



HOLY, HOLY, HOLY



PRAYER of DEDICATION



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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	page 3
CHAPTER 1 – Dedication and Commission	page 5
CHAPTER 2 – The Covenant of Love	page 7
CHAPTER 3 – Receiving God’s Promises	page 9
CHAPTER 4 – God Dwells with Men	page 11
CHAPTER 5 – God Dwells in Men	page 13
CHAPTER 6 – Man Becomes the Temple of God	page 16
CHAPTER 7 – Looking to the Temple	page 20
CHAPTER 8 – May Your Priests be Clothed with Salvation	page 22
CHAPTER 9 – May Your Saints Rejoice in Your Goodness	page 25
CHAPTER 10 – The Glory of God Comes Down	page 28

INTRODUCTION

In the psyche of every one of us is a need for dedication – something within each of us that cries out for meaning and purpose. We have been created with gifts and abilities, with our individual likes and dislikes, and we long to be significant and fulfilled. However, for many of us life is a routine from day to day and far from our “dream plan”.

As we were reading Solomon’s prayer of dedication of the Temple (2 Chronicles 6:14ff) we were meditating on each of the petitions and they made us think of our bodies as Temples of the Holy Spirit. (1 Corinthians 6:19)

There is great power in dedication to a purpose and for a cause. Because we are created as “speaking spirits” to ourselves create, to speak things into being just as God did at the beginning, we actually begin to fulfil our own destinies, our reason for being born.

We need to know the Covenant of Love. God always keeps His promises.

We need to want the promises God has made and has inspired to be written down for our edification. If God has said it I believe it and I want to receive it.

Will God really dwell on earth with men? (v18) If God will, how can this be? He is too great, He is omnipotent (all-powerful), He is omniscient (all-knowing), and He is everywhere by His Spirit. How, then, can He manifest Himself in a specific place?

If He will dwell in a specific place where a person can focus, a Temple, one should be able to meet God personally.

What are the needs of a person that he or she might want to meet God personally?

Have we wronged someone? (Verse 22)

Has something we have done caused us trouble and grief or sickness? (Verse 28)

When “Nature” has caused us or those we love, trouble and loss, do we feel angry and blame God? (Verse 26)

The outworking and ongoing effects of natural disasters often bring fear, loss, failure to prosper, and frustration.

Are we open-hearted to foreigners who are looking for a better life? (Verse 32)

When we have enemies who come against us, relationships that have gone bad, injustice meted out to us, oppression and abuse, what should we do?

We prefer to go our own way and not to want to conduct our lives according to the Maker’s (God’s) instructions and then we wonder why we are not fulfilled in our lives, but become “slaves” to our jobs and our families, trying to make ends meet, especially financially.

We have become slaves to our own ambitions, yet caught up in our past failures.

Solomon addressed all these points in his petitions. “May You (O Lord my God) hear the prayer your servant prays **towards this place**...and forgive.”

“This place” is the Temple which Solomon had built for the dwelling place of the Lord. King David had wanted to build it, and God had said, “Because it was in your heart to build a temple for My Name, you did well to have this in your heart. Nevertheless you are not the

one to build the temple, but your son will build the temple for My Name.” (2 Chronicles 6:8&9)

CHAPTER 1 DEDICATION and COMMISSION

“Let there be...” is what God said at each point of creation. (Genesis 1)
1) These words are the creative power He used after He visualised how He wanted His world for humans to be. After all the preparation was done God created humans “in His likeness (image)”. To reinforce the creative power of words He told Adam to name each species of animal. Thus a hippopotamus was a river horse. We name our children with specific thoughts in our minds. This is effectively dedication. It is actually prophetic utterance on behalf of God to identify the individual and collective but unique characteristics which will be the person of that name. This might not be taken seriously by someone who is ignorant of God’s intention but ignorance does not invalidate God’s decision.

God has therefore trusted humans with a great responsibility. This was at stake when Satan tempted Eve. Eve did not understand how powerful words are, and Satan has capitalised on our ignorance ever since. Dedication is public declaration and assignment. Witnesses are important because of another idea of God. Agreement is also a powerful force, creating accountability, affirmation and ongoing support. Dedication is also a time for celebration. It is good and all good things come from God. God is into dedication, big time!

Dedication opens the way for revelation and vision. As we speak out God's plans He trusts us with more of them.

