FOUR POWERFUL PRAYERS FOR 2025

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CENTRAL TRUTH

To occupy the high places that Christ has called us to, we must press into prayer.

SERMON DESCRIPTION/BACKGROUND

In the parable of the minas, Jesus provides an illustration of biblical stewardship and loyal relationship to God. It is within this story that Jesus makes the statement that we need to be about God's business and that we should occupy until He returns.

The word occupy means to be busy about God's business and ministry. To each one is given universal instructions, and personal instructions. Therefore, whether it is individual or corporate, we have a responsibility to busy ourselves with the Father's business. The word also means that we should fill the places and positions that God has called us to as His servants and followers. That we are to serve with a willing and thankful heart understanding that all the resources that are provided to us are by the grace of God. However, we should not attempt to occupy anything unless we have persevered in prayer first and foremost. We must be prepared by the Holy Spirit and having the presence of God within and without our lives, we can occupy the assignments that Christ has given to us with hope, confidence, and assurance that the hand of the Lord is upon us.

The idea that we would occupy is not a suggestion, but rather a command, that God is looking for a return on His investment and gifting, it is a requirement of the believer to give of the best of their talents and abilities for the work of the Master. To make the most out of every opportunity, circumstance, and scenario for the glory of God.

SERMON DESCRIPTION FOR ONLINE

As we enter a new year, we must be prepared to press into God and into the things of God with prayer. The following message will inspire you to pray these things on a daily basis.

SERMON QUESTIONS & OBJECTIVES

1. What do we need to know?
   - God's expectation is that we will occupy until He returns.

2. Why do we need to know it?
   - That the believer in Christ will live a productive and proficient life.

3. How should we apply it?
   - Make use of every opportunity presented.

INTRODUCTION OF THE SERMON

As we enter a new year, we must be prepared to press into God and into the things of God with prayer. The following message will inspire you to pray these things on a daily basis.

READING – MAIN PASSAGE

Stand Firm

2Thessalonians 2:13-17 (NLT)
13 As for us, we can't help but thank God for you, dear brothers and sisters loved by the Lord. We are always thankful that God chose you to be among the first[a] to experience salvation—a salvation that came through the Spirit who makes you holy and through your belief in the truth. 14 He called you to salvation when we told you the Good News; now you can share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

15 With all these things in mind, dear brothers and sisters, stand firm and keep a strong grip on the teaching we passed on to you both in person and by letter. 16 Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal comfort and a wonderful hope, 17 comfort you and strengthen you in every good thing you do and say.

Observations of the Passage

1. God's people are chosen into salvation. It is not an accident or even a human ability or idea.
    a. Salvation is experienced
    b. Salvation comes from the birth and the seed of the Holy Spirit
    c. The Holy Spirit causes us to be holy; to be more precise, He sanctifies us and separates us to the faith and life that is in Christ
    d. Sanctification occurs because of belief in the truth.

2. God's people are called into the plans and purposes of Christ
    a. They are personally invited to partake in the supernatural life that is provided by the Holy Spirit
    b. They are called into the good news and by the good news
    c. They are invited to share in the internal life and glory that is found in Christ and Him alone.

3. In light of these precious promises, God's people are instructed to get a strong grip of the reality of the new life
    a. To abide by the doctrine and the teachings of Christ
    b. Paul instructed his readers to hold onto to both the written and oral traditions that they were taught through his apostolic leadership. Not having the Bible, as we know it today, the letters of Paul and the messengers that were sent to them provided the instruction to which they should live by – this is the truth that Paul refers to.

4. It is important to know that God's people are loved and are to be loved, and that they are comforted by the Father, meaning, their hearts are consolidated and encouraged to move forward. This is the Gospel; this is the grace and the hope that is provided to every believer by the work of the Holy Spirit. For this reason, the believer is encouraged to take great comfort in knowing this.

5. The believer is comforted in knowing that everything they do and say is for the glory of God and will result in incredible fruit. Paul encourages the Christian that their work is not in vain nor their effort useless.

    Philippians 3:13-17 (NKJ)
    13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended (*seize, possess*); but one thing *I do,* forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward (*stretch)* to those things which are ahead, 14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

    15 Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you. 16 Nevertheless, to *the degree* that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind.

    17 Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern.

Rather than relying on his ministry as a super apostle, which Paul was, he states, rather, that he has not yet apprehended nor is he yet perfected. Despite this, Paul is not detoured or discouraged, but rather he presses forward, desiring to seize the thing that is most important to him – Christ.

