

# KINGDOM ADVANCING PRAYER

Mark: 1:35 & Matt: 11: 11-12

*From the desk of Elder Michael Scantlebury*

## Walking In The Fear Of God & In The Comfort Of The Holy Spirit

“Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And **walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit**, they were multiplied.” Acts 9:31

As I was in prayer this week following an incident that occurred at last Sunday’s main worship service, this scripture struck me very forcefully. As a matter of fact, I did up this letter sometime in 2000 and the Lord stirred my heart to revisit it. And I as looked deeper into this verse, I realised that there are keys for Kingdom Advance and growth.

The Bible here states that the churches were **multiplied** by walking in the **Fear Of The Lord** and in the **Comfort Of The Holy Spirit**. Today I would like for us to look at these two powerful dimensions, and the results that can be produced as we function in them.

In the preceding verses of Acts 9, we read of Saul’s (converted to Paul) eventful conversion to Christianity, and his remarkable turn-around from persecuting the saints, to preaching Christ with boldness and authority. Several attempts were made on his life by the Jews, so upon his arrival at Jerusalem in verse 26, he tries to join some disciples (students or pupils), not realising that the “Apostolic” (sent one) call and anointing was already upon him and that he did not need to sit among the disciples (students or pupils). They rejected him because of fear, and a lack of apostolic discernment.

In verse 27 Barnabas, an apostle with great discernment, recognized the apostolic call and mandate upon Saul, and brought him into the existing company of apostles. These apostles gave Saul a base for his operations and through this apostolic connection and ministry, all the churches throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria had peace and were edified or built up. The ministry of the apostles also produced the next two dimensions that we are going to explore.

### **The Fear of the Lord**

The Greek word that is used for **fear** in this portion of scripture and all the others that will be explored in this article, is the word “**phobos**” and it is derived from the primary root word “**phebomai**” which is rendered – to be put in fear; alarm or fright; to be exceedingly afraid; terror. It is where we get our English word “phobia” from.

So implicitly, the churches had a “holy phobos” for the Lord, and that assisted in producing increase.

However, as we continue we will see that this “phobos” was a very necessary ingredient in the early church, one that produced miracles, signs and wonders which led to increase.

The very first place that we see the evidence of this is in Acts 2, when the promise of the Father, the Holy Spirit had fallen. The apostles and the other saints were all filled and began speaking in previously unlearned languages (called other tongues). The religious people of the day had no clue as to what was happening, and were left in total amazement and confusion (verse 12). An apostolic anointing falls upon Peter, and he unlocks and decodes the mystery of what was happening, by going

to the scrolls and declaring "this is that" which was prophesied by the prophet Joel and releases an impartational teaching to all who were there (verses 14-40).

The result being great addition to the church and in verse 43 we read...

"Then **fear** came upon every soul, and **many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.**"

What an awesome event! As the apostolic anointing was released from the heavens through the Holy Spirit, fear (phobos) gripped the hearts of the people, and this resulted in the Lord confirming His revealed Word with miracles, signs and wonders.

### **Acts 5:1-16**

"But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession. And he kept back part of the proceeds, his wife also being aware of it, and brought a certain part and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, "Ananias, **why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit** and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God." Then Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and breathed his last. **So great fear came upon all those who heard these things.** And the young men arose and wrapped him up, carried him out, and buried him. Now it was about three hours later when his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. And Peter answered her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for so much?" She said, "Yes, for so much." Then Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out." Then immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. And the young men came in and found her dead, and carrying her out, buried her by her husband. **So great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things.** And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon's Porch. Yet none of the rest dared join them, but the people esteemed them highly. And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, so that they brought the sick out into the streets and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them. Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed."

The Holy Spirit, from the day of Pentecost in Acts 2, was moving very strong, and He moved the hearts of the saints to sell their excess possessions and lay the money at the feet of the apostles. In Acts 5, a husband and wife, Ananias and Sapphira, attempted to deceive the apostles by lying to the Holy Spirit, which ended in absolute disaster, as they were both killed by the Holy Spirit. Because of that we read in verses 11-12...

"So **great fear** (phobos) came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things. And through **the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done** among the people..."

This **great fear** that was released through the apostolic anointing acted as an agent for divine unity. It also was a defense against falsehood attaching itself to the church. In verse 14-16 we see a Godly kind of increase, and again many more creative miracles being done.