Commission comes from those in authority recognising the dedication and gifts of someone. That authority then gives permission to the dedicated persons, which frees them from the constraints which might hinder them from acting boldly and confidently. Commission conveys a legal right and is a delegation of authority to the trusted person and an expectation that the job will be done.

Jesus' final Commission to His disciples (Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-18, Luke 24:46-49 with Acts 1:8) was not only to those who were there with Him (the Apostles), but to all His disciples until the close of the age. He makes this very plain in His prayer before He went to the Cross. (John 17:20&21) But there were other "commissions" prior to this final one because the greatest "gift" is the Holy Spirit who is freely bestowed on all who will receive. (Luke 11:10) This "gift" is the power of God Himself and enables us to develop His character in us as "fruit of the Spirit." We simply cannot function as a member of His family without the seal of His Spirit, which is His promise that we are born from above, (John 3:3) and an assurance that He who has begun His work in us will carry it on to completion. (Philippians 1:6) We have the responsibility to continue in His revelatory knowledge and to be filled with the Spirit until He overflows, like a river of Living water, to thirsty people. (John 7:38)

We were commanded to be born again, to walk in love, (John 13:34) to abide in Him so that He abides in us, (John 15:5-8) to do greater

works even than He did by the Holy Spirit. (John 14:12) If He commanded us He also equips and enables us and it is our dedication to these commands, in love, that makes us suitable to be commissioned. "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching." (John 14:23)

CHAPTER 2 THE COVENANT of LOVE

GOD IS LOVE. (1 John 4:8) This is the very first thing we need to believe but it has been made difficult because Christian believers do not follow His ways. So many people ask us where God is in a tragedy or a natural disaster. This is a fair question because Jesus said, "love one another (and your enemies). This is how people will know you are my disciples." (John 13:34) This is not a mushy, sentimental feeling based on the personality of the other person but an unconditional and demonstrated desire for the well-being of the other person. People need to feel loved, especially if they do not love themselves much. God has our welfare on His heart all the time. This is not just a New Covenant concept. You can hear God's heart in verses like "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness." (Jeremiah 31:3) "All day long I have held out my hands..." (Isaiah 65:2) "What is man that you are mindful of him...that you care for him? You have made him a little lower than Elohim... you made him ruler over the works of your hands..." (Psalm 8:4-6)

God has big dreams for His highest creation. We are His representatives, His “speaking spirits” on His earth. Like any good father, He has created us to fulfil specific plans which He has created us for, and He trains us and equips us until we are ready to do the “works” which He has already put on our hearts to do.

When Adam and Eve thwarted His plans He already had a solution to the sin and separation problem. His sinless Son would take the punishment which we deserved so that His righteousness was satisfied. No longer would His highest creation need to be separated from fellowship with Him because the sins of all, for all time, were dealt with. Even this was not enough for God. Not only was the sin dealt with but He has imputed the righteousness of Jesus to us as a gift. Through Jesus and in God’s eyes we are sinless. This is Love: not that we love God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. (1 John 4:10)

God loves to give us good things. Indeed, He is the author of all good things. (James 1:17)

Satan, on the other hand, is our deadly enemy and God gets most of the blame for Satan’s actions, which, according to Jesus are all to kill, steal and destroy. (John 10:10) Jesus showed us how to resist the devil by using God’s word. Peter wrote, “Resist him, standing firm in the faith.” (1 Peter 5:9); James wrote, “Submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.” (James 4:7). John wrote, “The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the work of the devil.” (1 John 3:8) God loved the world so much that He sent His one and only Son...” (John 3:16)

This is our God, a God who loves, but it is our choice to believe that this is so.

CHAPTER 3 RECEIVING GOD'S PROMISES

...that whoever believes in Him...will have eternal life. "Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son." (John 3:18)

For many years one of us knew the Bible very well but had lost sight of God's personalised love. At last, after many trials I made a deliberate decision to believe God's word rather my image of myself and other people's opinion of me. Receiving with the mind leaves one in the soulish realm and subject to the emotions, but receiving in the heart is where the spirit dwells and the spirit is edified. This is where the Holy Spirit also dwells when we are born again and, because He knows the mind of God (1 Corinthians 2:11) He can communicate to our spirit the truth about God.

