

Perry Stone Protege: Jewel City Revival Becomes the Apple of God's Eye

In the midst of a cold winter in southern West Virginia, a cry of revival burst forth from the state's second largest city, Huntington.

Once known for its railway systems and city lights shining off the waters of the Ohio River in the late 1800s, Huntington earned the moniker "Jewel City" from its prosperous railroads and shipping exports. Today, the home of Marshall University is nearly overrun with addiction and poverty.

The city has been in decline for decades. Nonetheless, a group of believers gathered at the city's largest church, Christ Temple, have been preparing themselves for what they believed to be a soon coming outpouring of the Holy Spirit to the dying city. On Jan. 23, 2022, that is exactly what the city received.

I had never explored the city of Huntington, but I have always heard of its despair. Personal friends, family members and many others have spoken negatively of the once thriving city. My only visit to Huntington came in 2014 when I visited Marshall University for a football recruiting trip. I had the honor of ministering at Christ Temple throughout this great revival that began on Jan. 23.

Unsure of what to expect, I preached the Sunday evening service to a gathering of well over 500. I could feel the hunger crying out from within the people in that room as the worship transitioned into the preaching. My ministry has and always will maintain the message of a simple gospel, leading to repentance of sin and total dependence on Jesus. We place a heavy emphasis on water baptism as a first step after

salvation, but we also embrace the “renewing” of our vows to Jesus through repentance rebaptism.

This, of course, comes from the second chapter of Revelation, where Jesus asked the church of Ephesus to return to their first love by doing their first works over (Rev. 2:4-5). Baptism is more than a public profession of faith. According to Scripture, it is a covenant that is made with Jesus as we crucify our flesh, bury it in the waters of baptism and resurrect in the spirit (Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12; Gal. 2:20). I commonly refer to the baptism water as “a tomb and a womb” as people are dying to carnality, but they are also being rebirthed spiritually!

Since July 2020, our ministry has seen nearly 3,000 people step into the waters of baptism. Many of these baptisms are salvations, but a larger portion of them come from pastors, elders, worship leaders, faithful saints and many others who already profess Jesus as their Lord. For them, it is not a salvation experience but instead a “returning to their first love” experience. Multitudes have described it to me by saying, “It feels like I met Jesus all over again.” A transformation takes place in the heart when the American churchgoer realizes the true significance of water baptism.

Understanding this simple gospel message that emphasizes returning fully to Jesus, I concluded this first service (and every service following) with an opportunity to be baptized or rebaptized. Over two hours after the initial altar call, the Christ Temple baptism team was still baptizing hungry repentant believers! After one service, 67 souls were baptized in water.

The service was filled with a hunger and a presence of God that I had never experienced before. The initial schedule for this revival was only four nights, from Sunday to Wednesday. When Wednesday night’s service concluded, we had seen almost 240 people step into the water, while numerous others were

touched radically in the altars. This includes a woman who was completely unable to walk receiving total healing in her legs and pushing her wheelchair out the door! Seeing the fruit of what Jesus was doing, we realized it could not be stopped.

I write this brief testimonial eight weeks later because this stretch of revival just concluded on March 16. Some services saw as many as 70 people baptized. The revival touched the entire community, even extending into the public school system of Cabell County and surrounding counties where over 300 students were saved in their very own school auditoriums. These students would then carpool one another to the revival service and experience the same power of Jesus in the waters of baptism. The revival also touched the addiction recovery communities, with nearly 100 recovering addicts stepping into the water, some of whom received a radical deliverance from substance abuse.

After eight weeks of unprecedented revival in Huntington, 1,001 individuals were changed forever by stepping into the waters of baptism. The community has given the event a new name—the Jewel City Revival. For those reading this that are upset for missing it, there is good news. It's not over yet. Pastor Chuck Lawrence, a man of great wisdom and vision, made a decision to pause the revival services so that the church could reach out to those who have been baptized and saved during the revival.

Pastor Lawrence and his leaders have developed a discipleship plan so that these new converts do not wander back into the world of sin from which they were rescued. To do this, a break from the services was needed.

However, on Easter Sunday, the Jewel City Revival is beginning again—at 6:00 p.m., April 17, the revival services begin and will continue into Wednesday night, April 20.

This is only the beginning. Huntington will never be the same.

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