

ISSUE
07

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LIGHT

Jesus: "I am the light of the world." (John 8:12)

Lord in the MIDST

**Tribulations of Life &
Unwavering Faith**

Prayer of Esther

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A New Name

"...thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name"
(Isaiah 62:2)

In several cases the Lord gave a new name to His saints. In Matthew 16:18 we read how Simon was given a new name the Lord Jesus; henceforth he was to be called Peter, "a rock". The Lord Jesus asked His disciples, "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" Simon answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." This had not been revealed to him by flesh and blood, but by the Father Who is in heaven. From that day Simon's name was changed to Peter. It is on this revelation concerning Christ that the Church is built. This is why the Lord Jesus said, "upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

If you have an inward revelation of Christ in your heart, it is not of human origin. It is from heaven. If you have it, then a new name is given to you, and the powers of hell shall not prevail against you. If you are under man-made customs and rituals, it will cause spiritual blindness, confusion and strife.

But true believers who are ready to give up all things which are human and earthly and corrupt, and who are seeking earnestly things which are spiritual, heavenly and eternal, they are the true Church, and their life based on the revelation by the Spirit of the Father and the Son, and they cannot be shaken (Luke 10:22).

Saul the Pharisee saw a light from heaven, heard the voice of the Lord and was saved. From that day he became a new man. He later went to Antioch and as he ministered God's word there, he himself came to understand God's order in the Church. From that time, he began his great missionary journeys. Saul had many talents of ministry, yet he willingly came under subjection to the Lord in the church order at Antioch. Then a new revelation was given to him of God's purpose and order in the Church. He was also given a new name, Saul (a destroyer) became a Paul. He did not live for himself but spent himself for the Church.

Have you learned how to come under subjection in the Church? Take one common example. How many parents have ruined the lives of their children in respect of marriage: instead of bringing the matter to the Church for prayer, they thought they could plan quite well themselves. Beloved, you have the privilege of receiving the love, fellowship and the prayer help of the Church. Do not treat it lightly. When you have learned the meaning and value of subjection in the Church, not only in this but in other matters as well, you will no longer be a destroyer but a worker in the House of God, like Paul.

- Bro. Bakht Singh -

The Greatest Love story

(Song of Solomon)

Part 2

[Click here to read Part 1](#)

We have been meditating on the first 4 verses of Chapter 1 of the Song of Solomon in the previous article. As discussed there in, this book has a 4-fold interpretation. Only a person who is born again can understand the divine purpose of God in giving us this book.

Can you now remember the four interpretations of the Song of Solomon? Firstly, it is about the Expression of true marital love. Secondly, it speaks of God's love relationship with Israel His covenant people. Then third meaning is the Relationship of the Lord Jesus Christ with His Church. Finally, it speaks about the Relationship of the Lord Jesus Christ with an individual believer.

Whenever you read this book, you must keep this in mind. This book cannot be understood by those who have a carnal mind. The un-regenerated person cannot see the divine plan in this book. Those who are not born again will see a human love story. But we believers could see divine love and divine truths.

We are now going to discuss beyond verse 4. In this section from vs.5 to 11, we have all three characters in the story appearing. They are the Bride or the Shulamite,

the Bride-groom that is Solomon and the Daughters of Jerusalem. The conversation among the three characters is given in the form of a Drama. Nevertheless, they are full of divine and spiritual thought.

Vs. 5 – “I am black but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, like the tents of Kedar, like the curtains of Solomon”.

Here you find a fitting confession of the believer. Outwardly the believers may not have a great and beautiful appearance. But she knows that she is comely. What is the meaning of this expression? The true believers know that the true beauty is not that “outward adorning..... but...the hidden man of the heart” (1 Peter 3:3 & 4). We should know the principle revealed in 1 Samuel 16:7 - “Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart”. The Shulamite is very clear in this affirmation. She is aware of her lack of outward beauty but she is happy with herself because she knows that she is comely or beautiful before her lover. This is what we all must affirm in our lives. Our character must be beautiful before the Lord. When He looks at us what can He see? Can He find His divine characteristics in us? Can He see us as comely? Many of us can have a ‘form

of godliness outwardly. We look very spiritual people from outside but how is our inside?

