

Do We Really Want Revival?

When we pray, "Lord send revival!" what exactly are we asking for?

When we pray it is natural to visualize the answer to our petitions. Ephesians 3:20 encourages us to envision our prayers with the expectation that God "is able to do exceedingly abundantly" more than I can think. So when we envision revival what exactly are we dreaming for?

Are we praying for the salvation of our family and friends? Are we asking for a harvest of souls in our communities and nation? Does revival mean altars filled with tears and repentance? Perhaps revival brings an outpouring of fire within the church enduing the saints with the power of the Holy Spirit. For you does revival mean a greater demonstration of signs, wonders and miracles? Pastors, when we ask for revival are we praying for growth both spiritually and numerically?

All these things and more are certainly welcomed and should be desired in the church, but they themselves are not revival. Salvations, refreshing, miracles and growth come as the secondary result of revival. They are the fruit that follows a genuine awakening.

Revival is when the eternal all consuming presence of the Lord comes to his church. Revival is God's arrival! It is when the King of kings inhabits the throne within our hearts, lives and church with absolute authority.

Before you say amen, consider the drastic difference between asking God for salvations or growth against the backdrop of a confrontation with the manifest presence of God.

Hebrews 10:31 says, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

Yes, we have full assurance of faith and can boldly approach the throne of God as sons and daughters made righteous by the perfect blood of the Lamb. However, do not forget that he who sits upon that throne dwells in unapproachable light (1 Tim. 6:16).

That thought may stand in opposition to contemporary theology but consider that when John, the beloved, encountered that throne. He fell as though dead at the feet of the one whose eyes blazed with fire. Jesus had to come to the disciple, whom he loved, and say, "Fear not." Truly our God is awesome and to behold Him in His glory is frightening. It would be foolish to forget that fact.

There is a cost to revival. When God arrives He upends and usurps our agendas. Our schedules will be inconvenienced, our selfish desires will become inconsequential. There is no room for pride or flesh. Egos become casualties and sin is dealt with swiftly. His holiness touches our life and by His fire we are purified. Revival means death to the old before it brings life to the new.

Is it not far more convenient to pray for growth in our church than it is to relinquish control of His church? Is it not easier to pray for the salvation of a loved one than it is to allow God full use of our voice to share the message of salvation with them? Is it not far more convenient to pray for God to bless the poor than it is to sell all we have and give to them? This is the difference in seeking the hand of God, rather than God Himself. One merely wants God's blessing, the other desires His lordship.

Jesus commanded all His would-be followers to count the cost of the pursuit. He cautioned them not to begin unless they were prepared to see it through till the end. In our pursuit of true revival may we count the cost as well.

We sing "I surrender all," but truthfully we barely "surrender

some.” When we pray, “Shake everything in my life that can be shaken,” will we cry for mercy when He starts to shake what we hold most dear? When we offer everything we have to Him will we hold back when He asks for it? It’s easy to pray prayers and make commitments with our words that our hearts faint to fulfill.

Yes, there is a cost, but nothing else is more worthy. The exchanging of our kingdom for God’s kingdom is incomparable. Though it hurts to surrender it; though we know the flesh can scarcely bear it—still we cry out for it. We welcome it because we are assured that God’s shaking “indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain” (Heb. 12:26).

Let the shaking begin! In the coming revival, God is reestablishing His authority and glory upon the church. He is returning the awe of His awesome holiness to His people.

As the writer of Hebrews continues, “Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire” (Heb. 12:28-29).

I challenge you to shift your attention in your prayer for revival. Instead of solely seeking the fruit of revival, seek the sovereign God of revival. See Him taking his rightful place upon the throne of your heart. Surrender it fully to Him so that He alone may reign.

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