There is an interesting example when Peter and John went to Samaria because many had accepted the word of God. (Acts 8:14) The Holy Spirit had not yet come upon them; they had simply been baptised into the name of the Lord Jesus. Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. (Acts 8:17) This is interesting because they had accepted but not received. From the

response of Simon, something visible happened when they received. Being born by the Spirit of God brings to life the human spirit which connects to God in the way that Adam was connected before he sinned. We are dead in our transgressions and sins. (Ephesians 2:1) God cannot be connected to a sinful person because God is a “consuming fire”, (Hebrews 12:29) and His Holiness would burn all the sin up and we would be destroyed. Only the Holy Spirit can make us holy, and being filled with the Holy Spirit safeguards our relationship. Peter advises us to be eager to make our calling and election sure. (2 Peter 1:10)

If anyone is in Christ he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come. (2 Corinthians 5:17) Being born by the Spirit of God really changes us into His likeness and a reflection of our Heavenly Daddy. This makes it possible to believe and receive His promises because His Spirit within us confirms the truth to our spirit. Otherwise there is a constant longing within us for this confirmation of the truth, which is so amazing that the human mind cannot either believe or receive it. God’s ways are higher than our ways and His thoughts than our thoughts. (Isaiah 55:9) so our “logic” cannot comprehend God’s ways at all. We can only receive when we are born again. This is obviously why Jesus said, “I tell you the truth, no one can see the Kingdom of God unless he is born again.” (John 3:3) John the Evangelist had previously written that Jesus came to the Jews but the Jewish people did not receive Him. Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name (His character, His words, His values, His whole person) He gave the right to become children of God – not born in the physical or by human decision, but born of God. (John 1:11-

13) Jesus Himself was born by the power of the Holy Spirit and we are born into God's family by exactly the same power.

When we are children of God we have every right to expect Him to be a real Father to us, providing our needs, guidance and training, encouragement as well as rebuke. In fact He promises to do just that. (for example, Hebrews 12:5-11) He has every intention of keeping every promise He has made to those who are in His family.

CHAPTER 4

GOD DWELLS WITH MEN

Adam and Eve heard the sound of the Lord God in the cool of the day. God was in the Garden, waiting for Adam and Eve to finish their work and their care. (Genesis 2:15) At the end of the day God must have enjoyed His fellowship with His precious creation – man, whom He had made to rule His earth. We believe He looked forward to teaching them new things, revealing His secrets and His plans, because all fathers look forward to doing this. He had made them only a little lower than Himself (Psalm 8:5) and intended that they would be powerful influences on His earth.

Imagine His grief, then, when Adam “sold out” to God's great enemy, the devil. Spiritual death was the result; no more fellowship because Adam and Eve were banished from the Garden for ever. (Genesis 3:23) God returned to His high place in Heaven and waited. (Isaiah 6:1-4) He had a redemption plan but that was not for a while.

There were some who sought the Lord's presence and the Angel of the Lord appeared to those but God always came and went away again. The Ark of the Lord was only a symbol of His presence. It was real enough for those who honoured this symbol, but the presence went where the Ark was, even when it was captured by the Philistines. (1 Samuel 4:11)

Throughout the Old Testament we can read God's longing to restore fellowship with His humans and there are some who had fellowship with Him, but Immanuel, God with us, was only a promise because of the unresolved sin problem. (Isaiah 7:14) The blood of bulls and sheep could not remove the sin permanently. (Hebrews 7:27 and Hebrews 10:1&2) No one was empowered to obey the Law. It was given because the people asked for guidelines to do things God's way. They were so full of fear of God that they told Moses they did not want God to speak to them. (Exodus 20:19)

No one can keep the Law. The independent trait that sin and separation from God introduced in each of us will automatically question the law. Conformity might try to obey but creativity will win. This is why we must receive our new heart. (Ezekiel 36:26&27) This heart will be soft and pliable to God's ways.