### **Acts 9:31-43**

"Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied. Now it came to pass, as Peter went through all parts of the country, that he also came down to the saints who dwelt in Lydda. There he found a certain man named Aeneas, who had been

bedridden eight years and was paralyzed. And Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus the Christ heals you. Arise and make your bed." Then he arose immediately. So all who dwelt at Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord. At Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha, which is translated Dorcas. This woman was full of good works and charitable deeds which she did. But it happened in those days that she became sick and died. When they had washed her, they laid her in an upper room. And since Lydda was near Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent two men to him, imploring him not to delay in coming to them. Then Peter arose and went with them. When he had come, they brought him to the upper room. And all the widows stood by him weeping, showing the tunics and garments which Dorcas had made while she was with them. But Peter put them all out, and knelt down and prayed. And turning to the body he said, "Tabitha, arise." And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up. Then he gave her his hand and lifted her up; and when he had called the saints and widows, he presented her alive. And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed on the Lord. So it was that he stayed many days in Joppa with Simon, a tanner."

As the **fear** (phobos) of the Lord fell upon the churches, the Lord continued to use Peter in that season, and tremendous miracles took place, which resulted, in addition to the churches. Aeneas, who had been bedridden for eight years and was also paralysed, was completely healed and delivered. Dorcas, a faithful saint had died, and Peter raised her from the dead. It also resulted in the Cornelius connection in chapter 10 of Acts.

#### **Acts 19:11-20**

"Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul, so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them. Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists took it upon themselves to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "We exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches." Also there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?" Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, overpowered them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. This became known both to all Jews and Greeks dwelling in Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. And many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds. Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and it totalled fifty thousand pieces of silver. So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed."

The Lord was working mightily through the apostle Paul and many unusual miracles were done. Some itinerant Jewish exorcists tried to emulate the apostolic anointing, and were soundly beaten by some demonic spirits. The result: verse 17...

"This became known both to all Jews and Greeks dwelling in Ephesus; and **fear** (phobos) fell on them all, and the name of the Lord was **magnified**" – [made great, enlarged, increased, made conspicuous, extolled, respected, held in high esteem].

The Bible goes on to say that because of that, not only Ephesus, but almost the whole of Asia, turned away from false gods to the true and living God (verse 26).

Note that believers were added to the church and walked in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, even though the **fear of the Lord** was present. The fear of the Lord is not something that any true believer should be afraid of. The Bible states in 1 John 4:17-18

"Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgement; because as He is, so are we in this world. There is no **fear** (phobos) in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love."

So then, this **fear** is not a deterrent *to the pure in heart and the serious minded*. It is an atmosphere that is created so that the Lord can work miracles, signs and wonders among us. It is His presence that produces this **fear**, and it can silence the oppressors, defeat those who oppose Him and also assist in eliminating falsehood.

This is why we need to walk in that fear, let that presence be with us. However, the Lord was careful to reveal to us that the early church walked in the knowledge of the comforting presence of the Holy Spirit. If that were not so, then the fear of God would have been counter-productive in the church.

The Holy Spirit is known as the comforter or in the Greek, "*parakletos*" – Intercessor, Advocate, Consoler, and Comforter.

He is called alongside to help, give comfort, consolation or encouragement to us. He is also a strengthening presence and upholds anyone who appeals for His assistance. This comfort and assistance can come directly from Him and also through the revelation of the Word.

"For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." Romans 15:4

As we continue to press forward in that which we are called to accomplish, let us follow the Word of God in the example of the early church and **walk in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit**.

Let us remain focused and committed to the task the Lord has assigned to us. Blessings and Prosperity!

## NEWS AND PRAYER BRIEFS

Two Sundays ago Pastor Edward Chu ministered a very relevant and encouraging word that spoke to the momentum the Lord is giving us at this time. (We are seeing our facility packed to capacity with people standing at our main worship service). The Lord is giving increase at this time and there is a Divine Momentum and Pastor Edward warned that one of the ways the devil seeks to impede this kind of momentum is through offences. As such we encouraged our saints to develop what is called "A Teflon Spirit" – that is a heart attitude where no offence is received or retained. Every attempt to cause offence to come will be treated with a good release of the water of God's Word to wash it away without any effects of the attempt. Be in prayer with us in this season of growth and Divine Momentum.

We have also set up a "Prayer Team" who has begun to pray into our exploits for India (since that time Pakistan has called asking us to come. Interesting to note that Pakistan was once a part of India) and we ask that you remember that team. This is the first in what will be several teams that will evolve into "Task Forces" that will be praying for specific regions in the earth that the Lord is calling us. Eventually we will have saints praying over every region of the earth.

Keep in prayer for Elder Michael; keep asking the Lord to continue releasing His Divine wisdom in his life as he continues to provide leadership for what the Lord is building in and through Dominion-Life International. The Word of the Lord keeps coming that the Lord is building a resource and training centre that would affect the nations of the earth.