

4 Vital Lessons Believers Can Learn From Azusa Street Preacher William Seymour

William Seymour believed that there was clearly a key or secret that contributed to the success of the Azusa Street outpouring, especially during the initial three-year period that was marked as the time of the greatest fruit (1906-1909). He articulated the Azusa standard in this fashion: "...the secret is: one accord, one place, one heart, one soul, one mind, one prayer."

Seymour had a strong conviction that the power of God (Pentecostal power) would be present when God's people joined together in unity with divine love as the primary source and focus of coming together. Even though he clearly taught on and encouraged the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the gifts of the Spirit, salvation and so on, he definitely came to understand that the ultimate expression of a move of God was a love that crosses every barrier, including social, racial, financial, gender, denominational and so forth.

In light of Seymour's view regarding the secret to the Azusa Street outpouring being love coupled with deep unity, it is important and sad to note that he died at the age of 52 from a heart attack. Some actually believe that this could have been the result of the fragmenting and division that took place within the Pentecostal movement post the height of the Azusa Street revival. How sad it is to ponder this reality knowing that heartbreak could have contributed to Seymour's heart attack.

Like Seymour, I am convinced that if a move of God is void or moves away from the primary and foundational themes that he believed were essential to an outpouring of God's Spirit, then

it is destined to splinter, split and eventually cause much pain, leading to an ultimate end.

Seymour was a man who was clearly known for his genuine humility. This was even evidenced during the Azusa Street meetings by the fact that oftentimes during the services, he would literally put his head in one of two wooden shoeboxes that were used for a pulpit. While doing this he would actually give himself to intense prayer. Obviously, this action spoke to his utter dependence upon the Lord for what was happening at the Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles, California.

Another element of his example that stands out to me is the fact that he did not have a controlling spirit, as is evident in some leaders. During the meetings that took place, oftentimes Seymour would have others speak, as he understood that God uses the different gifts in the body to accomplish His purposes and even though he was in leadership, he recognized that he was not the only one gifted or anointed.

Also, there were other times when the Holy Spirit was moving in such a powerful way that He would simply allow God the Father to do what He desired, while He kept His hands off. This was actually something that I witnessed on more than one occasion during multiple years at the Brownsville Revival in Pensacola, Florida, that lasted from 1995 to 2000.

I have been in ministry now for over 34 years and have served in various roles including pastoring, leading Bible colleges, college professor, itinerant ministry, author and so on. During this time I have been around multiple leaders and most of them have been solid followers of Jesus who I loved and respected. However, I will say that only a fraction of them walked in the humility or meekness that Seymour walked in. Therefore, his life is a true example to all of us that we should glean from.

It is a sad fact that after the Azusa outpouring was over, few people gave Seymour the honor and recognition that he deserved based on his role as being the tool that God used so powerfully to spearhead the Pentecostal movement in the 20th century that has now spread around the globe. Despite this reality, I am blessed to know that his life continues to influence and prophecy into multiple generations.

As I reflect upon the Azusa Street outpouring, there are multiple things that stand out to me as a follower of Jesus, as well as a minister of the gospel. However, more than that, the life of Seymour and his role in the midst of the outpouring has impacted me even deeper.

Some key lessons that I have learned from Seymour are as follows.

1. **When you are willing to embrace and walk out a life characterized by a deep hunger for God as Seymour did, then this dynamic touches the heart of God and He responds powerfully.** This was modeled as he was willing to sit outside of a classroom to receive teaching about the Pentecostal experience due to the color of his skin. Obviously, this was something that he should have never had to experience, but his hunger for God was evidenced by his willingness to go through this experience.
2. **Prayer, prayer and more prayer is the ultimate key to a move of God.** This deeper experience with God through incessant prayer in Seymour's life was crucial then and this should never change, despite what generation or church age we find ourselves in.
3. **Deep humility or apostolic meekness prepares the atmosphere for God to move in and through us.** There is actually a danger of entering into pride or self-promotion when ministry becomes successful. However, Seymour maintained humility and a dependence upon the

Lord, which is key to any real ministry that will have eternal results.

4. **It is important to allow the Holy Spirit to have control of our lives and ministries.** Seymour clearly understood this, which was evidenced even by the way he allowed God to move during the meetings at Azusa Street. The truth is that many times we want to be in control, but when revival really breaks out, even though there are clearly biblical parameters, the fact is that within those parameters God can and will do things that go way beyond our comfort zone at times. {eoa}

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