Can you remember what the Lord saw in Nathaniel when he first came to the Lord Jesus? Was it the outward attraction of a good-looking man or the beauty of character? The Lord Jesus said "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile"! Oh, what a testimony regarding this man! Guile is a hidden thing in the heart. The Lord saw that this man was not a hypocrite.

The lesson we learn from the above statement of the Bride in Vs.5 is that what is important is the comeliness of character and not the outward beauty and attraction.

Another lesson is seen in the second half of the verse. "The tents of Kedar and curtains of Solomon". The tents of Kedar are strong and durable and the curtains of Solomon are the most beautiful. Our lives must be like that. Peter says in 1 Peter 5:10 "God of all grace who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you". There are sand storms that the Tents of Kedar had to withstand. Likewise we also have to go through suffering and testing of faith in our Christian life. Such experience will make us strong in the Lord. God works into our character the beauty of the Lord Jesus Christ His Son through such experience and we become very beautiful before God.

The above verse in Song of Solomon can also be taken as a confession and a realization of the

believer. Confession is to say "I am black". However good we are, we still know that we are not good enough according to God's standard. We carry in our mortal body the ability to commit sin. This is why Paul the apostle a holy man of God cried out saying "O wretched man that I am"! Let us remember to acknowledge this our condition. You may be a believer for many years serving the Lord but we must never think now we are perfect or exempt from the sinful nature. She was standing in the King's chamber and honestly confessing her blackness. Then look at the other part "but comely". This may sound like a paradox! But it is true in the case of every believer. Saint in the Bible is not a person who has no sin but rather a person whose sins have been forgiven. This comeliness has come because of the imputed righteousness of God by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. This is why God will not reject us even though we still carry a sinful nature in us. Whenever we come before God to pray or to worship, we do not come in our own goodness or virtue but in the imputed righteousness of God. Thus, we are acceptable in His presence. We are accepted in the Beloved.

Vs. 6b – "They made me the keeper of the vineyards, but mine own vineyard have I not kept".

This second part of vs.6 is of great value to those who are in the ministry of looking after or disciplining other believers. Elders, Deacons, Leaders, Teachers or Servants of the Lord, all should understand the message contained in this verse. We are given to keep the vineyards that is the spiritual lives of others and we may be

faithfully doing that work. Look at the confession of the Shulamite. "Mine own vineyard have I not kept". What a terrible mistake it is! We very often can slide into this experience. We can become so busy with "our ministry" so that our own spiritual lives get neglected. No time to read the Word or pray because we are busy in the ministry. That is a dangerous snare. Our joy primarily comes through our union and fellowship with the Lord and not by service. We must strictly discipline ourselves to spend time with the Lord and His word on a daily basis. Otherwise, gradually we could slide into lukewarm spiritual life while being quite busy in our service.

We can see in the Gospels how our Lord was so disciplined to spend time with the Father even early in the morning all by Himself in a solitary place. His day was full of ministry. Preaching, teaching, healing and listening to all the problems of the people. He has taught us what to do in such a situation. Our success and effectiveness of ministry is in our personal walk with the Lord, our communion with Him and our intimacy with Him. Please do not neglect this. Have a prayer and Bible study time daily and regularly. That is the place where you receive strength and guidance for your ministry. Looking after your family is a great ministry but the strength must be derived from the Lord.

At verse 7 and 8 of chapter 1 of Song of Solomon we can see a very instructive conversation between the Shulamite and Solomon. There is a question and the answer. The question is raised by the Shulamite and the answer is from Solomon the

shepherd and the lover.

"Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon, for why should I be like one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?"

