

Asbury Revival: Will Believers Recognize Its Legitimacy?

The Asbury University newspaper reads: "Very few seats remain empty, but people crowd the walls, the floor and the balcony. It's been almost 60 hours since a pure Holy Spirit revival broke out."

Others declare they have never seen the student chapel with so many people. It started in a normal chapel service where there was a confession of sin by a student and 30 people stayed behind to seek God.

As we browse social media and look up hashtags such as #asburyrevival, one cannot miss all the criticisms, judgments and doubts of what is happening. The critical voices seem to be very loud shouting over some of the rejoicing by others.

The services have not been four or five hours long, but virtually non-stop for the last 60-plus hours. Some are decrying "emotionalism." This sort of thing is not just breaking the mold, but making a lot of people feel uncomfortable or convicted!

If we consider revival history, there has always been the unusual. God has worked in ways that broke the molds of those days. Many times, the strange things God required of some of those used in revival turned away others because they appeared too extreme.

Often, the generation after a revival sought to "sanitize" revival and the radical things God did. Rather it is best to let God be God and to try not to explain away everything or discard what was seemingly extreme.

We doubt moves of God for many reasons:

1. We can doubt a move of God when it goes beyond our ability or experience. When God called Moses or any other person by faith, it went against natural reason and ability of the individual. If God's call can be accomplished in our own energy it's not a call from God. Revival always empowers believers to do what they cannot accomplish on their own.

God's work always requires God's strength to accomplish it. The Bible says whatever is not done in "faith" is actually sin. If we are not acting in ways beyond our strength and ability we are not acting in faith.

When God is doing a work by His Spirit, we need to tread carefully, examining the fruit by His Word. God will not act contrary to His written Word but neither will He act in-line with our preferences, to please our carnal minds or appetites. We pray like this: "God send revival but just do it when we want and how we want it!" Words like that don't fall from our lips, but that is what is in our hearts.

2. We can doubt a move of God when it goes against our rational mind. We can fall into the danger of making a concept of a move of God in our own imaginations and not according to what the Spirit of God desires.

One way we can position ourselves is by humbly praying: "God please send revival; do it how You want; when You want; in whatever way You want; with whomever You want." Or, at the very least, we can come to God asking Him to bend our wills to His own so we will think and pray according to His will.

Revival is considered too loud or emotional by some. Sometimes revival breaks a traditional mold that has been in place for many years. God starts to run the church in the way He desires, not in ways that we find acceptable or comfortable.

3. We can doubt a move of God when it is something new. Early

in his ministry, John Wesley came to a place of “doubting” the work of God in their midst. He was later part of the great Methodist Revival in England.

In his journal we read, “Sat. 16: We met at Fetter-lane, to humble ourselves before God, and own He had justly withdrawn His Spirit from us, for our manifold unfaithfulness. We acknowledged our having grieved Him by our divisions and above all, by blaspheming His work among us, imputing it either to nature, to the force of imagination and animal spirits or even to the delusion of the devil.”

The work of God was so powerful and “new” in a sense he doubted this could be God at work. In the end, they sought God and came into a renewed sense of His presence.

We read again in his journal, “In that hour, we found God with us as at the first. Some fell prostrate upon the ground. Others burst out, as with one consent, into loud praise and thanksgiving. And many openly testified, there had been no such day as this since January the first preceding.”

God had mercy on Wesley and the move of God continued. We can abort or lose revival and God’s call even on our lives as leaders.

 If the presence of God is not with us, are we grieving Him? May we humble ourselves in pursuing Him in first love again.

God can have mercy and help you not to miscarry revival or fall short of God’s purposes.

Is God sending revival to Asbury College in Wilmore, Kentucky? At the very least we know there are “mercy drops” where we not personally doubt, grieve or criticize Gods work. {eo2}

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