get very frustrated with me because I did not include the neighboring towns which they lived in. Nevertheless, I obeyed the parameters that the Lord had set before me. As the years of faithful prayer went by my territory was

increased to the entire county, then to all of the United States and now I am accepted in the Beloved and the brotherhood of God's warriors and my territory has been expanded to the entire world. I feel like I have finally graduated! Praise the Lord!

It has been a process and it did not just happen. At one point the Spirit convicted me to ask the Lord to humble me. At this time I had experienced a lot of personal contact with God and his miracles and I was pretty puffed up in my own mind until the Spirit convicted me that I was trying to steal God's glory. I immediately asked for a humble heart not expecting what was to come. It was a painful experience because during the process I had to let go of my works and my pride and trust in the Lord. At the same time, under great duress I had to stand up to accusations and pressure from others to deny the gifts that God had given to me and the pressure to conform to this world so that I would be accepted and liked. I was rejected and denounced by my fellow Christians and still I was lead to pray for them for years to come. During this process the Lord gave me a word that if I would go through this, then we were like a river with many dams, and as the walls of my dam fell, the force of the water would pull down the dams of those downstream. He is a man of His word. Nevertheless, I must stand victorious on a daily basis because Satan is just waiting for a better opportunity to get at me. I must never rely on past victories or I will surely fall. I always have to stay on guard and not allow that spirit of pride any entrance into my thinking. It is a difficult position because I must also guard against false humility and never deny my God or any of the gifts He has given me. (Rev. 2:13) One of my favorite scriptures is that I am created by God for good works, that He has prepared before hand for me to walk in.(Eph. 2:10) So whenever God does a miracle or answers my prayers or leads me to do a good work, I remind myself that God did the good works, I just walked in what He prepared beforehand. It is not my work, it is His, it is not my glory, but the glory that he gave to me, His glory. I have labored hard to get here and I know I will have to continue to labor to stay in the rest of God (Heb. 4:11). This year the knowledge of that rest is being poured out onto the earth and I intend, with God's help, to be one of those who receive and not just have an occasional experience of God's Presence, but enter the Presence behind the veil (Heb. 6:19).