In verse 4, she referred to the lover as King but now she says that he is a shepherd as well. Yes, Our Lord Jesus Christ is both a King as well as a Shepherd. This question that she raises sounds like an inquiry of a new believer regarding a place of fellowship where the believer could be fed with the Word of God and be looked after. Today Christians have the practice of going after good preachers. They think that by listening to great preaching one could grow spiritually. This is not exactly right. We need more than good preaching. We need good shepherding for spiritual growth. We must grow into discipleship. That can only be done in a good local church fellowship environment.

Now look at the answer of the Shepherd in Vs. 8. **"If thou know not, O thou fairest among women, go thy way in the footsteps of the flock, and feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents."** There we have the "Shepherds' tents" mentioned. This could be interpreted as a Local Church based on the New Testament principles which is cared for by spiritual shepherds. God has given to His Church, Pastors (Shepherds) who could care for the sheep. The safest place for a new believer is a good local Church to fellowship with. The expression "Shepherds' tents" is of great importance. Many Christians

do not see the value of the Divine principles that should govern a local Church. The very word Church is misused these days to mean a building made up of cement and bricks. This is totally wrong. Church means 'called out'. We are the called-out people of God. There are important principles given in the scriptures regarding the identity and the functioning of a local Church.

In closing let me mention some of the divine principles that we should follow regarding a local church.

1. New Birth is a must for any person to be part of a local Church – John 3:3, Acts 2:41

2. In a local Church believers gather in the Name of the Lord Jesus and not under any other name – Mt.18:20

3. Bible the Word of God is the final authority in all matters of life and practice of the Church -,John 17:14, 2 Tim 3:16

4. There should be no denominational names over a local Church – 1 Cor 1:13, 1 Cor 12:12

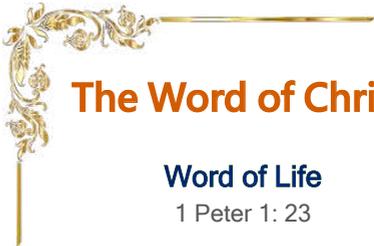
5. We must recognize the ministry of different gifts that the Lord has given in the Church – Eph 4:11

6. Plurality of leadership or eldership should be maintained – Acts 14:23, Acts 20:17

7. The common priesthood of all believers should be recognized – 1 Pet 2:5

Thus, we can see that the Song of Solomon though being a love story of two individuals, has much to bring to our attention because it is inspired by the Holy Spirit and written for all times.

- Anne Jayasundara -



The Word of Christ

Word of Life

1 Peter 1: 23

Word of Truth

Colossians 1: 5

Word of Righteousness

Hebrews 5: 13

Word of His Grace

Acts 20: 32

Word of Faith

Romans 10: 8

Word of the Kingdom

Matthew 13: 19

Word of His Power

Hebrews 1: 3

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 1:1

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, ...full of grace and truth.

John 1:14

For thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.

Psalms 138: 8



Lord in the MIDST

MIGHTY WARRIOR

Zephaniah 3: 17

Reading Zephaniah 3: 5, 15 & 17

When we read these 3 verses we realize that it has a common word "MIDST" used in them. We are quite familiar with this word because it is one of the most striking themes that runs through the pages of the Bible. Ex 25:8/ Matt 18:10 / Rev 21:3. Among these and many other such verses Zephaniah 3:17 is also a popular verse. We find that in these 3 verses in Zephaniah 3, that the Lord being in the midst of His chosen people reflects 3 important characteristics.

