

Memphis Exalts Jesus Draws Thousands

What began as a prayer burden turned into a major event—an event that gathered together members of the body of Christ with one simple desire—to exalt the Lord Jesus. The event, “Memphis Exalts Jesus” brought together several thousand Christians from a wide array of racial, ethnic, denominational and cultural backgrounds at AutoZone Park in downtown Memphis. For over four hours there was praise and worship, scripture reading, prayer, exhortation, and testimonies. During the whole time, no name was mentioned other than the Lord Jesus.

The burden for the time was birthed in the hearts of a number of Christians from various backgrounds as they sought the Lord concerning a possible response to the national Atheist Convention being held in Memphis on Easter Weekend.

“It was clear to us, that the idea of protesting or demonstrating was not what the Holy Spirit wanted,” said one of the event facilitators. However, something was in our hearts and we sought the Lord for direction. After several months of prayer, consideration, and fasting, the Lord seemed to be encouraging having an event focused only on the Lord Jesus Himself.

Two men who did not know each other, from very different backgrounds both had the same desire—to rent AutoZone Park and have “Memphis Exalt Jesus.” These men found each other through several mutual believers.

“At first it was laughable,” said one of the men. “I kept it in my heart and mind for at least two months before saying a word about it.” Then suddenly it emerged and there was a witness to go forward. In just 10 weeks hundreds of Christians came out of the wood work to organize and execute the event.

The gathering occurred on the day that many in the city commemorated the tragic death of Martin Luther King; on the day that the Atheists held their national convention in Memphis; on the day before the celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. There was a sense that having thousands of Christians come together in "Memphis Exalts Jesus," would not only impact the hearts and minds of many believers but also release chains imposed by the powers of darkness that have brought division and distrust among so many.

The venue, AutoZone Park, is the home of the AAA baseball team, the Memphis Redbirds. "The Lord provided the perfect weather day," said Nate Rhoades. Rhoades is an air traffic controller. He indicated that the meteorologist that works with the FAA called for "Abundant Sunshine"—this was remarkable given that the weather leading up to and immediately after the event was rainy, stormy and dreary. "The perfect weather was the Lord's grace," he said.

As previously stated, in a remarkable way "Memphis Exalts Jesus" brought together Christians of all races, denominations, and ethnicities for one purpose, to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ. No one else was named during the event. All of the speakers, the choirs, the prayer facilitators, and even the event coordinators remained unnamed.

"There has never been an event like it in the city," said, Jan Winterburn one of the event facilitators. It was incredible, we all entered into to worship and prayer—whether the choirs or speakers were African-American, Caucasian, Hispanic, Asian or born again Jews. She added, "This was about the Lord Jesus being exalted and the members of His body coming together under His Headship."

From the very beginning the Scripture, "'If I be lifted up, I will draw all peoples to Myself' resonated in our hearts," said Kit Mays. Mays addressed the crowd declaring Jesus is God and Jesus is Savior. Another Speaker, Aaron Campbell spoke of

Jesus as King. Another brother, Mark Wade, spoke powerfully on Jesus is Lord. These four themes resonated throughout the event—Jesus is God, Jesus is Savior, Jesus is Lord and Jesus is King (and coming King).

For many years Christians in Memphis have been praying for the city and the body of Christ in the city. Specific weekly and monthly prayer meetings have been held for this purpose. Many hearts have been grieved as Memphis has been sadly divided.

Even among Christians there is much division based upon race, culture, ethnicities, denominations, and more. During the past year or two the energy behind praying for the unity of the Body of Christ in Memphis has accelerated. In addition, many have been praying for revival. Some were encouraged by watching the transformation videos that show whole communities impacted for Christ.

Though planning for an event of this magnitude normally takes nine to 12 months, the planning group brought it together in about 10 weeks. “It was one miracle after another,” said Winterburn. She added, “We saw the Lord intervene by bringing hundreds together to plan—all had one heart and one mind—the spirit of each planning meeting was a foretaste of heaven—with love, grace, and oneness of heart.”

All along the way, the planners found the Lord providing for them—bringing all the right people at the right time with the skills needed to have the event. In addition, the Lord brought many prophetic words of encouragement. One of the most noteworthy words came from Ezekiel 37—the dry bones coming together, then sinews, flesh and life as they stood up in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Not only were Memphians at the event—but some came from New York, Houston, and other cities. In addition, there were attendees from Korea, Japan, Uganda, Switzerland, Sweden, Columbia, Spain, England, China, and a number of other nations. Even some of those who attended the Atheist

Convention stopped in for a while. Some were seen enjoying the praise music.

Scores of attendees were asked about the time—all effused much praise for all the Lord had done. This was consistent with another Scripture the Lord gave for the gathering. “The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord’s doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it” (Ps. 118:22-24).

The Headship of Jesus Christ and the unity of the body of Christ is indeed a rare commodity in places with wealth and freedom. The event organizers have a great hope that this was not merely an event, but a catalyst—that Memphis would be a city on a hill, a light to the nation and the nations—where Jesus Christ, Himself rules and reigns in His Church—where He alone is Name, glorified, lifted up and that all peoples will be drawn to Himself.

One of the event organizers said, “For several years we have been praying for the Lord to raise up 300 companies of intercessors in our nation. We believe that though our nation’s foundations have eroded, the Word of God is being recast, and the Lord is being rejected and replaced by paganism and evil doing—there still can be one last great awakening—one that restores the Lord to His rightful place and sweeps multitudes into the kingdom of God. May we be on the cusp of the greatest move of the Holy Spirit in our nation’s history.” Another attendee said, “What we saw on Saturday, April 4 was like Elijah seeing a cloud the size of a man’s hand. May we see many clouds of latter rain emerge across our nation and may God alone through Jesus Christ get all the glory, honor, power, might and dominion.”