God has always been with us in the sense that He really cares for His world, but He chose to delegate His authority to humans. He ultimately takes the responsibility for all things, which is why ignorant people blame Him for the bad things that happen. Just as Adam and Eve blamed each other rather than admit that they had done wrong, this "gene" continues right down to the present. Sinners prefer to

blame someone else rather than admit they have done wrong. This continuing state of affairs is one of the reasons that God decided on a better covenant – one by which we are transformed into His likeness by a miracle. This miracle is even greater than healings of the body, because lives are transformed by the Holy Spirit. Jesus, who is Immanuel, God with us, said to His disciples, “It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away (to Heaven), the Counsellor will not come, but if I go I will send Him to you.” (John 16:7)

God had an even better plan than “God with us”. The Counsellor who will come will be with us for ever. He lives, not only with us but will be in us. (John 14:17) The stipulation is that we love Jesus and obey His teaching. God is working back towards His original plan, one step at a time. He always intended that His children be representatives of Him, bringing His blessings and His love to others, extending His Kingdom, His rule of love and care. He knows that, because of sin, no one will be able to represent Him faithfully, because holiness is from within the heart.

CHAPTER 5 GOD DWELLS IN MEN

Almost the first thing that Jesus did when He came into the room where the disciples were hiding after Jesus had been crucified and had risen from the dead was to breathe on them and say, “Receive the Holy Spirit.” (John 20:22) But nothing visible happened immediately. Jesus had spoken it into being, created the possibility with His words.

It was not until Pentecost that there was the manifestation of the power of the Spirit's coming and the disciples were changed into people of power.

Paul explains it in his letter to the Ephesians. They believed and were marked in Him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit. (Ephesians 1:13) They received when the eyes of their hearts were enlightened...by His incomparably great power for us who believe. (Ephesians 1:18&19)

Just as asking people to come to church does not make them a Christian, so also believing in Jesus does not make us born again by the Spirit of God. We use "believing" in the sense that we have knowledge, but "believing" Biblically is putting our whole trust in Jesus. There is no room for picking and choosing what we will or will not believe. God's word is a package from a Holy God who does not lie. (Numbers 23:19) Every word that is attributed to Him is the truth, even if we do not understand it. The Holy Spirit is willing to teach us, according to God's promise, if we are hungry enough to want to learn. (John 16:13 & 1 John 2:27) Learning from the Holy Spirit is an adventure because He teaches, step after step, as we put each step into practice. This is not learning as we are accustomed from our school days, when we acquired knowledge to regurgitate it in the exams and possibly never have use for it again.

When the Holy Spirit fills our hearts we have everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him who called us. (2 Peter 1:3) He goes on to say that it is through His promises that we may participate in the divine nature and escape corruption. (2 Peter 1:4) He writes the steps through which the Holy Spirit takes us. (verses 5-9) We

have already written about this in a previous book (Walking with Jesus, chapter 6). These steps are faith + goodness + knowledge + self-control + perseverance + godliness + brotherly kindness + love.

When God dwells in us He changes us to reflect His glory, “being transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.” (2 Corinthians 3:18) We surrender our own agenda, our own will, to adopt His and so become the people He designed us to be. Love for the family of God fills our hearts. This is the kind of love that appreciates the differences that God Himself has implanted in each one of us deliberately. Just as God wants the best for each of us, so also we want the best for others in the family. Jesus’ example is written in Philippians. “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.” “Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped.” (Philippians 2:5&6)

Some Christian leaders think they are more important than the people who serve them, when in truth Jesus taught that anyone who wants to be first... must be the servant of all. (Mark 9:35) Some ministers want discounts and favours and people to do the menial work. If they make sure that their people are born from above then the Holy Spirit would motivate them according to their gifts and the ministers and pastors would not have to beg and bully. Their people are doing good works in their own strength, which does not necessarily honour God and will be works that are “burnt up”. (1 Corinthians 3:15) God has already planned our good works with which to

honour Him. (Ephesians 2:10) This is not to say that people should not do menial work but they need to understand how to honour the Lord in all things. (1 Corinthians 10:31)

CHAPTER 6 MAN BECOMES THE TEMPLE of GOD

"Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?" (1 Corinthians 6:19) This is really an extraordinary thing and it becomes so when we invite the Holy Spirit to come into our hearts. It is a very real experience to be born into God's family, especially after living by default in Satan's kingdom and following the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. (Ephesians 2:2) This way of life is marked by gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts.

But the way of God is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. We should want to manifest these so the Temple of God is beautiful for all to see. We have crucified our old nature but if it rears its ugly head we crucify it afresh. We should never excuse it. Why would we want God's Temple to bring Him discredit? There is a constant need to sweep it clean and we do this by repenting – turning away from sinful ways constantly. Certainly Satan is prowling around, waiting to catch us out and cause us to fall, but we are instructed to draw near to God, to submit to God, and resist the devil who will flee from you.