Vs. 5 – Lord the **RIGHTEOUS JUDGE** in the midst of His people

Vs. 15 – Lord the **TRIUMPHANT REIGNING KING** in the midst of His people

Vs. 17 – Lord the **MIGHTY WARRIOR** in the midst of His people

In this issue we are going to consider the spiritual lessons and instructions we can receive from Zephaniah 3:17

1) Lord the **MIGHTY WARRIOR** in the **MIDST** of His people

Here we are introduced to the Lord as a **MIGHTY WARRIOR** in the **MIDST** of His people who will **SAVE** his people. I'm going to introduce this **MIGHTY WARRIOR** in 3 ways to you.

a) **CAPTAIN of our Salvation** **Hebrews 2:10**

We were sinners & enemies before God – Rom. 5: 8,10. We were without strength and unable to do anything for our salvation – Rom. 5:6. As a result of sin we were destined to death and destruction in hell fire - Rom. 6:23a.

We were in darkness and under the power of Satan – Acts 26:18. But the Lord Jesus Christ came to our rescue by being born into this world as the Saviour of mankind – Matt. 1:21. He fought the battle on Calvary's cross as a Mighty Warrior on our behalf and tasted death and triumphed over Satan, Sin & Death and became the **CAPTIAN OF OUR SALVATION** – Heb. 2:14,15

Though for a moment the death of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross looked like as if Satan had gotten the victory, yet by rising again from the dead He gained the victory becoming the captain of salvation. So the Lord in our midst is a mighty warrior who is able to save.

No matter what your condition is, no matter how worst a sinner you could be or no matter what tight grip Satan may have on your life, if you believe in the mighty warrior in our midst, He is mighty to save.

The Lord is reminding us through this promise that He is in our midst as a mighty warrior and he can save us from all our sinfulness, habitual sins and addictions and bondages because he has become our captain of salvation.

b) CONQUEROR of the world John 16:33

When we live a godly life separated from the world, the world becomes an hostile environment for us to live in – John 15:19 / 17:14. As a result of our commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ we will have to face much opposition, tribulation & suffering from the world. Sometimes in the midst of all these experiences we may at times feel that we are a defeated group of believers living helplessly & hopelessly in this world.

But the Lord is reminding us that even though we face all this opposition from the world and experience the sufferings inflicted by it, that He is in our midst as a mighty warrior who has overcome/conquered the world. Looking around at the circumstances that surround us and the way the world is responding & reacting to the Lord Jesus Christ and His people let us not be discouraged. The Lord in the midst of us is a mighty warrior who has and is the conqueror of the world. So let us live in that faith that overcomes the world – 1 John 5:4.

And so let our hearts be filled with peace even in the midst of all opposition & tribulation for we know that the Lord in our midst is a mighty warrior and He has conquered the world

c) CARING SHEPHERD of our soul John 10:12

Generally we think a shepherd as a very gentle person who will gently care for the sheep. But when we read the scriptures we understand from the life of David that a shepherd acts as a mighty man of valour and a warrior in protecting the sheep from all dangers – 1 Sam. 17:34-36. In the same way our Lord Jesus in our midst is a mighty warrior who will protect us from all danger and be the caring shepherd of our souls.

As we look into our lives we can see how much our caring shepherd has fought for us the battles of our lives as a mighty warrior and fulfilled His ministry as our caring shepherd. As we face this year in the midst of all these calamities and uncertainties of life let us remember that when the shepherd is in our midst we have nothing to worry and be anxious about. Let us be encouraged because the Lord our mighty warrior is in our midst and He is the caring shepherd of our souls and He will therefore

PROTECT our lives from all that happens to us and against us
Psalm 23:4

PROVIDE our need and satisfy us guiding us to green pastures and still waters removing every obstacle
Psalm 23:2

PERFECT His purposes in our lives no matter what happens, nothing can thwart His plans & purposes for us
Psalm 23:3,6

- Dinesh Malcolm Paul -

O Worship the King

Worship is a spontaneous reaction and a spiritual response that we express when we see God.

In Revelation 1:17 John says, "And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead." And we know that this same John was leaning on Jesus' bosom as a dearest friend on the eve of crucifixion. But when he saw the Lord Jesus Christ in His resurrection glory, he immediately fell at His feet as dead.

The man who was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil, and the one who did not sin with his lips even during his most distressful period of life, laid his hand upon his mouth being speechless before the almighty God. In Job 40:4 he said, "Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth."

