Visiting Heaven thru Prayer 1 of 2

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Ezekiel: Hi there, welcome to Heaven Talk: dreams, visions, comments and discussion on all things Heaven. I'm Ezekiel, coming again to you from the foothills of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains of beautiful Taos, New Mexico and joining me is my beloved spouse, Ms. Clare. How are you tonight?

Clare: Oh, good. I'm looking forward to this.

Ezekiel: OK. Tonight, we thought, first of all, you know, we really want the Lord to speak to our hearts. We don't want this to be us or you or anyone else. We want to hear from the Holy Spirit. And as I set out to pray and try to prepare, just asked the Lord what He wanted tonight - immediately, the Holy Spirit brought to mind a couple of things. First of all, you know "On Earth as it is in Heaven" and the fact that those weren't just pretty words in a prayer. I mean that He meant it. He meant for things to be on Earth as they are in Heaven. And the next thing He brought to mind was when He said in John 14:2 My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? Well, the question comes up immediately: But how? How do I get there? I remember the apostles saying, "We don't know the way." The Lord tells them that they do. Well, does He just kind of, does He just blink His eyes? Do we just go blink and all of a sudden we're there? How does that happen?

Clare: Well, first of all, we don't want to presume that we can just go there without His invitation, without Him orchestrating it and that's been the way it has been for us for quite a while in prayer. The Lord would approach us and come to us and invite us to go with Him and once He's made that invitation, it's just an open door, really.

Ezekiel: Yeah, you know I remember early on someone had introduced us to the concept of soaking prayer, which most of us are familiar with at this point. Just come into a meeting, being quiet and bring in a little snack or something. We'll talk about some of that later. But just getting comfortable and not so much talking and teaching and interaction, but being quiet before the Lord.

Clare: Right. And I prefer to call it Dwelling prayer, because the Lord dwells in our heart and ultimately it's in our heart that all of this takes place. Our heart is a gateway to Heaven and the Lord lives in our heart. And that invitation to be with Him and for Him to be with us is a longstanding invitation that is made to everyone who is willing to pay the price really.

Ezekiel: Well, so we're all Christians and most of us walked this walk for at least some time. Is a prayer just a normal, natural thing? What's different about what we're talking tonight?

Clare: Well, I think there are different kinds of prayer. There's prayer when you meditate on the Scriptures and that takes you to a very special place sometimes. There's prayer when you're down on your knees beseeching the Lord to act on behalf of another soul in our lives. But then, there's a passive prayer

of dwelling with Him. There's prayer, the prayer of worship, you know worshipping Him. And I find that, that's the best entranceway into Dwelling prayer, because when we worship Him in Spirit and in truth, we're worshipping Him. It clears the air, it prepares our hearts. It puts our mind and our hearts in the right place. Worship brings us to the Lord, so to speak. And when that happens, it creates... like a cocoon of grace and life and the Lord can come into that or emerge from that and invite us into His presence.

Ezekiel: So, you're saying, just maybe start with some worship music that you're comfortable with or familiar with and just...

Clare: Some really holy worship, worship music that glorifies God directly. I mean there's a lot of different songs that we can listen to that are Christian, but worship that directly glorifies the Lord is really important. I like Terry McAlmon. I'm kind of partial.

Ezekiel: Most of us think that prayer is: you sit at the breakfast table with my Bible, right, and maybe TV's on the background where something is going on or whatever and we spend about 20 minutes or so or maybe a little longer if we're doing Bible study. How do you begin to pray like this, other than the worship you know?

Clare: Well, as you said before when we were talking, we need to clear the air, we need to protect that time. This is not something you do before you go to work or before you go to school, you know, just quickly get out of prayer. This is something you do to be in God's presence and allow Him to act. He is the one who is acting on you. At a certain point, you are just there for Him. So, you don't want the television set going, you don't want the telephone on the hook, you don't want to be checking out texts from people, you don't want to be interrupted because once you get to that place, you are in a delicate, delicate cocoon of grace and you don't want to interrupt that.

Ezekiel: I remember being a kid in school trying to do homework and I constantly was tapping on a glass with a pencil you know, taking a bite on an apple. You know, it was hard just to concentrate on the homework. But I can just see walking into your bedroom or wherever and right off the bed, knock-knock-knock someone is at the door, your IPod or computer says 'You've got mail.' So I can see that you kinda... this is a special time you really want to set up in a special way. And we're talking about being with the Lord.

