



# THE ACTIVITIES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH (PART 1)

by Dr. Daniel O. C.

If Christ is praying for me in the next room, I would not fear a million enemies, yet distance makes no difference. Jesus is praying for you and me. If Jesus is praying in the next room, would you be afraid? No! Jesus is praying for you at God's right hand surely!

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Arguments never settle issues but prayer changes situations. Do not make arguments with people but remember prayer is powerful. Therefore prayer is profitable when it is practiced.

- Do you practice 'prayer'?
- Do you seek God in prayer?
- Do you embrace His love through prayer?
- Do you believe that He hears you when you pray?

The confidence that we have when we pray is that He hears us. Our God hears us that is why we pray. We do not pray because we know how to pray. We pray because God answers prayer.

### **THE ACTIVITIES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH**

You and I are part of the New Testament Church – a group of people, the body of Christ called out, chosen by the Lord and separated from the world. We need to know and understand the activities of the church in those days when it was born and when you and I were yet to be.

What were the activities of the church? Many people ask this question: “The Scriptures tell us that the power of God moved greatly during the time of the

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early church. Why is it that we do not see the same power of God that moved during the time of the early church in our churches today?"

Where are the manifestations of God's presence and the tangibility of the anointing of God that we read in the Scriptures concerning the early church and the New Testament church? Why are we not seeing them today? Why is it that today many of us are speaking through our head knowledge and no more in the demonstration of God's power? Why is it today that our churches are filled so much yet there is a lacking in the lives and a great vacuum in the hearts of people? There is no love among the brethren, and no compassion for one another.

The early church had their priorities right. They did not preach neither talk nor make references to money. They knew God would supply their need. But how is it that today, from our pulpit to the pews we talk about nothing other than money? Where is the faith of God's people? Jesus asked this question, "When I come back on earth, shall I find man and woman in faith?"

The Bible warns us that even though we are in the world, we are not to be part of the world. How is it then that the world has entered into the church and the church has become worldly? When we go through the Scriptures we can find out the activities of the New Testament church. We need to apply the same

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principles today so that we will be able to gain the same results that they had during their time.

The Bible tells us that when the apostle preached, 3000 came to the Lord. The Lord added to the church. Today, what is happening? Even though we have 3000, 5000, 10000 or 20000 in our churches, the churches have not made much spiritual progress. We do not really mean business with God.

### **1) THE EARLY CHURCH PREACHED JESUS**

One of the things that we can see in the Scripture concerning the activities of the early church is that they preached Jesus! They did not preach about man, they did not preach false doctrines, neither did they preach money.

- Philip preached Jesus
- Paul, the Apostle, preached Jesus
- Peter preached Jesus

What are we preaching today? The disciples and Paul preached sound doctrine, doctrine of repentance. The Bible tells us, that they preached the doctrine of repentance, faith, baptism, laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, eternal judgment and eternal life. They preached all these doctrines based on the

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Word of God. They did not preach money neither did they talk about the manner of measure one had to give.

We need to understand that money is only a servant. Money is not a master. Money can buy only what money can buy, money cannot buy you what money cannot buy!

- Money can buy you a building but money cannot buy you a home.
- Money can buy you books, but money cannot buy you brains.
- Money can buy you a Bible, but money cannot buy you salvation.
- Money can buy you a bed, but money cannot buy you sleep.
- Money can buy you food, but money cannot buy you appetite.

Therefore money is a servant! We should not overestimate the place of money in our lives but value it only as it is supposed to be. Money should never become our god.

## 2) THE EARLY CHURCH PREACHED THE UNADULTERATED MESSAGE

The Early Church preached the unadulterated message. They did not preach the convenience message. They did not go there to make you to believe that 'well what I preached is right'. They preached convicting messages, messages that cut

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across the hearts. They did not preach messages of convenience, neither did they preach 'sugary' messages. Their messages cut across the heart to turn people to God (Acts 2:32-43).