In Luke 5:8 we read that Peter fell at the feet of Jesus when he first realized that he was a sinner. And during his restoration, as recorded in John 21, Peter jumped into the sea realizing his futility when he heard John saying that it was the Lord who was standing at the shore.

Likewise, the list goes on beginning from Adam, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Manoah, and so on.

It is noteworthy to know how all of them reacted and responded when they encountered God.

It is more important to acknowledge God than to merely have a knowledge of God.

He is the one who created everything seen and unseen simply by the Word of His mouth; but humbled Himself for you and for me and became obedient unto the death of the cross. Proved His love by dying for sinners such as us; resurrected in glory defeating death; reigning over the universe from eternity to eternity; the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

- S. Varapasath -

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.

Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle.

Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.

Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory."

Psalms 24:7-10

Tribulations of life and unwavering faith

The world as we know it, which is our home and our sanctuary is brimming with sinful actions and deeds. Covetousness and fraud are prevalent in everyday life almost to the point where a righteous man, who loves his family very much, who is virtuous and truthful in his trade and who is faultless in the eyes of the law and prays to God every morn, noon and night faces obstacles that tempt him to turn to sinful and fraudulent paths however dangerous they may be. And he, due to his children going hungry most nights and his financial insufficiency to pay rents and settle bills, will tend to capitalize on crime. It is the circumstances that drive him to make such drastic decisions.

Let us look into the life of Job in the Bible.

“There was a man in the land of Ur, whose name was Job. And that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil” Job 1:1

Job was a man most favoured by the Lord, and that very much so. For he was blessed with everything a mortal human could wish for, possessions that made life joyous and worth living. He was no more in a position for need, for all his needs were met spot on.

“And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters. His substance was also seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred oxen...” Job 1:2-3

The riches and luxuries that Job possessed were taken away from him all of a sudden without prior notice, it was so that his oxen and camel were robbed, open wounds and blistering appeared on his body. His own spouse and siblings encouraged him to rebuke God’s name and perish with his dignity intact, but Job did not falter, for he only praised the Lord’s name even more.

“At this Job arose and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, fell down and worshipped. ‘Naked I come out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither. The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away blessed be the name of the Lord.” Job 1:20-21

Indeed, Job questioned God for the mishappenings in his life, although he never did so much as dare to disrespect or vilify the Lord’s name. Even in troubled times he praised God and exalted him.

Job was a wise and Godly man in every aspect. He proved that his possessions were not the subject that sculpted his lifestyle but the rewards of his unwavering faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The patience and humility and repentful nature presented by Job is something that every saint, missionary or man or woman in God should practice. His is a personality who had faith worth praying for.

- Ephraim Rajkumar -

PRAYER OF ESTHER

A lesson for the ladies

The Character we are going to consider is ESTHER, and her prayer at a crucial time in the history of the people of God.

Let me start with a brief introduction to Esther:

- She was an orphan without parents
- She was adopted by her uncle Mordecai after her parents' death
- She was chosen to be in the palace
- She obtained kindness of the king - Esther 2:9
- She had the best place of the house of the women
- She was loved by the king more than the other women
- She obtained grace and favor more than all the other virgins - Esther 2:17

Now let us consider some LESSONS FROM THE PRAYER OF ESTHER:

1. ESTHER FASTED AND PRAYED

Esther fasted and prayed, and we see 3 features in her fasting and prayer. As sisters we also should follow the example of Esther in fasting & prayer.

❖ There was a specific PERIOD OF TIME

Esther had a period of 3 days and 3 nights. We need to have a particular time period for fasting and prayer. There should be seasons of fasting and prayer in our lives. We see our Lord Jesus Christ fasted and prayed for 40 days – Matt. 4. So let us set aside a specific time period to be involved in fasting and prayer.

