

# LIVING UNDER AN OPEN HEAVEN

(The Prayer Life of Jesus)

by Fubara Ibama

Have you ever wondered why Jesus had so much success in His earthly ministry? Why did He not have an impossible case? Every sick person was healed, every demon-possessed case was set free, every need was met and every problem solved. How was He able to accomplish this? The answer that readily comes to mind is, because He is the Son of God – He is Deity! Definitely He is. But, this answer is not correct because Jesus did not walk on earth as Deity, but as a man. To buttress this point, I want to draw your attention to when He was in the boat with His disciples, crossing the Sea of Galilee. The Bible says He fell asleep. ***“Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.” (Psalm 121:4)*** Furthermore, when Jesus was being tempted by the devil, He answered thus, ***“But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matt. 4:4).*** The reason He was that effective was because He operated under an open heaven. Operating under an open heaven simply means having the whole of the resources of heaven at your disposal, and you can draw from them any time. At such times, you don’t struggle to get things done. You accomplish great things effortlessly because you have the backing of heaven. If we are able to pay the price Jesus paid, we will have the same result. After all He said, ***“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father” (John 14:12).***

The question we would like to ask is, how did Jesus operate under an open heaven? The scriptures are abundantly clear on this. Let us look at (Luke 3:21-22). “Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.” From the above reference, we notice that the heaven did not open because Jesus was the Son of God, but because HE PRAYED. John the Baptist baptized others besides Jesus but heaven did not open for any of them. Everyone left after being baptized but Jesus PRAYED. It was while He prayed that the heaven was opened. PRAYER opens up heaven. If we pray, heaven will be opened to us also.

Now, something very significant happened. Because the heaven was opened, the Holy Ghost came down and the voice of God was heard distinctly. There is no way we can have a meaningful, effective Christian life without the Holy Ghost helping us. Of Jesus, the Bible says: “How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him” (Acts 10:38). Of course, there can be no ministry without the Holy Ghost.

Before He left for heaven, Jesus instructed His disciples to tarry in Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high. When they gathered together at the Upper Room, they did not just sit down to chat or drink coke. It is not that drinking coke or coffee is sinful. **THEY PRAYED!** “And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren” (Acts 1:13-14). Obviously, the prayer life of their Master had great influence on them. They were so challenged by His prayer life that they requested, “Lord, teach us to pray.” They did not ask Him to teach them how to heal the sick or perform miracles or be better preachers, but how to PRAY. Prayer is the key; it is the heaven opener. Any minister who does not have a prayer closet should not have a pulpit.

As the one hundred and twenty disciples prayed in the upper room, they had the same experience Jesus had. The heaven opened and the Holy Ghost descended on them as cloven tongues of fire. This experience completely revolutionized their lives and made them very effective for the Kingdom of God. If we carefully examine the lives of the Apostles in the early Church, we will quickly observe that they continued the ministry of Jesus Christ. They were so much like the Christ that the people called them ‘CHRISTIANS’. They enjoyed an unprecedented Revival because of their prayer life. If we want to see God move in our generation, if we want to see revival, then **WE MUST PRAY!** The Bible records, “And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; . . . Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them . . . and they were healed every one” (Acts 5:12, 15-16). I believe all the sick at the pool of Bethesda (John 5) were brought and everyone of them received his/her healing and deliverance. The reason is obvious. The Apostles gave themselves to prayer (Acts 6:4,7). It means, they were completely sold out to prayer. In other words, prayer controlled their lives. They therefore inevitably operated and lived under an open heaven. We also can live under an open heaven if we will pay the price – PRAY!

Elijah, the Tishbite, also operated under an open heaven. As he stood before Ahab and sealed heaven for 31/2 years, he concluded by saying, it shall be “according to my word.” And it was so. Under such an open heaven, he had the liberty to call down fire at the Mount Carmel contest. Hear what the Bible says about him: “Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit” (James 5:17-18).

Prayer was so important to Jesus that even when He was having a very successful Healing/Miracle service, He abandoned it and went to pray (Luke 5:15-16). A great while before day, while others were sleeping, He would leave the comfort of His bed and sweet sleep to go to a solitary place to pray. I believe as Jesus gave the first part of the day to His Father, in communion with Him, He received first hand instruction on what to do each day. If we are to succeed in life, in our various fields of endeavor, either as pastors, Christian workers, in business, in marriage, as students, etc. we MUST PRAY. If we fail, it means we neglected our life line – PRAYER. Prayer will change your circumstance for the better, it will change your life, it will open heaven for you. On the mount of transfiguration, it was while Jesus prayed that He was transfigured (Luke 9:28, 29).

Sometimes our flesh can form a ceiling over us, causing us to pray without getting result and keep us stagnated. Besides, Satan is capable of causing a 'brass' heaven over us as it was in the days of Daniel (Daniel 9). But whatever the case, God has provided a powerful tool for us to combat such situations. That tool is **FASTING!** A lot of us have neglected this tool to our peril. In Matthew 17:21, Jesus told the disciples: "Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by PRAYER and FASTING." The disciples had tried to cast out a demon from the suffering boy but could not. Jesus came and took care of that case effortlessly. In their amazement they asked Jesus why they were unable to do it. He said it was because of their unbelief and gave them the solution – how to deal with that kind of unbelief – PRAYER and FASTING! We are the children of the covenant and all of us are entitled to live under an open heaven every day of our lives. LET US PRAY!