

The Ministry of intercession VS The works of Accusation

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Date: 04 January 2026

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[0 : 00] It's been good to be here and the songs and the testimonies that were shared were a blessing to me.! And appreciated all that. Thank you for the children's lesson too.

I want to talk today about a couple of things, but primarily about intercession.

And the ministry of intercession was about a week ago someone, a brother shared with me from another congregation that that's something that's really speaking to him and their church.

And it all week has been speaking to me now as well. And so, yeah, I understand that when you talk about intercession and things like this, and then also the opposite of maybe intercession or the thing that people do, we do.

That is perhaps the opposite. I want to look at that as well. And that makes us all a little bit maybe vulnerable. And opens up something, and that is accusation.

[1 : 37] Intercession or accusation. The one is a ministry in God's kingdom. It's what Jesus does. The other one, accusation is the works of Satan.

I'll just say that right up front. Because he is the accuser of the brethren. He's the one that accuses us. And, but Jesus is interceding for us.

Does that make sense? I mean, if you just put it in a nutshell, that's where it ends up. It's kingdom and ministry.

You know, we often, we talk about ministries or missions or we lift up certain things that we think are godly and right and rightly so.

We lift up maybe preaching. Somebody preached a good message or that was a good teaching or whatever. Good service, good serving each other.

[2 : 44] But one of the most powerful ministries in the kingdom of God is often the least seen. And it's intercession. It's praying for someone else.

Standing in the gap for someone else. What is intercession? Yeah, it's standing in the gap. It's not very flashy and it doesn't seek recognition.

Something we can't see that much. Yet scripture shows that entire nations, churches and families rise or fall based on it.

Based on intercession. Standing in the gap. In Ezekiel 22 verse 30, it says, So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall and stand in the gap before me.

I don't have this in my notes, but I saw a quote that said, That intercession builds a bridge, but accusation builds a wall.

[3 : 59] Just wanted to. That just came to my mind. And I believe that is accurate. Intercession means standing before God or coming to God on behalf of someone else.

Carrying needs, sins, battles and burdens to the Lord. And before I forget, I just that song that Jeffrey picked that really ministered to me this morning in a different way than before.

Just because I've studied for this and. And when you picked that song, I'm just going to turn to it real quick. That just really ministered to me and what you shared as far as going to Honduras and needing the prayers of those that that you love and those that love you.

I'll add that, too. And may we remember that as you and your sisters go to. To. To Honduras that we pray for you and lift you up and.

And ask God to protect you and all those things. And we prayed for you last night, too, by the way. Needing the prayers of those I love.

[5 : 22] I want my prayer, my friends to pray for me, to bear my tempted soul above and and intercede with God for me. I need the prayers of those I love.

Don't we all need that? Don't we need. Prayers. I had a. Recently. Or not long ago, seemed like there was some clouds lifted in my own life and.

And. And the sun shined again and. And. And I could see a path forward and. And then later I find out that someone was praying.

Isn't that how it is sometimes? And how many times does that happen in our life? And we don't know that someone's praying. That's OK, too. We never find out.

But by praying and interceding for another. It may be as simple as just the cloud lifting off of them and. They can see Christ better.

[6 : 22] And so on. To walk in the light. Isaiah 53 verse 12. Uh. Isaiah 53 is a familiar chapter, but in verse 12, it says.

Therefore, will I divide him a portion with the great and he shall divide the spoil with the strong. This is talking about Jesus. Jesus.

Because he has poured out. His soul unto death. And he was numbered with the transgressors. And he bear the sin of many.

And made intercession for the transgressors. This ministry of interceding. Is. Jesus ministry. It's what he does.

Intercession. Intercession. And I have a lot of quotes here. But intercession is not gossiping to God about people. It is pleading with God for people. And intercessor says, Lord, have mercy.

[7 : 23] Lord, please intervene. Lord, save. Heal. Protect. Restore. I love those words. I love the restore. Restoration.

Reconciliation. That's another ministry that the Bible gives us. It says we have the ministry of reconciling. Reconciling. Reconciliation. People unto God.

Jesus Christ. He is the foundation of intercession. He is the one that started it. In Hebrews 7, it says he. He always lives to make intercession for them.

