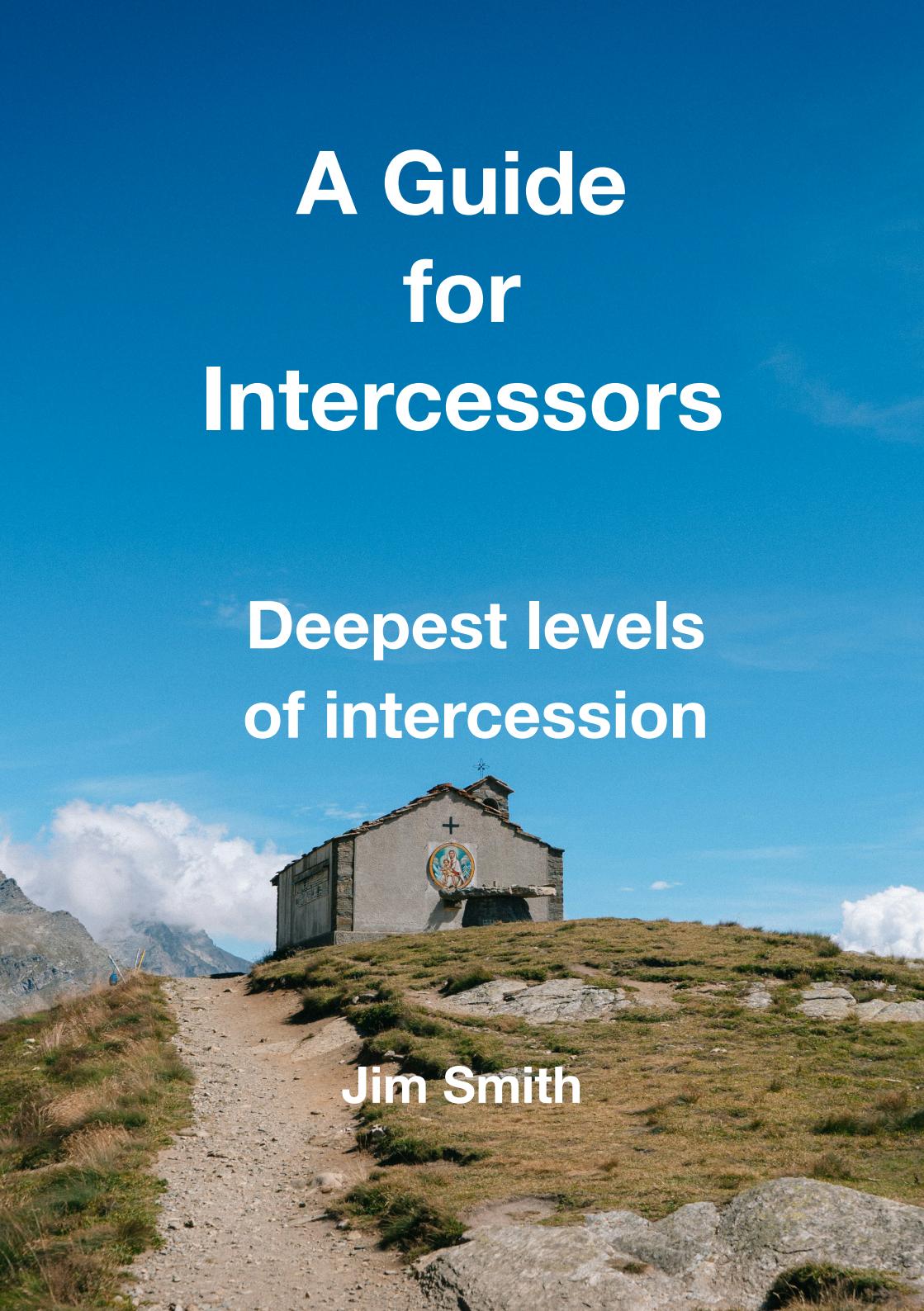


A Guide for Intercessors

Deepest levels
of intercession

A photograph of a small, rustic stone chapel situated on a grassy, rocky hillside. The chapel has a gabled roof with a cross on top. A circular medallion with a religious figure is mounted on the front of the building. A dirt path leads up to the chapel from the bottom left. The background shows more of the mountain range and a clear blue sky.

Jim Smith

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**Deepest levels of
intercession**

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Resources.

Much of this material is used by Jim Smith when teaching those who have a lot of experience in intercession but who want to go deeper.

There is other material available for those who want to start out in intercession or are in the early days of the experience.

The website for deeper things is
unshakeable-towers.org

Rev Jim has been an Anglican pastor for 56 years and involved in intercession for over 40 of those. Recently he has been developing his “towers of intercession” ministry and is searching for individuals who are deep in the intercessory stream and who would be willing to hear what the Lord is saying to them about intercession.

In this updated and revised edition, there is a chapter on the towers ministry.

Jim and his wife Mary live by faith and ask for nothing.

Introduction

Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them. (Hebrews 7:25)

(A full explanation of this verse can be found in the “Extra material for study” section at the end of this material.)

Here is a working definition of intercession and intercessors –

The intercessors are the lamps of God – so precious and so necessary. They are often alone, often isolated and ignored, their intercession seen only by the Lord. But they are vital to the future of God's people everywhere.

How do these “lamps” function? Often in emotional and visionary ways. For example -

The seashore

Standing by the seashore, I saw a boat in the shallows and someone was in it. I felt a strong desire to be in that boat, so I waded out and climbed in. I found that the man in the boat was the Lord.

I knelt down to worship and his glory touched me, filling me with the worship of heaven. Gold, silver and diamonds sparkled in my worship and as I knelt, I began to hear a distant sound. It was the worship of heaven. It was so beautiful that I wanted to stay in it forever and never leave.

But as quickly as it all started, it was over and it was just me and the Lord in the boat. Looking at me he asked, “Are you ready?” “Ready for what?” I replied, but even as I said it, I knew the answer. I wanted more of him, more of heaven, more of his glory. “It’s a costly path,” he said. “But it has been very costly to get this far,” I replied. “No, it hasn’t,” he said. “You have hardly started to pay.”

Desire the deepest places

This vision expresses what every intercessor should desire - more of the Lord. There has to be a desire in the heart of an intercessor to want to go to the deepest places. The Spirit can stir and the Lord can call, but intercessors have to desire that call. The Lord does not force anyone to come to the deepest places.

If intercessors are stirred to want to go deeper, then the Lord will allow it, but the risk is great. The deepest places are deeply challenging, as this material is about to show. In the end, it will cost intercessors everything. Once they have entered, there is no way back. This is a one-way trip.

Chapter 1. Pass through the gates

After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.” (Revelation 4:1)

St. Gregory of Palamas, a 14th Century Greek monk wrote - *“Our passionate life must be offered to God, living and active so that it may be a living sacrifice.”*

Gregory is making a statement of the emotional and not the intellectual. The beginning of getting to the deeper places is to pass through the gate of the intellect and into the area of emotion. In this emotional environment, a number of things have to touch the intercessory spirit before or as intercession begins. Here are some of them.

* The hurts of the world

During that long period, the king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God. God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. So God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them.

(Exodus 2:23-4)

As the people of Israel endured their slavery, they appealed from their heart to the heart of the Lord. He took on their hurt and responded to it. This is the beginning of the pathway to the deeper levels of intercession. There must be a willingness to take the hurts of the world and carry them to the hurting heart of the Lord. This can only be done by making the hurts our hurts. This is very challenging. The price is 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.”

If intercessors are going to move at the deeper level, then the ocean of sorrow will be the place where they will swim. Many do not want this level of commitment.

*** Compassion of the Lord**

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. (Matthew 9:36)

Once intercessors have passed into the emotional environment, they will become aware of the compassion of the Lord. This is the framework of his intercessory heart and it must become the framework of the earthly intercessors. I've been interceding for many decades yet I still struggle to grasp the wonder and the depth of this compassion. Perhaps it's right that as an intercessor I cannot find the depth of it.

This vision challenged me –

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 beaten and broken by the world. 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 deeper places of intercession, I will allow you to see and feel the real truth about the agony of my creation. Then my compassion can become your compassion as well.”

What was so hard to see was the hurt this woman was bearing. I saw it in one person, but she was, I came to understand, representative of so much of the world. I had prayed for the world before, but never before had the pain of the world pressed so hard into my spirit. During Holy Week, like so many, I had listened to the story of the crown of thorns. But St. Jemma (early 20th century Italian Intercessor) takes it to a whole new level – the deeper intercessory level -

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, intercessors will have to “wear” the agonies of the world and allow the compassion of the Lord to pour through them to him. I have found this a thrilling but exhausting process. Without this compassion, intercession becomes sterile and formalistic.

* Tears

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

Tears fill the intercessory environment. Intercessors cry. The Lord cries. Heaven cries. Hannah points the way here-

Once after a sacrificial meal at Shiloh, Hannah got up and went to pray. Eli the priest was sitting at his customary place beside the entrance of the Tabernacle. Hannah was in deep anguish, crying bitterly as she prayed to the Lord.

“Not so, my lord,” Hannah replied, “I am a woman who is deeply troubled. I have not been drinking wine or beer; I was pouring out my soul to the Lord. Do not take your servant for a wicked woman; I have been praying here out of my great anguish and grief.” (vs 15-16)

“I am a woman who is deeply troubled”

Hannah’s tears poured out from her broken heart. A broken heart gives entry into a spring, a river, an ocean of tears – tears which can fill intercession. Many Intercessors have never understood this fact. They have broken hearts without knowing that this is the heart which can reach out to God’s broken heart and serve it. It took me a long time to understand this. I cried and cried for my lost son – I still do.

But slowly I realised that these tears could also be cried for others, and for nations. I began to offer them to God, and I found it much easier to understand his broken heart and how to reach it. It became “broken heart to broken heart.”

* **Frailty of our nature**

“Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty.”

(Isaiah 6:5)

This is a difficult area of the intercessory world to understand yet it is essential to understand it. Human nature was never designed to bear huge spiritual struggle and pressure. So when the strain comes, the humanity of the intercessor feels weak and helpless. I have taught and spoken to hundreds of intercessors and this feeling of inadequacy and weakness is common.

Isaiah felt it when he had his great vision of the Lord. I also experienced it in this vision -

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. “Why did you not protect me Lord?” I asked. “At the deepest level,” said the Lord, “there is no protection. We are totally exposed to the pain and the hurt. We are only safe when we 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 in the storm but none came. Had he abandoned me? No – quite the opposite. He had allowed me one of the privileges of being in the deepest level – 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.

* Surrender

Then he said to them all, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.”

(Luke 9:23)

If the heart of the intercessor is like a castle, then the castle has to completely surrender to the Lord. Every part of the intercessor’s heart and life must be surrendered to the Lord’s authority. Sometimes the challenge is hard.

I had gone to one country to share a word about the capital city. The word said that unless the city yielded to the Lord it would spiritually die. Before I visited, I had been quite ill and I had still not fully recovered, so one afternoon I was resting in my room when the Lord spoke to me.

