

The First Wave of Revival Hits America

For many years now, I have been grieved over the lack of spiritual hunger in much of the church of America. With our society deteriorating around us and with large numbers of professing Christians departing from the faith, many of us have been more complacent than desperate (in the best sense of that word).

Why so little prayer and fasting? Why such faint cries for revival?

Of course, there were notable exceptions to this rule, including many houses of prayer, many gatherings for fasting and intercession and many brokenhearted leaders and believers. But it was not until the fall of 2019 that I began to sense a rising time of corporate hunger.

As I wrote in my 2021 book “Revival Or We Die: A Great Awakening Is Our Only Hope,” “The thing that gives me the greatest hope is that God has put a cry in the hearts of His people. Believers across the nation have been seeking Him earnestly for a fresh outpouring, a tendency I began to notice more markedly in the second half of 2019.

“Then, the crisis of 2020—meaning that the whole year was a crisis—caused that cry to go deeper. And, I repeat, it was God Himself who put the cry in our hearts and moved us to pray. Why would He do this if it was too late for America? Why would He move us to pray if He didn’t intend to answer our prayers? Why would He raise our vision for revival and build our faith for awakening if He only planned judgment and destruction?

“Matthew Henry once said, ‘When God intends great mercy for His people, the first thing He does is set them a-praying.’ I ask you, then: Would God have set us to praying if He had no

intention of showing mercy? And could there be such sustained intercession for revival if the Lord did not initiate it?"

What happened since then?

COVID happened, shaking the nation and revealing a lot of about our own lives and congregations.

The race riots happened, bringing division and separation right into our churches.

The politicizing of the church happened, with followers of Jesus becoming just as polarized as the world and with many of us becoming more identified with a party and a candidate than with the Lord.

The failed Trump prophecies happened, putting more egg on our face and bringing mockery to the Holy Spirit.

Christian leadership scandals happened on a very public, national level, bringing disgrace to the name of Jesus and only increasing distrust in the church.

It would seem, then, that we received the exact opposite of what we were praying for, namely, national abasement rather than a fresh wave of revival. Not so!

This is actually exactly what we were praying for, only we didn't realize it. That's because God comes as a refiner's fire (see Malachi 3:1-5), purifying His people before He empowers His people, humbling us before lifting us up.

What, exactly, does a refiner's fire do? It brings the impurities to the surface so they can be skimmed off and removed. It shows us our sin so that we can repent.

It is a painful and humbling process, one that can lead to agonizing public confession. But it is the very thing that prepares the way for the coming of the Lord. It is often the first step in revival.

As I wrote in "The End of the American Gospel Enterprise," my first revival book, published in 1989:

God's fire purifies and refines. Malachi prophesied that the Lord would come to His people as "a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap". On that day, the prophet says, "He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; He will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver" (Mal. 3:2-3). He will pass His priestly servants through the flames, melting all impurities out with His heat. Ouch!

Have you ever been refined in God's furnace? Have you experienced the heat of His flames? Has your dross risen up to the surface – filthy, ugly and proud – so that God could skim it off? Have you been shocked to see how much flesh was still there – impurities and imperfections of every kind – before the intense fire of God's visitation melted it away?

No one likes to talk about sin. No one wants to be "negative." But God has a higher purpose. He doesn't want to concentrate on the negative, He wants to remove it! He wants us to add to our "righteousness consciousness" a depth of "righteousness conduct." He wants to conform us to the image of Messiah, in thought, in word, and in deed. He wants to make us pure.

Listen to the words of the great apostle of faith, Smith Wigglesworth: "If you are to be really reconstructed, it will be a hard time . . . not in a singing meeting, but when you think there is no hope for you . . . tried by fire . . . God purges, takes the dross away and brings forth pure gold. Only melted gold is minted."

What was Wigglesworth's own experience? How did he walk in such a degree of the love and power of God? This was his personal testimony:

"Before God could bring me to this place He broke me a thousand times. I have wept, I have groaned, I have travailed many a night until God broke me. It seems to me that until God

has mowed you down you never can have this longsuffering for others.

“There have been times when I have been pressed through circumstances and it seemed as if a dozen railroad engines were going over me, but I have found that the hardest things are just lifting places into the grace of God.”

If you’ve never been “burned,” get ready, because this is what revival is about. It is only the scorched ones He can use.

The refiner’s fire has come to the church of America in the last few years, bringing our impurities to the surface for the world to see. And those fires will continue to burn in our land, bringing us to deeper repentance. But the Spirit is also being poured out as well.

 As I said on the Jan. 30, 2023 Line of Fire broadcast, “I believe that we are in the early stages of the first waves of the next revival movement in America. I believe that the tide will continue to rise.” (See also this Nov. 2022 article on the coming national outpouring.)

The outpouring at Asbury is a further sign that things are right on schedule.

Bring it all, Lord! {eoa}

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