And yes, intercession is kingdom ministry because it begins with Christ himself. Jesus. He interceded on the cross.

He said, Father, forgive them. That was an intercession. He was. And here he is being crucified and tortured and.

[8 : 26] And killed. Bleeding and dying. And he's. And even then he's thinking of us. He's thinking of his persecutors. He's saying, Father, forgive them.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Today. We read in Romans chapter 8, which I want to turn there then. But in Romans 8, in verse 34, it says that he now he intercedes now at the right hand of the father.

And intercessor serves or Jesus serves as our high priest representing us before God, the father. When we intercede, just so we're clear on this, we're not inventing something new or inventing a ministry.

This we're just continuing Christ's ministry here on earth. It's his ministry. It's what he began. Peter says, we are a royal priesthood.

Here's a quote. No strong church exists without hidden intercession. And I believe that it's it's an attitude of the heart.

[9 : 48] It is more than just praying. It is also caring for each other. It's caring for one another. In fact, how do we pray if we don't care?

Maybe we first need to care. I'm not sure which comes first, but probably we first need to care before we can really pray and intercede. Caring is perhaps the motivation.

Love. Love. And it. And it. And Timothy. And Timothy. Paul says, I exhort first. First of all, that.

Supplications, prayers, intercessions. Be made for all men. Paul exhorting.

So it's. So it's. Like a commandment. Even. He says that supplications, prayers and intercessions be made for all men.

[10 : 48] In first Timothy two, verse one. Intercession prepares hearts before the gospel is heard. We know that many times in great revivals in the past.

Those revivals didn't happen necessarily by the preaching. Yes, the preaching was used, but it's the prayers beforehand. It's people praying.

And then God moved. Intercession restrains evil and invites God's mercy. Intercession breaks down spiritual strongholds.

Many times before they show up in the natural. Spiritual strongholds are broken. Some of the examples in the, in the Bible.

Moses. He stood between God and Israel. Read about that in Exodus 32. Abraham pleaded for a wicked city. Actually, he was.

[11 : 55] I think his motivation there was his nephew lot. But. He pleaded for a wicked city. Samuel.

Samuel. Samuel. Said that it would be a sin for him to stop praying. I, I don't have that pulled up right now, but. Um, I was reading that story.

Where Samuel said. That it basically it would be a sin for him. He doesn't want to sin against God and stop praying for Israel. He felt it was a sin to stop praying for them.

And in the heart of a true intercessor. There is humility and not pride.

There is faithfulness. And not visibility. and not visibility. Not necessarily anyway.

[12 : 57] But for sure there is faithfulness for an intercessor. There's compassion and not condemnation. There is scripture, or we might say, is biblical, not emotion alone.

Obedience. Even when prayer feels heavy, or maybe if we're too tired or too busy, but we are obedient like Samuel.

We're obedient and we pray, even if we don't feel like it. Intercession often feels like a burden before a breakthrough.

But God is looking for intercessors today. I believe that. God is looking for that. In Ezekiel, he said, I sought for a man.

And God is still asking today, who will pray? Who will seek my face? Will we pray? I appreciate the burdens lately for prayer.

[14 : 11] I believe that God is speaking that to us here. Who will pray for families? Who will pray for the church? Who will pray for leaders? Who will pray for the lost?

Intercession says, I will pray. I will pray. It is not a secondary ministry.

It is kingdom warfare. God is. I will pray for the Lord. And it is Christ-like obedience. God's kingdom advances on its knees.

God is. In James 5, verse 16, it says, The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

I want to look at intercession versus accusation. The question is, whose voice are we carrying?

[15 : 20] You know, I go through this and I realize my own failures in this. I'm preaching to myself. I believe that, and I want to make some application here, but probably most of us can look back and say, yeah, that wasn't right.

I was too accusing. And we want to look at a few of those, you know, how those things come out versus caring and loving and being intercessory.

But the Bible says in Proverbs 18, verse 21, Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.

Amen. In Scripture, many times it talks about two opposing voices being at work.

Death and life are in the power of the tongue. Life or death. The one accuses and pulls people down.

[16 : 43] The other lifts people toward redemption and restoration. And I'd already mentioned the ministry of reconciliation.