(James 4:7) The devil does not want to be around the glory of God. Purity makes him too uncomfortable. There are so many warnings, especially in Paul's writings. "So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit...but if you are led by the Spirit you are not under law." (Galatians 5:16-18) "Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature..." (Galatians 5:24)

"But among you there must not be even a hint of ...impurity...because these are improper for God's holy people." (Ephesians 5:3) "Live as children of the Light... and find out what pleases the Lord." (Ephesians 5:8-10) "Do everything...so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars...as you hold out the word of life..." (Philippians 2:14-15)

Do we believe these scripture verses? Do we want them to be a reality in our lives? Jesus paid a very high price so that these injunctions could become true for us. When we grasp the concept that we are indeed God's Temple we should want to do everything that could make us fitting vessels for such a privilege.

God made very definite statements concerning His word. He has exalted His name and His word above all things. (Psalm 138:2) "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away." (Mark 13:31) "I am the Lord, who has made all things...who foils the signs of the false prophets...who overthrows the learning of the wise and turns it into nonsense, who carries out the words of His servants and fulfils the predictions of His messengers". (Isaiah 44:24-26) My word

... will not return empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it. (Isaiah 55:11)

Thus, when the words of Solomon's prayer were honoured by God, demonstrated by the glory of the Lord filling the Temple, (2 Chronicles 7:2) the Temple became the dwelling place of God on the earth. God assures Solomon, "I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for myself as a temple for sacrifices." (2 Chronicles 7:12) This is now an eternal promise for the "Temple" of God. From that time the Temple was the Presence of God for the Israelites – to seek God's face and to turn from their wicked ways, (ie, to repent, to change their direction). "My eyes and my heart will always be there." (2 Chronicles 7:16)

Therefore when the Temple was neglected in Haggai's time, after solemn agreement so long ago, it was an insult to God Himself. God was angry with the Israelites because they did not respect and care for the Temple. He could not bless them because He could not break His word. The prophet speaks on God's behalf. "You have planted much but harvested little. You eat, but never have enough. You drink, but never have your fill. You put on clothes, but are not warm. You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it." (Haggai 1:6) "Build the house so I may take pleasure in it and be honoured." (Haggai 1:8)

As soon as they began, God began to make promises and after three months God was pleased and promised that from that day blessings would flow again. (Haggai 2:19)

The Temple is now our bodies, individually, and the body of Christ collectively. How do we build this Temple? The Son of God is indeed building the Temple. Jesus said, "I will build my church."

The letter to the Church in Laodicea describes its state as "You say, I'm OK. You do not realise that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked." (Revelation 3:17) "I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire so you can become rich." (This is not money but the weight of the glory of the Lord.) I counsel you to buy from Me "white clothes to wear, so that you can cover your nakedness." (This represents the righteousness that only Jesus can give, our wedding garment which we need to attend the Banquet in Heaven. (Matthew 22:11) I counsel you to buy from Me "salve to put on your eyes, so that you can see." (Salvation and salve have the same root. Spiritual blindness is what causes us to miss God's plan for our good, and revert to our own way as if we had no Covenant with God. We will then go lukewarm and be spat out.)

Jesus warns what Isaiah had prophesied. "You will ever be seeing but never perceiving. For this people's heart has become calloused...". (Matthew 13:14&15) The solution to this state is to be earnest and repent. (Revelation 3:19) Jesus' promise is to purify us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

When people look to the Temple they want to see the glory of God. Hypocrisy is what turns the unsaved away.