Clare: Right, being with the Almighty God who comes to us in a still small voice, in a still small breeze. And in order for us to be like Elijah did on a mountain, and to recognize that still small voice in that breeze, a delicate gentle little breeze. We need to still our souls and we need to make sacrosanct that space and time and not allow other people to butcher in. One person after another telephone calls, you getting up to do something, get distracted and the devil will do everything in His power to cause you to be distracted. So you never settle into this kind of prayer.

Ezekiel: So, kind of find a private place. And there were times when I'll just get in our vehicle and just go to the park and sit, you know even though we live in a house of prayer and as a little mention, it's fairly quiet here. There is always something or someone who can pull me away or just an odd room in your house, garage, shop. I've heard of people who go on in buses or campers to someplace where there is no phone, no this, no that, disciplining yourself to be with the Lord God Almighty. We're talking about heavenly places and all things Heaven. I mean He lives in us, but this is like... it's almost like he is catching us up in a way, pre-rapture. So kind of set it up right. So, can we go home from work or school

and kind of go right into it maybe?

Clare: I can, but I don't know about other people. But, if you really want this intimate relationship with Him so that you can hear Him and see Him and know what His will is for your life and to be really tight with Him that He becomes your spouse. If you want that, you have to meet certain conditions, so to speak. And one of them is, your body needs to be in good shape, you need to be alert. What I like to do typically, since this is the absolute high point of my day, I like to be well rested, like take a 20 minutes nap and have some coffee or tea, a little if you can handle caffeine. I'm older and it doesn't bother me but some people can't handle it. They get jittery. The main idea is to be alert and to be able to rest in the Lord without falling asleep. Take a shower, lie down for a while, and get something to eat. And there's nothing wrong with taking coffee and a biscuit or a cookie or something into prayer with you or chocolate. And you know me with my chocolate chip.

Ezekiel: It's like a holy place? You've got to like... kneel a certain way or pray a certain way?

Ezekiel: Well, if you feel the anointing on kneeling, you kneel. If you feel the anointing on sitting, I mean...It's not about the form; it's about the condition of your heart and being engaged with the Lord in humility of your heart. I mean, people can kneel and be very proud or other people can kneel and it brings them to a beautiful place of docility and humility. But the thing is, some people have a little blood sugar and attention deficit and things like that. I do have low blood sugar and you do, too. So, we both tend to take little snacks into prayer with us and the Lord doesn't find fault with that. In fact, there have been times when prayer has been very, very intense and the Lord and I have been in a conversation which has been intense. He'll tell me to go eat an ice-cream because my blood sugar just bottoms out because it's so intense. And I'll do that and come back and He is totally pleased with me.

Ezekiel: Well, there are two things that come to my mind right off the bat. And that is, we all know about a personal relationship with the Lord. He's Jesus, He's our Savior. But I have to look at my heart and my life here a couple years ago, for sure. Because I was asking the Lord for a period of two weeks, "Lord, help me to really come to You the way I should". You know, "To really be present to You, love You the way I should", you know. And He began to take me into not just a personal relationship but more of a familiar relationship and He did that by causing me to spend more time with Him. And one of the first things that came up, the first two things was distractions and falling asleep. You know, we need to spend really a tenth of time. But, so what do you do with distractions when your mind goes here and there or whatever? Do you just jerk it back? Just bow yourself down?

Clare: Well, you're gonna have distractions and most of the time you're going to have distractions and the minute you realize that you've been distracted, you gently pull yourself back to center. You say, "Lord, help me not to be distracted". I have a little story about that. I really needed an answer from the Lord about a pretty important issue in our lives. You know, I went up to a mountain cabin retreat, fasting and praying. I sat with the Lord all day and prayed. Not once did I feel that we were connecting. Ha! And finally I realized that I'm trying to do this in my own strength. *I'm* trying to do this. What would happen if I came to Him like a little child and said "Daddy, I'm too little. I can't do this. Would you pray through me? Would you help me to pray please because I can't do it"? Wow and wow, I'll tell you, within four minutes or so, I felt a smile on the Lord's face. I felt a sunny warmth in my heart and He was waiting for me to ask. It's like "Ok, I'm fasting and I'm praying and I'm doing this thing and I'm doing everything I'm supposed to do the right way. I'm doing. I'm doing. I'm doing."

