

A Holy Ghost Party Can Be Dangerous Without This Key Element

Without one key element, movements that emphasize signs, wonders and glory meetings are extremely dangerous.

I'm encouraged that we are witnessing a sense of awakening in parts of the church today. It thrills my heart that we are starting to move beyond the tired, predictable wineskins of yesterday and are yearning for a much deeper dive into the river of the Holy Spirit.

There are meetings and movements that are enjoying a supercharged atmosphere. Some of these are extremely good, necessary and forerunners for the coming church.

The hunger is so overwhelming for some, however, that this current season is producing people who will run to any meeting that presents the hope of experiencing a supernaturally activated moment.

Of course, a deep desire to encounter the wonder of the Holy Spirit is not an indicator of impure motives. Quite the opposite, those who hunger for more of Jesus can be counted among the remnant—as long as their hunger is pure and their approach is stable.

"When Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, saying, 'Give me also this power, that whomever I lay hands on may receive the Holy Spirit.' Peter said to him, 'May your money perish with you, because you thought you could purchase the gift of God with money! You have neither part nor share in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. Therefore repent of your wickedness, and ask God if perhaps the

intention of your heart may be forgiven you'" (Acts 8:18-22, MEV).

Impure Spiritual Hunger and the Call for Repentance

Simon was more than intrigued by the invisible force he was experiencing. He was so zealous to function in that power that he actually wanted to pay for it! I know that seems absurd, but that spirit is at play very commonly today. The rush of the super power he was experiencing was so remarkable that he couldn't help but to go after more of it. His sin was not his hunger for God. His sin was his motive. He had no option but to repent—or die in his sin of impure spiritual hunger. This sin that Simon the Sorcerer was overcome by, the sin of impure spiritual hunger, is rampant in the church today.

To deal with this temptation, a key element that must exist within movements that are marked by supernatural power is repentance. Of course, repentance and the cross must be the primary driver of any church, movement or ministry. Sadly, today that is not always the case.

I was stunned when I heard about a pastor that no longer preaches the blood and the cross because, as he stated, they are *pre-resurrection*. His focus is now the benefits and the bonuses we can experience on this side of Calvary. While this may shock many of you, the truth is that many are abandoning a keen focus on repentance, the blood and the cross, though they may never be so bold as to announce it.

The last two places I ministered, in Dayton, Ohio and Greenville, South Carolina, I received strikingly similar comments from people as I was connecting at the end of the service. In both places I had preached a straight forward message on holiness, repentance, surrender, sin, the cross and eternity. It was nothing original, but the anointing was strong.

In one of the events someone said, "I haven't heard preaching

like that in 30 years.” In the next event I was told, “I haven’t heard preaching like that in 27 years.”

That almost brought tears to my eyes. It did bring righteous indignation to my spirit.

“From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, ‘Repent! For the kingdom of heaven is at hand’” (Matt. 4:17, MEV).

In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand’” (Matt. 3:1-2, MEV).

“God overlooked the times of ignorance, but now He commands all men everywhere to repent” (Acts 17:30, MEV).

Holy Ghost Party

I love to dance in the river, jump in the river, swim in the river, soak in the river. If the river is rushing, I’m there. I’ve been transformed in glory meetings and I can’t wait for the next one!

I’m also extremely careful to discern the motive of my heart. The glory of God is not meant to be used as a high-inducing narcotic. God is holy and we must approach and enjoy Him from that reality.

When God moves, it’s not a playground, though there are times for wild celebration. We need to experience great fear just like in the days of old. Holy Spirit comfort and fear of the Lord must go hand in hand.

“Then the churches throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and were built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied” (Acts 9:31, MEV).

I’ve had the privilege of being in the midst of some extremely powerful and unusual river events where manifestations of oil,

gold dust, gold teeth and a mist of God's presence filled the auditorium. People were dancing, trembling and rejoicing throughout.

It was impossible to deny that joy was in the place and that humanly impossible wonders were occurring. I was giving leadership in that church but was continually awestruck at the very real, very powerful things God was doing. I was laid out many times during that season, including in the parking lot at 2 a.m. one late night as God spilled out after a powerful prayer meeting. I was undone. Many others were as well.

We enjoyed a Holy Ghost party atmosphere that was wonderful and legitimate. The celebration was joyous!