CHAPTER 7

LOOKING TO THE TEMPLE – collectively and individually

The Temple that Solomon built was the most beautiful that he could make. This is what our Temple should be. Paul expressed it when he was describing a Godly woman – dressed modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, but with good deeds. While these directions are cultural for that time it is the principle that is still important. All those outside of Covenant are looking to see what they instinctively know to be a good person. The works of the flesh in other people, especially Christians, are very apparent to sinners. They use these standards to excuse their own shortcomings, and make judgments to justify themselves. There is, in “the world”, a very strong thinking that there are scales to measure good against bad things we have done and everyone in this thinking (which is really Buddhist or New Age) hopes that the good will outweigh the bad. God, on the other hand insists that no-one is good because of sin, but the gospel says that Jesus has taken ALL the sins of the world on Himself so that we can receive a righteousness that only God can impart to us. He sees us as “in Christ”. It is Jesus and His anointing that clothes us with the beauty and perfection of Himself. “Not I, but Christ who lives in me.” (Galatians 2:20) “Christ will be exalted in my body.” (Philippians 1:20) This of course is the individual member of the whole body. Because the whole body is made up of many members, or parts, they make one body. (1 Corinthians 12:12) Each part of the body is important for its

own “gift”. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it. (1 Corinthians 12:26) The whole of Christ’s body is affected when one part is infected. The witness of Christ’s body is marred by one bad part. Each member needs to be healthy, spiritually. When people who are not yet saved look at the body and see an infected part they will not have anything to do with the whole body. This is the present state of the church. One part says to another, “I have no need of you.” (1 Corinthians 12:14-26) Many leaders plan their own course without any reference to another work in progress, regarding that work as a rival rather than the Spirit’s leading in the same direction.

Many years ago we used to love going to the prayer meetings, but when we prayed another person would make the same prayer and we felt we had not done it right. We felt threatened and discouraged until God opened our eyes and we understood that our prayer point was so important to God that He led another person to pray into the same thing. Indeed our prayer was not inadequate but right on target. Once we had this understanding we enjoyed the prayer meetings even more.

Jesus’ prayer for His church was that they would be one just as He is one with the Father. (John 17:21) This unity is so that the world may believe that the Father has sent Jesus. This unity demonstrates the glory of Jesus, the power of the anointing and the pure love of God. The church divided confuses the world but the church operating in love amazes the world. This love and warmth is tangible to them in a cold and uncaring world where people are on about number one and selfishness reigns supreme. The unsaved should be able to look to

Jesus' church and see His glory and His love. The church should be able to demonstrate the works of Jesus who was anointed with the Holy Spirit and power, who went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with Him. (Acts 10:38) After all Jesus promised to be with us to the very end of the age. (Matthew 28:20)

CHAPTER 8 MAY YOUR PRIESTS BE CLOTHED WITH SALVATION

When God created Adam and Eve they had no need of clothes because they were clothed with the glory of God. We imagine that they were so beautiful from the inside, just like little children who run naked in the sheer joy of their beautiful and innocent bodies. They always laugh happily as they feel freedom from restraint. But when sin came into the world everything changed. Adam and Eve realised that they were naked and they were ashamed. SIN felt like mud and filth, affecting the outside as much as the inside. Unless the conscience is seared, we are supposed to feel dirty so that we will want to wash. A seared conscience is as disastrous as a decision to be a street person who no longer wants to live a "clean" life, and lives not much better than an animal or even not as well as some animals. We try to minister to these people in the streets of Parramatta, but most always refuse to come to God to be cleansed from their sins.

The Old Testament priesthood was of the tribe of Levi. They were chosen because they made a decision “to be on the Lord’s side.” It was not long after God had delivered the Israelites from Egypt (and slavery) and they had made a group decision that they would prefer Moses to speak to God on their behalf and relay God’s messages to them. (Exodus 20:19) God had given them the Commandments because they had chosen to have a representative between them and God, rather than a personal relationship with God. These laws were extended in fine details and the place for worship and the priesthood rituals were also clearly defined. How gracious God is to meet humans at their level instead of forcing His own way. Moses was on Mount Sinai, with God, receiving all these details and the stone tablets on which were written the Ten Commandments. When he came down and saw all the revelry in worship of the gold statue of a calf (which represented Baal) he was devastated. Moses called out, “Whoever is for the Lord, come to me.” (Exodus 32:26) All the Levites rallied to him. These sorts of challenges still happen today. God is always looking for those who want to rally to Him. His “priests” must desire His presence and to do His service, without question. Moses said to the Levites that day, “You have been set apart to the Lord today, for you were against your own brothers, and He has blessed you this day.” (Exodus 32:29) Later it is written that “the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to Him.” (2 Chronicles 16:9)

These priests were to make the sacrifices for sins on behalf of the people. This is why Jesus became our Great High Priest, the

ultimate sacrifice for sins, priest and victim. No longer is there any need for sacrifice for sins because it is done to God's satisfaction for ever and ever.