Be reconciled, the Bible says. To be reconciled. Reconciled to what? To Jesus, number one.

To Christ Jesus. Reconciliation. And reconciled to each other. Reconciled in relationships.

Reconciled in marriages. You know, that's something that I didn't think about until just now in this message. But marriages need reconciliation.

Reconciliation. And it is a ministry of reconciliation. As Christians, we want to see that, right? We don't want to just hear about it.

[17 : 38] We want to do something about it. Well, we can pray. We can intercede. We can talk to God on behalf of others. To see people come and be reconciled.

People come and be redeemed. And to be restored fully to God so that God gets glory.

The question isn't whether we're speaking. The question is, whose voice are we echoing? Right? You know, I had to think about how businesses in the professional world, they know there's a truth in this.

Not necessarily intercession, but they know that it's more powerful to give a positive word than a negative. Sometimes you have to give a negative or, you know, a correction.

But they know that they get more out of their employees by lifting them up and making them, yeah, getting them motivated.

[19 : 01] In fact, they hire in motivational speakers to really motivate the workforce and the company. And, you know, wow.

You think about that, I think, what about us as a church? What about the church of Jesus Christ? Are we lifting each other up? Are we motivating each other, encouraging each other on?

Not so that we have a better church offering, like in business, but that God's kingdom expands and it grows and we influence others and so on.

not against the motivational speakers. I'm just saying there's something deeper than that yet.

And that's in the body of Christ. Revelation 12, again, verse 10, it says, for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

[20:13] You know, a lot of times we look at Satan as just one that tempts us. And he does. He's the tempter. But he is also the, he's called here the accuser.

He is also an accuser. He's the one that brings condemnation. Something that, some things that accusations do.

One is it exposes sin without offering hope. Or we could add, it exposes wrong or error without adding any hope.

It reminds people of their past. Now get this. It reminds people of their past instead of pointing them to the cross.

Intercession. The attitude of an interceder or intercession will always point us to the cross. It'll always point us to hope and redemption. It condemns rather than corrects.

[21:22] You know, there's a vast difference between condemnation and conviction. I wonder sometimes how many people, believers, serve God because of condemnation versus conviction.

Like, having true heart conviction. James and I talked the other day a little bit about, or you mentioned about, the laws of God being written in our heart.

That's conviction. That's, things that are written in our heart, they're not condemning, but they're conviction. I think with our, many of our background, where we come from, we struggle with condemnation.

And I know I do. I struggle with that way too easy, probably. Again, need the prayers of those we love. Let's turn to Romans 8.

Read some verses there. I just love how this first part of the chapter starts in, where it addresses condemnation.

[22:43] There is therefore now, we know the verse, there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.

And that's the key. Are we in Christ Jesus? If we're not, we're already condemned. But if we're in Christ Jesus, there is no condemnation.

Hallelujah. There is none. We might imagine there is, we might start thinking there is, but Paul says there is none. If we are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, another key here, but after the Spirit.

If you claim to be in Christ Jesus, but you walk after the flesh, well, that's contradictory. If we're in Christ Jesus, then we are not walking after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. From the law of condemnation.

[23:55] Death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.

That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the Spirit, but after, I mean, sorry, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh, but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

In other words, we mind the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

The carnal mind is an enemy against God. It can't be subject to the law of God. Those, then, that are in the flesh cannot please God.

So if we walk in the flesh, we cannot please God. I can't please this flesh. The flesh, the carnal mind, and God at the same time.

[25:12] And then he comes back again in verse 9. He says, But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now, if any man be in, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

Sometimes we talk about the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ as though it's optional. As though it's, yeah, I'm kind of walking in the flesh, but I'm still a Christian, though, right?

Well, in verse 9 here, it says that if you don't have the Spirit of Christ, you're none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead, because of sin.

But the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.

There is life and there is liberty in the Spirit. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty, the Bible says.

[26:33] I think we'll go on to, well, we'll come back maybe later to some of the chapter 8 there. You know, in the natural, in our nation, a prosecutor never asks the jury for mercy.

Only the defense attorney asks for mercy, right? The prosecutor never does. He only wants a guilty verdict. When believers speak without grace, they may be telling the truth, but they're speaking from the wrong spirit.

