

God Has Pushed a Big Reset Button

Unless you've been hiding under a rock for three months, you know gasoline is at record low prices. I paid \$ a gallon last week in Georgia. Some states are reporting prices below a dollar a gallon.

There are two reasons for the price drop: Not as many people are buying gasoline because of the pandemic, and Russia and Saudi Arabia are engaged in a price war, causing the oil supply to swing up. Market analysts say they've never seen such a glut of oil.

As I pondered this situation a few days ago the Holy Spirit spoke to my heart and said: "Now is the time to fill up." I knew He wasn't talking about my car's gas tank. Sometimes there are things in the natural world that send spiritual messages. I believe God is asking the church in this season of lockdown to fill our spiritual reserves.

Jesus talked about the importance of having enough oil. The five wise virgins in His parable in Matthew 25 made sure they had enough oil for their lamps, while the five foolish ones weren't prepared. They were locked out of the wedding feast because they didn't consider oil an essential commodity. Right now, during this pandemic, God has hit a "reset" button because He wants us to be ready for what's coming.

We've been much like the foolish virgins. The oil of the Holy Spirit hasn't been important to us. We can take it or leave it. We don't think we need God's supernatural power because we have technology, comfortable church buildings, economic prosperity, eloquent preachers and slick contemporary worship.

We figured out a way to do church without God's help. We even have books and church growth gurus to teach us how to

manufacture a cool vibe, entertain people for 60 minutes and get them out quickly. Revivalist A.W. Tozer said it this way: "If the Holy Spirit was withdrawn from the church today, 95% of what we do would go on and no one would know the difference."

Many churches today are devoid of the Holy Spirit's raw power. Conversions are rare. Baptismal tanks are dry. Altars are empty. We don't hear many testimonies of healings. And how long has it been since someone was freed from a demon? Our processed version of Christianity doesn't resemble the book of Acts.

This must change. What if God wants to send a global awakening of the Holy Spirit after this coronavirus pandemic? Do we have enough oil in our lamps to handle the next revival? Here are three things you should do immediately to prepare your heart for what's coming:

1. **Pray for a spiritual reset.** When the pandemic started in March, my schedule was canceled, and I realized how busy I'd become. As uncomfortable as it was to adjust my routine, I knew I needed the break—even if it meant less income. I asked the Lord to change my habits, purify my thoughts and attitudes, and give me more hunger for Him. I wanted personal revival.

As I began soaking in God's Word, I realized the day of Pentecost is May 31. The Lord told me to read the book of Acts every day in May leading up to that date. Reading about the early church has stoked my hunger for God even more. I don't want to settle for anything less than New Testament revival. The book of Acts is still God's template for how He works, and we need to adjust our lives to it.

2. **Let God refine and prune.** Before Jesus came, John the Baptist had to prepare the way. That process requires repentance and a washing away of the old. Whenever God

is about to do a new thing, He recalibrates us so we don't go back to our old ways. He can't put new wine in old wineskins. The way we did things in previous seasons won't work in this next move. Ask God to trim away the dead branches of stale religion—in your life and in your church.

3. **Seek a refilling.** Dependence on the Holy Spirit was the early church's secret. The Spirit anointed the first disciples to heal the sick, discern evil spirits and carry the gospel boldly to difficult places. How did we ever think we could do ministry without that power?

When Paul went to Ephesus he met some men who believed in Jesus in an intellectual way, yet they had never been born again. In fact they didn't know there was a Holy Spirit (see Acts. 19:1-7). This reminds me of many American churches. We go through the motions of church, but we are clueless about Pentecost.

Now is the time to ask Him to fill you. Don't wait until your regular routine resumes. The last thing we need is to go back to last year's "normal" setting. What God has in store for us in 2020 is unprecedented. Only those with full tanks will be able to handle it. {eoa}