

# How to Avoid Getting Stuck in a 'Swamp Church'

I always tell the story of how a minister friend and I went to California, and my friend wanted to visit a historic Pentecostal church. The church had been home to great revivals in the past. As soon as we got inside the building, he said, "It's a dinosaur. Let's go."

I was like, "Is that it? You came in for that?"

"That's it. It's a dinosaur. Let's go."

It's terrible to call a church a dinosaur. The church had a revival years ago, but now there was no flow of the Holy Spirit, no fountain of the Holy Ghost, no new songs flowing, no prophetic utterances and no revelation. There was nothing fresh happening there that would lead you to think about a spring.

A spring always gives fresh water. It is not stale. If there's no fountain, no spring, the water becomes stagnant, and when it becomes stagnant, it becomes stale. It becomes a swamp.

Don't end up in a swamp church. Most of all, don't end up with a swamp heart.

Thank God for Zion, where there is a river whose streams make glad the city of our God. Zion has a spring, a fountain of life always flowing with something fresh, something new and something that brings life.

God wants a fountain to flow in your life. You should never be dry, dead, barren, parched and thirsty. Out of your belly shall flow rivers of living water. The prophetic—being able to speak and hear the word of the Lord—should always be bubbling up and flowing. There should always be a freshness flowing

free in Zion—new songs, new words, new visions and new dreams.

### **The Meaning of a 'Zion Heart'**

Zion heart is a term I first heard while listening to a message on Zion by Kevin Leal at one of our Asaph Worship Gatherings. I love to hear prophets preach and teach the Word because there's an anointing on prophets to look at Scriptures from an uncommon perspective. When I preach on Zion, I preach it from an apostolic perspective. Hearing his prophetic approach to the topic was very unusual and refreshing. I told him I felt like the Joker in *Batman* when he said, "Where does he get all those wonderful toys?" Prophets receive unusual and amazing insights from God when they study the Scriptures.

As Kevin and I discussed this topic further, we spoke about how the church is limited in its understanding of Zion when it sees it as only a physical place. Zion is in fact a people and then not just a people—Zion is also a heart attitude. Zion is not limited to the types and shadows of the old covenant. The reality of Zion has been made full in Christ. Zion, which is the kingdom, which is the church, is in our hearts. God once dwelt in a physical temple; now we are the temple of God (1 Cor. 3:16). "The Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands" (Acts 7:48).

It's very seldom that any preacher preaches on Zion, because to most Christians, Zion is a future reality, not something we can experience in the present. When you have a revelation of this subject, it gives you insight on who you are as a son or daughter of God. Zion is not a physical location; Zion is a people, and Zion was, of course, the place of worship.

Around 2,000 years ago, Jesus said, "the hour is coming, and is now here" (John 4:23). He said this to the Samaritan woman He met one day at a well. He was letting her know that a time was coming when people would no longer worship at the temple in Jerusalem, but would worship in spirit and in truth. Jesus

was taking the focus off the physical location, saying that act of worship was temporary. As a matter of fact, He was letting her know the temple would be destroyed, but God seeks, looks for and searches for people who will worship Him in spirit and in truth.

God is always looking and searching for worshippers who worship Him in spirit by the Holy Ghost. This is why I emphasize prophetic worship so much. People may wonder why I have such a passion for this. It's because the Spirit-filled worship is not dependent on the songs you know. It does not depend on what someone else sings, what's popular or who has the greatest song out. Spirit-filled worship depends on the Spirit of God.

Unfortunately, not many people want to do what it takes to draw from the Holy Ghost. So many of us are lazy. We don't want to use our faith. We don't want to move in the Spirit. We'd rather do it the easy way. We'd rather do the big things everyone else is doing—the sound, the song. There may be a lot of great sounds and great songs. I'm not against great anointed songs, but nothing takes the place of the Holy Ghost. Nothing. You get breakthroughs and miracles when you move in the Spirit that you do not get by copying someone else. And a lot of people don't want it. They go after what's popular—lights, camera, action, smoke. Looks good, sounds good, but it will never replace the power and grace that come through the Holy Ghost.

When you learn how to live in and move in the Spirit, get ready for some blessings that normal people don't get. Unusual things happen. Special breakthroughs happen in your life. It's a different lifestyle. It's the lifestyle of one whose heart is toward Zion—one who loves the unadulterated presence of God, one whose heart is for God and His heart is for them. And once you get used to this level of worship and relationship, you can't go back. {eoa}

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