

AWAKENED THROUGH PRAYER



Pray the Harvest

Abraham is 99 years old. He's sitting at the door of his tent looking down over the Jordan Valley. He can see the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah off in the distance. Suddenly Abraham leans forward and narrows his eyes as he notices three men coming toward him through the heat haze. Something inside Abraham tells him that these are no ordinary men. These are visitors from the World Beyond. Abraham calls to Sarah his wife, and tells her to order the servants to prepare a feast. He rises and walks toward his visitors and bows down before them in reverent welcome. Soon Abraham's visitors are feasting on a sumptuous meal. When the meal is over, one of the visitors announces, "Next year about this time Sarah will bear a son."

Abraham is an old man. Sarah is an old woman. How can this be? Abraham pushes his doubts aside and believes --- he knows he has just heard a word from God. Sarah, listening from inside the tent, begins to laugh. "I'm going to have a baby at my age? Barren all my life, and now I'm going to be a mother?" Soon after the visitors are gone, Sarah and Abraham experienced an awakening in their hearts and in their bodies. Something comes to life within them that was never there before.

All they have to do is go with the flow.

A year later Isaac is born.

When God's world breaks in on our world, the laws of God's world prevail.



Earth Meets Heaven

Wonderful things happen.

Frightening things happen.

Such things are happening even as you read these words.

Suppose those three men come to visit your church and mine next Sunday. They announce, "Next year about this time this church will be filled to capacity week after week with men and women crucified with Christ---servants of the kingdom whose hearts burn with fire."

Would we laugh like Sarah did?

Yet soon after we've heard the promise there is an awakening among us, like the one that came to Abraham and Sarah.

Next year about this time our churches are not only full week after week, everybody's focused and on fire with zeal as never before.

God's promise to Abraham was followed by an awakening.

When God makes a promise to us, he confirms it with an awakening.

May God give us ears to hear the promise and hearts to obey the command that comes with it.

One day Jesus looked out over a crowd of people and was moved with compassion. Jesus turned to his disciples and said, "See these people? You're not just looking at a crowd of needy souls, you're looking at a harvest for the Kingdom of God."

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, for they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

Matthew 9

Pray for laborers

"Pray for laborers" was not an after-thought, it was a command.

It was at this point that Jesus gave these men authority to heal the sick and speak with grace, and sent them out into a harvest for his Kingdom which continues to this day.

"The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

There is a harvest out there that has been assigned to us.

And it begins with the command,

"Pray for laborers."

Once we start praying for laborers, the Lord awakens in us the authority of heaven.

Soon we are not just praying for laborers, we are laborers.



Send us to Harvest

Imagine that all the people in your church and mine are suddenly transported to a far-away island. The inhabitants are poor and half-starved even though this island has all the amenities we enjoy. The supermarkets are stocked with good food, but who can afford it?

The governor of the island lives in a luxurious mansion. He and his associates are loaded with money and control the island like Mafia bosses, making sure the citizens remain poor.

As soon as we arrive, each of us is given a satchel full of money. Thousands and thousands of dollars are stacked in hundred dollar bills.

Our job is to give this money to the struggling citizens without drawing attention to ourselves.

You go into a coffee shop and sit at a table with some local folks. You slip each of them \$1,000, order them to tell no one, and leave.

You get on a bus, sit next to a mother with a baby on her lap, and pass her \$1,000, and get off at the next stop.

You visit a supermarket and move through the aisles, slipping money to shoppers and ducking down another aisle before they can ask questions.

Every morning we are each given a new stash of hundred dollar bills to spread out through the populace. Every evening we come back with our satchels empty.

Within days the island is transformed. The Governor and his Mafia buddies are scratching their heads in fear and wonder. People now have hope. They begin to figure out ways to make a decent living. They are no longer under the thumb of the Governor and his gang of thieves.

The people on that island were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. And we harvested them into a better life by the power of the One who gave us all that money.

***"The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few;
pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."***

So we pray for laborers.

As we pray for laborers a strange thing happens. The Lord comes along and says, "Your prayers are answered. I'm sending you out into the harvest. I'm giving you everything you need to get the job done."

Instead of a satchel of cash the Lord pours the power of his Spirit into us as never before.

No doubt we've all done good things for people throughout our lives.

But now the good things the Spirit guides us to do are drenched in the power of heaven as never before.



Dance of the Harvest

"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid.

Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house.

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

Matthew 5

Maybe it's just listening to someone bare their soul in a coffee shop. Maybe we slip a few bucks to someone to help with groceries. Maybe we provide a ride to the doctor.

Through simple deeds people are being touched by the power of the cross and drawn toward the light.

And now our deeds are followed by words.

Where did those words come from?

***The Lord GOD has given me
the tongue of those who are taught,
that I may know how to sustain with a
word him that is weary.***

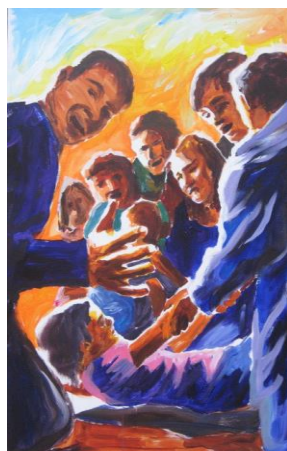
***Morning by morning he wakens,
he wakens my ear
to hear as those who are taught.***

Isaiah 50

It could be a conversation at a bus stop. A few words of comfort given to a child crying on a street corner. A chance meeting with an old friend---or an old enemy.

We don't ask people if they're saved.

We give them an encouraging word, as God sends people across our path.



The Dead Raised

To our surprise an old acquaintance says, "Do you really believe in God?" Or they ask, "How do you know that Jesus rose from the dead?" And instead of racking our brains to figure out how to answer, the words we need just come to us.

Instead of getting a fresh stash of cash each morning to spread around that troubled island, we get fresh words from God every day.

"Morning by morning he wakens my ear to hear as those who are taught."

Every morning we get a fresh supply of living words as we go into our room and shut the door, and pray.

Suppose you have a secret spring in your bedroom closet that bubbles up with life-giving water. One drink from this spring each day has kept you young and strong for 300 years and you still look like you're only 35. Would you complain, "Oh I have to go get another drink from that spring today!"?

So now we drink the living water of God's Spirit every day, listening to his words, offering up our prayers, interceding for each other.



Loosed on Earth

And out we come each day with a fresh supply of life for those who need a sustaining word.

The three men who promised a son to Abraham and Sarah, followed that promise with an awakening in their bodies and their souls.

When God makes a promise, it's always followed by an awakening in those who believe the promise.

If God is promising us a harvest, we, too, can expect an awakening.

The awakening will increase as we pray for laborers.



Once the awakening takes hold of us, who knows what our church will look like about this time next year!

Prayer- Holy, all powerful Lord...in who resides the power to do all things, unbelievable things, we believe in your promises to us, we believe the words that come from you. Awaken us to this. Awaken our hearts, come to life within us. We believe that our prayers bring us to wondrous things, that our prayers pour your incredible power unto this earth and into our lives. Lord, may many laborers be drawn and inspired to pray your will on this earth. Cover the laborers with the authority of heaven, and yes drench them with power like the world has never seen before. Raise us up, let our light shine, touch our deeds, our works all we do with your authority. Give us tongues that sustain the weary. Awaken our ears. Draw us to you each morning, day by day, moment by moment to draw a fresh supply of life. Draw us with a thirst that can only be quenched by you... so that our prayers will truly lead to a new awakening.

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