

When Everything's Unwrapped, Will You Have What Really Lasts?

Simeon was known to be a righteous and devout man, but many had undoubtedly misunderstood his pious lifestyle. He always seemed to be waiting for something, but no one knew exactly what it was.

Lately, his uneasy fidgeting had made others uncomfortable. How many times had his well-meaning friends exhorted him, "Calm down, Simeon!"?

But he couldn't calm down. His heart had been stirred in unspeakable ways when the rabbi had read the words of the prophet Haggai.

"For thus says the Lord of Hosts: Once more, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and earth, the sea and dry land. And I will shake all the nations, and they will come with the wealth of all nations, and I will fill this house with glory, says the Lord of Hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is Mine, says the Lord of Hosts. The glory of this latter house will be greater than the former, says the Lord of Hosts. And in this place I will give peace, says the Lord of Hosts" (Hag. 2:6-9).

In a similar way, everyone had a hard time relating to poor Anna. "How long has that old lady been here in the temple?" they would ask. "I heard someone say she's been here for 60 years!"

To some it seemed like such a waste, but a few others were provoked by her remarkable focus in prayer, fasting and worship. And there were others—those who, like Anna, had an unexplainable longing that had been getting inexplicably

stronger.

One day they were all magnetically drawn to the temple, and it was to be a day unlike all the other days. Invisible invitations brought them together for a holy convocation.

The air was suddenly electric, and Simeon could feel it. Anna's worship reached a surprising crescendo. Eyes of a select few began to dart around the courts. Haggai's words began to echo in their minds. Everyone's desire was about to be brought into Zerubbabel's temple just like it had been promised.

Just then a normal-looking man named Joseph walked in carrying two pigeons. Behind him was a young woman carrying an infant to his dedication. Any other time they might have walked across the courtyard unnoticed, but not that day. That day eyes were fixed on them and the precious cargo they carried.

Simeon and Anna converged on the unsuspecting couple, and in a moment their lives of waiting made sense. Promises had become reality. Desires were fulfilled.

Regarding Haggai 2:7, Charles Spurgeon commented:

*"Oh! If the world could gather up all her right desire; if she could condense in one cry all her wild wishes; if all true lovers of mankind could condense their theories and extract the true wine of wisdom from them; it would just come to this, **we want an Incarnate God**, and you have got the Incarnate God! Oh! nations, but ye know it not! Ye, in the dark, are groping after him, and know not that he is there"* (emphasis added).

Can you believe with me today that Jesus Christ is, in fact, what the nations of the earth truly desire—*who* they truly desire? Is He the one *you* truly desire?

As we celebrate Christmas and the birth of our incarnate God,

let's look to Jesus as the source of shaking that brings clarity to our desires. We allow too many things to clutter our path to Him. Our affections are spread too thin on lesser things.

Would you join with me as we enter into the New Year, and let's make a sacred dedication of our lives. Let's invite Jesus to shake us all in order to remove the things that clutter our way to him. He wants to remove the obstacles that keep us from realizing now he is actually the One we desire.

"At that time His voice shook the earth, but now He has given us a promise, saying, 'Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also heaven.' And this statement, 'Yet once more,' signifies the removal of those things that can be shaken, things that are created, so that only those things that cannot be shaken will remain. Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be moved, let us be gracious, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12:26-29).

Not long from now Jesus Christ will return and all eyes will see Him. Once and for all, He will be revealed as the ultimate fulfillment of global desire—regardless of culture or creed.

From the same place Simeon and Anna once witnessed His humble entrance into the world, He will bring peace to the nations. Those who realize this now have the great privilege of taking this message to the nations in order to spread the fires of desire.

A prayer of personal dedication:

"Lord Jesus, I invite You to shake what needs to be shaken in me for this New Year. Let your consuming fire of desire for me ignite my desire for You in return. I want to know and say with confidence that You are truly the desire of the nations.

"Lord, help me to grow in this confidence out of a place of

personal knowledge that You are the fairest among ten thousand. There is no other name given to men by which we must be saved. There is no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth who is worthy.

“You alone, Jesus, are my desire. Amen.”

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Unconditional Surrender

“Now the one who keeps His commandments remains in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that He remains in us, through the Spirit whom He has given us” (1 John 3:24).

When the Holy Spirit comes into you at your invitation, you receive as much of Him as you will ever have. You do not get a little bit of Him then and a little bit more at later experiences. Since He is a Person, you cannot get Him in pieces. You either have all of the Holy Spirit or you have none of the Holy Spirit. Why is it, then, that He seems to get us in pieces? He comes to us unconditionally, while we surrender to Him conditionally.

