

## **Prayer that Satisfies God**

Most of us share a common task as we start each day. We begin our day with a look into our mirror and if we are honest most mornings we usually do not like what the mirror is revealing to us. Who could have imagined that a good nights sleep could have effected us in such a way? Though we may not like the honesty of the mirror we are forced to agree with its truth and begin to make the necessary adjustments to our lives in order to meet and function in the new day.

I am sensing that the church is likewise beginning to awaken from a long dark night of sleep that has had a profound effect upon her. If we are going to be effective in the new day that is about to dawn in God's purposes we too will have to take a good look into God's mirror, which is His Word. Let us begin our look in James 4:3 "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." This passage sums up where much of the church has been in recent years in her relationship to prayer. James is describing prayer that is selfish in nature. Everything begins and ends with me. My church, my ministry, my anointing, my gifting etc.

This generation has been inundated with the topic of prayer. The books, tapes, videos and seminars on the topic are endless. We have gone from spiritual prayer mapping of the heavenlies that would make even Rand McNally envious, to prayer walking that didn't even improve our waistlines, prayer "soaking" that has only left us looking all wet to the rest of the world, the prayer of Jabez phenomenon that made one man a millionaire along with a prayer mountain, prayer towers and now 24/7 prayer.

In Is 26:18, "We have been with child, we have been in pain, we have as it were brought forth wind; we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth; neither have the inhabitants of the earth fallen." This scripture describes what I believe has been the effect of all of these prayer movements. They have made no lasting effect upon the earth, we have only brought forth wind or in modern language we have produced a lot of hot air. If we are honest we would have to agree that this verse is a true indictment against us. We have not only not produced any lasting deliverance in the earth but the condition around us has grown increasingly worse both inside and outside the church.

Prayer that is centered on man despite the spiritual spin we may put upon it, is still at odds with God and His purpose as James 4:4 indicates. In Is. 53:11a we see a contrast and an answer to this dilemma, He shall see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied: We see here that there is a travail that satisfies Him. When the Lord was satisfied with the travail of His Son it was that which brought deliverance in the earth. It is vital to understand what He desires and to come into agreement with that so that we will no longer be praying amiss but in unison with what satisfies Him. Rom. 8:26,27 clearly tells us that due to our infirmities we do not know how to pray as we ought.

Now we may not want to agree with this scripture but unless we do we will never move beyond our selfish prayer life. Paul is not only telling us we don't know how to pray but that there is only One who does, that person being the Holy Spirit. He is the only One who always knows and prays according to His will. Our infirmities in prayer will only be overcome as we are filled with His Spirit. We will now look at an example from the scriptures that I believe will help us to see this kind of prayer at work in a life.

The book of 1 Samuel opens with the story of Hannah. She is living during the time of the Judges which is described as a time when there was no king in Israel and everyone did what was right in their own eyes. It was also a time of corruption in leadership where the sons of Eli are described in 1Sam 2:12 as men who knew not the Lord which was the reason for their failure in ministry. Hannah lived in a very dark hour, a night season for Israel. The outward pressures in Hannah's life were compounded by the fact that she is barren while her husband's other wife Peninnah, had many children. The Lord used all of this anguish of soul in Hannah's life to produce within her a travail that would satisfy Him. We see the fruit of this work in 1 Samuel 1:10,11. Hannah is broken before the Lord and emptied of any more of her own prayers, she is reduced to the language of tears that only God can interpret. From this barren state the Holy Spirit will now overshadow her and pray through her according to His will. Hannah calls upon the Lord of Hosts, this is the first time this name is uttered from the lips of any of His people. This shows us that she is now under the influence of the Holy Spirit for it is only He who reveals to us the nature of God as Jesus declared in Jn.15:26.

The prayers that for years had centered on her needs are now swallowed up by a far greater need that is on the Lord's heart. She now understands the real need is for the Lord to have a life that is holy unto Him. The travail that was upon God's heart was for a life that was separated unto Him, a life that would be free from the contaminants of that hour, a life that would satisfy Him! Once He had such a life, He would be able to use this life for the ushering in of His purposes. It was now time for a King and Kingdom to emerge that would bring deliverance from Israel's enemies, unify the nation and restore His presence amongst His people.

We live in a similar day that Hannah found herself in. God desires to use the present conditions that are extremely dark to create a cry within His church that will once again produce a people that are holy unto the Lord. The deliverance that the world and the church needs can only come when He is once again satisfied. The apostle John describes the bride in Rev.22:17 as one who is saying the same thing the Spirit is saying. She too like Hannah has come under His influence. May we also yield our hearts a fresh to the workings of the Holy Spirit, the only One who knows how to pray.