

3

EXPERIENCING THE SUPERNATURAL

When we are prepared to fast and pray, we will experience divine visitation, divine intervention, divine direction, divine connection, divine power, divine favour, divine healing and divine deliverance.

DIVINE CONNECTIONS

Peter and Cornelius

Cornelius, a centurion in Caesarea, was a devout man who feared God (Acts 10:1-2). Although an unsaved Gentile at the time, he was nevertheless observing three basic duties that Jesus had taught His disciples to do.

And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing,

And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God. (Acts 10:30-31)

In Matthew chapter six (NKJV), Jesus spoke about “when you do a charitable deed” (vs 2-3), “when you pray” (vs 5-7) and “when you fast” (vs 16-17). He did not say “if”.

Cornelius' prayers and alms went up as a memorial before God (Acts 10:4). **God heard his prayers and remembered his giving of alms** (Acts 10:31). In fact, God sent an angel to inform Cornelius of His divine favour (Acts 10:3) and where he should look for Peter who would tell him what he must do (Acts 10:5-6, 33). God was setting up a divine connection for him.

Peter went to the roof top to pray. As he was praying, he became very hungry (Acts 10:9-10). I believe he could have been fasting and praying.

When Peter fell into a trance, he saw a vision of heaven opened and what he considered unclean animals descending from heaven to him on a great sheet. Then a voice came to him, telling him to kill and eat what he saw.

When Peter protested, the voice spoke to him again a second time, "What God has cleansed you must not call common" (Acts 10:14-16, NKJV).

While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee.

Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them. (Acts 10:19-20)

Peter, a Jew, would not have gone to Cornelius' house if the Lord had not been so specific in the vision which occurred three times. To visit a Gentile home would mean that he was going against Jewish tradition. Praise God, Peter obeyed God and went.

While Peter was yet speaking, the Holy Ghost fell upon his listeners, and those who went with Peter were astonished that the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the Gentiles too (Acts 10:44-46).

Cornelius was the first Gentile to be saved under Peter's ministry. **It all happened because both men were found praying and fasting. Fasting and prayer brought salvation**

and revival to the Gentiles; Cornelius, his household, relatives and close friends.

Do you want to see the heathen in our nation saved? Fast and pray, and you will see God at work.

Paul and Ananias

Bent on persecuting the church, Saul was struck blind by a light from heaven (Acts 9:3). Today, anyone in his place would have gone to an eye specialist. Saul just fasted and prayed for three days.

And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink. (Acts 9:9)

While fasting and praying, Saul in a vision saw Ananias coming to put his hand on him “that he might receive his sight”. At about the same time, the Lord was giving Ananias specific instructions on how to meet up with Saul and lay hands on him. Why? “That he might receive his sight” (Acts 9:10-12).

Because Saul was fasting and praying, God answered him. He sent Ananias as the answer. When Ananias laid his hands on Saul, “immediately there fell from [Saul’s] eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once” (Acts 9:18, NKJV). So Saul **received his healing through the laying on of hands.** God sent Ananias because healing comes from the Lord.

Saul, who became Paul, was himself mightily used of God to work unusual miracles with anointed handkerchiefs or aprons that brought healing and deliverance (Acts 19:11-12). This was in the time of the former glory (Haggai 2:9) when many experienced many miracles. Even the shadow of Peter healed the sick (Acts 5:12-16).

Shouldn’t we who are in the latter glory be

experiencing even more?

Why are we not experiencing such miraculous power? The simple reason is unbelief. Instead of turning to the God of miracles, we turn to man. **But once we turn back to God with fasting and prayer and seeking His face, we will walk in the realm of miracles again.**

We should see open visions, divine connection and speedy answers to prayer because we are living in the last days. Miracles must happen in a mightier and greater way so that we will be a real blessing to the people. Jesus said to freely receive and freely give, He was speaking in relation to healing and deliverance (Matt 10:7-8).

DIVINE DIRECTIONS

Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. (Acts 13:1-2)

The early church was powerful in carrying out the perfect will of God because they were a praying church. Not only did they pray but they also fasted. They did not take God for granted. The early church was already moving in the power gifts, performing many miracles, signs and wonders. Yet they found it necessary to come together to fast and pray. **They were ministering to the Lord. How? With fasting.**

God did not even wait till they finished praying but as they were ministering to the Lord, the Holy Spirit began to move and revealed to them the plan of God, “whereunto I have called them.”

