

Holy Spirit Ignites Old-Fashioned Holiness Revival in a Graveyard

Some say holiness is old-fashioned. I disagree. It's God-fashioned! Hebrews 12:14 makes that abundantly clear by compelling the true Christ-follower to pursue holiness, "without which no one will see the Lord." Perhaps an encounter with God is not what some are after. However all those who desire to plunge themselves into the depths of His presence will find that the pathway to that place is a highway called holiness.

There is a story I share in Trail of Fire of a revival that took place in Dundee, Scotland in 1839. It was a powerful move of God that was marked by a clear call to holiness. That outpouring shook an entire nation. We could use such a move today!

This revival started under the preaching of an evangelist named William Burns. Burns had come to Dundee at the invitation of Pastor Robert Murray McCheyne. McCheyne was in need of someone to oversee his church in his upcoming absence. For that task, he chose an evangelist. It was McCheyne's hope that Burns could build upon the foundation he had laid and awaken his congregation into a genuine revival.

His hopes and prayers were answered when revival began to breakout after a midweek service. During that service Burns shared the testimony of an outpouring he had witnessed in a neighboring town. Burns invited all who wished to earnestly seek such a visitation of the Holy Spirit to stay afterwards and pray. One hundred people heeded the call.

As the extended prayer service continued late into night, the Spirit of God descended. Burns felt led to call more prayer

meetings for each night following and the number of people in attendance continued to grow. There was hardly any space left in the church by the week's end. The revival fully took hold the following Sunday. That morning it seemed as if the entire population of Dundee was there. Burns preached a powerful repentance message that was met with a flood of tears.

To make room for the increasing crowds, Burns tried moving the service outside into the meadows, but the local authorities objected, so they were forced onto a rather unlikely location—the church graveyard. What a sight to see! Multitudes were being reborn in a place set aside for the deceased. The irony was not missed. They celebrated it, stating that “a field for the dead had been transformed into a birthplace for the sinner” (Trail of Fire, pg 58). After more than one hundred years, Scotland's spiritual drought was finally over!

McCheyne wrote to William Burns during the revival, “I also am deepened in my conviction, that if we are to be instruments in [revival], we must be purified from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit. Oh, cry for personal holiness, constant nearness to God, by the blood of the all success in the ministry will only be to your own everlasting confusion” (Trail of Fire, pg 60).

Many might challenge McCheyne's words. After all holiness is not a popular word in the world today. Truthfully it never has been. Holiness is contrary to anything and everything that is not of God. Its very presence in a culture is upsetting to the status quo. Holiness shines like an intense light revealing, exposing and threatening all who wish to remain in the darkness of their sins. It is unfortunate that true holiness is seldom preached, much less expected from either the preacher or the parishioner. Its very mention has been retired from the vocabulary of the modern church and deemed as the old, rigid religion of our grandparents. What a shame!

Holiness is greater than a way of life. It is life! Life in

all its fullness. Holiness is the very environment of heaven as it is the essence of who our God is. As such, if we hope to find our home with Him, holiness must too find a home in us.

This is why God instructs His people, "You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy" (Leviticus 19:2). This is why Jesus reaffirms the command in His Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:48) and why the Apostle Peter restates it in his first letter (1 Peter 1:16). Consider that! It was spoken by God Himself, reaffirmed by Christ, and written about by the apostles—can it be any more clear?

Holiness is a must for God's people. He has made it the necessary moral condition for the well-being of His creation. When true holiness is present, all is healthy and whole. However, when holiness is absent, all becomes afflicted with the disease of sin.

This is why the message of true revival will always be a call away from worldliness and into holiness. McCheyne wrote that he was convinced that revival could only be sustained by genuine holiness. He preached it and modeled it with his very life. So much so that he was known in town as "Holy" McCheyne.

If we are to become participators in God's revival, we too must become partakers in His holiness! Because a revival that is absent of holiness is not revival at all.

So how does one begin this pursuit of holiness? McCheyne offers great advice and calls us to find holiness in the only place true holiness exists—Christ Himself. He writes, "Our soul should be a mirror of Christ; we should reflect every feature; for every grace in Christ there should be a counterpart grace in us." He later said, "For every look at yourself, take 10 looks at Christ" (*Trail of Fire*, pg 67).

True holiness will never be found in looking toward yourself. It is the consequence of having been touched by His holiness.

So set your gaze upon God! Come before the Lord in full faith

and complete humility. Allowing your life to be exposed to His holiness and there become undone. Fix your eyes on “Let us look to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb. 12:2). Everything changes the moment you have an encounter with His holiness!

My friend, no matter how barren or lifeless things may seem at the present, there is hope! Just like it happened in 1839 when a yard for the deceased was transformed into a field for the reborn, we too can experience the resurrection found in a revival of holiness. How could such new life ever be deemed as old-fashioned?

You can learn more about the Revival at Dundee along with nine other moves of God in my latest book, *Trail of Fire*. *Trail of Fire* tells true stories from 10 of the most powerful moves of God. However it is more than a book about what God has done, it is a call to what God is doing. Pick up this book and break free from the dry, dull routines of religion and become a catalyst for revival!