This is what we need today! When we preach unadulterated message it will cut the hearts of people and that will turn them to repentance. The response of the people to such messages was: "What shall we do?"

Have you ever gone to a meeting, where the message cut your heart and you asked: "What shall I do now?" Then, that is a convicting message. Today, all of us want to go to churches where we feel good, where they tell you it is perfectly alright for you to sin, where you won't be condemned for your sin. You may be told that it is not really sin and that God will understand your situation.

The Bible says the apostles preached the message that cut through the hearts of the people and there was conviction and they asked: "What shall we do?" You need to reach a breaking point where you ask: "Lord what shall I do now?" Only then will you find your way back.

The prodigal son reached a breaking point where he said: "I have my father, I have to go back, I am not worthy to be called his son, I just want to be one of the

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labourers, an ordinary servant. After all they eat better than even anybody else why should I suffer here?"

Have you reached your own breaking point? Or are you still playing church? Are you still going to church because you want to meet your social elite? Or do you go to say: "Lord as I come, let Your Word cut my heart, so I will know where I have fallen and I will run back to you." The Bible says: "Run back to God from where you have fallen." They asked: "What shall we do?" Peter did not mince his words. He straightaway told them to repent.

Today do we preach repentance in our churches? No! What we preach is prosperity – "Give \$10 and the Lord will give you \$1,000." That is what we call religious gambling. If you give \$1000 the Lord will give you \$1 million!" That is a good business. Then all I need to do is go to the bank, take some money and give to the Lord and the Lord will give me triple of that amount! Then I do not need to work anymore. That is a good business, isn't it? Do not be deceived. That is what we call religious gambling. Since when did God become a gambler? Check on what you do and hear. Keep your eyes on the Scripture.

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The people asked: "What shall we do?" and Peter told them to repent. Are we willing to repent? The Book of Mark 1:15 says: *"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the Gospel."*

Are we willing to repent from where we have fallen and say: "Lord, I repent from my evil ways." Beloved, the church does not save. The first step towards God is repentance. "Repent!" That is what the Lord told them straight to their faces. He did not mince his words. He did not tell them: "Well, you know, you are God's people – Israelites, it is okay," but He told them "Repent!"

Today, God is telling you: "Repent!" You may say: "Ten years ago I have repented." Listen. Repentance is a daily affair. What is repentance? It is a change of attitude towards sin. Are you willing to repent and say: "God I have sinned against You."

Prophetically, Peter said that this very promise was not only for the Jewish believers, but also for the Gentiles afar off – you and I today. That is why we are prophesied – "As many as the Lord will call." You and I are called. He used many other words and concluded by saying: "Be saved from this perverse generation." Today the Lord is saying the same thing to you Church: "Be saved from this perverse and crooked generation." Be saved. Are you sure of your salvation?

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You may have had an encounter with God 10 years ago, but that does not mean you are a Christian today. Your Christian life has to be renewed everyday. You have to make sure that you are walking with God. You cannot say that because you were saved 10 or 12 years ago, it is alright. No, beloved! The Bible says: "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling."

*Philippians 2:12*

*Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.*

Three thousand were added to the church. They came because the truth was spoken. When the truth of God is spoken and the hearts of people begin to embrace the truth, many souls will be saved. Signs and wonders follow the word and God begins to add to the church.

Today, we are talking about 'my church...', 'your church...', 'their church...' etc. But the truth is: the Church does not save you. Beloved you can be there and still go to hell! You have to hear it. Do you embrace the truth? Are you being fed? Are you being shown the way of the Lord? Do you see sincerity and honesty? God

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loves sincerity. Do you tell God: "Lord I want to follow You, I do not care about what man says."

### 3) PRAYER AND THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

*Acts 6:2-4*

- 2 *Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables."*
- 3 *"Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business;*
- 4 *"but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word."*

The Bible made it clear that the Apostle said: "Let us give ourselves to the ministry of the Word and prayer." Today in most of the churches we do not pray – not even the church leaders. We do not even pray before we select them.