We give Him our Sundays but not our Mondays.

We give Him our actions but not our attitudes.

We give Him our relationships but not our reputations.

We give Him our time but not our thoughts.

We give Him our burdens but not our bodies.

We give Him our prayers but not our pleasures.

We give Him our crises but not our children.

We give Him our health but not our hearts.

Would you drop the conditions and give Him all of you?

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Intercessors, Will You Respond to This Call From God?

The setting was festive with Christmas décor and cookies but the discussion was holy. I was sitting in the governor's mansion with about 75 pastors and leaders from around the country—including Mike and Cindy Jacobs, Pastor Jim and Rosemary Garlow, Paul Tan, and E.W. Jackson—to hear what was on Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal's heart about the United States of America.

Although he's a successful politician, Jindal understands that leadership in America will not come from a politician or a movement for social change. After sharing his powerful testimony of how Christ found him, Jindal pointed to the need for a "spiritual and transforming revival" that would help us recapture the vision of American pioneers who on the Mayflower signed, "In the name of God and for the advancement of the

Christian faith.”

With that Jindal invited us—and Americans across the country who are crying out for mercy over judgment even in the face of a brittle economy, raging immorality and an uncertain future—to join him at The Response in Baton Rouge on Jan. 24.

“These are historic and defining times, a new world order of chaos is being driven by militant Islam seeking to impose Sharia Law worldwide. Our nation is faced with fatherless homes, an epidemic of drugs and crime in our inner cities, a saturation of pornography, abortion, racism—Jesus Christ, Son of God and Lord of Life, is America’s only hope. We need a spiritual transformation,” says Jindal. “There is good news; Scripture reminds us that as we come before the Lord in a posture of humility, honesty and repentance, then ‘The Lord will hear from heaven, forgive and heal our land.’”

I can hear the skeptics now, saying, “Another day, another prayer rally.” I understand—but do not agree—with that sentiment. The naysayers point to the houses of prayer all over the world—some of them are filling the bowls 24/7—without any discernible change. Others point to Lou Engle’s TheCall, Faytene Grasseschi’s TheCry, OneCry, Cry Out America, Broken Before the Throne or even the National Day of Prayer and figure we’ve done all we can do to fulfill 2 Chronicles 7:14. But we can’t give up now!

As more saints intercede in alignment with the heart of the Father, the prayer movement becomes like a proverbial snowball rolling down a hill—eventually the bowls of prayer will tip over (see Rev. 5:8). We can’t merely look at the results in the natural to gauge our impact in the spirit. The results will eventually become visible if we remain faithful to believe God’s Word doesn’t return to Him void (see Isa 55:11).

Let us not become weary or faint in praying for God’s will. We will reap a harvest from our faithful prayers if we do not

give up (see Gal. 6:9). And reaping a harvest of prayer results can sure light a fire in the heart of a believer who wants to see God's kingdom manifest—who wants to see the “spiritual and transforming revival” that's also burning in Jindal's heart.

As that fire spreads, so does God's will across the earth. We can see transformation in this land. We really can. God wants to bring transformation. I'm not the only one who believes that. In my upcoming book on transforming revival, I received insight from Dutch Sheets, Billy Graham, Reinhard Bonnke, the late Steve Hill and many others about God's will for our nation. It brought hope to my heart and courage to my soul for the days ahead.

I believe all prayer rallies are significant. I believe they all make an impact. I believe where two or three gather in the name of Jesus, He is there in their midst (see Matt. 18:20). I believe if one puts a thousand to flight, two can put 10,000 to flight (see Deut. 32:30). And I believe when thousands gather despite race, culture, denomination or agenda, it touches the Father's heart and He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions we have asked of Him (see 1 John 5:15).

That's why I'll be at *The Response: a Call to Prayer for a nation in Crisis* with Jindal and many others, in a posture of humility and honest repentance, asking the Lord to hear from heaven, forgive and heal our land. You can join me on Jan. 24, 2015, at the Pete Maravich Assembly Center in Baton Rouge, Louisiana—or watch it streaming live at .

As Jindal put it, “People from all ages, denominations, ethnic and racial backgrounds will gather to pray and fast for America, asking God for mercy and grace for what we Christians have allowed in our nation. May His church have a corporate heart awakening to bring healing to the soul of America.” Amen.

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