That one hit me. Jesus came with truth and grace. He didn't come with just grace. came with truth.

In fact, He is the truth, the way, the life, but He came with truth and grace. And we see that He lived it out.

He lived that out in His life here on earth. We see that over and over as He spoke with people and interacted with people. He gave them truth, yes, but He also showed them mercy.

[27:58] He didn't, the woman that was brought to Him by the Pharisees. He didn't defend her, her guiltiness. He just said, neither do I condemn thee, but go and sin no more.

That was truth and grace speaking. The rich young ruler, He gave him an opportunity. He told him a way forward. He told him the truth.

He told him the truth. When we magnify sin, I might say, or a problem, but especially when we magnify sin more than Christ or more than a Savior, then we're not speaking for Christ.

anyone can magnify sin and say how terrible it is or how terrible you are. But if we don't magnify the Savior more, then we're not speaking for Christ.

We don't have the spirit of intercession. In fact, we're echoing the enemy. We're echoing the enemy. We're echoing And when we magnify sin more than our Savior, we step outside of Christ's ministry and into the enemy's territory.

[29:33] If we can have a clear picture of what is intercession and what is accusation. I had to think of you, Jeff, and your sisters going to Honduras and how I trust.

I mean, I was there, we were there, but not teaching school. But I assume you're going to need some of that to where you're going to be ministering to some of these children.

I hope that's what happens, that you get to minister to them and there's probably some messed up lives and so on.

but yeah, that you can have the spirit of intercession to reach them. I think that's the purpose of the school, isn't it?

Is to reach the community through those precious little ones. Magnify our Savior. Yeah, it was terrible, yeah, I was bad.

[30 : 41] it was a bad deal. But the Savior is greater. Where would we be without that? Where would I be without that?

Without the knowledge of a great Redeemer. Do we lift Him up? Do we lift Him up as the answer? In Hebrews it says, wherefore He, Jesus, is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.

Again, we see over and over in the New Testament how Jesus was an interceder. He interceded for the sinners. That's why He came, why He died.

Here's a thought or an example. When Moses came down from the mountain, when he found Israel in sin, He didn't abandon them.

He went back up into the presence of God. And here's what he said, Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin, and if not, blot me, I pray thee out of thy book which thou hast written.

[31 : 59] In Exodus 32.32. What a heart. I don't claim to understand that or have that, but he was basically telling God, let me be lost.

Save Israel, but blot me out of your book. That's a caring heart beyond my understanding.

And when Jesus prays for believers, who am I to speak against those that he shed his blood for and intercedes for?

At Calvary, Christ satisfied every righteous demand of God. When Jesus bled and died, he satisfied the wrath of God.

How are we doing with condemnation? Are we living in that spirit of, in that freedom where the spirit of the Lord is there is liberty?

[33 : 07] Are we walking in the spirit? When God removes filthy garments, the church has no authority to put them back on someone.

That was a quote I found. You and I don't have any authority to try to put those filthy garments back on someone that God has cleansed and washed.

Rather, we should rejoice. Yes, praying for each other can lift those clouds for someone else.

I think there's more ministry done in prayer and praying and fasting perhaps than in preaching. in Galatians, Paul told the Galatians in chapter 6, verse 1, Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such in one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

And that's something too that I believe here he was just reminding them, you know, you're spiritual, you're walking right, but remember that you too can be tempted, you too can fall.

[34 : 38] We're not so spiritual that we can't be tempted or fall. Consider that he says, consider thyself. And then James says, confess your faults one to another and pray for one another that ye may be healed.

Maybe we should practice this a little bit more than we do where we confess our faults one to another and pray for one another for healing.

Jesus intercedes, Satan accuses, Romans 8 33. We'll look at that again, the last part of the chapter here.

Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Here's another quote. A church full of accusers becomes unsafe.

In other words, people feel like it's not safe. but a church full of intercessors becomes a refuge, a place of safety and love.

[36 : 03] Which do you and I prefer? You don't even have to ask, right? But I need a church that were intercessors And you do too. That doesn't mean that we don't correct and that we don't bring a challenge.

In fact, I want to talk about that a little bit. We're not throwing that out at all. It's more a, I believe, more a condition of our heart. Yeah, let's go to Romans 8 again, verse 31.