“What is the heart of this word you bring?” he asked. It was about death - spiritual death of a city. “How does a prophet live such a word?” he asked. I replied, “A prophet must become his word.”

Suddenly to my horror I realised the implication of what I was saying. Was I going to have to die to fulfil this word before the nation? I knew the answer had to be, “If you need me to die for this word then I will.” There was a very long silence and I thought the Lord was going to take me at my word. I had to accept this - it was part of my surrender. Then he said, “You will live and get safely home. I just needed to know that if you were asked by me to surrender your life, you would do so.”

This is where surrendered intercession can finish up for those who intercede at the deepest level. How can intercessors handle such a demand? Here's the prayer of abandonment by the French missionary Charles de Foucauld. I think he understood exactly where intercession might bring him. (It did in the end - the Toureg people he was serving killed him). Some who are entering the deepest places might have to accept that his prayer must become theirs.

*Father, I abandon myself into your hands,
do with me what you will.*
*Whatever you may do, I thank you:
I am ready for all, I accept all.*
*Let only your will be done in me
and in all your creatures.*
I wish no more than this, O Lord.
Into your hands, I commend my soul;
I offer it to you with all the love of my heart;
For I love you, Lord, and so need to give myself:
To surrender myself into your hands without reserve
and with boundless confidence.
For you are my Father.

*** The joy of intercession**

“Ask anything in my name.” (John 14:14)

The deeper levels are hard but contain many joys. I was reminded of this joy when I had this vision -

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. It is a vision which has sustained me many times and enables me to endure the hard struggle at this level.

Padre Pio captures this joy well: –

“Hardly do I open myself to pray than all at once, I feel as if my heart were possessed by a flame of living love – unlike any flame of this poor world. It consumes but gives no pain. It is so sweet and delicious that the spirit finds great pleasure in it and remains satiated in it, in such a way that it does not lose its desire of God. This is a thing of supreme wonder to me. Perhaps I will never come to understand it until I reach the heavenly country.”

* **Unceasing love**

This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. (1 John 4:10)

Another of the great privileges of the deeper places is access to the very deep love of the Lord. This experience helped me here –

I was standing by the edge of a very deep chasm and the Spirit said, “Jump in!” I did and as I fell, I realised I was falling into the love of the Lord. His love pressed in on my spirit. The deeper I fell the greater the pressure of his love until I realised, I could not contain any more of it. I cried out, “Lord remember my humanity!” Then I realised that I didn't care how great the pressure of his love was even if I died in it. It was all I ever wanted.

Deep in my heart, deep in the deepest places of my heart, I find I cannot cope with the unceasingness of his love. It is longing and yearning. It is telling me - “I love you with no conditions, no reserve and no end.” Deeper and deeper I plunge, longing only to find an end, a limit so that I can manage this love, put a framework around it and say, “Now I understand.” After 77 years of walking with the Lord, I feel I have hardly begun the search. Intercession takes place within this unceasing love.

* Stillness

“Be still and know that I am God.” (Ps 46:10)

“Faith puts us into a new atmosphere, in full sunshine, full daylight, in a serene and luminous place far above the region of clouds, winds and storms, beyond the realm of twilight and night.” (Charles de Foucauld)

In the presence of Jesus, there is a deep stillness. It is the stillness of eternity - of God who was and is and is to come, and is before “was”, and after “is to come”. This is another privilege of being in the deepest places. Here is my experience of stillness -

In the Spirit, I found myself sitting by Jesus on the shore. There was such a profound quiet, that I knew I wanted to ask nothing, nor do anything.

I sat and he sat. Slowly I began to absorb his stillness, and I appreciated the order and calmness of the universe, and of creation. The stillness calmed my soul, and I knew all I needed to do was to be in that atmosphere.

We sat together and looked out over the sea. I did not need to intercede in words. Just being in that environment was my intercession. Being became my intercession. The Lord turned to me and said, "Is there anything you want to say to me?" "No," I replied. Then I said to him, "Is there anything you want to say to me?" "No," he replied. So we just sat, looking out over the sea, and I absorbed the stillness until I was stillness.

*** Higher and higher**

Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.

(Psalm 139:7-10)

Deepest intercession satisfies the spirit of the intercessor like nothing else can or will. It is this conviction which enables intercessors to endure at this level. Here are two of my visions - and they express my sheer delight in the privilege of being given access into the deeper places.

I wanted to fly in the skies of the Spirit. To soar up like an eagle, rising in the thermals of glory. "Fly," you said. I flew into the heavens, seeing marvellous things I never dreamed were possible. I wanted to be free – twisting and turning in the glory. "Do it," said the Lord! I did. I will forever fly and be free.

I stood before the Lord and I saw many angels each holding a flaming torch. Each torch had a name. “Lazarus come out!” “Peace! Be still!” “Let there be light!” “He is risen!” “At the name!” “Alpha and Omega!” “Take one,” said the Lord. I chose “He is risen.” As I lifted it high, power flowed into me in a way I had never known before. I lifted the torch higher and all heaven shouted, “Jesus is alive!”

Chapter 2. Ascending the hill

When darkness grows deep his love is a fire. You need only fix your gaze on that lamp burning in the darkness till day begins to dawn and the sun rises in your heart.

The beginning

Ascending the hill is another way of looking at intercession and it added more to what I was learning. It began with this -

I was standing at the bottom of a very steep mountain. As I looked up, the Lord said - “You must climb this if you truly want to intercede before me.” I was disturbed. The climb looked very hard. “How can I do this?” I replied. There was no answer, so I set off to climb.

As I climbed, I learnt a lot about intercession, especially as I moved up the hill. In these places the storms are violent and lions roam around looking to devour.

At some point, Satan will try to take his throne as he did at the Temptation of Jesus. (Matthew 4:1-11) Here intercessors will feel the desolation of the cross, the painful burden of the Lord and the agony of the suffering servant. (Isaiah 53:1-6) They will have to stand with no protection, depending totally on the Crucified One protecting and holding back all the dark forces, so that they can seek God in the depths of his heart. They will also experience a joy beyond anything they have experienced before.

Ascending the hill is the ultimate challenge for the Intercessor. It is the hardest climb, but also the greatest privilege and joy.

*** At the foot of the hill**

At the beginning of the climb, there is a decision to be made and it is the most obvious one - is the climb too hard for me? Jesus warned of the danger of taking on too much-

Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Won't he first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace. In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples. (Luke 14:31-33)

This hard climb is not for everyone. Everyone can be called to intercession, but not everyone can take up the calling. Everyone is called to support those who can climb to the highest peak, but not everyone can go there. For some, the pressure is too great and the cost too high. Christians find this difficult. In the current “everyone is equal” society, the idea has got into the church that everyone can and is entitled to do everything. This is not biblical and causes a lot of pain when those not called to this specific ministry fail. The Kingdom is not about equality but service.

* The cost of the hill

There is another difficult principle at the start of the climb, and it is best understood from the outset. It is summed up in these words from Jesus - "**But this is your hour, when darkness reigns.**" (Luke 22:53)

Jesus could have defended himself from arrest and execution. He himself said – "**Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels?**" (Matthew 26:53) He could have called on heavenly defence, but he allowed the enemy to attack and to bring him to death. This was the plan of God. "**The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him.**" (Matthew 26:24) The enemy had to have his way so that creation might be saved. Intercessors climbing the hill must learn that in the purposes of God, some attacks might seem to succeed so that the Lord might make a way in the desert.

This is so hard. Hard to understand and accept. So hard to allow. On the climb there is no other way. Jesus could have called the Legions, but as he said - "**But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?**" (Matthew 26:54)

Intercessors have to have courage to walk this way, knowing what a huge risk is involved. They are facing a very tough climb. It's good to reflect on the cost which has to be paid before starting the journey.

Bernard of Clairvaux, who knew from personal experience the cost of the hill, wrote this for all who are just starting in the deepest places - *“All wish to enjoy you, but not to the extent of following your example. They will reign with you but not suffer with you.”* A Polish nun added this, *“A soul which is united with God must be prepared for great and hard-fought battles.”*

*** The hill - alone and together**

Intercession is a lonely business. Jesus experienced the utter loneliness and depth of intercession in Gethsemane when he came to his closest friends and found them sleeping.

(Mark 14:41)

I had this vision -

A crowd of God’s people came to me and asked - “Can you lead us to the highest place where we can be close to the Lord?” We set off, and after we had climbed for a while, we came to a flat grassy place. One group went off to build a church. I said to them - “You wanted to climb not to build.” They still went off to build their church and abandoned the climb. This process repeated itself over and over again until I was climbing alone.

I have come to understand that intimate intercession is solitary. Intercessors have to climb alone - and at the same time climb within the Christian family. This is not an easy balance.

* The hill - hope, joy, love

Intercessors have to have a very positive attitude to the climb. This will sustain them in all the struggles of which there are many. Here is one vision which keeps encouraging me -

I wanted to fly in the skies of the Spirit. To soar up like an eagle, rising in the thermals of glory. “Fly,” you said. I flew into the heavens, seeing marvellous things I never dreamed were possible. I was free – twisting and turning in the Glory. I knew that to fly in the Spirit was not enough. Then I saw you in the distance, holding out your arm. I swooped down and you gathered me into your heart. I found my peace and I never wanted to fly again.

Intercessors have to remain positive, in the face of a hard path. This is not easy, but without it, they will eventually collapse into despair, and despair is a lion which is always close. These verses will encourage those climbing -

Hope: “For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.” (Jeremiah 29:11)

Joy: “For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Hebrews 12:2)

Love: - “It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.” (1 Corinthians 13:7)

* The hill - discipline of the climb

“Hard fights are rarely fought except by those with the greatest strength.”

Like all good soldiers, intercessors must be disciplined. This does not appeal to the 21st century church which thinks that everything can just float down from heaven as long as they hold out their hands! This has never been true of the Christian walk and is not true today. Intercessors must have discipline. These are areas to consider -

*** Discipline of belief.** “I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!” (Mark 9:24) Intercessors have to hold fast to their belief in the Lord. Every effort will be made to undermine belief, but they must cling on as the Lord commanded the suffering father.

*** Discipline of knowing the Lord’s voice.** “Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.” (2 Corinthians 11:14) The angel of light will do all he can to deceive intercessors and pull them from the right pathway. It is essential therefore that intercessors discipline themselves to recognise the voice of the Lord and discern all deception. This discipline must be functioning at all times.

*** Discipline of the cross.** “May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.” (Galatians 6:14) Every intercessor must try to live a cross-centred life. The cross must shape lifestyle and behaviour at all times.

* **Discipline of endurance.** “Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 3:13-14) Intercessors must never give up the struggle. If they slip, they must get up again. There must never be any yielding. One older intercessor put it like this -

To enjoy the victory that is ours in the Lord, we must be clothed with truth, righteousness, the gospel of peace and the helmet of salvation – all given us freely at no price, having been purchased by the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Hannah – The burden: In her deep anguish Hannah prayed to the Lord, weeping bitterly. (1 Samuel 1:10) Hannah carried the burden of intercession in her heart and in her body. This is what it is like on the hill.

