



**A
LETTER
FROM YOUR
PASTOR:
SEPTEMBER 2020**
by Lee Shipp

MINISTERS OF THE SANCTUARY

Our ability to usher in the presence of God, by worshipping in the beauty of holiness, is the greatest thing we can do for those fighting hell! This ability is what separates the living Church from that which is simply existing in forms and traditions. The Church is the habitation of the Holy Spirit and there is no greater experience on this earth than a church gathered in the manifest presence of the Lord. In that atmosphere miracles are commonplace: deliverance over oppressive enemies, healing in our bodies, hope in the midst of despair, supernatural strength and the impartation of divine wisdom. These are all to be had in the presence of the Lord. Jesus never intended for us to gather without His living expression and blessing.

The manifest presence of the Lord is the hope of His people. His presence strikes fear in our enemies, causing the demonic hordes arrayed against us to run in hysterical confusing defeat. This was the experience of Jehoshaphat in 2 Chronicles. A formidable force from Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir had arrayed themselves against Judah. Without divine intervention, Judah's destruction was at hand. Sensing the impending doom upon their cities and families, Jehoshaphat cried to the Lord for help. The Lord heard his cry and answered through a prophet, assuring Jehoshaphat that the battle was the Lord's!

Though the invading hordes were still advancing, and though Judah was required to assemble and go out to meet them for war, the Lord promised to come and fight the battle while Jehoshaphat watched. How would God show up? What would cause the manifest presence of the Lord by which the people of God would be delivered from their enemies? The secret was praise!

Jehoshaphat instructed the people to believe in the Lord. He appointed singers unto the Lord, who should go before the army, to praise the beauty of holiness. They were to lead the army saying, "Praise the Lord; for His mercy endureth forever" (2 Chronicles 20:21). Then history records this most phenomenal event, "And when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments against them [armies arrayed against Judah]" (2 Chronicles 20:22). The invading hordes actually were so confounded that they began to slaughter one another. I love to highlight this: "And when they began to sing and to praise..." You can sing and not praise. Praise is the event that God responds to.

David had this revelation of praise and therefore, instituted constant praise in the House of God. David instructed Solomon to build the Lord's house, giving him thorough instructions regarding every detail. David claimed that the Holy Spirit had given him the pattern and made him to understand in writing, even all the works of the pattern (1 Chronicles 28:19). What the Lord revealed to David had a profound effect upon him. This revelation caused David to prepare for God's house with all his might. David drew up the plans, contracted all the materials. From his personal resources David invested vast sums of gold and silver.

Intent on this project being completed, David publicly instructed Solomon to complete this work after his death, "Now set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord your God; arise therefore, and build ye the sanctuary of the Lord God, to bring the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, and the holy vessels of God, into the house that is to be built to the Name of the Lord" (1 Chronicles 22:19).

DAVID'S PATTERN AND THE CHURCH'S PRAISE

If all things are a type of Christ, what possibly could these instructions say to us in the Church? First of all, build the sanctuary. This means to win the lost. Disciple the nations. The House of God according to Peter, is built with living stones. These stones are individual lives who are surrendering to Christ as Savior. Therefore, build the sanctuary – win souls to Christ.

Then, bring the Ark into the house. The Ark represents the presence of God. The Church should always be about Jesus and His glory. The preeminent person is Jesus. What does it matter if people are there, but Jesus is not? Live by the Holy Spirit and allow Him to have His way in everything.

And finally, bring the holy vessels of God into the house. These vessels speak to us of the ministry of prayer, praise, and worship. Attract God's presence by praise. Jesus said His Father's house was to be a house of prayer for all nations. Pray Church! David described the holy vessels as being the candlestick, the incense, the bread, and the bowls and cups (1 Chronicles 28). These vessels describe essential elements for the Church's worship of God. The

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candlestick represents the Word of the Lord. God's Word is to be central in our gatherings as the means of instruction and light. The incense speaks of prayers, worship, and praise as these actions of faith rise up to God as a sweet aroma. The bread represents the feeding, edifying, exhorting of one another in the body of Christ: the ministry of discipleship and growth among the members. And finally, the bowls and cups represent our fellowship and service to one another. This represents our sincere love for one another and our desire to be together. As Jesus took the bowl and washed the disciple's feet; likewise, we find our joy in loving service to one another.

Jesus made us kings and priest unto God. We are the WILLING ONES who serve the Lord's house. He made us this way. We are ministers of the sanctuary and nothing can prevent us from serving, not diseases (Covid 19), fear, or threat of punishment. Nothing can keep us from gathering with the Body of Christ – as we are driven by His Spirit of love.

The sanctuary is Christ and His Church! This sanctuary is the House of God. The gates of hell will not prevail against it. This sanctuary transcends the importance of everything else for this sanctuary is Christ! Many like to visit this house, some even stay for long periods of time, some even find jobs to do and become influential and lead, but when troubles come or tribulation, they will abandon the House for they are not born of it. We who are born into the House can no more leave it or forsake it than a man can forsake his own arm or leg. When this house gathers, and the Lord's presence is manifest, the possibilities and miracles are unimaginable. It is the cry of this House that draws the attention and presence of God. When we take our place with the members of the house, when we exercise our anointed calling as priests, and when we cry to God there is a great power in the Holy Spirit to help us. This house is joined with heaven. The church is in a relationship that extends from earth to heaven; to the very throne of God.

