

What Will It Actually Take for a Move of God to Sweep This Nation?

“When God finds someone with courage to pray, preach and live a life before Him of holiness and compassion, He can literally change the face of a nation.” (Winkie Pratney, *Revival*, 117)

What is required on our part to see a genuine move of God sweep across a nation? What are the prerequisites to true revival? Do our hearts burn with a passion for the Lord and compassion for the Lost? Can we say our only desire is to live a holy life for a holy God? How do we become recklessly abandoned to the will of God?

I believe we can find the answer to these questions through a passage of Scripture in the Gospel of Matthew. It was in a place of worshipping God, total focus of heart and soul upon the King of kings and unity among the believers, that the early disciples recognized and accepted their calling and commission.

After Jesus' Resurrection, He called His disciples to the appointed mountain, where they worshipped Him. As they gathered, Jesus gave them all authority to make disciples of all nations, teaching them to observe all things that He had commanded them (Matt. 28:16-18). As disciples, we are called to challenge others to develop a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and to live holy and righteous lives. Not only with our words, but by our lifestyles and with His imparted authority, we are to compel people to come to Christ.

The body of Christ is beginning to awaken. She is preparing herself to reach out as never before. But first her heart must be stirred and prepared. People are being refreshed and renewed. Strong conviction is drawing hearts back to a right

relationship with the Lord. This is only the beginning—a sprinkling of renewal—but we are preparing for the rain.

Most importantly God is building His character in His church. Hearts that are consecrated to the Lord can contain an outpouring of His Spirit. It is time for a second circumcision of heart (just as God had commanded the people before Joshua led them across the Jordan). We must examine our hearts, our motives, our actions and allow the Lord to cleanse us. He must increase, and we must decrease.

This is the time; this is the hour to prepare for a move of God throughout the land. I am reminded of something the late Bro. Leonard Ravenhill said, “God doesn’t just answer prayer; He answers desperate prayer.”

Genuine passion for God allows no room for mediocrity. Any leaven in our hearts and lives must be purged so that we are consumed with a love for God and His truth. It is what we do behind closed doors where no one else can see us that determines the power of God or lack of it in public. It is time to prepare our hearts and seek God as never before. From a place of relationship with our heavenly Father as we join together, He will send us out in Christ’s authority to impact the nations with the gospel. The Lord will draw people by His Spirit, and they will be compelled to come to Him. This is the gospel—the blind receive spiritual sight, the deaf hear the truth, the prisoner is set free and the lost find life! With the Spirit of the Lord upon us, we will preach Good News, heal the brokenhearted and proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord (Isa. 61:1-2).

Revivals in the Past

Throughout history, there have been reports of great awakenings and revivals. Revivals of the past began with a deep hunger and desire for prayer and intimacy with God, bringing people to a place of repentance and a call to

consecration and holiness. One such outpouring occurred in 1857.

According to Winkie Pratney in his book, *Revival*, “people had despair and hunger staring them in their face. Prayer was such a key in this 1857 Great Awakening, that it has been also called, ‘The Prayer Meeting Revival.’ During this Great Awakening, a gentleman named Jeremiah Lamphere ... gave up his business in order to be a city-street missionary. He passed out ads for a noonday Wednesday prayer meeting in downtown New York. The first meeting brought about six other men to pray. The next week, there were 20. By the first week of October, they began to meet daily. Within six months, over 10,000 people were meeting every day in meetings, confessing sins, getting saved, praying for revival ... With hardly an exception, churches worked together as one, with no time for jealousy. By common consent, doctrinal controversies were left alone” (pages 106-108).

It is also interesting to note that this awakening was an urban movement that spread through the land.

Going Forth in His Authority

The greatest miracles that take place during times of revival are the changed lives. When we are confronted face to face with the living God, we are changed! It shouldn't be our desire to seek after the spectacular nor the manifestations, though these things will happen at times when God is manifesting Himself to His people. We, like John in the book of Revelation, are exhorted not to worship angels or the supernatural, but to worship God. As we worship Him, His authority is poured out upon people, provoking us to be radically changed and to have a holy hunger for His righteousness. When this happens, multitude upon multitudes of souls in the balance of eternity without Christ will be compelled to draw near.

What stops a move of God?

Revival cannot be worked up; it is something we prepare our hearts for by worshipping God. One of the highest forms of worship is our simple obedience to God. We must be aware of the things that will hinder a genuine move of God. Certainly pride is at the top of the list. Leaders within the body of Christ will be challenged in this first.

Perhaps it's the desire to see God move in their own churches. As leaders, we must desire God to move through the community, region or nation without jealousy, envy or strife. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing will be there (James 3:14-16). Keep in mind that James is speaking to the church. We must get our fingerprints and thumbprints off of what God is doing. It is God's DNA, not ours, that will bring change to the soul of man. If we are to see a genuine manifestation of God's presence it is crucial that we are building His kingdom and not worried about our man-made earthly ones.

Combat our human tendencies with the opposite spirit.