Jesus - strain of holding on: An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground (Luke 22:43-4). Satan was pressing Jesus to give up. This is the pressure which is faced constantly. It hurts both body and soul.

Peter - the burden of failure: And he went outside and wept bitterly. (Matthew 26:75) Peter had to taste the consequences of failure in his body and his spirit, and it was very hard for him. All intercessors will fail at some point and the burden is very hard to bear.

There are many other pressures. Here is a vision which I've had to reflect on many times.

The road stretched out in front of them and began to rise up. The Pilgrims began to climb. The path got steeper and steeper. The stones cut into their feet, the sky grew darker and rain fell. Up and up they went.

Some slipped, and they clung onto each other, dragging themselves along. Darker and darker, higher and higher, steeper and steeper. Some sank down onto their knees. "Leave us," they said, "This is too hard. We should never have started out." In desperation, the Pilgrims looked for help. They looked back, but the path was slippery and treacherous behind them. They looked up, but it was so steep. "Lord," they cried, "You promised us a future. Surely it cannot all end here?"

Then they heard the Lord's voice – quiet and untroubled. "Why are you afraid? Why do doubts rise up in you? I promised you a future but not an easy one. You must grow stronger in your commitment, in your resistance and your determination."

*** The hill - the Lord's holiness**

To ascend the hill, an intimate knowledge of God's holy presence is essential. Moses soon found this out, and so did John -

"Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." (Exodus 3:5)

Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under its wings. Day and night they never stop saying: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come.' (Revelation 4:8)

Intercessors know, love and live with the Lord as close friends. However, ascending the hill brings those who climb into the presence of his holiness. This is where it gets so hard for intercessors on the hill. Every sin and weakness will be revealed in the light of the holy God. The ascent is the way of intercession for the world, which is a sinful and fallen place. As intercessors walk the path, they will experience a holiness which will penetrate, challenge, shock and ultimately delight. Here is the double challenge - **Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrongdoing.** (Habakkuk 1:13)

How can any intercessor hope to stand? In the presence of such holiness, even the angels fall on their faces. (Revelation 5:14) Do those climbing have the courage to be exposed to such holiness?

The Lord understands the challenge of his holiness to the intercessory spirit. He is patient as intercessors begin to adjust to the holy environment. But he cannot compromise his holiness. It is the intercessors who must change. The Lord wants his intercessors to change.

Apostle Paul put it like this –

And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. (2 Corinthians 3:18)

*** The hill - bearing the cross**

James Calata, South African priest and politician wrote this and it's a good beginning for the next part of the climb-

“It is inevitable that in working for freedom some individuals and families must take the lead and suffer. The road to freedom is via the cross.”

The ascent of the hill for the intercessor is the ascent to the cross. When intercessors ascend to the cross, not only do they have to bear the penetrating light of holiness but also the burden of judgement. Yet in this position they are safe as Julian of Norwich explained –

“When I looked at the cross, I was safe. For apart from the cross there is no safety but only the horror of devils.”

Intercessors must come under the shadow of the cross, and there they are safe. The blood breaks all the power of the enemy, the triumph of the cross is lifted over them like a rainbow, and the peace of the cross fills their hearts.

This intercessor, a 14th century Italian woman put it like this, “I enclose myself in the Passion of Christ and receive the hope that I could find freedom.”

It is easy to keep the real cross at a distance. This is not possible on the hill. This hill leads to crucifixion. If intercessors resist, then they do not truly love the Lord. Intercession is embracing the dying Christ and with him going to the Father to plead the blood. The hill is the cross. There, intercessors embrace the dying Christ.

Here is a vision to reflect on -

We climbed a very high mountain and the view was beautiful beyond description. I saw the angels of the Beauty. I heard their praise. “Your cross, Lord, is more beautiful than any beauty you ever made, for in it is the beauty of your mercy for your children. In this beauty, all can be made whole.” I rejoiced in the beauty of the cross.

*** Getting there - is it worth it?**

“If God’s people will once more begin to speak only of God, the spirit of holy fervour will return among us, and we shall set the world on fire.”

Intercession is a tough business, and the hill only ever gets steeper, and the intercession gets harder. Is it worth the struggle? It’s easy to say, “Yes,” when things are going well. When an intercessor has been battered for the hundredth time, “Yes,” doesn’t come so easy to the lips. Here is my vision which may help intercessors say “Yes,” and keep on saying “Yes,” until victory is won.

I saw a mighty angel with a fiery torch in his hands. Prayers were pouring up to the Lord, like liquid gold, and he delighted in every one of them. Then the Lord spoke. "Go to every church in the land. Hold the torch high so that I can examine the heart of my people. When you find those who are longing for my creation, touch them with the fire."

The angel went through the land, examining the heart of each church. Where the spirit of repentance was found, the angel touched the church with the torch and the church caught fire and became a great column of fire, blazing and burning away all the sin of the filth that had come into the land. Many fell down before the fire and confessed their sins. Those churches burnt even brighter and a light began to spread in the land.

Some churches were found to be so full of sin and corruption that they could not burn. They opposed the light, shouting, "Why have you come to trouble us? Leave us alone!" But this time, the fire could not be resisted, and it burnt them to death.

So is it worth it? I can only answer this for myself for each intercessor must make their own judgement. The hill is hard. I have slipped back so many times and finding the energy to start again has often been difficult. I have been challenged by his holiness and I struggle with the sacrifice of the cross in my own life. Yet I would do nothing else but climb the hill for in the process, I have found out who God truly made me to be.

With this knowledge, I am able to intercede to move his heart and when his heart is moved the world can be changed.

I stood before the seraphim and the cherubim. Glory was flowing all around them. I asked, “How long has this flow been going on and when will it end?” They replied, “It has been flowing from before the beginning of time and it will flow until the end of time.”

I said, “Then it would be an ocean bigger than the universe.” “Yes,” they replied. I stood in the glory and it flowed round me like the river. It flowed softly and beautifully sweeping on and on and on. All I wanted was to be in the glory and to stay in it forever and forever.

This is one of the blessings of the highest places of intercession.

Chapter 3. Intercessory life in the Spirit

The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. (John 3:8)

“I have to kneel before the Father, put my ear against his chest, and listen, without interruption, to the heartbeat of God.” (Henry Nouwen)

Things are different

A businessman was in a hotel in Ghana. He looked rather lost, so I asked him what was wrong. “Everything is fine,” he said, “I am waiting for my driver.” “Have you phoned him?” I asked, “Oh yes,” he replied. “He says he is coming. He will be here in a few minutes.” I smiled and said, “When he says ‘he is coming’ it does not mean is he is coming now! It means he will come sometime. This is Africa. We move to a different rhythm here.” My friend had to learn the rhythms of Africa. It was a strange country to him, and he had not yet quite picked up the pulse.

The same is true when intercessors enter the spiritual world. Things move differently here, and intercessors have to adjust to life in the spiritual world. So, what is life like for intercessors in this spiritual world?

*** “The wind blows wherever it pleases.”**
(John 3:8)

I was standing on top of the Sussex South Downs in the U.K. recently, watching the beautiful white clouds floating lazily along. I noticed that their shadows could be seen on the ground. As they drifted over the valleys, the land seemed alive with these shadows. Right across the valley, this patchwork of light and shade was passing along, as it has done since the valleys and clouds came into being.

This is the rhythm of nature, and this is also the rhythm of the spiritual world. The Spirit moves around, and intercessors feel his presence - now here, now there, leading from one experience after another. He passes along, and the spiritual world is always changing in his light. This is the biblical description of such a spiritual walk: -

“The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear the sound of it but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.” (John 3:8)

The rhythm of the spiritual world is movement. Intercessors have to be flexible. One moment they will be worshipping, the next the Lord will be speaking, the next they will be seeing or feeling, then praying. A rigid approach does not work. They cannot say - “Let me finish this first!”

St Brendan set out in a journey by sea with some of his monks. He had a “sun and clouds” approach, and he puts it like this -

“They set themselves to the oars until their strength failed. Then Brendan began quickly to comfort and advise them, saying: “Brothers do not fear. God is our helper, sailor and helmsman, and he guides us. Ship all the oars and rudder. Just leave the sail spread and God will do as he wishes with his servants and their ship.” (St Brendan The Navigator)

Intercessors will have to adapt. They must leave their frantic need for order and solutions behind, put up the sails and drift in the Spirit. Nothing else works!

*** Praising in the joy of heaven**

“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come.”
(Revelation 4:8)

Once in the Spirit, I became aware of a background humming sound. At first, I thought some electrical equipment was malfunctioning in my room. Pushing that thought aside, I listened again and realised that I was hearing praise. The spiritual world is not a silent place. It is full of angels who adore the Lord, and the invisible church which has served the Lord here on earth, and still serves him in the spiritual world.

The Bible is quite clear: -

Whenever the living creatures give glory, honour and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say: “You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.” (Revelation 4:9-11)

When intercessors enter the spiritual world, they are entering a living and changing environment. One time, I was in the Spirit, and I became aware of the invisible church. I saw the mighty army and they looked like a vast field of wheat, swaying in the breeze. As I looked closer, I saw that they were moving with a rhythm of praise. They were dancing. The spiritual world is full of praise, and God's eternal people are constantly moving in a spirit of praise. Miriam can lead the way -

“Then Miriam, the prophetess, Aaron’s sister, took a tambourine in her hand, and all the women followed her, with tambourines and dancing. Miriam sang to them: ‘Sing to the Lord, for he is highly exalted.’”
(Exodus 15:20-21)

Sometimes, when settling to intercede, a hymn or Christian song comes to mind. It might be a lack of concentration - or maybe it is getting tuned in to heaven. Either way, praise will break in again and again. It should. It is “heavenly music, intolerably sweet!” (Richard Rolles)

* Love is the breath of heaven

“If you love me, you will obey what I command.” (John 14:15)

“Lord you are my lover, my longing, my flowing stream, my sun, and I am your reflection.” (Mechthild of Magdeburg)

I was in the Spirit, and I saw a great river. It flowed into me and then out of me - backwards and forwards. “What is this?” I asked. “This is my love,” the Lord replied. “It is the breath of heaven. It moves from me to you and from you to me, back and forwards all the time, and through everyone who comes here.” In the spiritual world, intercessors have to breathe - not oxygen, but love. Like so many things, this is easier to understand than write: -

Softly you come to me
falling on me
like snowflakes,
drifting into my soul,
healing my wounds
with love.

Softly I reach out for you
longing

with all my heart
to know your touch.

Softly,
I fall asleep
into your arms

Softly forever

* Intensity of the presence

“Woe is me,” I cried, “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty.”
(Isaiah.6:5)

“When you pray, gather up your whole self and with your beloved, enter into the chamber of your heart. Remain close with him there.” (St. Bonaventure)

I was in the Spirit, and I met with the Lord. He was full of sorrow and began to share that sorrow with me. It got more and more intense, until I felt I would break in two. “Stop Lord,” I cried. “Remember my humanity!”