❖ There was a specific PURPOSE

In our fasting and prayer we need to have a specific purpose. Fasting and doing nothing will not result in anything. We have to fast and pray. Fasting

and prayer goes together hand in hand. Also we just cannot simply pray. There should be specific requests and needs to pray for. The biblical example of fasting and prayer was for others more than self and regarding specific matters. During this time of global pandemic we can pray with fasting for healing, for salvation of souls and revival in the lives of the people of God.

❖ It was a **PRIVATE ENGAGEMENT**

Fasting and prayer should be a very private matter and not to be publicized. According to Matt. 6:16-18 fasting should be a private engagement between us and our God. We should not publicize that we are engaged in such an exercise. We can gather as a group or a Church and fast and pray. In OT times as nations and communities they fasted and prayed. But we need not make it a big show. Let us do that which is necessary and not try to make that an opportunity to promote ourselves. When Esther fasted and prayed with her group the matter was so serious and demanding that she needed support of others also to fast and pray with her and for her mission.

2. ESTHER COMMITTED HERSELF AND PRAYED

Esther 4:16 – Here what did Esther tell? "I will go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish". She was not only committed to prayer but she was also committed to the cause for what she was praying for. She became the solution and the medium through which God can deliver His people in answer to prayer. Esther committed herself to take upon her whatever the end result would be. Very often when we pray we become God's answer to prayer and the instrument God would use as answer to prayer. So just as much as we commit ourselves to prayer, we also should commit ourselves to become the answer for that prayer and face the consequences.

Dear sisters are you willing to commit yourself to pray? Will you also commit yourself to be God's answer for your prayer? Only if we do this we can become partners with God in accomplishing His will and purposes.

3. ESTHER PRAYED IN FAITH

At the end of her fasting and prayer period, immediately the next day morning Esther was ready to go unto the king – Esther 5:1. When we pray for a particular matter we should always believe that the Lord will answer our prayers and take steps of faith. Mark 11:24 – "Believe that you receive them, and you shall have them." Matt. 21:22 – "Whatsoever ye ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."

When you pray or after praying you should not doubt, but believe and have faith. Most of the time we say, "I prayed" and then resort to our own solution, and doubt about our prayer. But let us learn from Esther to pray in faith and to take that step of faith after praying. Unless we act in faith we will not be able to see answer to our prayers.

4. ESTHER PRAYED WITH OTHERS

We find that not only Esther devoted herself to prayer, but she got her maidens to also join her and also the Jews to pray with her and for her. In the early church there were so many incidents where the believers got together and prayed. Acts 12:5 When Peter was kept in prison, *prayer was made without ceasing*. Many were gathered together and prayed for the release of Peter. This was at Mary's house (mother of John mark).

As sisters are we ready to open our house for prayer? In any circumstances do we get together and pray? We know and we have heard that the ladies are very good in gossiping. When something happens we will have so much of questions: who did? Where did it happen? Who else were there? Oh! So much of questions will rise in our mind.

Please dear sisters, instead of gathering and gossiping we should get together and pray. When someone comes and shares their difficulties & problems with you then and there pray with them. More than anything praying together is important. Matthew 18:19 - "Again I say unto you, That **if two of you shall agree** on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them". Today we have many WhatsApp groups and most of the time it is filled with unwanted stuff. Instead let us make use of

these media platforms to make groups and share burdens and prayer requests and pray together. But let us be mindful that there are certain matters which cannot be shared with others and prayed for in a group but has to be lifted unto the Lord in our personal prayer.

5. ESTHER PRAYED FOR OTHERS

Esther's prayer was not for her. It was for her brethren the Jews who were in danger. Even though she was quite safe yet she prayed for her fellow Jews. James 5:16 – "Confess your faults one to another, and Pray one for another". More than for ourselves we need to pray for others. In our prayer list others' request should be first and then ours. Col. 1:9 Paul did not cease to pray for fellow believers/ Phil 1:9-10. In John 17 we find the Lord Jesus prayed for others. Definitely He would have prayed for yours and my salvation. Esther did not pray for her, she prayed for her people to be protected and to be saved from death. Do we pray for others and their salvation?

