



TODD LEVIN MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

A monthly teaching publication to our partners and friends

MINISTERING TO THE LORD

Dear Partners and Friends,

Many Christians spend more time ministering to one another than they do actually ministering to the Lord. I'm convinced that if we were to spend more time ministering to the Lord, then we would not need to be spending so much time ministering to one another for the simple reason that if you will minister to the Lord, He will minister back to you. And let's face it, people don't always have the answers that we're looking for, but God does!

The Word of God is very plain as to what will happen if we minister and draw close to Him. *"Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you."* (James 4:8) This scripture indicates that it is possible to draw near to the Lord. If it were not, why would the Word of God instruct us to do so? You might ask, "But how do I draw near to God? We draw near to the Lord by ministering to Him. How do we minister to Him? We minister to the Lord through prayer, praise and worship. Let's not forget why we were created. Revelation 4:11 declares, *"For thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."* We were created to bring pleasure to God. And one way we can do that is by ministering to Him.

It seems that in our society today we've been conditioned to center on the problems of life instead of the answers. Now don't get me wrong, we first need to identify the problem rather than ignore it like some have chosen to do. To live in denial and pretend the problem is not real, non-existent is foolishness. Faith, bible faith, never denies the reality of the problem, but on the contrary, bible faith identifies the problem and endeavors to believe God for a favorable outcome.

When we learn how to get our minds off the problems, and everyone around us and concentrate on Him, then we realize that our God is greater than any and every problem that we'll ever face in life. I often tell people to draw an imaginary circle around you and the Lord. No one else is there just the two of you. Then, "forget about yourself and concentrate on Him and worship Him." When we turn our eyes upon Jesus and look right into His wonderful face, then the things of this world grow strangely dim, in the light of His glory and grace.

The problems that you will face in life or even facing right now are not as large as they might seem. It's all relative. What do I mean by that? Once you stare at your problem and turn and look at your God, there is no comparison. You will come out on top. You will live and not die. Let me illustrate: medical science is still fighting cancer. Once they have the cure the fight is over. You simply apply the solution to the problem and the problem is over. Remember it's all relative. There will come trials and tribulations in this world, but be of good cheer Jesus said, for He has overcome them all. And if He overcame, then we overcome as well.

“But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

1 Corinthians 15:57

“Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all.”

Psalms 34:19

The bottom line is that you have to make the choice, the right choice. Do you focus on the problem, or focus on the answer...Jesus? Do you want to magnify your problem or magnify the answer...Jesus! I think a lot of the time that people enjoy talking about their problems, struggles, lack and difficulties. After all, if “they couldn't talk about these areas, what would there be to talk about?” So some say I firmly believe if we will do what the Word of God teaches, then we will have what the Word of God promises. If we will minister to Him, He will minister to us.

I want to take a look at several examples with you in the Word of God and see for yourself what happens when people minister to the Lord. Let's take note how the Lord receives our praise and what His response will be.

The glory fills the temple

“Thus all the work that Solomon made for the house of the LORD was finished: and Solomon brought in all the things that David his father had dedicated; and the silver, and the gold, and all the instruments, put he among the treasures of the house of God. Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, the chief of the fathers of the children of Israel, unto Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of the city of David, which is Zion. And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the LORD unto his place, to the oracle of the house, into the most holy place. And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place: (for all the priests that were present were sanctified, and did not then wait by course: Also the Levites which were the singers, all of them of Asaph, of Heman, of Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, being arrayed in white linen, having cymbals and psalteries and harps, stood at the east end of the altar, and with them an hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets:) It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of musick, and praised the LORD, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever: that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the LORD; So that the

priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of God.”

2 Chronicles 5:1-2, 7, 11-14

Here we have a manifestation of God’s glory in direct response to the children of Israel gathered together ministering to the Lord. A manifestation of God’s glory...think about that for a moment. Yes it is true that Jehovah Shammah, the ever-present one encompasses each and every one of us, but the beauty of this lies in the fact that there are times when God’s presence is actually manifested such as in this case. The Lord was attracted to the praises of His people. God’s presence was so overwhelming that the priests could not even remain standing to minister.

“But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.”

Psalms 22:3

Another physical manifestation was that the glory cloud had appeared. Personally I’ve seen it several times in various meetings that I’ve been in. The best way to illustrate what it looks like would be similar to walking into a room filled with smokers. All the cigarette smoke rises up and lingers just below the ceiling. Maybe not the best illustration, but I think you can pretty well imagine that scenario.

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit

We have another example of the manifestation of God’s presence on the Day of Pentecost. Here the 120 were waiting in the upper room. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication to the Lord. (**Acts 1:14**) They were ministering and waiting upon the Lord. I’m sure that most of us are aware of what happened next.