We can see the same kind of intensity in the dedication of the first Temple: -

When Solomon finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the temple. The priests could not enter the temple of the Lord because the glory of the Lord filled it.

When all the Israelites saw the fire coming down and the glory of the Lord above the temple, they knelt on the pavement with their faces to the ground and they worshipped and gave thanks to the Lord, saying, “He is good; his love endures forever.”
(2 Chronicles 7:1-3)

The intensity of the Lord's presence is very challenging. Intercessors feel their humanity pressing heavily on them, and there is no escape. The Psalmist had the same experience -

**Where can I go from your Spirit?
Where can I flee from your presence?**

**If I go up to the heavens, you are there;
if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.**

**If I rise on the wings of the dawn,
if I settle on the far side of the sea,
even there your hand will guide me,
your right hand will hold me fast.**

**If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me
and the light become night around me,"**

**even the darkness will not be dark to you;
the night will shine like the day,
for darkness is as light to you.**

(Psalm.139: 7-12)

There are two things which can help here.

Firstly, intercessors must come to expect this intensity. It is a sign that the King is present, and that they are in the right place. Secondly, intercessors get stronger and can bear more of his presence as the years have gone by.

This Celtic prayer has given me courage: -

O Holy Jesus,
Gentle friend
Morning star
Midday sun adored
Brilliant flame of righteousness
Everlasting and eternity
Fountain ever new, ever living, everlasting
Heart's desire of patriarchs
Longing of prophets
Master of Apostles and disciples
Giver of the law
Prince of the New Testament
Judge of doom
Son of the merciful Father
Son of the true Virgin Mary
True and living breath
Grant me your holy grace.

* Emotion not intellect

“But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him. He ran to his son, threw his arms round him, and kissed him.”

(Luke 15:20)

“The universes which are amenable to the intellect can never satisfy the instincts of the heart.”

(Cloud of Unknowing.)

The heart of the rhythm of the spiritual world is the willingness to let emotions speak.

Here are two of my experiences: -

* I was speaking in a very large church in South America. It was a very hard word to the church, but the Pastor wanted me to share it. As I began to speak, I saw a young woman fall on her knees and began crying. "Lord," I said, "I cannot go on. I am damaging your people." But as I looked to the Lord, I saw that he was crying. "If you do not carry on," he said, "You will hurt me." I was caught between two emotions - his and the woman crying.

I carried on speaking, but after a few more minutes, a young man fell to his knees crying and sobbing. Again I said to the Lord, "I cannot go on. I am hurting your people." But as I looked to the Lord, I saw that he was crying. "If you do not, you will hurt me." I was hurting more and more but carried on. Within a few minutes the whole church was on its knees, crying out to the Lord. My emotional stress was so great that afterwards I could not work for a week.

* I once found myself in the Spirit standing on a huge plain. There were no trees or bushes. It was empty for as far as my eye could see. The Lord said to me, "If you travel as far as you can, north, south, east or west, to the very horizon, there is more of me." I felt very alone, very small and very exposed. "This is how it is," he said, "You must be totally open to me. If you build any walls, pull together any hedges or trees to protect yourself, you will break your intense relationship with me."

The emotional side of the spiritual environment can be seen in the Gospels: -

Nain: - “Soon afterward, Jesus went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went along with him. As he approached the town gate, a dead person was being carried out—the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the town was with her. When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her and he said, “Don’t cry.” (Luke 7:11-13)

Gethsemane: - Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him. On reaching the place, he said to them, “Pray that you will not fall into temptation.”

He withdrew about a stone’s throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, “Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.” An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.

(Luke 22:39-44)

Peter and Jesus: - When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?” “Yes, Lord,” he said, “you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.” Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.” The third time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love me?” He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Feed my sheep”. (John 21: 15-17)

“Peter was hurt” - his emotions were impacted by what Jesus was saying, not his intellect. In intercession, the brain has to be put to one side. I have always struggled to explain this side of intercession. Thomas Merton, describing contemplation, wrote this which helps: -

“Contemplation is a more profound depth of faith, a knowledge too deep to be grasped in images, in words or even in clear concept. It can be suggested by words, by symbols but in the very moment of trying to indicate what it knows the contemplative mind takes back what it has said and denies what it has affirmed. For in contemplation, we know by “unknowing.” Or better, we know beyond all knowing or “unknowing.”” (Thomas Merton.)

* Rhythm - the angels

“Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favour rests.” (Luke 2:13-14)

I was praying in the heavenly places, when I heard the Lord speak the word “release.” Suddenly, a flood of angels was all around me, rushing to obey his command. There was so much movement, so much love, so much activity and so much flow. Angels rushed to serve the Lord’s command. There was laughter, light, colour and such great joy. Down they rushed, sweeping me up with them, until they came to a very dark place. There they stopped, and as they waited, in complete stillness, hope, joy, and the fragrance of Jesus filled the place. I knew we were waiting for the Lord.

As I reflected on this experience, which I greatly enjoyed, I remembered this verse –

“Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God.” (Luke 2:13)

I realised then that I had always looked at angels from the wrong perspective. I looked up to their activity, but in the rhythm of the spiritual world, I should look down on what God sends them to do. I need to see them flowing outwards at his command. What the shepherds saw was only the end product. In the spiritual world, intercessors are allowed and privileged to see the start. It's not always easy to grasp this at first.

*** The invisible church**

“But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands on thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven.” (Hebrews. 12:22-23)

The invisible church fills the spiritual world. The entire church of the Firstborn - all who have gone before are there and involved in prayer and praise. The praise is infectious, and it is impossible not to be moved by it. This is how I have found it with the invisible church. When I feel their praise, I begin to dance. When I hear their prayer and intercession, I begin to pray. I am a member of the invisible church - why would I not want to pray, to praise, to dance?

Here are two visions -

- * *“As far as I could see, there were palms waving - and light! So bright. I drew nearer, and I heard such a sound - sweet, deep, longing, calling. I so wanted this sound to be in me - to be me. But what was I seeing?*
- * *I walked forward, and slowly the path, which had been so stony and hard, began to change. It was full of flowers, and their perfume filled my heart. The Lord came to me, holding a branch in his hand. “You are so slow,” he said, “Don’t you want to join in?” and gave me a branch. When I saw it was a palm branch, I began to understand. I went on, into the light, into the sound, into the glory.*

Chapter 4. The sacrificial heart of the intercessor

Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.” (Mark 8:34)

The deeper levels of intercession could easily be called “the sacrifice.” So much at this level is sacrificial and sometimes intercessors are surprised at this. The heart of the Christian faith is the cross. The heart of intercession must be the cross and that involves sacrifice. If intercessors are not prepared to accept this heavy burden, they cannot ensure the deepest environment. Being able to sacrifice is a great privilege but there's no denying how costly it is. It begins here -

Embracing

Intercession is embracing the dying Christ and with him going to the Father to plead the blood. Here are some reflections from older intercessors on this description -

St Benedicta: - “One can only learn a science of the cross if one feels the cross in one's own person. I was convinced of this from the very first and have said with all my heart, “Hail cross, our only hope.”

Julian of Norwich: - “When I looked at the cross, I was safe. For apart from the cross there is no safety, but only the horror of devils.”

Michael the Solitary – “In the shadow of the cross everything else seems of little value. In the shadow of the cross everything is revealed. In the shadow of the cross everything is forgiven. In the shadow of the cross hope is reborn in every moment of time and eternity. In the shadow of the cross, we are saved, forgiven and restored. Let that shadow never fade from your path and all will be well.”

The intercessory journey is one into the cross because only there, can intercessors share the Lord’s intercession. This requires a sacrificial heart. Such a heart is willing to surrender all that is in the heart to the service of intercession in the presence of the Lord. Without this understanding, intercessors cannot progress into the deepest places. What needs to be in the heart and mind?

*** Living sacrifice**

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. (Romans 12:1.)

Edith Stein, also known as Sister Benedicta, was arrested by Gestapo officers in August 1942 and taken to a concentration camp. Her last words before she left the monastery were, “Come, we are going for our people.” There are documented sightings of her in the camp where her sense of calm and compassion for others was clearly seen.

She stood out among the thousands as a person of quiet and peaceful resignation. She is quoted as saying, "The world is made up of opposites, but in the end, nothing remains of these contrasts. What only remains is great love. How is it possible for it to be otherwise?" She said that she wanted to offer herself as a sacrifice for her people, the Jews.

She was murdered in the gas chamber, sacrificing herself both in her life and in her death. This is the way of the intercessor.

The lives of most of the great intercessors of the past would give a similar testimony. For the intercessor the cross is a living sacrifice. Every day it demands that intercessors give themselves to it and to the world for which the Lord died. Speaking personally, I have found this extremely difficult and often hard to endure. The deepest places are tough places.

* Bearing the cross

A certain man from Cyrene, Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus, was passing by on his way in from the country, and they forced him to carry the cross. (Mark 15:21)

James Calata, South African priest and politician wrote this about cross-bearing -

"It is inevitable that in working for freedom some individuals and families must take the lead and suffer. The road to freedom is via the cross."

The intercessory life is for the intercessor the ascent to the cross. When Intercessors do this, not only do they have to bear the penetrating light of holiness but also the burden of judgement. They have to sacrifice their lives, hanging on the cross, broken and humiliated.

Intercessors have to come under the shadow of the cross, and there they are safe. The blood breaks all the power of the enemy, the triumph of the cross is lifted over them like a rainbow, and the peace of the cross fills their hearts.

This intercessor, a 14th century Italian woman put it like this: -

“I enclose myself in the Passion of Christ and receive the hope that I could find freedom.”

She gives a powerful challenge to 21st Century intercessors. They must “enclose themselves” in the cross. They must bear its burdens but will also enjoy its protection. It’s easy to keep the real cross at a distance. But the hill leads to crucifixion. Intercession is embracing the dying Christ and with him going to the Father to plead the blood. The hilltop is the cross. There, intercessors embrace the dying Christ. This is why so few get to the top. The price becomes too high on the way up, and they realise that it can only get higher and harder. Here is a vision to think about -

We climbed a very high mountain and the view was beautiful beyond description. I saw the angels of the Beauty. I heard their praise. “Your cross, Lord, is more beautiful than any beauty you ever made, for in it is the beauty of your mercy for your children. In this beauty, all can be made whole.” I rejoiced in the beauty of the cross.

* Identification

Then Thomas (also known as Didymus) said to the rest of the disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.” (John 11:16)

“Let us go with him,” is part of the deepest intercessory path. It’s a downward path - down into his heart and into the struggles of his ministry. This vision brought me face to face with this issue.

I saw a woman come to the cross. She was filthy and covered in dust and maggots. She smelt very bad, and her whole life was in ruins. “I wrecked my own life,” she said, “I have no excuse and no hope.” I came close to the woman, and saw her ugliness and filth, not just in her body, but also in her soul. Suddenly, to my horror, I became her. Filth was all over me. I smelt of hell. In shock I stood, confused and afraid. The Lord spoke to me – “Now do you understand what it means to identify with my cross?”

