

God's Holy Interruption Is Coming Soon

This past weekend I preached at The Roads Church, a charismatic congregation located in the tiny town of Norris City, Illinois. Located amid cornfields, the population is only 1,325, but almost that many people visit the church on weekends. They come from all over southern Illinois and Indiana, some driving an hour because the Holy Spirit is doing miracles there.

It's thrilling to see the spiritual hunger of the people in Norris City. Every morning members of the church gather to pray for God's presence to visit their region, and Pastor Chad Everett and his team have planted two satellite congregations in Mount Carmel (45 miles away) and Carlinville (155 miles away) because people in those towns want more of the Holy Spirit.

On Sunday, I preached from 1 Kings 18, when Elijah called down fire from heaven and prayed for an end to a three-year drought. I reminded everyone that when things grow spiritually dark, as they did during the reign of Ahab and Jezebel, God is willing to bring a holy interruption. The Lord didn't allow the prophets of Baal to defeat Israel; He sent a visible demonstration of His power that caused everyone to fall on their faces and say, "The Lord, He is God" (1 Kings 18:39.)

I'm convinced we will see this kind of national revival. It's what I live for. But if we want what Elijah saw, we must pray like he prayed.

After the fire fell and Jezebel's prophets were defeated, Elijah went to the top of Mount Carmel and put his face between his knees. This was no ordinary prayer—it was gut-wrenching travail. He prayed for rain when there were no

clouds in the sky. When he sent his servant to get a weather report, and there was no evidence of a coming storm, Elijah didn't quit. He prayed and prayed again, with groans too deep for words.

In the end, Elijah's servant saw "a cloud as small as a man's hand is coming up from the sea" (18:44). With that shift in the weather, the prophet girded his loins and outran King Ahab's chariot as the rains began to pour down from the sky. What a remarkable picture of how prayer moves the heart of God to unleash revival on earth.

Is this what you live for? Are you watching the horizon for the storm clouds? Are you in daily travail for God's holy interruption? Many of us look around and get discouraged because all we see are negative reports. Jezebel seems to control our news media to make it appear that her side is winning. We must tune out the negativity so we can see in the spiritual realm. And then we must pray until the fire falls and the rains come.

More than 120 years ago a young coal miner named Evan Roberts fell to his knees in a prayer meeting in Blawnannerch, Wales, and made an unusual request. With great drops of sweat pouring from his brow, he cried out, "O Lord, bend me!"

History books tell us that Roberts was never the same after he uttered those agonizing words. Because of his overwhelming compassion for sinners, he asked God to "shut the gates of hell in Wales" for one year. When the Welsh revival began in 1904, 100,000 people came to faith in Christ in a short period.

What inspires me most about Evan Roberts was his tenacity. Historians say Roberts prayed for revival in his country every day for 13 years before anything happened. We must exercise the same kind of persistent faith today.

Roberts' prayers did more than call down the fire of revival

on Wales. There were American ministers who visited Roberts' meetings at Moriah Chapel, and they came back to the United States infected with a holy contagion. One of them, Rev. Joseph Smale, pastor of First Baptist Church of Los Angeles, returned to his city in 1905 and opened up his church for daily intercessory meetings. He specially was praying for what he called "a new Pentecost."

Large crowds attended Smale's gatherings, but traditionalists opposed him so vehemently that he left his church and started the New Testament Church of Los Angeles, which became a hub for daily prayer. There, Smale began urging his members to seek the gifts of the Holy Spirit. When revivalist William Seymour began his meetings in Los Angeles, Smale was fully supportive.

In 1905 the cloud was only the size of a man's hand. But in 1906 the torrential rains came, and a new Pentecost arrived in the form of the Azusa Street Revival. Evan Roberts' prayers, and those of a million Welshmen, were added to the prayers of Smale, Seymour and the people of Los Angeles. The Azusa Revival triggered the modern Pentecostal movement, which has resulted today in more than 600 million believers in Christ globally.

I'm convinced we are on the verge today of something greater than the Welsh Revival or Azusa Street. Don't focus on the evil things Jezebel is plotting, or how her noisy prophets are stomping and raving to gain attention. I hear the sound of thunder in the distance. Pray that the Lord will send His downpour.

J. Lee Grady is an author, award-winning journalist and ordained minister. For 18 years he worked for Charisma magazine, one of America's most widely distributed evangelical Christian publications, and he served as editor for 11 of those years. Lee is the author of six books, including 10 Lies the Church Tells Women, and he focuses much

of his ministry on releasing women in ministry. Lee has taken his message to 30 countries. Lee and his wife, Deborah, have four grown daughters and two grandsons. They live in LaGrange, Georgia.