

Towers ministry – short reads

“**Short reads**” look at specific parts of the intercessory life within the towers. They are just four or five pages long designed to cover one issue.

Deeper Intercession Part 1.

Teresa of Avila taught in her book “The interior castle” writes of seven different rooms intercessors have to pass through. I think she's right - there are levels to pass through as the Lord takes his intercessors deeper and deeper. Here are some things to think about as towers intercessors pass through the deeper places. There are many examples of my experience here. I cannot think of any other way of describing the deeper places but to explain them through my experiences. It's a tough read.

*** Desire the deep places**

There has to be a desire in the heart of an Intercessor to want to go to the deeper places. The Spirit can stir and the Lord can call, but the call has to be desired. The Lord does not force anyone to come to the deeper places. If intercessors are stirred to want to come, then the Lord allows it to begin.

The risk is big. The deeper places are deeply challenging. It will cost everything. Once entered, there is no way back.

As this journey begins, here are some words to reflect on. Maybe after reading them, some might turn back. This is a decision each has to make.

I heard a voice speaking from heaven. “The Son’s body is the altar of the world where the sacrifice is made. It is made in a human body, not in a liturgy or a church. It is offered within our humanity. That is why it hurts so much and that is why many try to distance themselves by rules, theology or liturgy. Intercessors do not have this luxury. For at the deepest levels they too become, with their Lord, an altar of the world, and people die on altars.”

I wanted to walk this path, but the price was too high. I wanted success, yet he embraced defeat. “It’s the only way” he said. “Only as we take on the pain, the failure and the death can we hope to overcome. Only love can overcome evil.”

* The ocean of sorrow

Over the years, the Lord has graciously led me into the deeper levels. My understanding is that anyone can come here, but few do - either they do not realise that there are deeper levels, or because they are too afraid to come because the price is too high. St. Paul of the Cross, a 17th century Italian, wrote this:- **"We must contemplate Jesus engulfed in an ocean of sorrow to save us from the eternal abyss."** Many do not want this level of commitment.

If Intercessors are going to move into the deeper levels, then the ocean of sorrow will be the place where they will swim and not a lot of people want to do that. Why bother? What can be achieved?

John of the Cross said this:- **"There can be no achievement in intercession. We stand in the flow of the eternal spirit and the only achieving will be the Lord's when he returns."**

If any enter the deeper level it has to be on the understanding that getting some satisfaction in return for it is not the way to progress. Everyone has to accept that all that can be achieved is to be there. Many find this hard because their lives are built on the concept of "Give and Take." In other words, there is always some repayment for service - a feeling, a hope, a sense of value or of purpose.

All this has to be swept away in the deeper levels. There is nothing here except to be here. It's a tough place to be.

* The great love

**As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God.
My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?**
(Psalm. 42:1-2)

This experience was where I began.

A great desire for the Lord swept into me. In the Spirit I saw a great lake which shone like gold. Without any thought, I fell in and began to sink down into the love of the Lord. Down and down I went and more of his love poured into my dry spirit. On and on I sank and more and more of him filled me. I cried out in ecstasy "Don't stop! Don't stop!"

Finally I was so full of the lake which shone like gold, that I was totally absorbed into him. "Don't send me away" I sobbed. "I don't want to live again. Let me stay here and be with you forever." Then the vision ended and I was back in the real world. I cried and cried for my loss.

As I sank down into God's love, I soon passed beyond what I had known so far in my life. I was shocked at how little I had understood. I felt like a child – like a beginner in faith. At the deeper levels, we must be prepared to have our shallowness shown up and we have to accept it. My immediate thought, after this experience ended was - "I thought I knew God. Now I seem to hardly know him at all."

Even at this first stage, it was becoming clear to that at the deeper level, emotion was the key. I *felt* this experience, rather than understood it with my mind. As always, the brain is in the way, trying to quantify, make a list, plan for action, remember or recall. I was swept into the glory without any need of my brain. My spirit responded. The fall into love was frightening - like being in a very fast lift going downwards. But the more I fell the more I wanted it. At the deeper level, Intercessors are so close to heaven that their spirits cry out to remain. Having to leave the spiritual world can be like a physical pain, and the world can look so ordinary and empty. This emotion is hard to live with and it gets harder.

* The agonies

**In her deep anguish Hannah prayed to the Lord,
weeping bitterly. (1 Sam 1:10)**

If love was my first experience, my second was a complete contrast – I experienced the agonies of God's creation.

I was resting in the Spirit and was drawn into the deep places. I saw a woman and it was a terrible sight. She had been attacked again and again. First by men and then by demonic attacks on her emotions and very life. She was twisting and turning and her pain overwhelmed me. I was shocked and afraid. I had never seen this kind of picture before.