This vision shook me greatly and yet I got the point. Identifying is very hard but essential. I did not find this easy at the time and it has not got any easier.

* Suffering

To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. (1 Peter 2:21)

“The more we surrender ourselves to love, the more we surrender ourselves to suffering.” (St Theresa of Avila.)

Most intercessors are aware of the suffering which comes with their intercession. This is a hard lesson to learn, and often younger intercessors have not quite grasped it. At the deeper level however, there is a powerful theology at work as intercessors bear the sufferings of their calling.

*** Suffering - the Lord's delight**

“Here is my servant who I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight.” (Isaiah 42:1)

God encourages Isaiah and all who follow him - those who suffer for him are a delight to him. One of the privileges of being the suffering intercessor is to be the Lord's delight. Those who suffer for his name are specially blessed to him and specially blessed by him.

*** Suffering - the privilege of suffering**

“To this you were called, for Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in his steps.” (1 Peter 2:21)

Christ has left intercessors an example that they should suffer with him. In this materialistic world, the privilege of being allowed to suffer “for the sake of the Name” (Acts 5:41) has been lost in many places. But it is an honour to suffer, to bear the pain and sorrow for belonging to God. As intercessors do this, so they share his pain, and are able to minister to his heart.

*** Suffering - the perfection of suffering**

“Although he was a son, he learnt obedience from what he suffered.” (Hebrews 5:8)

Suffering perfects intercessors. This may not be a popular idea, but if it was true for Jesus, then it will have to be true for intercessors. “Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.” (1 Peter 2:21)

Chapter 5. The weapons of intercession

For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. (2 Corinthians 10:3-4)

When intercessors pray, it is war. One old intercessor said this - “Prayer is warfare to the last breath.” Most intercessors know about the spiritual weapons of Ephesians 6. At the deepest level of intercession other things are needed.

Weapon - the power of the sacrifice

“Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.” (John 1:29)

Satan hates the cross. It is the one thing he cannot imitate or copy. In it is his defeat. He remembers Mizpah (1 Samuel 7) and he remembers Calvary – “the lamb who takes away the sin of the world.” In each case, he was broken by sacrifice. In the 21st century, pleading the sacrifice is a skill which is rare. Isaiah saw it like this -

He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. (Isaiah 53:7)

The Gospel writers saw things much more clearly. They saw that a better blood was needed, a sacrifice provided by God and acceptable to God who would break the curse of the blood: -

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29)

Paul takes understanding of the sacrifice further -

“God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” (2 Corinthians 5:21)

And Peter said this -

“He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.” (1 Peter 2:22)

Weapon - the power of the blood

“For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.” (1 Peter 1:18-19)

Sacrifice and the blood are intertwined, although they're separated here for teaching purposes.

This story has always encouraged me from an experienced missionary -

"I felt a great sense of oppression from the enemy. So, I covered my body, mind and emotions with the blood of Jesus. I began to feel really inadequate: hopeless, small, and ineffective. Was the power of the blood failing me? But then I realised that this was the enemy, increasing his attack because he was afraid - of the power of the blood of Jesus to defeat him, and set people, cities, and nations free. I took authority over the enemy, and each time I did that in the power of the blood, the oppression lifted. The attacks got weaker and weaker, until they stopped - all because of the power of the blood of Jesus."

I have written extensively on the power of the blood but here is a short summary for intercessors.

*** Blood is to do with life and sacrifice**

“The life is in the blood,” (Leviticus 17:11) and this verse will finally bring intercessors to the sacrifice of Jesus.

*** Innocent blood has the power to damage the spiritual flow of blessing in any heart or any nation**

Innocent blood that is spilt has to be dealt with, or creation will be forever trapped at the moment of its spilling. The blood of Abel stands as a great warning to subsequent spiritual history. It was innocent blood, and it remained unrepented of. Cain did not repent but only complained at the unfairness of God’s punishment. From this original act of shedding of innocent blood and the unrepentant heart of Cain, things only got worse.

* Passover – the power of the blood

“On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn—both men and animals—and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the Lord. The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt.”

(Exodus 12:12-13)

This is the power of the blood, from God's perspective. The great plague of the firstborn must have looked very frightening from a human point of view. But there was a way to prevent it entering the house - by sprinkling the blood of the lamb on the doorposts of the house. This blood "spoke" to God, being sufficient to turn away his judgment. Even animal blood, offered within the covenant setting, could be effective. The writer to the Hebrews, taught that if animal blood could do this, how much more precious was the blood of Jesus.

* Covenant - the guarantee of the blood

Moses, got up early the next morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain and set up twelve stone pillars representing the twelve tribes of Israel. Then he sent young Israelite men, and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls as fellowship offerings to the Lord. Moses took half of the blood and put it in bowls, and the other half he sprinkled on the altar.

Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it to the people. They responded, “We will do everything the Lord has said; we will obey.” Moses then took the blood, sprinkled it on the people and said, “This is the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words.”

(Exodus 24:4-8)

The Siniatic covenant was sealed with the sprinkling of blood. The blood marked out this event, protecting it from Satan's attack, and making it everlasting. The new sanctuary was also sealed with blood, (Exodus 29) making it an acceptable place for the Lord, and the ceaseless sacrifices were blood offered to God for forgiveness.

*** Jesus and the perfect sacrifice**

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29)

In order to deal with the blood, a better blood was needed. That blood was the blood of Jesus. To John 1:29 the Bible adds -

You have come to God, the Judge of all, to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel. (Hebrews 12:23-4)

How to plead

How do intercessors move in and plead the sacrifice and the blood? Here are some suggestions although I have hesitated to write them. Having a sacrificial heart and moving within the sacrificial heart of Jesus is intensely costly to the intercessor, yet this is, at the deepest level, intercession. It has to be felt and lived and no amount of suggestion or description can describe that experience.

This is the burden I have learned to carry and the price is high. Against this background here are some suggestions

*** Intercessors have to be identified with that blood**

The Old Testament people knew this to an extent. The blood was on the doorposts, so they were sheltering behind it. (Exodus 12:1-13) They sprinkled it and were sprinkled with it. (Exodus 24:4-8). But Jesus takes the teaching a lot further, showing the need to be identified with the blood - with his perfect blood of sacrifice.

Jesus said to them, “I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.” (John 6:53)

*** Intercessors must let the blood be identified with themselves**

This is the natural development of being identified with the blood. If intercessors identify with the blood of Jesus, then it is identified with them. The blood of the Old Testament could be sprinkled.

The blood of Jesus is, in a biblical sense, in intercessors.

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take it; this is my body.” Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, and they all drank from it. “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many,” he said to them. “I tell you the truth, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it anew in the kingdom of God.” (Mark 14:22-25)

The blood which is “in” intercessors has great power.

At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split. The tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. They came out of the tombs, and after Jesus' resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many people. (Matthew 27:51-53)

Weapon - Crucified to the world

“I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.”

(Galatians 2:20)

It is not enough for intercessors to believe in the cross. They have to lead lives which are crucified to it. Everything has to be crucified so that the enemy has no access. At the deepest level, this can be very costly. Sacrificing possessions and lifestyle are hard. Crucifying lives, bodies, hopes, expectations, marriages and families - that is a really tough place to be. Is it too much to ask?

Spending time at Calvary will answer that question. The question is - are intercessors prepared to go this deep? Or think of it this way –

At the deepest levels of intercession, the “Why” question is irrelevant. The “Why” is because “I AM” went there. Intercessors follow. Intercessors feel. Intercessors die. After visiting this desert of separation a few times, I guarantee that intercessors will not ask “Why” but “Oh God, when can this end?”

Weapon - The power of the word

“I am not ashamed of the Gospel for it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes.”
(Romans 1:16)

“Let there be light.” (Genesis 1:3) “Lazarus come out.” (John 11:43) The word of God is powerful beyond understanding. It has an inner power which can live long after it has been spoken.

All too often God’s people treat the word like some magic which will bring victory. That will not work at the deepest level. For the word of God to work at the deepest level, it has to become part of the intercessor - it has to live in the emotion and the life of the one using it. This is not difficult when it’s at the “Lazarus come out” level. But it is not so easy when it’s rooted in Gethsemane - “Watch and pray” or Calvary - “Take up the cross and follow me.”

Weapon - The victory of the cross

“No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.”

(Romans 8:37)

“But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

(1 Corinthians 15:57)

Intercessors are the victors. The battle has been won. During the time between the Lord's ascension and his return, this victory cannot be fully realised. Only his return will seal the victory. Yet it can be claimed. It can become the framework of the intercessory heart. Intercessors are able to live in the end times' return of Jesus and his victory even though it has not yet happened. If intercessors can grasp this, they have a power in them which can never be broken, and the enemy will be forever backing away from them in defeat. The victory will shine out brightly. Apostle Paul sums this up really well -

“For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

(Romans 8:36-39)

Here is a vision I had of victory.

I heard bells ringing in the heavenly places, and their joy and praise filled heaven and earth. Each bell had a name. They were called “Glory”, “Hope”, “Love”, “Majesty”, “Splendour”, “Victory”, “Forgiveness”, “Redemption”, “Healing”, “Risen”, “Spirit”, “Power.” They rang out their praises, and at the sound, my heart was filled with hope, and I longed to join with them, but when I did my voice seemed so small.

Then I heard other voices. There were hundreds, thousands and millions of them. They were all singing praises, and their sound grew so great that it almost swamped the bells. Backwards and forwards flowed the praises – from bells to voices, from voices to bells. Then the mighty angel proclaimed - “Let praises ring!” A mighty shout rose up from the voices of heaven and the bells crashed out their sound. A great tidal wave of praise swept over and though me. I was enfolded and lifted up to the Throne.

I saw the Lord in glory. His majesty was like living light, radiating out from his heart and filling all creation with his authority, his throne, his victory and his love. He outshone the sun. Suddenly a great pulse of his compassion swept over all of us.

All of us, the living, the raised ones, the angels and the archangels felt it. It pulsed with such love, longing and fulfilment that at its release, the bells ceased their praises, and all heaven fell silent. We had come to the King, and the King had come.

Chapter 6: The spiritual struggle - bringing down the Prince

I have been working in Africa for 30 years, challenging the intercessors to walk the true path of intercession. I began to think about the spiritual situation in the heavenly places. I soon realised that I would need to put the major teaching together in one place, as the principles fit almost anywhere. So, I have done this here.

A very old intercessor wrote this: - **“Prayer is warfare to the last breath.”** It is!

The struggle

When intercessors look at Nations from the spiritual point of view, they soon become aware of the spiritual battle in a different way from what they see with their physical eyes. Apostle Paul made this clear -

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

(Ephesians 6:12)

Here is what intercessors face in the heavenly places. Isaiah describes Satan's character: -

How you have fallen from heaven, morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart, “I will ascend to the heavens; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of Mount Zaphon. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High. But you are brought down to the realm of the dead. (Isaiah 14:12-15)

How can intercessors face such a strong enemy? How can they pull him down? First, they have to know what they are up against.

