

# On Prayer and Preaching

by Art Katz

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*The quality and power of the word that goes forth in public ministry is directly affected by the quality of prayer, identification, and togetherness among the brethren.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 21:13, Acts 2:14, Romans 12:1-2, 1 Corinthians 12:12-27, Ephesians 4:3, Philippians 1:27, Colossians 3:14, Hebrews 10:24-25, James 5:16, 1 Peter 4:10

**Topics:** "Unity in the Church", "Prayer"

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## Description

Art Katz emphasizes the critical role of prayer and unity among believers in enhancing the effectiveness of preaching. He argues that the quality of prayer and the spiritual connectedness of the congregation directly influence the power of the spoken word. Katz highlights that true participation in the ministry requires a collective bond, where the congregation shares in the burden of the message, much like Peter's sermon at Pentecost, which was powerful due to the unity of the apostles. He warns against the observer mentality prevalent in modern society, urging believers to engage actively in the spiritual life of the church. Ultimately, Katz calls for a sacrificial approach to prayer, where intercession becomes a priority, releasing divine power during the ministry of the word.

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## Transcript

In my opinion, prayer undertaken before, during, and after the public ministry of the word affects the quality and power of the word that goes forth, without which we miss the fullness of God's intention. Another factor would be the "dwelling together in unity" of the brethren to whom the word is being spoken. If we are not really bonded, and just going along, or we have some unspoken and unresolved things, then that will unquestionably affect the life of the spoken message.

Are we together sufficiently in God's sight as to really release a quality of life? It is not just the speaker as being the vocal member bearing the weight of it, but are we all bearing it together with him in participation. Something of an existential kind is unfolded in proportion to the quality of prayer, identification and togetherness that is true of us. The word is birthed by the spasms and contractions of prayer before it is finally brought forth. For the most part, we do not see the spiritual connectedness, and therefore our prayers are so often unfocused and nominal.

We are religiously performing something that is expected of us, but our heart is not in it, not because we are lazy or indifferent, but simply because we have not understood the spiritual reality of the thing. Our speaking and preaching is affected by the depth and quality of the common life together, even though it is

only one mouth expressing it. Peter's first sermon, which led to the salvation of thousands of resistant Jews, is an example of this: But Peter, taking his stand with the eleven, raised his voice and declared to them: "Men of Judea, and all you who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give heed to my words" (Acts 2:14).

The key to the power of that address was: "But Peter taking his stand with the eleven." Peter spoke in perfect agreement with those who rose with Him. What he said is precisely what they would have said. They were in agreement, not only with the word, but also with each other, because they experienced a Pentecost themselves together. The fire that was upon their heads also forged them into one. We have lost this understanding because ours is a "professional" age where individuals are not only celebrated in the world, but also in the church.

There is little emphasis on church life as the corporate expression and channel of the life of God. The message may find its expression through one mouth, but the life that issues is relative to the authentic spiritual agreement and participation of those in the that group. The world has really schooled us into an observer mentality rather than participant, and also to a sense of individual separation one from another. But in the kingdom of God, we are as much responsible corporately for the word as we are for the mouth through which the word issues.

This is the whole distinctive of man and woman in "one new man." Can the woman find a depth of satisfaction to hear through her husband that which is in her own heart, and which she might actually have greater ability to express, but wants it to come forth through the head? Is she joined with him, and so identified with him that his success in it is her own satisfaction? On the corporate level, we should be so jealous for the word that our only gratification is for the word to come forth in fullness and power through whomever the Lord has appointed.

We should see it as being ourselves doing the speaking, because we are so one with that mouth. Can you hear a message and have your interest engaged and at the same time intercede? That would take a remarkable quality of spirituality, maturity and separation from self. The ultimate sacrifice would be to leave the room and to miss what is taking place, and not even know what is going on, in order to give yourself to intercession. "My house is a house of sacrifice," said our Lord, and that sacrifice, like any act of self-denial, releases an enormous power in that moment.

Power is released wherever the principle of the cross or self-denial is taking place, even the denying of yourself the pleasure and enjoyment of hearing the thing that is going forth, and to separate yourself for intercession even while it is going forth. As long as the prayer is going forth, then the word is going forth, and the moment it ceases, then the word ceases.

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