

The Prophesied Exodus of Saints From Churches That Quench the Spirit's Power

"My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (1 Cor. 2:4-5).

I had a dream recently of a pastor who was worshipping the Lord in a service, but all around him there were distractions. People were not paying attention, and hardly anyone was focusing on the service. Then the Spirit of the Lord showed me that there was no expectation in the service because the pastor had built a low ceiling. This is the present hour situation in many churches today, and this is an important word for ministers and saints.

The Word alone is not enough to equip the saints. The demonstration of the Spirit and power of God is necessary too. Why else would God set them in the church?

When the Spirit is released and the power of God is demonstrated, it ignites the saints to do the work of the ministry. This is when a body of believers is the strongest. The demonstration of God's Spirit and power even ignites the service gifts and what is commonly called the ministry of helps.

A leader won't have to constantly ask the people to serve or arduously recruit volunteers. The joy of serving and moving with God is ignited through the demonstrations. The people are always willing in the day of God's power (Ps. 110:3). The hungry and thirsty will be drawn in.

Sarah is an example. When we ministered in the Spirit in her

church, she received an impartation. She was ignited with expectation and excitement. She was touched and filled, and something changed in her. This type of thing is to consistently happen in the hearts of the saints.

Even as far back as the beginning of the church age, the seven men chosen to wait on tables were to be men filled with the Spirit (Acts 6:3). The apostles' quality decision to stick with the unwavering devotion to prayer and the Word kept them in a place of always ministering the Spirit. This is where the focus of ministers needs to be.

Not only will it help ignite the saints when the demonstration of the Spirit is on, but it helps the preacher and teacher and prophet, for they too are ignited in their spirits. God's workings affect their utterances so that there is a greater kick and "umph" in their ministry, and their words are freighted with the Spirit's authority.

When pastors make the choice to back away or turn off the move of the Spirit it diminishes the power of God to fill every heart, and it opens the door to other things where people have to be entertained because their hearts are not satisfied and fulfilled in the Lord.

Years ago during a Holy Ghost meeting, the head pastor of a large charismatic church shut off the lights and closed the meeting down on a guest minister. But there was joy manifested in the meetings and the saints were having visions of going on the streets to evangelize. All kinds of spiritual activity happens like this when God starts moving.

To abruptly and irreverently shut down a meeting where God is moving, even when there are excesses, is to slap God in the face. What shortly followed in this church was tragic: Marriages went sour, divorce and adultery became rampant, heretical doctrines surfaced and many people backslid. This is what happens when pastors stop or hinder the move of the Holy

Spirit or refuse to move into it.

I call this the aquarium effect. Studies have shown that if you put a certain species of a large fish in a small aquarium it will not grow beyond the size of the tank. When a pastor puts too many limitations on a service or on the church, it not only quenches the Holy Spirit, but it limits the expression of the kingdom and it limits the growth and freedom of the people and who they are. There must be an expression of extravagance or you will kill the anointing through formality.

You might say: "What if chaos breaks out? After all, Paul told the Corinthians to do things decently and in order."

There is a simple answer to that concern. Paul laid out some guidelines and protocol for their gatherings. What we must ask ourselves is this: Is it Holy Ghost chaos or is it fleshly chaos? Does it minister edification or confusion? The Spirit's wisdom is always liberty with limitations.

In a kingdom mindset, each one has something (1 Cor. 14:26). The Ephesian 4:11 ministries are free to demonstrate the Spirit and power of God, and each joint makes its supply. When everything has to be sifted through the pastoral mindset, people will reach a ceiling.

Pastors who are only concerned with their vision and how they want things done will produce an aquarium effect. Those who are truly following God's plan are kingdom builders and moving in an ocean with no confinement or ceiling. Their pulpits are submitted to the Spirit of the Lord, and the world is their stage.

I am thinking of two pastor friends right now who fall on the godly side of this example. In their churches there is much liberty with some limitations. Actually, knowing both of them well, I would venture to say that if they had to err, they would err to the side of liberty rather than having too many limitations that would quench the joy and liberty of the

Spirit. Their churches buzz with excitement and the joyful activity of the saints. As a result, more increase keeps being given to them.

There is an awakening to the Spirit of God in pastors right now, especially upon those who are listening and paying attention to the Lord. They know something is missing. They know they made a wrong turn somewhere. They are about to retrace their steps and move back into the will and plan of God for their lives, ministries and churches.

Pastors of local churches who sincerely desire the plan of God will have soulical ties removed from their make-up where they won't be able to go back to familiar settings. It will be more difficult, however, for denominational pastors or those in controlled settings to wade out into the waters of the move of God.

Once a man comes under a system or humanly designed agendas, where the wisdom of man has preeminence and man's traditions are esteemed higher than God's plan, there will be attachments and restrictions in that organization.

Do you want to be an aquarium keeper or an ocean swimmer? The Brownsville revival and its legacy were brought to a halt for this very reason. The president of the Bible school, where I was also one of the teachers, was an ocean swimmer, but the denomination tried to make him an aquarium keeper.

The whole thing unraveled when man put his restrictions on it. When the reputation of man becomes more important than the glory of God, there will always be a spiritual abortion. Any minister who comes under a man or an organization that has many restrictions will be hindered if their calling is to be an ocean swimmer instead of an aquarium keeper.

The expectation of spiritually hungry people whose leadership have constructed low spiritual ceilings will collide with the raw power of God and the demonstration of the Spirit they know

is available. There is coming an exodus of hungry saints from churches that have restricted and hindered the demonstration of the Spirit and the power of God.

It's time to get out of the aquarium and into the ocean now before the rude awakening comes. It's time to wade out into the deeper waters of God's ocean and start swimming in the Holy Ghost. You'll be glad you did.