Nevertheless there is a need for an intermediary on this earth. Jesus is in Heaven at the Father's right hand, and He has sent the Holy Spirit, who knows the mind of God. (1 Corinthians 2:11) Any spirit must have a body to operate legally on the earth, even the Holy Spirit. To continue Jesus' work on the earth He desires to use us if we are willing. When we give Him permission He can continue the priestly work of Jesus in and through us. We are His witnesses; we are supposed to be a reflection of Him so that those who are not yet saved will be attracted to Him. "In this world we are like him". (1 John 4:17) "God has chosen to make known the great mystery of the gospel – Christ in you, the hope of glory." (Colossians 1:27) Jesus said, "Stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high." (Luke 24:49)

The Bible says that we are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 2:5) Paul urges us to offer our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship. (Romans 12:1) Jesus has freed us from our sins by His blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve His God and Father – to Him be glory and power for ever and ever. (Revelation 1:5&6)

This power from on high is our salvation, the "being transformed" life that demonstrates the power of God to make a new creation that becomes an ambassador for Christ; God making His appeal through

us. (2 Corinthians 5:17&20) This is not just a salvation to benefit us individually but a light that shines on those destined for salvation but not yet in the Kingdom. People look to the Temple and see what they need. Many Christians are satisfied that they are OK, but are they clothed with power? Are they attracting others by the glory that is on them?

CHAPTER 9 MAY YOUR SAINTS REJOICE IN YOUR GOODNESS

Saints, sanctified ones, are those who have been accounted holy in God's sight. In the Psalms ⁽¹⁵⁾ David observes that it is those whose walk is blameless and who do what is righteous, who speak the truth from their hearts and have no slander on their tongues, those who keep their promises even when it hurts – these are those who dwell in the Lord's sanctuary. These honour the Lord and all who reverence Him and do their neighbour no wrong. All who dwell in the Lord's sanctuary are sanctified ones. God's word has not changed but the new Covenant of the indwelling Holy Spirit intensifies our personal relationship with God. His guidance helps and enables us to please God, not through rituals and law keeping but through the bidding of His soft voice. When we obey His voice He conveys His pleasure like any father does to his child. This makes our faith in an invisible God real. Many people want God to

prove that He exists but saints have found that their faith proves that God does exist.

Moses asked to see God's glory. (Exodus 33:18) He was effectively asking to see God's face, because, in answer, God said He could not show Moses His face. Moses already believed that God existed and that God was with them but God decided to show Moses His goodness which would proclaim His name (His glory, character, nature and power). Experiencing this goodness caused Moses to worship God and to receive His promises. Goodness is the desire to bless, to pour out good things on those who will receive.

Peter writes to add to our faith, goodness. (2 Peter 1:5) Cold obedience is based on fear but the desire to please and to bless is based on love. God rewards those who earnestly seek Him, having faith which pleases God. (Hebrews 11:6) God's rewards and God's "well done" fill us with joy because we have pleased God and we know that we have blessed Him as much as He has blessed us. God is such a giver. He keeps on pouring out blessings as we receive them and pass them on to others. Jesus said, "When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8) We need to exercise faith on every occasion, based on God's promises and Jesus' example. Moving in the Holy Spirit's leading is obedience because of love. (John 14:15-21)

David's experience was that surely goodness and love would follow him all the days of his life. He was a man after God's own heart, even though he made many mistakes. (Psalm 23) He rejoiced

often in God's goodness especially when he had just had "down" moments. Rejoicing in God's goodness always lifted him up.

Solomon could not know the New Testament concept of "saints". This is what is so amazing about prayer. We can utter the words of God's heart to bring about His plans, and in Solomon's case actually prophesy what was to be in the future. Paul uses the word "saints" often in his letters and he always means those who are in Christ. God loves all people but His family have special favour and those who want to reflect the heavenly Father know His "well done" on a daily basis. We become more conscious of His presence with us and in us; more conscious of the power of the anointing, and more confident that He will answer our prayers. No matter how many promises God has made, they are "yes" in Christ. (2 Corinthians 1:20) With this assurance it is natural to rejoice. When God is saying "yes" to everything we ask of Him, according to His promises we are encouraged to learn even more from His word and from His heart.