Directionally, Paul writes to the believer that they should follow his example, being forward and upward in the things of the Lord. That the follower of Christ should not be stagnant or moving in a direction that is counterproductive. Specifically, no matter where we find ourselves, we need to be moving towards the Lord, and that He is always ahead of us.

It is important to know that Paul states one thing that is incredibly important - forgetting those things which are behind. This is not to suggest that the Christian develops spiritual amnesia or memory loss, but rather it conveys the idea that things have been settled in God. In other words, that He has taken care of them and has dealt with them. It is important to note that not only negative things should be forgotten and left behind, but at times there are positive things that also contribute to the believer being stuck and or stagnant. Thus, Paul strongly advises his followers to keep moving forward and to make progress.

There are key verbs in this passage, such as: press, stretch, forward, reaching, and so forth, that indicate there is a responsibility on the part of the believer to be active in their faith. However, this is not to suggest that it is out of their own strength but rather cooperating with the Holy Spirit and relying on the grace of God. It is important to note that, even as Christ stated, without Him, we can do nothing, so, we must abide in Him, live in Him, and rely on Him on a daily basis. Keeping this in mind, we should not move into a mindset that relieves us from any sense of responsibility or duties that are important to the child of God.

Paul suggests that there is a goal for the prize of the upward calling in Christ Jesus. But what is this goal? What is this upward call? The answer is found earlier in the chapter when Paul indicates that his desire and priority is to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and in the fellowship of His suffering. Everything else is futile and useless, Christ is the prize! To pursue and to press without relationship and knowledge of Christ and understanding of the ultimate goal is to waste precious time and energy in things that are fading. However, when we launch from the place of relationship with Christ, we understand the critical importance of working with Him and for Him.

Paul is clear to state that we have not arrived, nor have we apprehended, but there is a purpose for why we were called and that is the purpose that we desire to achieve and to accomplish. That being the case, to the degree that we have already obtained, we should not lose heart nor ground, but start from there, step-by-step, in action by action, moving forward and upward consistently and systematically in the things of the Lord.

These principles will assist the believer in occupying the place that God has called them into so that their lives will be fruitful and full.

MAIN POINTS

Father, I humbly ask You to write the story of my life. Today, I open my heart to You, inviting You into every part of who I am and all that I am destined to occupy. I recognize that You have chosen and called me, and I am ready to step into every role and responsibility You have prepared for me. Grant me the grace and passion to fully apprehend all that you have apprehended me for. I ask this, not for my own sake, but for the glory of Your name, the advancement of Your Kingdom, and the fulfillment of Your work. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen!

"Occupy the places I have called you to"

1. **IDENTITY in Christ –** ***"God is introducing you to you"***
    a. The servants of the Kingdom – the mindset
        i. Who I am in Christ
        ii. What I carry
        iii. What I am called to do
        iv. We do it together

2. **The Minas – The tangible assignments and resources**
    a. Money and resources
    b. Ministry
    c. Skill
    d. Divine enablement – Matthew 9:29 “according to your faith”
    e. Reallocation of the minas
    f. What keeps us ahead – what makes us stand out
    g. Monetize – what and how
        i. Courses
        ii. How do we become a digital church?

3. **The Cities – Authority**
    a. **<u>This involves the external responsibilities we have to spheres of influence we have been called to</u>**
        i. External responsibilities
        ii. Dreams – the promises of the future.

4. **Our Beginning Ways (APC DNA) Internal**
    a. Apostolic expression
    b. We are the children of God and followers of Christ
    c. Dreams and promises
    d. Our original purpose.

Have “authority”, “reward” and “recognition” of the Lord – operate in what God has said about you.

SERMON CONCLUSION - THE CALL TO ACTION

Encourage the believer in Christ to pray this prayer morning and night that their way may be successful and that they should not deviate from the truth.

Father, I humbly ask You to write the story of my life. Today, I open my heart to You, inviting You into every part of who I am and all that I am destined to occupy. I recognize that You have chosen and called me, and I am ready to step into every role and responsibility You have prepared for me. Grant me the grace and passion to fully apprehend all that you have apprehended me for. I ask this, not for my own sake, but for the glory of Your name, the advancement of Your Kingdom, and the fulfillment of Your work. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen!

Occupy
1. Identity in Christ
2. The assignment and resources
3. The authority
4 The beginning ways.