The character of the Prince

The Bible shows the enemy's character -

He wants worship

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour. “All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.” (Matthew 4:8-9)

The Prince of the powers of the Air (Ephesians 2:2) wants to be worshipped. If the fallen angels once had a place in heaven, then the Prince wants it back. But his worship is false.

He wants the human spirit to be bowed down to worship in defeat. Nebuchadnezzar made this clear -

Then the herald loudly proclaimed, “Nations and peoples of every language, this is what you are commanded to do. As soon as you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music, you must fall down and worship the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. Whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace.” (Daniel 3:4-6)

He wants to reign and rule

The Prince wants to rule over humanity. This is seen in Revelation –

Then I saw a second beast, coming out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb, but it spoke like a dragon. It exercised all the authority of the first beast on its behalf, and made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed. And it performed great signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to the earth in full view of the people. (Rev 13:11-13)

It also forced all people, great and small, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hands or on their foreheads, so that they could not buy or sell unless they had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of its name.
(Revelation 13:16-17)

The Prince does everything to get onto the throne of a nation. He does not do it from love and sacrifice, but from arrogance, aggression and a desire to dominate. He will do all he can to hide this from intercessors. He will show himself as the voice of reason, of tolerance, of any and every faith, of a mature “Everyone can have his own idea” approach.

Or he will blind the church to his working, while in secret he builds his strength. He will use deception. He will enter the heart of the church, weakening and enslaving. He will use every avenue open to him and he will persist, especially as he is mostly unopposed.

He wants to obstruct

The king and his men marched to Jerusalem to attack the Jebusites, who lived there. The Jebusites said to David, “You will not get in here; even the blind and the lame can ward you off.” They thought, “David cannot get in here.” Nevertheless, David captured the fortress of Zion—which is the City of David.
(2 Samuel 5:6-7)

The Prince will obstruct the work of the Lord, just as the Jebusites tried to obstruct David. He will raise up mighty strongholds and taunt God’s people.

He wants to pull down

One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful, and David sent someone to find out about her. The man said, “She is Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite.” Then David sent messengers to get her. She came to him, and he slept with her. Then she went back home. The woman conceived and sent word to David, saying, “I am pregnant.” (2 Samuel 11:2-5)

David's sin pulled him down from the integrity which should be in the heart of a leader. David recovered - but at a great cost. The Prince is not a force which builds up but one which pulls down. He will pull down leaders - political and spiritual. He will pull them down by corruption, by pride, or by deceit. But as he pulls down integrity, so falsehood and deceit advance. Leaders who are false will get promoted.

He wants spiritual powers

Meanwhile, the Philistine, with his shield bearer in front of him, kept coming closer to David. He looked David over and saw that he was little more than a boy, glowing with health and handsome, and he despised him. He said to David, “Am I a dog, that you come at me with sticks?” And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. (1 Samuel 17:41-43)

The Prince will never hesitate to use spiritual powers against intercessors. Balaam (Numbers 22:5-6) used curses and so did Goliath. Intercessors are fighting against the dark powers in the heavenly places and they will invoke spiritual powers against them -

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. (Ephesians 6:12)

He wants to chain

This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain. For he had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him.

(Mark 5:3-4)

The Prince will chain and break. This is his nature -

They had as king over them the angel of the Abyss, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon and in Greek is Apollyon (that is, Destroyer). (Revelation 9:11)

He wants to deceive

Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden’?” (Genesis 3:1)

And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. (2 Corinthians 11:14)

The Prince remains a dangerous threat. Why hasn't he been pulled down before? Because he deceives God's people. He uses intellect and philosophy to convince the wise that he is not there. Or he comes to an agreement - "Leave me alone and I will leave you alone." He lulls God's people into a false sense of security. He shows himself as not really a big threat.

Or he shows himself in success, wealth, prosperity and achievement. God's people then come to believe that these things are marks of the Spirit of God - not the deceptions which they are. Anyone who points out the deceptions is accused of being a Deceiver!

The Prince is a liar and a deceiver - the Father of Lies. (John 8:44) In this disguise, he is really at his most dangerous. For unopposed he will gain access to the Kingdom and destroy the church. Once he has weakened or destroyed, he can march across the nation, crying "They are mine." But by then it will be too late to oppose him and bring him down. Time is short.

He is angry

Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to wage war against the rest of her offspring—those who keep God's commands and hold fast their testimony about Jesus. (Revelation 12:17)

This Prince is *always* angry. This is his nature. He is angry that he is subservient to the Lord, angry against any godly work. He is especially angry about the Church which represents everything he wants and everything he hates.

He is restless

Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. (1 Peter 5:8)

The Prince has no home, no throne, no permanent place. He prowls around, looking to disturb and destroy. He brings this unsettledness into situations.

He releases fear

Then the Philistine said, “This day I defy the armies of Israel! Give me a man and let us fight each other.” On hearing the Philistine’s words, Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified. (1 Samuel 17:10-11)

Goliath brought fear into God’s people. This is because fear is part of his nature. The Prince brings it on people because he himself is afraid.

The Prince is always afraid. It is the mark of his kingdom, just as joy and freedom are a mark of God’s kingdom. This fear has its root in the Lord’s teaching on the Stronger One (Mark 3:23-29). The Prince is afraid that another Stronger One will destroy him. He remembers what happened to the spirits in Legion. So, he always displays strength - like Goliath – to hide his fear.

Breaking his hold

The beginnings - prayer

Breaking strongholds is about prayer. Intercessors have the right to appeal to God to hinder and obstruct the grip of a demonic ruler over a Nation so that the gospel can be proclaimed, and the darkness may be lifted from the eyes of unbelieving people.

Their task is to drive the Prince out of his territory by prayer. He wants intercessors to believe this -

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour. “All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.” (Matthew 4:8-9)

But he is a liar as Jesus revealed: -

You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

(John 8:44)

He will resist, because he does not want to give up anything. Daniel teaches –

Then he (Gabriel) continued, “Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia.

(Daniel 10:12-13)

Intercessors have the right to challenge him because whenever they proclaim the Kingdom of God, the Lord's Kingdom is established and any who claim ownership must leave.

But if it is by the Spirit of God that I drive out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

(Matthew 12:28)

Despite what the Prince says, intercessors have the power: -

The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. (2 Corinthians 10:4)

Intercessor stronghold

No weapon forged against you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you. (Isaiah 54:17)

The Prince wants intercessors to think that he cannot be broken, and that he is free to roam the Land. But Jericho shows that he is very afraid -

Before the spies lay down for the night, Rahab went up on the roof and said to them, “I know that the Lord has given you this land and that a great fear of you has fallen on us, so that all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you. We have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to Sihon and Og, the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan, whom you completely destroyed.

When we heard of it, our hearts melted in fear and everyone’s courage failed because of you, for the Lord your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below.”

(Joshua 2:8-11)

Fear filled the Satanic stronghold of Jericho. As I thought about this, I had this vision: -

In the spirit, I found myself inside the stronghold of the Prince. A voice whispered to me –“You had better get out of here.” “Not at all,” I replied and called down thousands of angels to form a stronghold of glory and praise within the Prince’s stronghold. I poured the blood of Jesus all around them, so that they can never be moved.

The angels are within the stronghold of the Prince, and they are worshipping the Lord within the blood. This gives intercessors great strength and a foundation on which to move against the Prince.

How might intercessors attack the strongholds?

For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. (2 Corinthians 10:3-4)

There are no new weapons – just the old ones.

1. Much prayer

It was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them. He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword. When he saw that this met with approval among the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also. This happened during the Festival of Unleavened Bread. After arresting him, he put him in prison, handing him over to be guarded by four squads of four soldiers each. Herod intended to bring him out for public trial after the Passover. So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him. (Acts 12:1-5)

It was prayer and prayer alone which saved Peter. It is prayer and prayer alone which changes things. If the Prince is going to be broken, the intercessors have to increase their prayer.

This is where they have to begin –
Pouring out their hearts before the Lord

Hannah was a very sad woman. She could have no children, while her rival could have many. One day, Hannah went to the Temple to share her sorrow with God. She was praying so hard that Eli the Priest thought she had been drinking, but she replied -

“Not so, my lord,” Hannah replied, “I am a woman who is deeply troubled. I have not been drinking wine or beer; I was pouring out my soul to the Lord. Do not take your servant for a wicked woman; I have been praying here out of my great anguish and grief.”

(1 Samuel 1:15-6)

She poured out her heart. Intercessors must do the same - pour out their hearts before the Lord to break the Prince.

Mourning before the Lord

To “pouring out” has to be added mourning. “Mourning” must go very deep into the intercessory heart. Israel mourned for the loss of Israel as the people settled into Babylon -

Beside the rivers of Babylon, we sat and wept as we thought of Jerusalem. We put away our harps, hanging them on the branches of poplar trees. For our captors demanded a song from us. Our tormentors insisted on a joyful hymn: “Sing us one of those songs of Jerusalem!” But how can we sing the songs of the Lord while in a pagan land?

(Ps 137:1-4) (New Living Translation)

Jesus encouraged mourning. He said this to the women of Jerusalem as they watched his progress to Calvary -

“Daughters of Jerusalem, don’t weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.” (Luke 23:28)

Intercessors can mourn when they see things from the Lord’s point of view. Here is one of my visions of this -

I saw the Lord staggering up to Calvary. His cross was so heavy. “I am bearing the weight of sorrow, disappointment, failure, sin, grief and death,” he said. “These burdens I bear. This is the weight of the cross.”

The way through to destroying the Prince is through the Passion of Jesus (Mark 14-15)

Intercessors have always known this, but this is going to be a tough experience. The Lord opened the Passion to me, and I was shocked at the powerful emotions there - and I am a Prophet, used to the emotions of heaven. This is what I saw and felt -

- * *The despair was indescribable.*
- * *The darkness was so aggressive.*
- * *Helplessness was everywhere.*

I experienced this only on the fringe of the Passion. What must it be like nearer the cross? This is the path which must be walked. The path goes deeper and deeper into the cross. Intercessors must walk deeper and deeper into this experience of Calvary.

Walking to Calvary

From the Garden of Gethsemane, the arrest, the betrayal, the trial, the scourging, the walk to Calvary, the execution and the agony - in all of this the Prince was in control. He became ever more violent and triumphant. He mocked, ridiculed and exalted in destruction. Intercessors have to walk this path, absorbing all this pain and hurt. It is the only way to the moment of victory. This is the way -

**Just as there were many who were appalled at him—
his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any
human being and his form marred beyond human
likeness. (Isaiah 52:14)**

**Who has believed our message and to whom has the
arm of the Lord been revealed?**

**He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a
root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to
attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we
should desire him. He was despised and rejected by
mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.
Like one from whom people hide their faces he was
despised, and we held him in low esteem.**

**Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering,
yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by
him, and afflicted.**

**But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was
crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that
brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we
are healed.**

**We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has
turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him
the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah 53:1-6)**

“My God, my God why have you forsaken me?”