Leaders are rather selected by:

- Familiarity
- Nepotism
- Favouritism

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We no more allow God to do His will. Beloved people of God, ask yourself a simple question: "Am I a child of God?" Stop deceiving yourself. You know right in your heart, you are not. Even though you proclaim to be a Christian, even though you go to church every Sunday, right in your heart, you know you are not in a good relationship with God. Today is your day to turn back to Him.

**4) THE EARLY CHURCH PREACHED IN SEASON AND OUT OF SEASON**

The early church preached in the season and out of season. They did not wait for certain seasons and say: "Well we have certain seasons to preach." In 2 Timothy 4:2-5, Apostle Paul was referring to the early church as to what they did. They preached in the season and out of season, rebuked, exhorted, encouraged, taught, reached out to people, and told them the truth.

They taught the:

- incorruptible word
- immovable word
- unshakeable word
- impregnable word
- the ever-living word of God

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Today, we have contorted and distorted teaching – twisted and turned just to make people feel good. We use one verse, blow it out of proportion and use some play words to make it humorous so that people will be laughing and enjoying the deceptions. We want to make everyone feel good. That's not God's will.

Beloved, I do not need to wear a white robe to be spiritual. You do not need that either. Spiritual life is manifested on how you conduct yourself. You do not need to wear a spiritual uniform before you are recognised as a child of God.

It is time for you to quit being deceived. Stand firm on the word of God. Tell God: "This is Your word, I want it to be real to me and let me embrace it and remain pure."

Preach the word with truth and conviction. The Bible says that at the end, people will have itching ears. They will not like to hear sound doctrines. That is why they say: "Oh I prefer to go to this Bible class, because the teaching at the other place is too strong!" Let us stand on the truth and preach the strong uncompromising message the Lord puts in our hearts. The day we change, that is the day our ministry is over! The truth has to be spoken. Sometimes you hear, "Oh he has no grace, no mercy. I don't feel comfortable." The matter is not whether you feel comfortable or not. On that day, God's word will be a witness

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against you, because you had heard it. You have itching ears, that is why you do not want to hear sound doctrine. Those who do not want to hear what God wants them to hear will heap up teachers for themselves who will teach them false things.

It is time, my beloved. Ask yourself a question: "Am I a child of God who desires to have the best of God or do I want to have the best of Satan?"

Many will turn away their ears from the truth. They will begin to listen to fables. Maybe that is what you are doing today thinking that we are extremists. Well, I am an extremist for Jesus, whose extremist are you? Extremist for Satan? Well you are in trouble. Many of us are lukewarm. We do not want to be sold out for God. When you embrace the love of God you will never allow compromise to be in your life.

Do not be bothered about all the things around you which tend to distract you from the main focus - Jesus. Go ahead and do your work as an evangelist, endure hardships and afflictions. I always tell people: "If you believe in the Lord and walk in righteousness, you will never lack any good thing."

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David said: "I have been young and now am old yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken nor his descendants begging bread" (Psalm 37:25). I am one of the testimonies of God's goodness.

If you walk in righteousness, you will see the goodness of God:

- God will care for you
- He will feed you
- He will give you all that He has for you.

You will lack nothing because your steps are being ordered by Him.

## **5) THE EARLY CHURCH INTENSIFIED PRAYER IN THE MIDST OF THREATS**

The early church intensified prayer in the midst of threats. But today many Christians in the midst of threats and attacks cannot intensify their prayers.

Be frank to yourself. When you face difficulties do you pray? Many of us do not pray. That is the time when we begin to TTC – TALK, THINK AND CRY.

- Talk about our problem
- Think about our problem

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- Cry about our problem

We never, never pray about it. We never submit it to God. This is how some people live today.