Very often many request for prayer from us and we often forget to pray for them. And only when they thank us for praying we remember that we had not prayed and feel ashamed within us. So let us also pray for others and experience the Joy and satisfaction that it brings. Keep a list of prayer requests and persons who need our prayer and pray for them. Today we are what we are because someone had prayed for us and our salvation even without knowing us or way before we were born.

Dear sisters many things can be accomplished through prayer. As sisters we have a very important ministry and that is prayer. Some of us may be house wives, some may be working or studying and we may say we don't have time for prayer. But let us remember to set a time for prayer. Let us learn the lessons from Esther's prayer and let us experience the results of prayer in our lives.

THE GREAT AND AWESOME GOD

PSALM 33

Now we don't know who wrote this psalm neither do we know the circumstances under which this psalm was written. That doesn't really matter. Because as you and I look at the content of this psalm, we can come to one conclusion and that is, this is a hymn of praise to God; for who God is and for all what God does. So, you can rightly title this psalm, "The Great and Awesome God".

Freshness

As we look at the first three verses of this psalm, it reminds us of the last couple of verses in psalm 32. Psalm 33:1 (NIV) reads, "Sing joyfully to the Lord, you righteous; it is fitting for the upright to praise him". So right here in verse 1 we are told as to who could praise God. Not anyone can praise God. We are clearly told that it is the righteous and the upright. So who are the righteous and the upright?

In new testament language, it is those who are born again; it is those who have come into a right relationship with God through the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ. It refers to those who have acknowledged their sin, repented of their sin and trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ alone for personal salvation. The righteous and the upright are those whose sins are forgiven, and they have received the gift of eternal life, and they have

a right relationship with God, and as a result, a right relationship with people. Only such people who have experienced the redemption of God can praise God.

So, we are told in this psalm that we need to sing joyfully to the Lord. Singing is one of the ways that we praise God, and we have the hymns from the ancient past and we have the contemporary songs, and we can have a good blend of both and we can sing joyfully to the Lord, and the psalmist says, "It is fitting". The word "fitting" means "it is beautiful". So think of it. Everytime you and I praise God, personally or corporately, it is something very beautiful to God; it pleases God; God is happy. Praise is beautiful in the eyes of God. And that is why satan will do all what he can do to silence us; and to prevent us; to hinder us from praising God vocally, loudly, thankfully.

When I don't praise God what will happen is I will be bound by doubts, fears and the chaos of this life. That is why it is an imperative that I praise God.

Skill

Verse 2, "Praise the Lord with the harp; make music to him on the ten-stringed lyre." Here a new thought is added. We are told to praise God with

musical instruments. God created music and God created the music instruments. So, we should be able to praise God not just with our voice only but also with the accompaniment of music.

Fervour

Now in verse 3 the psalmist says, "Sing to him a new song; play skilfully, and shout for joy.". So a new song. A new song comes when we have a fresh awareness and experience of God's grace. Old songs can become new songs when they are sung with meaning with a fresh touch from God and a fresh experience of the goodness and mercy of God.

And we are called to play skilfully. That means, we need to practice the instruments that we are going to play. We even need to test our vocals and we need to harmonize as we sing.

And again the psalmist says, "shout for joy". That word shout means, "be enthusiastic". Be enthusiastic when it comes to praising God. Just like when you go to a sporting event, you see people who are very very enthusiastic about the game. They will shout and they will use all their effort and energy to support their team. That's the idea, that we need to be very very enthusiastic when we praise the Lord.

So, there are three vital ingredients in praising God. There must be freshness; there must be skill; and there must be fervour. As you personally praise the Lord and as we all come together on a Lord's day to praise God cooperatively, God inhabits the praises of His people, meaning, God makes His home among us when we praise Him and Praise is beautiful.

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