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from my cries of anguish? My God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer, by night, but I find no rest. Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One; you are the one Israel praises. In you our ancestors put their trust; they trusted and you delivered them. (Psalm 22:1-4)

Intercessors finally arrive here. This was the moment of total destruction and sacrifice. At this point the Prince was broken. This he could not copy, counterfeit or mimic. Intercessors have to get here and from this Position enter into the Father's heart and plead the blood. Then they can break the Prince. He knows this and he fears us.

2. Bind the strong man

In fact, no one can enter a strong man's house without first tying him up. Then he can plunder the strong man's house. (Mark 3:27)

The Prince is a complex spirituality. Like Legion, he is made up of many. One of the ways of restricting him is to begin to bind some of the more obvious ones. This may look a very small action, but all military engagements begin by destroying little things - railway lines, communications and supplies. This begins to trouble the enemy and puts fear into him - just what Joshua did at Jericho with his marching strategy.

Such binding has to be God-centred, and this is how intercessors make sure that it is -

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words.

(Romans 8:26)

Intercessors begin by getting into the flow of the Holy Spirit, as he intercedes with Father. As intercessors do this, the Spirit will begin to intercede about what things need binding. When intercessors have this knowledge, they can begin to bind from heaven and not from earth. The Prince will be terrified of this - he remembers Mizpah.

3. Outposts

Intercessors need to place outposts in the spiritual world - places from which worship and glory can flow, preparing the way for them. What might such outposts be? Here are some of them -

* **“Call to me.”** (Jeremiah 33:3)

This is the outpost of prayer. From this place, intercessors can pour a river of prayer into the enemy's territory.

* **“I am the Lord.”** (Exodus 20:2)

This is the outpost of authority. From it, intercessors proclaim, “Jesus is Lord” and under that authority the enemy has to retreat. In this authority, the Lord’s kingdom is established, and all thieves have to leave.

*** By my Spirit.** “Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord Almighty.” (Zechariah 4:6)

The Spirit raised Jesus from the dead, and intercessors have that power (Romans 8:10-11). As the power of the Spirit is released, every Goliath will be destroyed and every stronghold weakened.

*** All obey.** “Raise your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea to divide the water.” (Exodus 14:16)

Nothing can withstand the word of the Lord. All creation, all humanity and all demonic must obey him. This message pours out of this outpost.

*** Worship.** “The four living creatures said, “Amen,” and the elders fell down and worshipped.” (Rev. 5:14)

Worship flows from this outpost, exalting Jesus and his kingship. The enemy hates this sound because it highlights his defeat.

*** The sacrifice.** “Then Samuel took a suckling lamb and sacrificed it as a whole burnt offering to the Lord. He cried out to the Lord on Israel’s behalf, and the Lord answered him.” (1 Samuel 7:9)

The power of the blood flows from this outpost, washing away the foundation of the Prince – his grip of sin and death.

*** More than conquerors.** “In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.” (Romans 8:37)

From this outpost flows the triumph of Jesus, which will never fail and is irresistible.

*** Heals you.** “Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.”
(Mark 5:29)

From this outpost flows the healing stream, which releases and shows the power of the Lord.

*** Repentance.** “Return to me and I will return to you.”
(Zech. 1:3)

This outpost holds the power of repentance. The joyful reunion of those who have fallen away. It breaks the Prince’s lies - that God has abandoned his people.

4. Infiltrate

Gideon infiltrated the stronghold of Midian: -

Gideon and the hundred men with him reached the edge of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, just after they had changed the guard. They blew their trumpets and broke the jars that were in their hands. The three companies blew the trumpets and smashed the jars. Grasping the torches in their left hands and holding in their right hands the trumpets they were to blow, they shouted, “A sword for the Lord and for Gideon!” While each man held his position around the camp, all the Midianites ran, crying out as they fled.

(Judges 7:19-21)

Intercessors need to adopt a similar strategy. In every part of their personal and national life, they need to be like Gideon's 300 - bringing the potential for breaking of the stronghold into the spiritual battle. Then, when the Lord calls, they can break the jars, and to his horror, the Prince will find that God's people are on him. What areas can be infiltrated?

- * **Sickness.** Battle cry - “I am the Lord your Healer.”
(Exodus 15:26)
- * **Stress.** Battle cry - “Not my will but yours be done.”
(Luke 22:42)
- * **Temptation.** Battle cry - “God will provide a way out.” (1 Corinthians 10:13)
- * **Pressure.** Battle cry - “Call to me and I will answer you.”
(Jeremiah 33:3)
- * **Lack.** Battle cry “My God will provide my every need.”
(Philippians 4:19)
- * **Obstruction.** Battle cry – “At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow.” (Phil. 2:10)
- * **Sin.** Battle cry – “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins.” (1 John 1:9)
- * **Circumstances.** Battle cry - “You will hear a voice behind you saying “This is the way. Follow it.” (Isaiah 30:21)
- * **Sorrow.** Battle cry – “When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.” (Matthew 9:36)
- * **Grief.** Battle cry - “I am the resurrection and the life.”
(John 11:25)

5. Identify, besiege, plead the blood, advance

Identify

Intercessors need to identify the strongholds of the Prince. All that is hidden will be revealed. These questions might help: -

- **What are the gods of the nation?**
- **What are the altars of the enemy, where he and humanity have made covenants?**
- **Are the leaders of the nation dedicated to a god or to the Lord?**
- **Has there been bloodshed in the nation. Where?**
- **On what principle has the land been founded?**
- **Where were the old seats of power built?**

Besiege

Intercessors need a strategy to surround the strongholds with praise, prayer, the blood and angels. In this way they do to them what the Prince did to Jericho – “shut them up.” Intercessors need to restrict their power and push them in on themselves.

Plead

Intercessors need to plead the blood actively against the stronghold and the Prince. In a few verses, Matthew shows the power of the blood.

At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split. The tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. They came out of the tombs, and after Jesus' resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many people. (Matthew 27:51-53)

Advance and reclaim

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. (John 10:10)

I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world. (John 16:33)

Here are two visions I had which have encouraged me as an Intercessor to advance and reclaim -

In the spirit, I found myself inside the stronghold of the Prince. A voice whispered to me – “You had better get out of here.” “Not at all” I replied and called down thousands of angels to form a stronghold of glory and praise within the Prince’s stronghold. I poured the blood of Jesus all around them, so that they can never be moved.

I saw a great stadium, full of people. Everything was gold, but there was a throne in the middle which was of the purest gold I had ever seen. It was surrounded by figures dressed in white and gold. Satan came into the Stadium and took his seat on the throne.

One of the figures was holding a crown of pure gold, He went forward and placed it on the head of Satan.

Everyone stood up and cheered - except me. A figure came to me and said, "You must stand and cheer." I replied "I am a prophet of the Most High. I have a heart of flint towards your Master and all his works. I am here to testify before my master of what I have seen. I will never stand."

The dark figure writhed in evil and anger. "Trouble will come to you," it said. "No trouble will ever come to me from you or your kind. My Master rules the heaven and the earth. I am leaving now and if any of your kind come even near me, I will kill them."

The dark figure was afraid and backed away

Little by little, intercessors can crush the strongholds and take back what has been stolen.

Chapter 7. Towers intercession

Deepest intercession finds a natural home in the Towers ministry. Here is the Hebrides Tower – shortened in this edition. Those who want to go deeper can get an idea of how this can happen. I have explained the towers ministry briefly. There is a dedicated site for towers. Details in the resources section.

Hebrides tower - Guard the fire

I was standing on parched earth. Destruction had come and destroyed everything. “Lord,” I said, “What has happened?” “My people failed me,” he said, “and this is what has happened.” “Is there no hope?” I asked. “Dig,” he replied.

I had no tools and so I dug with my hands. My nails broke and my fingers were cut by the stones but still I dug and dug and dug. I grew weary of digging. The sun was burning my back and I had no water. Evening came and I knew that dark powers were waiting to bring more destruction.

Then when I was almost exhausted, I found a small jar of oil. It was beautiful and golden and lovely. “Some have guarded the fire,” said the Lord. “When the destruction came, they hid it carefully in their hearts awaiting the day when once again my anointing could fall.” “Who are these people?” I asked. “Where are they?” The Lord reached down and turned the jar towards me. There scratched into the glass was the word “Hebrides.”

How the towers ministry started

When the war between Israel and Gaza broke out in 2023/4, I was working on my mission base in Ghana. I held a four-session prayer time over a month for this war. About 10 people joined me online and 35 on catchup.

As the prayer times began, I became aware that something unusual was happening during them and especially at the last one. During that prayer time the Lord told us that he was going to stand in the middle of the conflict area and asked which of us would stand with him. “We need a tower of intercession,” I said. “Who will occupy it with the Lord?” As so often in intercession I did not know what I was really asking for.

Some of the group said they would stand in the tower. I thought that was the end of it. I was soon to discover it was far from the end of it.

During the subsequent weeks the Lord began to show me that a tower of intercession was a very strong spiritual presence, and that the tower in the Middle East would last until he returned. I asked him if there were any other such towers, and quickly he showed me many. Each one had a specific name reflecting its function. I know where some of them are but not all. I know that at this time I haven’t identified all of them.

Spiritual background to the Hebridean tower

“A hard rain came.”

As I prayed and reflected on this tower, I asked the Lord about its spiritual background. The Lord replied - “A hard rain came. A hard rain will always come to those who are not alert to the enemy. He seeks to destroy all my great works.”

Perhaps the Hebridean tower stands in a place where watchfulness was lost. There was a great revival - one of the greatest ever seen, but were the intercessors so dazzled by the moves of the Spirit that they failed to make provision for the inevitable reaction - the hard rain? Can the “hard rain” be seen in the Bible?

A new Pharaoh

Now Joseph and all his brothers and all that generation died, but the Israelites were exceedingly fruitful; they multiplied greatly, increased in numbers and became so numerous that the land was filled with them. Then a new king, to whom Joseph meant nothing, came to power in Egypt. “Look,” he said to his people, “the Israelites have become far too numerous for us. Come, we must deal shrewdly with them or they will become even more numerous and, if war breaks out, will join our enemies, fight against us and leave the country.”

So they put slave masters over them to oppress them with forced labour, and they built Pithom and Rameses as store cities for Pharaoh. But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread; so the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites and worked them ruthlessly. They made their lives bitter with harsh labour in brick and mortar and with all kinds of work in the fields; in all their harsh labour the Egyptians worked them ruthlessly. (Exodus 1:6-14)

It had started well. Pharaoh welcomed Joseph's family. But as the years passed, the new king was angry at the prosperity of these immigrants of which he knew nothing. The hard rain began to fall. Oppression, persecution, bitterness and despair began to afflict the people. They had made no provision for this. They grasped the freedom of deliverance from their famine but failed to make provision for the inevitable hard rain of satanic destruction which would come against them.

