

New Fire for a New Season

There is a saying that goes something like this: we do not fear those we despise. Even as the devil is attempting to slow down the work of God's kingdom through intimidation tactics, God is turning those same tactics around and using them to spark faith in the body of Christ. Saying it in non-spiritual terms, we as the church are about to get so mad at the devil that we stop being afraid to act.

It started to ramp up in 2020. The Lord allowed a time of intense shaking, and that shaking is still happening. Even though the cultural shaking is not as heavy as it has been, many believers and churches are experiencing a personal shaking, too.

This is a tactic of the devil to get the individual parts of the body to isolate and clam up. Yet we know as believers that the body works best when every individual part is functioning properly. (See Ephesians 4:16.)

The good news is that the Holy Spirit is not simply reacting to the devil's strategy. He knew the devil's strategy before the devil did, and He is even able to use the devil's moves for the advantage of the kingdom.

The same way a wild animal being backed into a corner can increase its potential to be dangerous, the church is working through a process of becoming dangerous again.

Our sense of safety, our economies, our freedoms, our comforts and our "normals" are being disrupted. We're being squeezed.

In Luke 21, we see a widow who was also being squeezed to the last drop. As she got down to her last two mites (or pennies), the reality of destitution hit her and she responded with a type of reckless faith. She took her last two pennies and gave them willingly to God.

God has allowed the squeezing of His people so that we have the opportunity to figuratively take our last two mites and begin throwing them willingly into the kingdom work.

Many Christians are about to start saying, "I used to be afraid of what people think, but it doesn't matter anymore. All that matters is that people hear about Jesus." We're going to hear, "I used to worry about saving enough for the future, but now I'm realizing that investing in eternity is more critical." People will say, "I used to prioritize and be most excited about my career, but now I can't stop thinking about seeing people meet Jesus."

This is the same thing that happened to the early church in the book of Acts. The death of Stephen in Acts 8 set off a terrible persecution against the believers in Jerusalem. In chapter 11, we see that those driven out of Jerusalem by that persecution began to travel to other cities, preaching the gospel to both Jews and Gentiles. It also says in verse 21 that "the hand of the Lord was with them."

God didn't turn them around with His hand. He didn't send them home. He didn't restore the "normal." He empowered them to take advantage of the situation and to preach the gospel in power.

Many of us don't have the same comforts to lean on. We don't have the same leisure time. Maybe our pockets aren't as full as before. We might as well get radical with what we do have.

Radical is what we're seeing break out across the globe. Spiritual deliverance is returning as a normal practice in the body because people are less afraid to stand up against the devil in the authority of Jesus Christ.

People are sharing the true gospel message in creative spaces because people are less afraid of doing things in a new way. Religious traditions (which were not necessarily bad) are being turned down a notch in order to prioritize reaching the

lost. Simplicity is taking new priority.

Churches are asking the question, "Are we doing the most important thing? Are we fulfilling the purposes to which we were called? If not, how can we do that better?"

What happens next depends on how each of us responds to the pain and uncertainty. We can either shrink back in fear or we can take up the truth we know to be certain and share it with someone.

It's time to cease fearing what we used to fear and it's time to beat back the kingdom of darkness with the message of the light of Jesus Christ.

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