

Spirit-Filled Pastor Pleads, 'Oh God, Heal Our Crippled Churches and Dying Nation'

I'm sure we can all agree that evil surrounds us in America. Daily we are bombarded by reports of heinous crimes and lawlessness being committed throughout our land.

How can Christians not only remain peaceful and hopeful during these turbulent times but also dare to anticipate revival—perhaps another Great Awakening? I believe we can. But we must be willing to wait on God and seek Him like never before because “he acts for the one who waits for him” (Isa. 64:4b, LEB).

This type of waiting expects something to happen and waits patiently for it. When we wait and pray, anger doesn't influence us, impatience doesn't drive us, impulse doesn't derail us, and fear doesn't stop us. The disciples prayed in the upper room until heaven opened, and the Spirit came down. The filling of the Holy Spirit forever changed them. They were hungry for more of God. Can you say the same?

If we are to expect God to heal the crippled church and our dying nation, we must pray like Isaiah, “Oh [God] ... rend the heavens and come down” (Isa. 64:1a, MEV). And like the woman in the Parable of the Unjust Judge, we must *keep asking* (see Luke 18:1-8). Prayer must be brought back into our churches, real prayer that searches the soul and penetrates the heart.

Never, Never, Never Let Go

Many years ago, a very old man who experienced a revival when he was younger was asked why the revival ended. His eyes were filled with holy fire as he cried, “When you lay hold of God, never, never, never, never let go!” Let his burden be a

warning as well as a reminder to never let go.

When you were first born again, you had this fire, didn't you? And then life happened. Prayer and reading the Word gradually became an afterthought. Yet nationwide revival begins with personal revival—believers one by one begin to seek God again, and before long, there are family revivals and then churchwide revivals and then community revivals. Yes, it can happen, but the seeds must be planted by individual members of the body. In other words, it begins with you.

Are we welcoming this type of downpour in our churches and positioning ourselves for a downpour of God's Spirit, or are we extinguishing it because of pride, sin, doubt, unbelief and prayerlessness? It's time to break up our fallow ground and seek the Lord while He still may be found (Hos. 10:12). We provide the sacrifice; He provides the fire.

Do You Want to Be Made Well?

People love their sin and play the victim—which seems to be so prevalent in our educated, modern society—and they don't want to change. Just like many today, the Laodiceans in Revelation 3 thought they were in the center of God's will. They were a large church, wealthy and involved in the community, but Jesus said they were, instead, "wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked" (Rev. 3:17b), and that if they remained lukewarm, He would vomit them out of His mouth. Jesus' strong but loving words were designed to heal the spiritually crippled church.

Would they repent and experience His presence or remain crippled and drift further away? Throughout the Bible, the promises about returning to God are clear: If you return to God, He will return to you; if you seek Him, you will find Him; if you hunger for holiness, you will be filled; if you thirst for righteousness, you will be satisfied.

A Shocking Indictment

E.M. Bounds, famous for his books on prayer, wrote about a devout Christian named Edward Payson. Payson fueled the fires of revival during the Second Great Awakening through his persistent intimacy with God. It was said that he wore grooves into his hardwood floor as a result of his praying. Although some mock his fervency, I was inspired by it; it caused me to pray, "Lord, please bring a downpour of Your Spirit into my dry and barren soul. Oh God, would You revive Me again so that I can rejoice in You?" Does it stir your soul as well?

Praying fervently to experience the power of God as Payson did is not uncommon. Both early believers and persecuted Christians today would be shocked at how little we actually pray. Prayer can heal a crippled church and even resurrect a dying nation. Conservative churches need to dismount from their high horse and bend their knee at the altar.

Carnal churches need to stop quenching and grieving the Spirit and fear God again. Pastors, God wants to fill your heart before He fills your church (more here on both topics). Give up your programs, and replace them with prayer and worship. Give up your marketing ploys, and seek God's glory instead of numbers. Then just wait and see what God will do!

Answer the Call Today

Second Chronicles 16:9a (NKJV) says, "For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him."

Will He find you seeking after Him or running in the other direction? Nothing is more painful than seeing an unbeliever on the broad road to destruction or a believer running from God. Return to Him today, and experience the flames of revival.

His call is to the prodigal—"Return to Me, and I will return to you" (Mal. 3:7b, MEV).

His call is to the exhausted—"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28, NKJV).

His call is to the fearful—"The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:7).

His call is to the broken—"I will ... bind up the broken" (Ezek. 34:16b).

His call is to the sick—"I will ... strengthen what was sick" (Ezek. 34:16b).

His call is to the lost—"I will seek what was lost and bring back what was driven away" (Ezek. 34:16a).

God uses praying, Christ-centered believers on fire for Him to heal our land and revive our churches. Even if you're not where you'd like to be, God's love and mercy are continually calling you back. Make that choice today—once you make a choice, it then makes you.

Note: This is an excerpt from the booklet, "Oh God, Would You Rend the Heavens?" I'm hoping to release it in June 2021. Stay tuned. You can also find more articles on spiritual awakenings here. Also, I'm speaking on this important topic this Sunday at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. PST. You can view it live [here](#) or [here](#) on May 9. {eo}

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