I just want to read the last part of the chapter there and hopefully this is an encouragement. to us. What shall we say then to these things?

Paul says, If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all, for all of, if I can say it right, delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. In other words, who shall lay anything like a charge against God's elect?

[37 : 38] God's God's people, those that follow God. Who is he that condemneth?

It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or pearl or sword?

And as I'm reading this, I'm remembering what Merlin shared about, I think it was you, about the trials. Thankful for the trials. Was that Mike?

I can't remember which of you. Maybe both, but I thought, wow, are we thankful for the trials? That's a tough one for me.

[38 : 38] As it is written, for thy sake we are killed all the day long. We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

Who do we think of when we read that verse? We are more than conquerors through him that loved us. Brother Aaron preached a message about a year ago, I think, on that verse.

For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Paul in this chapter is dealing with condemnation for believers. And being free from condemnation does not mean that we're free of making mistakes or errors in our life.

Or saying, well, I don't feel condemned so I don't need to acknowledge what Jeffrey shared with me personally. No, it's not that. But free from condemnation just means that we are walking in Christ.

[40 : 18] And yet we do make mistakes at times, but we don't need to stay condemned about it. I think too many Christians walk in condemnation.

And really, if you think about it, it's unbelief. It's not believing the Word of God. It's not believing Jesus. It's not believing that He is that great Savior that sets us free.

We need to be careful who we listen to, what voices we listen to. Someone tries to accuse a brother or sister.

Let's not go down that road. I think sometimes it's easier or better, perhaps, to be rude to an accuser and walk away than it is to give a listening ear to the devil through them.

I want to try to wrap this up and conclude. You know, the Bible does say that we are to give correction.

[41:38] We are to challenge each other. Yes, iron sharpens iron. God's love. Sometimes even a rebuke is necessary. Hopefully very rarely and only when, only when necessary and only when it's wrapped up in love and redemption, meekness, intercession, rather than an empty, hopeless, no life giving rebuke that feels more like an accusation.

Let us show hope. I was challenged a month ago or whenever that Glenn died, Glenn Hostetler, something that was said in his funeral about him from one of his best friends in a certain he was preaching.

And I don't know if I can know exactly where he was going with all of that, but just in that, he said, Brother Glenn knew how, maybe you have to help me with this, he knew how to love people without becoming like them.

I think that's how it was. He ministered to people that were not like him. And he didn't become like them. But he loved them anyway.

I think he had the heart of an intercessor. And that really spoke to me, it challenged me. Let us be known as a people who pray before we condemn.

[43:26] Restore rather than hurt or ruin. cover each other with grace all while still calling to holiness.

Teaching for godly principles by persuasion and godly teaching versus by the letter of the law. I want this for my life.

I can see very much. I feel I don't feel condemned but I feel very convicted in my life looking back in my home at work the church.

And if I have a New Year's resolution this isn't in my notes but to you all that I walk in this.

Perhaps in the spirit of what Manny Troyer used to say when he had a concern for somebody he would say I do have a concern to share with you but I want you to know that my love for you is bigger than that concern.

[45:06] It goes together and I need this in my life. And then there's the question what do we do or how do we deal with how do we respond when accusations do come our way?

That's another whole other message. Jesus said that offenses will come and I do believe that like that song we need the prayers of those we love to help me in each trying hour to bear my tempted soul to him that he may keep me by his power that I may walk the narrow way kept by our father's glorious grace amen let's pray father we just come to you and just acknowledge today our need of you lord jesus thank you for setting that example thank you for interceding for us even today at the right hand of our father on our behalf because you love us father that example may that become our life that we would care for each other we would care for your people that we would care for those that are lost and don't know you that we would care deep enough to pray for them and to lift them up help us

Lord to be intercessors help us to love truth and the Bible says something about where truth and mercy kissed each other where they came together and you are the perfect example of that Jesus on the cross where you are the truth but you are also mercy and you are love and I just pray that every heart here would hear your voice and we would all just look at ourselves not each other but ourselves and say Lord I want to be that I want to be more like Jesus this year and for the years to come we commit ourselves to you and our hearts to you and we pray in your most holy name Jesus amen thank you and God bless you all