One of the most important things for us to do is to become righteousness-conscious. If we focus on our shortcomings we will cripple ourselves to do what God wants us to do. Everything that is to be done by faith is impossible in the natural (in our own strength). If we focus on God's goodness and His faithfulness we can achieve the works He has prepared for us. "No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God". (1 John 3:9) We cannot emphasise this enough because there are still church leaders teaching that we are sinners. This concept, which denies the truth

about our imputed righteousness and dishonours Jesus, keeps Christians from being able to rejoice in God's goodness. They are still sinners instead of saints, from their own mouths. This thought will limit revelation from God because He only reveals His secrets to His prophets, those who speak out His word. (Amos 3:7)

CHAPTER 10 THE GLORY of GOD COMES DOWN

When Solomon had finished praying, fire came down from heaven...and the glory of the Lord filled the Temple. When all the Israelites saw the fire coming down and the glory of the Lord above the temple, they knelt and worshipped and gave thanks to the Lord, saying "He is good; His love endures for ever." (2 Chronicles 7:1-3)

John prophesied, "I baptise you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I... He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire." (Matthew 3:11) When we first read this we asked God what this meant and how does this happen? We had read about Charles Finney walking through the streets and people falling down to beg to be saved from their sins. The saints of old are portrayed with haloes around their heads. Where did this concept come from? Did people see God's glory in their countenance? Then there were the tongues of fire seen on the heads of the disciples in the upper room on the day of Pentecost. The glory of God becomes visible to onlookers so that they want to receive God's gift of salvation. They actually see with their "outside" eyes the goodness

of God, so that their spiritual eyes are opened. What if the whole church demonstrated this fire?

This is why we want to pray Solomon's prayer of dedication. We would like to be so covered by the glory of God that people would only see Jesus. Our bodies would be vessels for God's use, to demonstrate His glory and power, and lead others to righteousness. "Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens... and lead many to righteousness." (Daniel 12:3) "...Shine like stars in the universe as you hold out (or hold on to) the word of life." (Philippians 2:15&16) Jesus said, "I have given them the glory that you gave me." (John 17:22) His prayer is that the Father would sanctify His followers by the truth; your word is truth." (John 17:17)

Moses' face shone so brightly that he had to put a veil on his face. Paul writes that "we who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit." (2 Corinthians 3:18)

This passage of the Bible says that the same veil remains when the old Covenant is read. It has been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. Jesus has removed the curse of the law, but if we choose to relate to God through the Ten Commandments we are still under the curse. The veil covers the heart; the law blocks the freedom that Jesus has won for us. We have moved back from grace to law. (Galatians 3:2&3 and 5:4) There will be no visible glory if we do this and the shining that wins souls will not be there. The fire is essential for the unsaved to be won into the Kingdom.

When the glory is present there is a powerful sense of awe which convicts people of their sin and a need of a Saviour.

Why then is the church just imparting knowledge as a way to evangelise? The gospel is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes, Jew, Gentile, and we could add foreigner, including those who have thus far had another religion. It is not a matter of semantics, playing around with the right words and compromising belief systems to achieve union. What Jesus has done to fulfil God's original plan to redeem mankind has a mighty power in the spirit realm. God showed His pleasure to Solomon by coming with cleansing fire, burning up all dross and turning hearts to Himself miraculously from the sheer awesomeness of His presence. See His glory, visualise His glory, do all that we can to bring His glory to touch the hearts of the lost and those who have tried to believe but have never had their hearts engaged.

This is what a prayer of dedication will do. God has done it and He will again if we want it enough.

Solomon prayed that those who have wronged their neighbour, those who have been defeated by an enemy because of sin, when there is drought or famine or plague or pests ruining the crops, when there is war, when there is unspecified sin and even when one is a foreigner outside of the Covenant and they come with their petitions to the Temple that God would hear and forgive. It is not the establishment called the church or the building in which the people of God meet, but the living Temple within the heart of the dedicated one.

James understands this. He writes, “is any one of you in trouble he should pray...is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven.”

(James 5:13-15)

God has invested Himself in His people, given them His authority and has promised to be with them to the end of the age. He is trusting us with His plan A, so let us be faithful to His ways. We can then expect Him to honour our faith and pour down His glory and His fire.