I asked the Lord what I was seeing and feeling. He replied - "In the deepest places of intercession, I will allow you to see and feel the real truth about the agony of my creation."

What I found so hard was the hurt this woman was bearing. I saw it in one person, but she was, I came to understand, representative of so many people in the world. Of course I had prayed for the world before, but never before had the pain of the world pressed so hard into me. St. Gemma (early 20th century Italian Intercessor) described it well -

Jesus placed the crown of thorns on my head, the cause of so much pain for my beloved Jesus, and left it there for several hours.

She had to wear the crown, and at the deepest level, we will have to "wear" the agonies of the world. As I said at the beginning the deeper levels are extremely painful and intercessors have to make the choice about whether they want to go there. The towers will take us all there.

* The storm

“He saved others..!!!” (Mark 15:31)

At the various levels of intercession, storms rage and intercessors will have to expect them. Here was my experience.

A violent storm was coming towards me. It was full of anger, bitterness, spite and despair. I was afraid but there was nowhere to hide. “Protect me” I cried out, but no one came to protect me. The storm broke over me, smashing into my heart.

The storm passed on, leaving me broken and bleeding on the shore. “Why did you not protect me Lord?” I asked. “Here” said the Lord, “there is no protection. You are totally exposed to the pain and the hurt. You are only safe when you are totally exposed. That was my message to you from the cross.”

I looked at my brokenness. “Don’t look at those wounds” he said, “look at mine,” and he showed me his broken hands.

This was a very painful lesson for me. I wanted and expected the Lord’s protection when this storm hit me, but none came. Had he abandoned me? No – quite the opposite. He had allowed me one of the privileges of being in the deeper levels – to be totally exposed to Satan in all his violence. This was the experience of the Lord on the cross, and now it was mine as well. I should have known. Some years ago I wrote “The Way of Thorns” and this vision was in the introduction:-

I saw a path - a narrow path, covered with thorns. As I looked, in the distance I saw a figure walking. His feet were broken and cut by the thorns, but still he walked on. I cried out “Who are you? Why do you walk this way? Why do you carry on?” He turned and I heard his voice. “Love.” I wanted to follow, but I was afraid of the thorns and the pain and the sacrifice and the cost. I wanted to follow, but if I started, could I carry on?

I didn’t have his courage, but I could hear his voice. Love - could I love enough to walk on pain? Did I love enough to make the sacrifice and keep making it?

In heaven, the Lord was bearing his cross again for the world. It was a suffering almost unbearable. Every kind of destruction had been laid on him. His nature was torn and broken, just as a road is torn up by a machine, and the rocks crushed, broken and thrown away. Hate and spite ran down his face like spit. “This” he said, “is the way of thorns. Who will walk it with me? “I can’t,” I said. It will kill me.” “Yes,” he replied and did not speak another word.

* The healings

**And the power of the Lord was with Jesus to heal the sick.
(Luke 5:17)**

What I have written is very hard. Entychano intercession is very hard. So much of what I was experiencing was as an onlooker. Now, for the first time, I began to see how I could act in this spiritual environment. Then this happened -

I lifted my hands in praise and doves flew out and up to the Lord. "These are the doves of healing and adoration," he said to me. He took them into his heart, and the healing stream began to flow. I was deeply moved.

This experience was so strange. As I began to pray, it was as if the doves were formed in my hands. As I opened my hands, out they flew - beautiful, white and gentle. They flew straight to the Lord and were enfolded in his hands.

What did they mean? The Lord told me their meaning and it was straight forward. *Hands lifted in prayer heal*. What a beautiful thought. As I lift my hands to pray, healing flows from my adoration straight into the Lord's heart. Then he is moved to provide the healing to those he knows need it. I might not know the needs but that does not matter. The doves fly and that has to be enough for me. This is such a powerful and active vision. Entychano intercession is hard, but it can also be beautiful.

* Enfolded in beauty

Can I get any closer in my explanation? I can try, but it is very hard trying to describe this emotional experience.

In the gentleness of lifting my hands in expectation and love, my prayers are carried straight to the Lord. There they are enfolded in beauty and purity by the Spirit. They settled gently on him, and he welcomed them.

He is gentle like the doves - gentle in giving as they are in coming to him.

This additional perspective opened another understanding to me. Healing is adoration. We adore him in our healing prayers, and this purity of adoration opens his heart to us in a way I had never seen before. Healing as adoration - what a beautiful thought. What a huge encouragement to intercessors.