Ezekiel: He didn't come because you were spiritual, right?

Clare: Exactly, in fact that's pride.

Ezekiel: Yeah, well the falling asleep thing, I know He helped me through that by kind of a no-brainer at this point - and it was "Hello. Duh... Stand up!" "Oh, OK". And I have a music stand next to me because I work with music and recording and things as well, and I thought "Well, I can get comfortable on that thing" and I put it up high where I could just rest my arms on it like a little podium and I put my little writing pad, my Bible there and I thought, 'Well, I stood and prayed before the Lord in the temple. I still do that at the Wailing Wall. Maybe, I'll try it." And it was really, it's a nice switch for me, because you do get tired, you're achy or a little antsy. And you've mentioned before, get up, take a walk, move around, clear the cobwebs a little bit, kick the tires on the car, redo your coffee or something but don't stop praying or quit because of distractions or falling asleep, right?

Clare: Right. The Lord is not upset with us when we have distractions. The devil will jump in and tailgate on that opportunity and say, "Look at you, you can't even pray without thinking about things in the world". He'll try to condemn you, which will cause another cycle of distractions. So, he is an opportunist and he'll take advantage of that. But if you just gently refocus on the Lord, He's still smiling and waiting there for you. He's happy with you that you've given Him this time. And He doesn't want condemnation.

Ezekiel: Absolutely not. Now, keep in mind, I know you're thinking, "This is Heaven Talk. What's this got to do with Heaven"? The good stuff is coming. Just hang in there. We're setting the stage here. Kinda sounds like some prep work, but you know, this is an appointment with the Almighty God, right? I mean this is like Jesus going up for the transfiguration. The eternal God of all of Heaven and Earth and the universe is coming for an appointment with us. How awesome is that?

Clare: Oh, that's so beautiful. Well, there was one thing I wanted to mention, too. Sometimes we can fall into condemnation because we're very tired. I mean, we can be rested, we can have our coffee, but all of a sudden when we start praying, we get real drowsy. And there are times when the Lord wants to put us down for a few minutes. And I noticed that when I get into worship (because that's always my approach with the Lord, unless He calls me into prayer) a different kind of prayer when He asks me to turn the music off. I'll get into worship and I'll really get deeply into it and involved with it but I'll start to get sleepy and I will sense the Lord and I might even see the Lord saying, "Go take a nap". Or I will take my petitions with me to my short nap. And I'll lie down and pray while I'm lying down.

Other times He puts me down because He doesn't want me doing things in my own strength. He doesn't want me pressing in and being vigorous in coming to prayer. Sometimes, He wants me to let go, to let go and rest in Him. And when that invitation comes to rest in Him (I've written some songs about that, that are on Youtube), and when that invitation comes, that is the prime situation to be able to hear from Him and see Him. And that's what we call Dwelling prayer. You've seen me do that. I'll go down for a few minutes and then there are other times when I'm in a worshipful mode and I feel that I need to rest and lie down on the couch or on a mat on the floor and just allow the Lord to work on me. And there will be incredible visions that come during that time and frequently He'll take me to Heaven, as you've experienced too.

Ezekiel: Yeah, exactly. And that's why I said the good stuff is coming and be patient, you know. It's not that we're trying to belabor. "Oh my gosh, I've got to read the directions, put the bicycle together". You

know, it's not like we've got to do all that stuff and set it up. It's not a legal thing - it's a practical thing. There are practical considerations. For example, I find that the cooler, the better, you know, in a room. If that tends to get really warm, I get really sleepy. Ever had that?

Clare: Yeah, well ventilation is certainly important, because the amount of oxygen in a room directly affects your concentration.

Ezekiel: And always, you know it's kind of redundant to tell a Christian this but, yeah, bring your Bible, bring some devotional books or something because, you know, the Lord wants to speak in many ways and He probably will speak in and through the Scriptures or whatever.

Clare: Yeah, the Lord said, we're priests and kings and that He's made us priests and kings. And the priests would go in to the Holy place wearing an ephod and He would hear from God. And so, it's our privilege to hear from God, and opening the Scriptures prayerfully and allowing the Holy Spirit to pick a reading is an act of faith. It's not silly. It's not childish. It's an act of relinquishing your control over what God will say to you.