In the book of Acts 4:23-31, see what the Bible says:

*23 And being let go, they went to their own companions, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them.*

*24 So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said: "Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea and all that is in them.*

*25 who by the mouth of Your servant David have said: 'Why did the nations rage, and the people plot vain things?*

*26 The kings of the earth took their stand, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against His Christ.'*

*27 'For truly against Your Holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together.'*

*28 To do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done.*

*29 Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word.*

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30 *By stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus.*

31 *And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness."*

The disciples were facing threats. They were warned not to preach in the name of Jesus anymore. They were told not to speak anything about Christ. They were warned but did they stop? No! How many of us always keep quiet because we are threatened not to speak about Christ? Let us see what the disciples did when they were warned not to speak about Jesus.

The disciples:

- intensified prayer
- reached out
- told their companions what they had been instructed
- raised up their voices and began to pray
- They said: "God stretch out Your hand and perform miracles. Prove Yourself Lord that You are God."

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The Bible says: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, fear, famine, danger stop us from reaching out to the people and tell them about Jesus Christ?" (Roman 8:35)

My beloved, ask yourself a question: When you face threats do you reach out to God and embrace His love by submitting to His Lordship and say: 'Lord, I pray...' or do you just feel, 'I cannot say anything so I will keep quiet' because you do not want to face the consequences of standing up for the right or for His Word or as His witness. The Bible says if you seek to save your life, you will lose it. The disciples intensified prayer in the midst of threats.

Do you give yourself to prayer? A real man of God is a man of prayer. A man or woman who stands against all odds is a man or woman of prayer. How much time do you spend:

- talking to God
- praying for your congregation as a minister
- praying for those around you
- praying for those who are close to you
- praying for those who invest into the kingdom of God through you

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Do you pray for them? No! The most common slogan today is “How are you?” “I will pray for you!” The next 20 years that person will not remember you. When we Pentecostal Christians gossip we call it sharing. When we do not want to do something we say: “As the Lord leads.” Whenever a Pentecostal preacher or a Christian tells you: “As the Lord leads”, it actually means they do not want to do that. “I have to be led by the Spirit,” is often an indirect way of telling you: “Sorry I won’t do it.” So he says: “As the Lord leads” or “by faith”. It is time for us to be real. If you are not real, you cannot make an impact in people’s life.

My beloved, the disciples of the early church were facing threats yet, what did they do? They reached out to God in prayer. They embraced His love and tapped from His strength. Church, we need to get involved in prayer not deceiving ourselves hypocritically. I hear many people say, “We go for prayer walk.” Out of 20 people going for the prayer walk, 10 do not talk to the other 10. They are all enemies. They do not even look at each other. Some put their faces northwards, some southwards, some eastwards and some westwards. *God sees all this*. The Bible says that the house that is divided cannot stand.

## 6) THE EARLY CHURCH SANG HYMNS, PSALMS AND SPIRITUAL SONGS

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The early church sang hymns and psalms. When people meet you what can they tap from you? Can they see the joy, peace and love of the Lord in you?

The Word of God encourages us to build up our lives and others' through hymns and psalms. Ephesians 5: 19-20 tells us to be:

*19 Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.*

*20 Giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Do you enrich yourself in psalms and spiritual songs, making melody in your heart, regardless of the situation you are facing? Beloved, praise has power. When you begin to praise the Lord, God will come with His sovereign power to defend your cause.

The early church knew how to tap from the strength of God. When Paul and Silas were locked up in jail, they began to sing praises to God and the Bible says that there was an earthquake. When you praise God surely a spiritual earthquake will take place concerning your situation.

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Have you ever wondered whether there is power in praise? Pick up my teaching called "Power of Praise." You will understand what I am talking about.

Regardless of the situation you go through, if you praise and thank God, make melody unto Him and give thanks to our God through our Lord Jesus Christ, then victory will be yours. Tell the Lord: "You are worthy to be praised Lord," even when the situation you are going through is quite adverse. Do you know that when you praise God in the midst of difficulties, you are actually saying: "God even though I am in the midst of this adverse situation, you are greater than my problem!" You are actually saying to the Lord: "I choose to see You and not the problem." Remember one of the worship song says: "Now we do not look at the problem in the land but choose to praise Him."