Seek God and rejoice when God uses others.

Pray for other pastors, for leadership and for the church.

If lives are being changed and souls are being added to God's kingdom, *rejoice*—even if it is not in your church or ministry.

For as you rejoice and sow to build God's kingdom, the Lord will take care of our own place of ministry and need.

One of our kingdom statements is "While men reach for thrones to build their own kingdoms, Jesus reached for a towel to wash men's feet."

Don't Touch God's Glory

We must maintain a posture of humility and servanthood if we

are to see a genuine move of God. The late Dr. Edwin Louis Cole, founder of the Christian Men's Network, once said, "You can touch the gold, but don't touch God's glory."

Do we desire to bring God the glory? Are we seeking to build His kingdom or our own? Have we surrendered our ministries? Is there any selfish ambition or prejudice? These are hard questions but ones we must ask ourselves. If we find ourselves falling short in any of these areas, now is the time to plead for God's mercy. Pray that God would not have to send a prophet, such as Nathan, to rebuke us for our sin, saying "you are the man" (2 Sam. 12:7). I am reminded also of what happened to Uzzah as David was first attempting to return the ark of the Lord to Jerusalem.

The ark was being carried on a cart, and the oxen stumbled. Uzzah reached out his hand to steady the ark, and God struck him dead for touching it! (2 Sam. 6:6-8). This presents a strong warning to leaders. Do not touch God's glory! God will move by His Spirit. We won't have to work it up or boast of what He is doing. All the glory belongs to the Lord, and we dare not touch it!

Warning: Judgment or Revival?

Will we have revival because we have made the choice to humble ourselves before the holy and awesome God, or will there be judgment because we have not placed Jesus as the King on the throne of our hearts and of the church? We see this pattern in Scripture in the last chapter of the book of Judges and continuing in the book of Ruth. "In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes." (Judg. 21:25). Is it because there has not been a king in all of the American church that we have sought after other gods? If we want revival, we must humble ourselves before Him in repentance or judgment will come. This kind of judgment occurs in the beginning of the book of Ruth.

“In the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land” (Ruth 1:1a).

This statement immediately follows the last verse of the book of Judges. There was no king in Israel, and the people did what was right in their own eyes. Therefore, God appointed a period in which judges ruled, and there was a famine in the land. God had no choice but to allow judgment because the people chose not to follow Him.

Likewise in America, if we continue to do what is right in our own eyes, God has no choice but to allow continued shakings. Yes, there will be mercy in the midst of His judgment, but now is the time to search our hearts. Is any other king enthroned in our hearts besides Jesus? If so, it is time to remove those foreign gods. For God is a jealous God, and He alone will be worshipped, and He alone is worthy of all praise, honor and glory.

Will we as a nation, as the church or as individuals continue to do what is right in our own eyes or will we surrender to the only true King? He will bring revival, but in that revival everything that can be shaken will be shaken so that only that which cannot be shaken will remain (Heb. 12:26). Let's purify our hearts that we might enter God's revival cleansed and ready to rescue souls.

Sprinkling of the Spirit, But the Rain Is Coming

We are seeing the early signs of a drizzle or a sprinkling. But soon there will be a downpour of rain. Rain does many things. It replenishes dry, parched land, and it washes away pollutants. And when the fire of God comes, it will consume and burn out the dross. It will bring us to our knees. May we have an outpouring of God's Spirit that washes and burns out the dross, igniting us into a flame that burns brightly throughout this land. Likewise, may we become conduits of the river of life which brings healing wherever it goes.

There will be a simultaneous washing and renewing through the river of God and a purging, purification through the fire of God. Without a prepared heart, some will be drowned in the water, and some will get burned by the fire. This is determined by the condition of the heart because no flesh will glory in His presence. We must wear proper garments as the firemen do to rescue those on the verge of hell's flames. May we throw out the proper life vest to those perishing in the sea of death, which comes only through Christ.

'Consume Me, Lord'

We say we want revival, but do we really understand what that means? As Dr. Michael Brown stated, "Once you pray, 'Consume me, Lord,' you can't negotiate with the flames" (*Holy Laughter to Holy Fire*, 74). We must allow the fire of God to consume us so that we become that burnt sacrifice, totally surrendered to the Father's will. That's what our Lord Jesus did, and He requires the same of us—for the cross is the place of total surrender.

The Momentum Is Building

God is already moving. This is a time to fulfill destiny. A momentum is building. It is up to us to make sure we don't allow the flesh to get in the way of what God is doing. The move of God's spirit transcends every denomination, race and every church.

This Is the Day

May there be a world-wide awakening that is deep and wide. If a thousand years is as one day, and one day is as a thousand years as it says in 2 Peter 3:8, then could it be that we are in the beginning of the third day since the time of Christ? We live in an important and unprecedented time. It is my prayer and my heart's intercession that you too will sense a fresh manifested presence of the holiness of God and a spark of revival through your cities and nations.

It's your time. May you and I fulfill our destiny for His Kingdom and His glory.