Ezekiel: I'm glad you said that, because you know, Rhemas - an enlightened word from the Lord where the Scripture just jumps up off the page and goes to your very heart and soul. I think those are really important and you hear the criticism, "Ahh, it's Bible roulette..."or whatever, but the devil uses a lot of us as good people to sometimes knock our brothers and sisters down with something dumb we say. And it's a beautiful way to go to the Lord saying, "I don't want to just do a Bible study today. I want to hear from your Holy Spirit. What's on your heart and mind"?

Clare: Right, right. Well, I think there's time for both. You can feel drawn to a Psalm. The Lord can give you a number of a Psalm and you can go to that or you can be doing a Bible study on one of the books of the Bible, letters or the Gospels and the Lord will speak to you through that Bible study. He'll arrange circumstances just like daily reading. He'll arrange circumstances where the reading will really mean something to you. So, that's another form of letting go. But when you're reading your Scriptures and something touches your heart, that's time to stop and meditate on that word. Make it a part of you. Make it a deep, deep part of you. And there's something very significant about the timing of the word that the Lord is instructing you. That's personal, private one on one instruction from God.

Ezekiel: So you're saying, "Don't keep on reading the rest of the chapter. But just stop right there..."

Clare: Yeah, that's right. The whole idea of prayer is intimacy with the Lord. And, so when He taps you on the shoulder and says, "I'm here" and He wants your total attention. He doesn't want the Bible to be in front of you and between you. Like - here's the table and on the other side the Lord is sitting with the Bible open and you're sitting on this side with the Bible open. The Lord at some point wants you both to get up from the table and embrace one another and just rest in His heart so that He can love you, so that He can heal you. And many times, He'll infuse knowledge into you, infused wisdom, infused knowledge either through a Scripture that will come into your mind or an understanding of something that's far beyond you.

Ezekiel: So, give Him time to speak rather than keep on going, because "we've got to get it done" or curiosity or whatever. Yeah, that's learning to listen.

Clare: very carefully...

Ezekiel: I want to throw in something real quick. I know it sounds like Jesus gets hung up on the details but dress cool or warm or whatever you need to do, because these are the little things that will pull you out of the most intimate moments with the Lord. If you get chilly, bring a coat, bring a sweater, and bring an extra something. Many times, summer liner, it's good to have a little something to pull over your legs or get comfortable with a pillow or something. So, you know you're right or whatever, if you feel the anointing to kneel or whatever, but I've been pulled out of prayer many times just because of my dumb body, you know hot or cold, but I've learnt to - you taught me how to layer up, you can always peel it off.

Clare: I'm a northerner; you're a southerner, that's why. But I would like to say something on that point. If you happen to be in a very oppressive environment where there's marital strife or teenage kids are acting up or whatever and your environment is very tense. You might want to take a sleeping bag and go sit under a tree with your sleeping bag and hot coffee and your Scriptures and be present to the Lord.

Ezekiel: Good point, real good point. It's hard to pray when you're in a tense environment.

Clare: When you're in an oppressive environment, it's almost impossible and going out is the best solution. And of course getting up really early in the morning before anyone else is up is wonderful.

Ezekiel: Wow, we're getting back to, you know, "Is there a prize or whatever"? Because one thing I noticed about the Lord, I mean I'll let you in on a little industry secret here. We do most of these things at probably 2:30 or 3:00 in the morning, whatever. Not because, we're night owls stay up watching TV but we don't even have a TV, you know. We turn on the computer and the Lord has to shut that, put it down. Because, He's so sweet, you don't really want anything with Him.

But it's amazing, you might think, "I can never sit with Him for an hour, much less 2 or 3 or 4 or 5 or 6 hours." Believe me, He's so sweet. You'll find yourself come back and as I mentioned in a previous segment, you're in prayer, you're with the Lord and all of a sudden the sun's coming up and you're thinking, "Man, I thought I've only been a couple hours".

But please, little warning here, caution. Don't push it unnaturally and be dead for school and dead for work. But at the same token, don't come into prayer dead tired either. You know there's a balance. So the Lord will - He'll let you go at the right time and He's got some sweet stuff you can just hang in there a little longer.