*Colossians 3: 16-17*

*16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*

*17 And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.*

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Let us learn to give Him praise! The New Testament church was praising God with hymns, psalms and spiritual songs. Do you know that in many churches today they do not sing hymns because they say that hymns are for the traditional people? Beloved, that is a lie. If you consider the lyrics of each hymn it has powerful meanings. That is why we sing hymns. We must stay balanced. We are Pentecostal and also evangelical. Hymns are very important for a child of God as you saw in the Bible. God did not establish this church to be a replica of another church. This church must make a difference. It must strike a balance and stay put in the doctrine of the Bible and not the doctrine of man.

#### 7) THE EARLY CHURCH READ THE SCRIPTURES

The early church read the Scriptures. Have you heard some people tell you: "Don't READ the Bible but MEDITATE upon it," and they quote to you Joshua 1:8: *"This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success."*

When we teach you anything, we will show you in the Scriptures. Let us see what the Bible has to say. Does the Bible say: "Read the Scriptures?" Yes. Where? Colossians 4:16: *"Now when this epistle is read among you, see that it is read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that you likewise read the epistle from Laodicea."*

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Certain things you believe may not be scriptural. It says 'read'. Thank God for the meditation of the word but the Bible also said 'to read'. Only if you read the Bible can you meditate on it.

*Colossians 4:17*

*And say to Archippus, "Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it."*

Do not be a gullible person and I do not wish you to be gullible too. Whatever is taught to you, beloved, search the Scriptures. If you have questions bring it back to your pastor or church leader. Do not just accept everything taught to you without searching the Scriptures. It is our job to show you in the Scripture what God has for His people, so that you and I will catch hold of them and practise them. The Word of God is power! You might say now that it says read only at 'that' place. No, let us look at another verse in the Scripture in *1 Thessalonians 5:27*:  
*"I charge you by the Lord that this epistle **be read** to all the holy brethren."*

Notice, it says 'read' the Scriptures. Let this very Scripture be read to all the holy brethren. Is it in your Bible? Have you been told that there were 3 wisemen who came to see Jesus? Wrong! There were no '3' wisemen. The Bible says 'wisemen'. Have you also have been taught that the wisemen came and saw Jesus in the

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manger? Wrong! The wisemen did not see Jesus in the manger. They saw Jesus in the hired room (Matthew 2:1-12 / Luke 2:1-20).

Do not get deceived. It is time you looked into the Scriptures. You do not have power because you do not know the Scriptures. It is not sufficient to only listen to what is told to you. When someone teaches you, tell them to show you in the Bible. See the truth for yourself.

*1 Timothy 4:13.*

*Till I come, give attention to **reading**, to exhortation, to doctrine.*

Give yourself to reading. Reading what? Fables? No! Reading the Scriptures. The early church – the New Testament Church read the Bible. That is why we read the Scriptures. They read it, you also can read.

## 8) THE EARLY CHURCH CONDUCTED THE LORD'S SUPPER

The early Church conducted the Lord's Supper and love feast.

*1 Corinthians 10: 16 – 17*

*16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?*

*17 For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread.*

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They conducted Holy Communion in obedience to the Lord's command and that is why we conduct Holy Communion.

Remember it is not written in the Bible that you must have Holy Communion once a month. It is the tradition of man. Neither is it written in the Bible that you must have Holy Communion once a week. You can have as much as you can, only with reverence. That is all! You can have Holy Communion in your own home too.

*Acts 2:46*

*So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart.*

When you break bread in your home with your family, surely you will never open your mouth to call your wife 'stupid', you would not call your husband 'idiot', you would not look at your children and say 'foolish children.' After taking Holy Communion, would you say such things? Surely not! That is why it is good for you to take it at home so that you would not speak vulgar words anymore but glorify the Lord in your home.

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