

Spirit-Filled California Church Pleads for God to ‘Rip Open Heaven’

On October 25, we began having church every night at 6 p.m. for two straight weeks.

At times, the atmosphere was overwhelming—a full altar, dozens of baptisms and countless lives changed, both in person and through livestream. As the old-timers used to say, “God heard our cries and showed up!”

Our key verse was Isaiah 64:1, “Oh, that You would rend the heavens! That You would come down! That the mountains might shake at Your presence.” The word “rend” means to rip open. We prayed, “Oh God, would you rip heaven open and come down and visit your people?” and He did!

Keep the Fire Burning

I consider myself a conservative. By nature, I’m not very emotional but I can’t ignore the complete barrenness of most churches. The Christian life is to be living and vibrant, not dry and dead. It begs the question: “Where are the rivers of living water that Jesus said would flow out of the hearts of those who believe in Him?” (cf. John 7:38).

When it comes to experiencing a spiritual awakening (revival), it can’t be worked up; it must be brought down from heaven. In Leviticus 9:23-24, the glory of the Lord appeared to all the people and the fire came down and consumed the burnt offering. God brought down the fire but the responsibility fell on the priests to keep the fire burning. They were to remove the waste but not the fuel.

In the same way, when God chooses to give us a measure of

revival in our bondage, our uninterrupted worship is the fuel that keeps the flame going. Again, although we can't work revival up, God can bring it down if we prepare the soil of our hearts.

Rend Your Heart, Not Your Garments

The prophet Joel reminded the people to humble themselves and rend their hearts and not just go through the motions (cf. Joel 2:13). And in the book of Ezra, we find this principle applied ... the secret to truly experiencing a spiritual awakening. Ezra fell on his knees and spread out his hands to God. He rend his heart, not his garments. He interceded and God heard his cry: "Our iniquities have risen higher than our heads, and our guilt has grown up to the heavens" (9:5-6). He took ownership of the blatant sin occurring in the nation.

Ezra realized the absolute necessity of repentance, especially in relation to revival. Sin is serious and it costs a great deal. He also tore his clothes as a sign of desperation. The same applies to us; our actions reflect our desperation to meet God or our lack thereof.

Humility crushes pride and ushers in the presence of God. Moses spent years on the backside of the desert as God broke and prepared him. Joshua's humility no doubt came from lingering in the presence of the Lord. Isaiah was completely broken when he cried, "Woe to me! ... I am ruined! ... my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty" (Isa. 6:5). Jeremiah collapsed and cried out for humility in the people, "My soul will weep in secret for your pride" (Jer. 13:17).

From King Jehoshaphat to King Hezekiah—the hammer of God crushed the proud and defeated the arrogant. The psalms are saturated with the brokenness of David. Jesus' disciples had to be crushed like olives so the anointing oil could flow. Paul had to be blinded by the glory of God before true humility became a mark of his ministry.

We Provide the Sacrifice; He Provides the Fire

When you lose your intimacy with God, you lose your bearing. God told the prophet Zechariah to say to the people: "Return to Me, and I will return to you" (Zech. 1:3). The strength of the church is in its purity and spiritual power, not in its numbers. God doesn't need a majority—He is the Majority. Prayer can no longer be a footnote at the end of a sermon; instead, prayer and spiritual power must guide the church in these critical times.

What about you? How can you receive a measure of revival in these dire times if there is no desperation for it? God can't pour into your heart if it's already full of *self*: Self-willed. Self-sufficient. Self-made.

Self must die in you before God can really live within you. The greatest hindrance to revival is within your own heart. Now is the time to break up your fallow ground and seek the Lord (cf. Hosea 10:12).

Now is the time to listen to the words of the prophet Isaiah: "Seek the LORD while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon" (Isa. 55:6-7). *We provide the sacrifice ... He provides the fire.*

Listen here to the sermon, *A Measure of Revival in Our Bondage*. {*eo*a}

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