KEEP THE HOUSE FULL OF LIFE

This house is maintained by the spoils won in the battles that we have fought (1 Chronicles 26:27). Oh, the beauty of living testimonies that we bring back from the battles we have fought. How beautifully is God's house adorned as we show off these victories through testimonies and praise. It is not a fresh coat of paint and carpet we need; it is a living testimony of God's life and power invading our hardships, trials, and tribulations – to bring us into the victory of Christ.

The spoils of war are those souls who have been brought out of the kingdom of darkness as a direct result of God's visible presence in your life. A living testimony of walking with Jesus is compelling. This living praise has the power to demolish enemy strongholds in others. Sadly, many believers do not have fresh and exciting testimonies, attributing to a lack of praise in their life. As a matter of fact, for many believers, their testimonies of when they were lost are more exciting and appealing than the stiff confessions of walking with God now. What I mean is their life in Jesus is about as exciting as a worm burning on the sidewalk – where is the God of Elijah?

I call believers to venture by faith into the conflict of Christ and see the wonders of God, then go and adorn the House of God with His glorious modern triumphs. It is obvious from Acts 7:47-49, that the house God had in mind, all along, was that house (the Church) Jesus would build. Stephen confessed that Solomon built a house unto the Lord. However, he declared that the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands. The heaven is God's throne. The earth is God's footstool. What house could a man possibly build for God?

Solomon built Him a house, but God does not live in that. Furthermore, Paul provides more evidence that God's house is the Church when he gave Timothy specific charges so he would know how to behave himself in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God (1 Timothy 3:15). Additionally, in describing God's house, Paul says that God's house is made up of individual lives, Jesus being the chief cornerstone. He reveals that this house grows into a holy temple in the Lord because it is added to every time one is born again. This house of God, made up of redeemed humanity, is the habitation of God through the Spirit (Ephesians 2:19-22). This is the house that was in God's mind.

THIS IS WHERE YOU SERVE

The Church is God's house and it is the sanctuary where we minister. Peter also reveals that we are the living stones that are used to build up a spiritual house. In this house, we are a holy priesthood; we are to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Through Christ's redemption, you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that you should show forth the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light (1 Peter 2:5, 9).

Beloved, do you see your service in the House of God now? It is to show forth the praises of Him who has saved you! This is verified in Hebrews. We are to gather often with this house to consider and provoke one another to love and good works (Hebrews 10:24-25). We are to join ourselves with Jesus, who has suffered publicly as He bore our reproach; shedding His blood in death to free us. We are to go to Him, publicly stand up for Him, and by Him, offering sacrifices of praise to God continually (Hebrews 13:12-15). What is this sacrifice of praise? It is using our mouths publicly to bless, praise, and exalt the Lord – giving thanks unto His name (Hebrews 13:15).

How beautiful are those who are unashamed to publicly praise and exalt the Lord as His priest. Serving His church, they go before in spiritual warfare, praising the beauty of Holiness and the enduring mercy of the Lord. These gathered in praise before the singers create an atmosphere for God to come and dispense His

blessings upon all gathered. Enemies will be routed, and people's lives will be saved.

Do you ever wonder what these believers are doing as they gather in the altar during worship? They are going before you into battle. Satan does not want you to be blessed. Satan does not want you to experience the manifest presence of God. These believers in the altar are the Lord's priest who, through praise, are demolishing the hordes of hell that are arrayed against you. They are fighting for you by inviting the presence of God. They stand in the front lines of war and offer up praise to God. They push back hell and they open up heaven.

They are fighting principalities and powers by their praise. They are calling upon God to manifest His presence to aid and secure His people. They are fighting in the altars: fighting unbelief, fighting fear, fighting sickness, fighting despair. They fight in the Name of Jesus. They fight by faith in the blood Jesus poured out. They fight by declaring the promises of God's Word. They fight by the power of the Holy Spirit.

These are the beautiful ones in the sanctuary, adorning and maintaining the House of God. They move about His house seeking its edification, comfort, and exhortation. They exercise supernatural help to humanity by exercising psalms, doctrines, gifts of the Spirit, love, prayers, and intercessions. They are not sitting quietly in a pew. They are engaged, they are the ministers of the House.

This is their life; they have been redeemed into this. The Bible says that Jesus makes those He has saved kings and priests, this is their new constitution of being! How they long to love God. How they long to touch God. How they long to touch God for others. They are compelled by an exciting life in the Spirit and would give up everything to have this ministry among the people of God, in His House.

How can I miss gathering with the church for work or a ball game? A priest is what I am and long to be. I am a priest; how can I miss the prayer meeting in the house of God? As David, I have set my affection on the house of God. Of my own substance I have donated to the House.

Lee Shipp
Sunday, August 30, 2020