

Are You Ready for a Pentecost Outpouring?

We read in Acts 2:1-21 about the outpouring of the Holy Spirit that came during Pentecost. When the 120 were waiting with expectation and anticipation through worship in the upper room, the Holy Spirit came in very unfamiliar and unexpected ways. The church was birthed and all nations were impacted.

The late Leonard Ravenhill, who embraced me like a spiritual grandson, used to say, "Many want an upper room experience like on the day of Pentecost, but they're unwilling to humble themselves on their knees at the cross of Christ."

You see, many want the presence and power of God, yet forget that we cannot circumvent the place of humility, holiness and honesty that comes from posture on our knees.

How can the bride prepare herself? One clue we have in Scripture is the Parable of the 10 Virgins in Matthew 25. The parable says there were five wise virgins and five foolish virgins. The wise virgins were prepared for the arrival of the bridegroom by having their lamps filled with oil. The foolish virgins had allowed their oil to run out, and when the bridegroom came they had no light by which to see. Like Hophni and Phineas, these foolish virgins neglected to keep the lamp filled with oil, and as a result they were left behind when the bridegroom arrived.

Sadly, many today are like the five foolish virgins. We have become apathetic in our approach toward the things of God. We have not kept the oil—representing the presence and anointing of the Holy Spirit—in our lamps. We have grown accustomed to the darkness around us and are unprepared for the days ahead.

God is calling His people to wake up and shake loose from their apathy and lethargy. He is calling us to hear the divine

warning about the days to come and to prepare, prepare, prepare. We must prepare ourselves for His coming by trimming our lamps with oil. We must prepare the church as an ark of refuge for those who are perishing. We must prepare the way of the Lord!

Hope in Dark Times

The times we are facing are truly difficult times. Everything around us is being shaken, so that only that which cannot be shaken will remain (Heb. 12:27). Many foresee a great economic collapse. Fires, floods, earthquakes and natural disasters abound. The moral failure of our leaders and decline of our culture continues.

These challenging times should cause us to heed the warnings of a God who loves us and wants to save us from the day of trouble. But they should also cause us to rejoice in the hope that remains. God desires to redeem and restore us. He is looking for the faithful with whom he can change a nation.

In the midst of Hophni and Phineas' private disobedience, God was already preparing to raise up Samuel out of what seemed to be an impossible situation. Hannah cried out to God in desperation for a miraculous fulfillment of promise. God had not forsaken Hannah, nor had He forgotten Israel. He had a perfect plan and perfect timing. Samuel represented a new prophetic voice that would rise in the land. He represented a righteous generation to replace that which was profaned.

A Samuel Generation

I believe that in America, God is going to raise up a new prophetic voice of courage. I believe He will replace the unjust judiciaries and raise up righteous judges. But it is critical that we realize the true state we are living in instead of engaging in business as usual. If the oil runs dry and the lamp goes out in the church, it's possible to continue going through the motions of institutional Christianity, but

in reality it's just cosmetic.

Cosmetic Christianity is much like costume jewelry: lots of luster and shine without real substance. One of my spiritual fathers, the late Dr. Edwin Louis Cole, called it "High Gloss—cheap merchandise." We must not be content with a compensatory facade—compensating on the outside for a lack on the inside. Because without the presence of God, our public celebrations and display are powerless.

When the time comes to go to another depth of spiritual battle, the very soul of our nation will crumble if the church does not take its rightful place. Our lamp must be full with the oil of the Holy Spirit. We can speak the Christian lingo and make public declarations but without the presence and the power of God, there is no upper room experience.

You see, many want the presence and power of God, yet forget that we cannot circumvent the place of humility, holiness and honesty that comes from posture on our knees.

We need a fresh revelation of the work of the cross and the power of the Resurrection in a place of authentic humility—dying to self. One of the highest forms of worship is simple obedience to God. He provides for us public power rather than public powerlessness. Our prayerlessness in private has become powerlessness in public.

We need courageous voices of prophetic clarity to resound from the pulpits of America as well as righteousness to permeate through the halls of politics. We have a renegade judiciary and need a new generation of righteous judges raised up in the land.

We need princes, politicians, priests (pastors), prophets and people who love God and others more than they love themselves. From preachers to politicians, from pulpits to political offices ... and all in between, we need a revival of character.

We need a new generation of Samuel to arise! God wants to reconfirm His covenant promise and commitment, so that He can restore the nation ... before the lamp of the Lord goes out and the glory of God departs in the land...." {eo}

(Adapted from a portion of a 2010 article by Doug Stringer that is prophetically timely today).

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