

Give to the Lord...

By Jim Golden

Just the other night I was praying and worshipping the Lord with some friends and the Scripture kept coming to mind, give to the Lord... strength. We used to sing a song that went something like:

*Give to the Lord, sons of the Mighty; give to the Lord, glory and strength...
(See REV. 4"11; 5:14).*

As I began to think more about this I was intrigued at the prospect that the Almighty needed me to give Him strength. One revelation that is clear throughout the Scriptures is the omnipotence of our God. He is the Almighty! So what is the Scripture saying? I believe it could be saying many different things, but as the night went on and others shared things that were on their hearts two definite themes began to emerge. I believe that these two things maybe keys to a more fulfilling relationship with our Lord.

One place in the Gospels it says that Jesus, because of their great unbelief, could do no significant works or miracles, only lay hands on a few sick people and heal them. The inference is that somehow because of their unbelief his capacity to function was limited or weakened. It would seem that our faith or belief in Jesus' ability is connected to the strength of his ministry. Now that he has ascended into heaven and his Spirit has been given to his followers it only follows that the same is still true as he dwells in us!

True, this theory has been greatly simplified, but I believe it is at the heart of the issue as to why we seem spiritually weak. The underlying truth is that we cannot be any stronger than we allow Jesus to be within us. It is our conception of who he is to us and through us that can make all the difference when we are confronted with the challenges that life or the devil brings our way.

The second theme is like the first, but is more focused on us than him. If we can weaken Christ's ability to minister by what we do or don't believe about him then we can strengthen or enable this same ability by what we do or don't believe also. In the first theme we are mainly speaking about his ministry to others. We often refer to his followers as his hands and feet. We are officially declared to be the Body of Christ. Once we understand the full implications or reality of what that means then we can begin to see more clearly why this is such an important issue. The second part of this scenario is his ability to minister to us individually.

I remember reading something in the Old Testament about the two-fold ministry of the priest. The priest would minister to God and to the people. One time the priesthood had offended God in some way and they were no longer permitted to minister to Him, but only to the people. I do not want to digress from the theme of this writing, but I have seen in my own life a similar thing happen. There have been times when the heavens seem as though they are made of brass and nothing I did seemed to allow me to break through. Yet, when there was a need brought to me by one of the saints I was allowed to pray for them and their need was met.

I don't pretend to understand all that is going on behind the scenes, but I feel that the distinction is important. I am not suggesting that because the heavens seem like brass from time to time in your lives that you have offended God. Many times He may withdraw your awareness of His presence so that you learn to walk by faith and not just feelings. He said that He would never no ever leave us or forsake us. It is His desire to make that more than just a Scripture verse in our lives, but a living reality. Faith, not sight, brings pleasure to our God!

This could be why we experience moments of "glory" so sporadically. We need to give the Lord the strength he needs to minister to us personally. What does that mean? As the evening's events continued it became clearer that often it is the unexplained circumstance or situations and our appropriate or inappropriate responses to them that can either strengthen or weaken God's ability to minister to us personally. As one person said, "It is easy to praise God on the mountain top, but the sweetest fruit is always "born" in the valley."

When the events of your life don't go the way you expected, is it your tendency to withdraw from the Lord? Do walls of defense or self-protection mysteriously appear? Or have you determined that there is nothing that can separate you from the love of God, whether His love comes in the form of praise or chastisement? I think that the question that Jesus asked his disciples long ago might be especially appropriate in this generation, "... will you leave me also?" My prayer for you and me is that our response would echo theirs, "where else can we go, YOU have the words of eternal life?"

I believe America as well as the world is in for some times of extreme testing in the days and months ahead. Like no other time in history we need to give to the Lord the strength (due His name) that He has enabled us to give Him and not hold or shrink back. I don't know about you, but I do not want to be one of those souls that shrinks back from Him. He takes no pleasure in them. I want to be one who brings Him delight and strengthens and enables Him to do to and *through* me what He has planned to do. AMEN!