

7 Ways to Reverse the Greatest Famine in the Church Today

Jesus said that His words are Spirit and Life (John 6:63). We must spiritually experience the God-breathed words of Yahweh, not merely digest them intellectually.

Jesus told us we need to know both the Scriptures and the power of God (Matt. 22:29). He told the Samaritan woman that our Father is seeking “true worshippers” to worship Him in Spirit and truth (John 4:23-24).

The apostle John wrote that the Holy Spirit’s anointing teaches us concerning all things, including the Scriptures (1 John 2:27). Jesus said that the Spirit would guide us into all truth and remind us of the words of Christ (John 14:26).

We should not merely read the Word exegetically through the intellect via the historical-grammatical hermeneutic method. We must allow the Holy Spirit, as the divine magisterium of the church, to give us His insights and application.

How Revival Comes

The Scriptures highlight the excellence and revival power of the Word of God as shown below in Psalm 119:

v. 25 (BSB): “My soul cleaves to the dust; revive me according to Your Word.”

v. 40 (NASB): “Behold, I long for Your precepts; revive me through Your righteousness.”

v. 93 (BSB): “I will never forget Your precepts, for by them You have revived me.”

v. 107 (NASB): "I am exceedingly afflicted; revive me, O Lord, according to Your Word."

v. 154: "Plead my cause and redeem me; revive me according to Your Word."

v. 159 (NASB 1995): "Consider how I love Your precepts; revive me, O Lord, according to Your lovingkindness."

Revival comes through prayer, worship, preaching and reading the Word of God. On some occasions, I have even experienced an infilling of the Holy Spirit while reading and meditating on His Word.

Nehemiah displayed the importance of allowing a biblical scribe to share the Word (Ezra, the priest) to bring renewal, revival and hope to the people (Neh. 8:1–12). King Josiah found the book of the Law and commanded its reading. This caused an incredible revival in the nation of Israel at the time. In my meetings, the teaching of the Word alone (without emotional preaching) has released great power and anointing to congregants, evidenced by weeping, spontaneous worship and godly sorrow leading to repentance.

Here are seven ways in which the church may reverse the famine of the Word of God in our midst:

1. Encourage corporate prayer focused on a supernatural hunger for the Scriptures to come upon the next generation of believers and preachers.

James 1:3-4 instructs the church to ask for wisdom. Meditating, reading and hearing the Word of God provide a lifetime of wisdom.

Proverbs 2 teaches us to cry out for discernment and understanding, to seek and search for wisdom as for hidden treasure; in so doing, we comprehend the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God (Prov. 2:3-5). Elijah's prayer for

God to turn the heart of His people back toward Him must become our prayer for this generation of preachers and believers (1 Kings 18:37).

2. Seasoned leaders should provide potential pastors and teachers with the tools to master the Scriptures.

Though training is usually in pragmatics, management and leadership, greater emphasis should be made on the proper tools to master and study the Scriptures. Nowadays, with all the convenient biblical tools available online, there is no excuse for scriptural illiteracy.

3. The church should equip pastors and teachers with biblical tools for hermeneutics.

Many excellent books are available on hermeneutics; one which presents a Pentecostal position for hermeneutics is "Spirit Hermeneutics" by Craig Keener. Lead pastors, elder boards, and church leaders must insist that their preaching team is adequately instructed in biblical interpretation to ensure the proper feeding of their congregations.

4. The church should encourage pastors to preach longer, in-depth teaching series.

The weekly preaching of disconnected, topical, motivational messages fails to instruct the congregation in biblical interpretation and does not ground them in particular truths of Scripture. Conversely, expository preaching through the books of the Bible enables people to understand the Scriptures and gives them a hunger for the Word.

5. Congregations should walk the Road to Emmaus every week.

The disciples on the Road to Emmaus knew Jesus by breaking bread; their hearts burned within them as Jesus expounded the Word. The church needs to increase the grace and knowledge of God through the Word and regular Communion (Luke 24, 2 Pet.

3:18).

6. Governing church boards should enable lead pastors to prioritize prayer and the ministry of the Word.

The apostle Peter defined his primary focus in ministry as prayer and the ministry of the Word (Acts 6:1-4). Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, taught him to be vertically focused and hear from God so he could disseminate instructions to the elders who governed the flock (Ex. 18:19-21).

The key to congregational flourishing is to have a lead pastor saturated in the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit, filled with wisdom and grace sufficient to lead the Church. Church boards must adjust the pastoral job description to reflect the priorities of prayer, personal study, and spiritual formation. Too many pastors are glorified administrators who preach “empty” without sharing the Word from an overflow of what God has poured into them.

7. Greater emphasis should be placed on Scripture readings during Sunday services.

 Attractional churches tend to bypass essential liturgical practices such as weekly holy Communion and reading the Word because they think it takes too much time. Portions of the service (during or before preaching) should include Scripture reading to prompt the congregation to hunger for the Word and pursue it.

Join my prayer that the next great revival in the church is ignited and sustained by anointed, extemporaneous, exegetical preaching and teaching through Spirit and Scripture-saturated servants of God. {eoa}

Editor's Note: This part two of a two-part series. Click here for part one.

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