During that long period, the king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God. (Exodus 2:23)

Here are the bitter fruits of the hard rain. Here is the result of failing to guard the fire, to guard the vision, to guard the heritage. My conviction is that the hard rain fell after the glorious Hebridean revival but in our New Testament lives, the Lord established a tower of intercessory protection, guarding the fire for the future. That tower might be ready now to activate the Lord's will and bring the fire again.

If the Hebridean intercessors can guard and continue to guard the fire, the possibility is there that the Lord will again bless. The key to this blessing is the intercessory move of the spirit in the tower of “Guarding the fire”. This places an enormous responsibility on the Hebridean intercessors. They are going to be challenged to the deepest levels of intercession.

Rooms in the “Guard the fire” tower

As I have studied the towers and have tried to understand their character, I have used the picture of rooms. These rooms equip the intercessors for their work from the top of the tower. Teresa of Avila also did this in her book “The Interior Castle.”

Usually the rooms speak for themselves but in this tower, I have reflected a lot on the first four rooms. They are all “deep” rooms. This tower has very deep antecedents and has seen the fire. To guard the fire requires very deep intercession and intercessors.

Room 1: Deep – fullness

“I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.”

(Ephesians 3:17-19)

Intercessors in this tower have to be committed to go into the deepest possible places of the spiritual world - deep into the heart of the Lord. That is where the revival fire is to be found and that is where the intercessors must guard it. This is a tough challenge and only the most mature intercessors will be able to face the joy and the strain of bearing such love.

This is a hard room to enter. Trying to describe it, I wrote these words which perhaps will give a glimpse into what happens here.

*I saw the pure love of the Lord
and I wanted all of it.
I began to search.
I danced in the wildness of the sunset sky.
I ran into the storm.
I embraced the sea, became the waves
and ached for the love I could not find.*

*I came at last to The Love –
a steep high mountain from which
I jumped and fell and fell.
Deeper and deeper.
I drank and drank until
I could drink no more.*

*In the stillness that followed,
the Lord spoke.
“There is more” he said.
I fell and worshipped the Love
beyond my heart to understand,
and was satisfied.*

Room 2: Deep determination and unyielding

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-9)

From the room of experiencing the fullness of God's love, intercessors move into the room of "determination and unyielding." Guarding the fire requires the deepest of determination and the refusal to yield to the enemy's whispers that "Everything is lost from the previous time, and it never will come back". This deep determination has to last for decades.

Here is how one older intercessor found his determination-

"I believe that when God finds the clean hands and the pure heart we shall see springs in the desert and rivers in the dry places. My dear people, let us get on our faces before God and pray that He may yet visit us in mercy and that we, His people, may once again ascend the hill of God and stand in His holy place. May God grant it."

Room 3. Deep understanding of the strategy of the enemy

“You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”

(John 8:44)

In the deepest places of intercession, the intercessors need a deep understanding of who they are up against. Those that guard revival fire can expect nothing less than the harshest of treatment from the enemy who despises it with all his heart. I have already written about this earlier in this material. Intercessors must base their intercession on this conviction –

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

(1 Corinthians 15:57)

Room 4. Resisting almost beyond endurance

And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson and Jephthah, about David and Samuel and the prophets, who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. Women received back their dead, raised to life again.

There were others who were tortured, refusing to be released so that they might gain an even better resurrection. Some faced jeers and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were put to death by stoning; they were sawed in two; they were killed by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated - the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, living in caves and in holes in the ground.

(Hebrews 11:32-8)

Intercessors in this tower have to resist with all their heart, even to death. They are guarding something so precious that there can be no question of giving up or turning back. Like the other three rooms, this is a deep challenge from the deepest places of intercession.

Here is another vision I had on this issue. It challenged me to endure, to resist at whatever cost - which I do not find easy.

In the spirit, I found myself standing in hell, among the spirits of rebellion, who had cursed and denied, blasphemed and destroyed, condemned and murdered. Even here, their rebellion continued. They threatened me. They were ugly and filthy. They were aggressive, assertive and grasping power. They towered over me, cursing God and his people. "If only we could get out of here," they threatened, "we would put an end to him."

I was afraid, but then I heard the music of heaven, coming from within this terrible place. It was beautiful and clear. The rebellious spirits backed away from me. “Oh no,” they cried, “not that again!” They began to shrink in front of my eyes. Smaller and smaller they got, until they were nothing more than small powerless shadows. “Don’t send us away,” they sobbed. “Let us remain. Have you come to destroy us?” I did not understand what had happened. “Hell could not withstand me,” said the Lord. “The sacrifice triumphed here. But the price was high.”

Room 5. Guarding the fire.

“Watch and pray.” (Matthew 26:41)

Guarding the fire needs powerful spiritual weapons in the heart of the intercessor. The spiritual armour of Ephesians 6 is precious, but intercessors need something much deeper. Here are some of the weapons to be picked up in this room. Much of this material has already been examined.

Weapon - The power of the sacrifice

“Look - the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world” (John 1:29)

It is the sacrifice of Jesus which breaks the power of the enemy. Those who pray here must learn to draw on the strength of that sacrifice, know how to release the power of the blood of Jesus, and how to take a stand on the Lamb who was slain. (1 Peter 1:19: Revelation 5:6)

Weapon - Crucified to the world

“I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.” (Galatians 2:20)

The enemy will use everything worldly to trap and defeat those who pray here. What can he do against those who have crucified everything in the world, and live only for Christ? Those who pray here must crucify self, (Mark 8:34) love of money, (1 Timothy 6:10) desire for security in the flesh, (Matthew 6:19-21) longing for recognition, (Matthew 5:11-12) physical needs, (Matthew 6:28-33) and sexual needs. (Matthew 5:27-28)

Weapon - The power of the word

“I am not ashamed of the Gospel for it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes.”
(Romans 1:16)

“At the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Philippians 2: 10-11)

Those who pray here need to proclaim the word over and over again and release its strength.

Weapon - The victory of the cross

“No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.” (Romans 8:37)

Intercessors have won! It's true! When the enemy comes against those who pray, he is already defeated. Revival might look a hard thing to achieve, but with Satan's defeat, it can be done.

Top of the tower

The seventh time the servant reported, “A cloud as small as a man’s hand is rising from the sea.” So Elijah said, “Go and tell Ahab, ‘Hitch up your chariot and go down before the rain stops you.’” Meanwhile, the sky grew black with clouds, the wind rose, a heavy rain started falling. (1 Kings 18:44-5)

Elijah never gave up his belief that the rain would come. His intense sevenfold prayer based on his conviction that God would answer, finally brought what he longed to see. Here is the vision I had from the top of this tower - may God fulfil it.

The wind is coming. Look out to the horizon and see. Now it is small - smaller than a man's hand. It has been waiting for the moment. The wind is coming. Can you not feel it on your face? No more than the whisper of the voice. The wind is coming.

Chapter 8. Additional material for reflection and study.

1. Charles Finney on prayer

I came across these principles when I was reading Charles Finney recently and I think they might be helpful for intercessors as they find their way back.

- 1.** Prayer opens the soul to God; lifts the soul up to God. God floods with light the soul of those who open their hearts to him in earnest, pleading prayer.
- 2.** Prayer increases faith and brings spiritual blessing. It is through prayer that we become acquainted with God, and a more intimate knowledge of God must of necessity, increase our faith.
- 3.** Prayer enlists us for God's will. It puts us in an attitude of receptivity where we become more willing to do God's bidding. It increases our desire to know and to do his will and thus enlists us in his service.
- 4.** Prayer gives us determination, patience and the courage to face and conquer the problems, and difficulties of life. It not only gives us the spiritual strength to do so, but often the necessary physical strength as well.

2. Full exegesis of Hebrews 7:25

There are a number of words describing prayer in the Bible. This passage from Timothy is very helpful: -

I urge then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people — for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Saviour, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all people. This has now been witnessed to at the proper time.

And for this purpose I was appointed a herald and an apostle - I am telling the truth, I am not lying - and a true and faithful teacher of the Gentiles. (1 Tim 2:1-7)

There are key prayer words here: -

* **“Petitions”**

This is the Greek word **“deesis”**, and it means “deep heartfelt prayers.” Here are some examples: -

But the angel said to him: “Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to give him the name John.” (Luke 1:13)

Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” (Matt 26:36)

Intercessors have to move to a deeper kind of prayer. The Hebrew word for intercession is the word “**paga.**” This means “to encounter, meet, reach, entreat, make intercession.” Here is one use of this word: -

“Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.” (Isaiah 53:12)

For “paga”, the Greek translation is “**entygchano**” which means “to petition or supplicate.” Here is a New Testament use of this word: -

“Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.” (Hebrews 7:25)

“Enteuxis” (noun form) began to appear in Greek centuries before Christ, meaning simply “to meet a person.” Through the centuries, the word took on a different meaning. Eventually, it meant, not just “to meet,” but “to meet and converse.” Then, as time went by, it began to take on yet a different meaning: “to have intimate fellowship with the person.”

These words reflect an intimate association with the Lord.

“Paga” and “enteuxis” give an idea of what intercession really is – an intimate entering into the flow of the intercession between Jesus and the Father. Intercessors step into that flow, and from within it, can make powerful prayer: “enteuxis” prayer.

Now this verse from Hebrews brings it all together: -

Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office; but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. Therefore, he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them. (Hebrews 7:23-25)
 (“Intercede” here is “entygchano.”)

Intercessors are called to enter into this intercessory flow between the Father and the Son. This is “enteuxis.” They are invited to stand in this position and share this intercession. This is a very challenging place to be, but it gives great power in prayer because it is intercession exactly and precisely into the will of God. Intercessors are standing in that flow so will know exactly what is being prayed and can join that flow. Intercession will be precise, targeted and effective.

Resources

Many individual towers are available to read on our website. There is also a video teaching series and videos on individual towers - www.unshakeable-towers.org.

Jim Smith writes - “I have been an Anglican Pastor in the UK for over 55 years, and involved in intercession for over 40 of those. and I serve also as a missionary in Ghana. Recently I have been learning about towers of intercession - special places in the world where intense intercession is needed.”



Rev Jim is searching for individuals who are deep in the intercessory stream who be willing to hear what the Lord is saying to him about intercession.

In this this book Jim Smith lays out a guide to any who are beginning to enter into an intercessor's path.

A selection of what is also available in this series:

The Towers. Here Jim Smith explains how the towers material came into being and looks at much greater depth at what intercession is and how it might work within the towers.

The Singapore tower. In this material Jim Smith takes a look at what the tower in Singapore might look like.

The England Tower. In this material Jim Smith explores what the England tower might be like and how intercessors might enter, repair and use it.

Blazing Fire. In this this book Jim Smith explores what the Blazing tower might be like and what intercessors will find there.

Ascending the hill. Jim Smith explains how intercession develops in the heart of a Christian and what it means for them.

Visit our website for this and much more material
and video teaching

www.unshakeable-towers.org