

Get Ready, the Next Revival Will Be Very Messy

Many Christians pray for spiritual awakening, and that's good. But I wonder if we realize how disruptive revival will be when it hits us like a tsunami. If you read accounts of previous revivals, three things become obvious: (1) revival requires a lot of work; (2) it's always chaotic; and (3) it offends religious people. It's not always welcome in traditional churches.

Just read the account of the revival in Samaria in the book of Acts. There was nothing orderly about it. Because the Samaritans had been entrenched in occult practices, many of them were set free from demons—and the evil spirits were “coming out of them shouting with a loud voice” (Acts. 8:7). Then, after the apostles arrived from Jerusalem, a prominent sorcerer named Simon offered to buy the Holy Spirit's power, and Peter rebuked him. The arrival of Christianity completely unplugged Simon's deception.

When the Azusa Street revival began in Los Angeles in 1906, many mainstream Christians labeled it a heresy, either because they didn't believe in speaking in tongues, or because white Christians were worshipping in the same building with Black believers.

When the Jesus Movement began in the late 1960s, many traditional Christians closed their doors because they couldn't handle longhaired hippies with love beads visiting their sterile church buildings. When the charismatic movement hit mainline Protestant and Catholic churches at the same time, religious people got offended when backslidden believers suddenly got excited about Jesus. When those newly revived Christians began raising their hands in worship and sharing Jesus openly, they were shunned.

Revival is a clash of two kingdoms. When the light of Jesus hits the darkness of sin, all hell breaks loose. Demons cause a ruckus, sorcerers come out of the woodwork, paralyzed people walk, the blind see, drug addicts get delivered, new converts weep over their sins, angry unbelievers start riots and angry religious people slam their doors on the Holy Spirit. And all of this happens at once!

We are overdue for another move of the Holy Spirit. Because so much darkness has become entrenched in our culture, it's going to be messy when God's power hits us again. Are you ready for it? Here are just a few things I'm expecting to see in the next season:

Many demons are going to come out! Scroll through Twitter or TikTok and you'll see ample evidence that people today are full of unclean spirits. Even non-Christians recognize that the bizarre behavior we see in our culture isn't normal; they know it's more than mental illness. Only Jesus can free these tormented people from their rage. The next revival will be marked by supernatural deliverance from evil spirits.

Healings will be both physical and emotional. So many Americans today are traumatized by abuse, abandonment and depression. We've never been more medicated. Young people from broken families are dealing with unprecedented levels of emotional pain, resulting in attention problems, anxiety disorders, sleeplessness, sexual confusion, gender dysphoria and a long list of addictions. We can't just offer Band-Aids for these problems; we must be prepared to roll up our sleeves, listen to the pain and heal the brokenhearted.

We will see unusual creative miracles. Suppose God touches a young woman who has been through gender reassignment surgery—but now she wants a relationship with Jesus. Her body has been butchered, and her immune system has been ravaged by hormone therapies. I won't be surprised when the Lord totally heals people in these predicaments.

Altars will be filled, but they will be noisy. Revival will always bring a wave of repentance. But when people come to the cross to find forgiveness from Jesus, don't try to muffle the loud reactions. Tears will flow, and sometimes people who have been in the grip of spiritual bondage will wail or scream. We can't be unnerved by the chaos that happens when sinners encounter the mercy of God.

 **We might have some bonfires.** In ancient Ephesus, the message of Jesus made such a dramatic impact on the people that they began burning their occult books "in the sight of everyone" (Acts 19:19). Radical repentance requires radical actions. I won't be surprised if we see altar calls in which converts delete apps on their phones and make a trash heap of Fentanyl pills, methamphetamines, syringes, pornography and sexual paraphernalia.

We will likely have riots. When the gospel exploded on the scene in the First Century, not everyone was excited about the message. The book of Acts describes riots that erupted in Lystra, Thessalonica, Achaia, Ephesus and Jerusalem. The devil knows how to stir up strife, but we can't let the negative reactions stop us. We might face vandalism, protests, bomb threats or violence, but the same God who protected the early church will sustain us.

Revival is serious business. Don't expect it to be like a sweet, comfortable breeze. Revival is like a tornado that transforms the world as well as the church. Please prepare your hearts now.

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