They received God's divine direction. They were leaders of the church, prophets and teachers. They must have been very busy leaders because they were in a midst of a revival, yet they had time to come together to fast and pray and to minister to the Lord. **They certainly knew how to get God's attention.**

The early church had their priorities right. Despite their busy schedule, they were not side-tracked. Today, the leaders of the church have become so caught up in work and activities trying to put the church and their acts together that the common excuse is, "I am so busy that I have no time to pray."

No wonder we find it so difficult to hear from God. **Because we are too busy to hear from God, we have to do our own planning and set our own goals and agenda to try to reach the lost.** The church today has certainly grown in numbers but not in power. It is being run by human effort more than by divine empowerment. It is no more doing the work that God has called us to do. It is no more coming together to minister to the Lord. It is now coming together for a planning meeting to set goals and targets which must be achieved by year-end.

The early church leaders were powerfully anointed of God and so much ahead of us in the move of the Holy Spirit yet they found it necessary to place God first, to minister to Him and to fast and pray. Instead of following their example, the leaders of today are busy brainstorming to get some new ideas, new strategies and new tactics to implement to keep the church moving.

Instead of hearing from God and being led of the Holy Spirit, the church today is running its own programme. Instead of fasting and praying, we are feasting and playing. Instead of agonising for souls, we are busy organising. Instead of travelling in prayer, we are hurrying in prayer. Instead of

hearing the voice of God, we are now hearing the voice of man. Instead of looking up to God for help, strength, provision and direction, we are looking across to other men.

Instead of being great givers, we have become great beggars. Instead of being led by the Holy Spirit, we are being led by our flesh. Instead of humbling ourselves before God, we have become proud of our own achievements. Instead of leading God's people to seek His face, we are keeping the people busy in programmes and activities, so much so that the people become tired and worn out and become a target and victim of the enemy.

The early church relied on the power of prayer and the word. **Even when there was great revival and the church grew, they stayed in focus.** When the Hellenists complained against the Hebrews because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution, **the leaders solved their problem by giving more attention to prayer (Acts 6:1-2).**

Busy as they were they would not substitute prayer for work. Therefore, they got the people to select other leaders to do the job.

Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. (Acts 6:3-4)

Praise God, He is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb 13:8). He is merciful, slow to anger but quick to give mercy (Num 14:18). **As we continue to turn to God and seek His face with fasting and prayer, again we will see the outpouring of the early and the latter rain.** We will usher in a great revival. People of God, let us not wait any longer. Let us start today with fasting and prayer.

O leaders and people of God, I implore you, please return to God as in the days of old when only God and God alone is exalted and magnified, where only the Holy Spirit is at work. We are living in end-times when the latter glory should be much greater than the former (Haggai 2:9). We are living in the time when the early and latter rain are going to be poured out together (Joel 2:23). God is waiting to pour forth His Spirit as He has promised in the book of Joel.

And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. (Joel 2:28)

The word of God says, “And it shall come to pass afterward”. That means it must take place. **But when will it take place? When the people of God meet God’s conditions.**

Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning:

And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.

Who knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him. (Joel 2:12-14a)

Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly:

Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders. (Joel 2:15-16a)

So people of God, especially pastors, elders and leaders, everyone both young and old, let us all turn to God once again with fasting and prayer.

Let us acknowledge our sins before God and repent of all

of our wicked ways so that God can once more move as in the days of Acts, and even more greatly.

Let us pray together

Dear Heavenly Father,

We come before You to acknowledge that we and our people have indeed sinned against You. You are such a great and mighty God yet we have made You so small. You have all the plans ready for us to complete Your great work yet we have been too busy running Your church.

Forgive us for doing Your work in our own strength and in our own way. Forgive us, Lord, for being too busy to pray, and to fast, and to seek Your face. Forgive us, Lord, for not putting You first in everything we do. Forgive us, Lord, for relying on the arm of flesh instead of relying on You.

You are coming so very soon, Lord, yet with all our programmes and activities, we are seeing so little result. Truly, we have sinned against You by not putting You first. No wonder we are not led by the Holy Spirit to live the Christian life of power, humility and victory. Because of sin, our people, our children, our church and our nation have suffered. Many have died and have gone into a Christ-less eternity because we have been too caught up with activities and programmes instead of praying, fasting and agonising for souls. We are truly sorry, Father, please forgive us.

In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.