“And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

Acts 2:1-4

As we see the church begin here on the Day of Pentecost, we come to find out that there was great unity among the Christians. I’m convinced one reason for this was due to the fact that they regularly came together and ministered to the Lord. And not only did they find favor with God, but the entire city was favorable to them.

“And all the believers met together constantly and shared everything with each other, selling their possessions and dividing with those in need. They worshiped together regularly at the Temple each day, met in small groups in homes for Communion, and shared their meals with great joy and thankfulness, praising God. The whole city was favorable to them, and each day God added to them all who were being saved.”

Acts 2:44-47 (TLB)

Prayers that avail much

Our prayers, praise and worship ride on the wings of faith all the way to the throne room of Heaven. And when the Lord is ministered to, all the Earth will know about it.

“And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them. And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done. And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.”

Acts 4:23-31

We've been in meetings where we've seen bodies shake under the power of God and even fall out, but wait until the entire building begins to shake in response to the outpouring and manifestation of God's presence! No wonder this group in Acts 4 spoke the word of God with boldness. I imagine everyone in the building that day was impacted by the magnificence of God's power. And to think that it all got started by the Christians coming together to pray, honor and exalt God, the maker of Heaven and Earth.

Paul and Silas in prison

In Acts chapter sixteen, we see Paul and Silas out in the marketplace one day casting out a demon from a girl. Unfortunately some people were quite annoyed by this and had these men beaten and thrown into prison. I wonder what our response would have been had we been in their shoes. Let's see how they responded.

“The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten. After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. Upon receiving such orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks. About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everybody's chains came loose.”

Acts 16:22-26 (NIV)

In your midnight hour when it seemed as though nothing was going the way you had wanted or imagined for it to go, is this how you responded, “praying and singing hymns to God?”

Unfortunately at this time in our lives when the storms of life are blowing and we can't seem to figure out where to go next, many people give up and quit. I'm persuaded that if you will minister to the Lord as Paul and Silas did during their midnight hour, you will have the same results that they had. God's power will break off every chain of bondage and open every prison door that you've been held captive in for so long. There is something about ministering to the Lord that seems to open up the windows of Heaven and rain down God's power into every situation and circumstance of life.

Worship is a faith action

“Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.”

Matthew 15:21-28

This woman was desperate. She came to Jesus in need of a miracle for her daughter. After failing several attempts to get Jesus' attention, there was one action, which would get immediate results: worship! “Then came she and worshipped him.” In this instance, her daughter needed deliverance. For you, it might very well be something completely different, but that's okay! If we do what this woman did, i.e., worship – we will get the same results.

Ministering to the Lord by ministering to one another

Let me show you one more way that you can minister to the Lord. I'll use the very words of Christ in order to establish my thought.

“For I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.” “Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’” “And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.”

Matthew 25:35-40 (NKJV)

We have this exemplified in the widow of Zarephath. This story is found over in the book of first Kings. Elijah the prophet of God was instructed to go to Zarephath. His next meal would be contingent upon his obedience to the Lord. Let's briefly look at the story.

“And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee. So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman was there gathering of sticks: and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink. And as she was going to fetch it, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand. And she said, As the LORD thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die. And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son. For thus saith the LORD God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the LORD sendeth rain upon the earth. And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days. And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Elijah.”

1 Kings 17:8-16 (KJV)

Here we see in the midst of famine the provision of God poured out upon this little widow woman. Her response to Elijah would determine what her outcome would be. I’m glad she ministered to the man of God. I’m glad she did not think more of herself than she did this stranger at the door. Remember what Jesus said, *“inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to Me.”* This poor widow woman was actually ministering to the Lord by ministering food to this prophet of God and the Lord was pleased. We can see that by God’s hand of provision for this woman. Her barrel of meal and cruse of oil never ran out but sustained her throughout the entire famine.

Friend, things happen when you minister to the Lord, as I hope you’ve seen by reading this so far. God’s Glory comes, the Holy Spirit comes, the favor of God comes upon you, boldness and power comes; deliverance comes; healing comes; provision comes. Whatever you need! It’s all available if you take the time and pray, worship, praise and thank God for who He is and what He has done in your life.

I realize the Christmas holidays are upon us. For many who forget the true purpose and reason for the season, it becomes a financial strain and burden year after year – extra food, decorations, presents, etc. I would strongly encourage you to set some extra time aside and minister to the Lord in these days. Come back to the heart of Christmas, which is Christ. Purpose and set your heart upon Him and know that as you minister and bless the Lord, He will minister and bless you above and beyond what you can ever ask or imagine!

Your Friends and Partners,

Todd & Eva