However, what grieves me to this day is that among the dancers were a few who were living very dark lives—and they were convinced that God affirmed those lifestyles. This is why they could dance and rejoice with such “freedom.” None of this came to the surface until God hit me hard one day. He told me it was time to shift the message from rejoicing to repenting, from dancing on our feet to crying out on our knees, and to let the Holy Spirit move in a very different way. God had set us up and it was time to marry true freedom with brokenness and surrender. This was the only way faux freedom could be exposed.

While the revelation of unapologetic sinful lifestyles was troubling enough, the point I need to make here brings something else into the equation: the plumb line of the cross.

The Cross

Holy Ghost parties, glory meetings and river experiences are not enough to rightly deal with our hearts and to draw us into freedom. They are insufficient. As overwhelming it can be, experiencing God's presence and His love is not enough to deal with darkness and rebellion.

God instructed me to preach with great unction and urgency on the cross, hell, holiness and the blood of Jesus. This ended the Holy Ghost parties and opened the door to Holy Ghost conviction.

This led to many rushing to the altars to allow God to break them, heal them and set them free.

Sadly, and disturbingly, there were previous Holy Ghost, glory meeting dancers who soundly rejected that message. One supported lesbianism and was convinced that God would never send homosexuals to hell. Another was involved in sexual New Age practices and rejected the theology of eternal separation from God entirely. Others told me they didn't affirm a definition of God that included judgment or anything negative. *One of the most passionate young people in the church said that she doesn't know the God associated with that message!*

That was like an arrow piercing through my heart! I couldn't believe what I was hearing!

In the midst of a true move of God, people were embracing deviant theologies and living in radical rebellion to the one they were dancing before!

As a leader, my heart was crushed. How could this have happened?

Rejecting the Message

When I hit the messages of repentance and the cross with fervor, some people fled. Honestly, this shouldn't have surprised me. In fact, I preach often that a true move of God will result in many being exposed and turning from God as deception and rebellion overtakes them. This is such a crushing truth that is hard to bear.

"... even him, whose coming is in accordance with the working of

Satan with all power and signs and false wonders, and with all deception of unrighteousness among those who perish, because they did not receive the love for the truth that they might be saved. Therefore God will send them a strong delusion, that they should believe the lie: that they all might be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thess. 2:9-12, MEV).

In Acts chapter two we see two responses to God moving. Some marveled. Some mocked.

The cross, when preached, will bring clarity.

"Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword" (Matt. 10:34, MEV).

"For the word of God is alive, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intents of the heart. There is no creature that is not revealed in His sight, for all things are bare and exposed to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account" (Heb. 4:12-13, MEV).

"Yet even now, declares the Lord, return to Me with all your heart, and with fasting and with weeping and with mourning. Rend your heart, and not your garments; return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and He relents from punishing" (Joel 2:12-13, MEV).

Then, the mourning and freedom that comes from true, deep repentance, can lead to another season of dancing!

"For You have turned my mourning into dancing; You have put off my sackcloth and girded me with gladness, so that my glory may sing praise to You and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks to You forever" (Psalm 30:11-12, MEV).

Today we have meetings that are focused intently on the glory, God's presence and the river. Healings, signs and wonders are primary. They can no longer be primary if we want to avoid allowing darkness and deception to thrive in such an environment.

Calls to repentance must be sounded. A revelation of hell must be had. The blood of Jesus must be foremost as the cross of Jesus is preached with unction.

"Godly sorrow produces repentance that leads to salvation and brings no regret, but the sorrow of the world produces death" (2 Cor. 7:10, MEV).

Only then can we truly celebrate and dance in the river. {eoa}

John Burton *has been developing and leading ministries for over 20 years and is a sought-out teacher, prophetic messenger and revivalist. John has authored nine books, has appeared on Christian television and radio and directed one of the primary internships at the International House of Prayer (IHOP) in Kansas City. Additionally, he has planted two churches, has initiated two city prayer movements and is currently directing a prayer-and revival-focused ministry school in Detroit called the School of Prayer. John's mandate is to call the church in the nations to repentance from casual Christianity and to burn in a manner worthy of the King of kings. He is equipping people to confront the enemies of God (established religion, Jezebel and so on) that hinder an extreme, sold-out level of true worship.*

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