

PREPARE FOR REVIVAL FIRE

General William Booth founded the Salvation Army in England in 1865. He frequently read the Book of Acts. When he did, at some point he would break into tears. With his hand buried in his hands, he would cry out in **fervent prayer**: **‘Do it again Lord. Do it again Lord.’**

Throughout church history, God has stirred up people with a hunger to see Him revive or wake up His church which at times becomes sleepy, distracted, lukewarm, slothful, apathetic, carnal or content with status quo. **Revival is a return to apostolic Christianity.** When people are ill, they often lose their appetite. When the church is spiritually sick, its people often lose their appetite for God and His Word.

Revivals occur when people get **hungry for God**. Their faith is quickened from hearing about other revivals and of God’s promises in His Word. Many people have been stirred, including myself at age 28, by Finney’s book: Revivals of Religion. Over the years, I have collected books on Revival. Most of these books describe revivals and then give scriptures to back them up. My favorite book on revival is **In the Day of Thy Power** by Arthur Wallis. His book takes a different approach, He first expounds scripture and Biblical events and then illustrates with examples from history. It has shaped my teachings on revival.

‘Revival is divine intervention in the normal course of spiritual things. It is God revealing Himself to man in awful holiness and irresistible power. It is such a manifest working of God that human personalities are overshadowed, and human programs abandoned. It is man retiring in the background because God has taken the field. It is the Lord making bare His holy arm and working in extraordinary power on saint and sinner.’ - In the Day of Thy Power 1956 CLC UK

What if, I have often thought.....what if every church would stop all programs and activities for 10 days? Yes. stop all of them and instruct everybody in the church to **assemble for prayer and wait on God together**. That is what Jesus said to his disciples in Luke 24:49. Wait until you receive power from on high. (Of course they did not know how long that would take and neither would we, but it would be worth the wait.) Pastors would find out how many of the flock were serious about being followers of Jesus. After Jesus ascended to heaven, only about 120 out of the 500 were willing to obey Jesus and tarry in the upper room. They were the ones who must have taken to heart Jesus’ previous words:

‘If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.’ - John 8:31-32 ESV

‘Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.’ - John 14:21 ESV

Prayer is the one activity that **precedes revivals**. God sets his people to praying and praising based on the promises He has made. The early church waited on God for 10 days and then it happened. **God showed up by coming down upon them** with His Spirit of Power. They had **humbled themselves** before God and likely **repented** of the way they fled when Jesus was arrested and then crucified. During prayer in community our **hearts are prepared** for the greater move of God. There are often plenty of spiritual fireworks and outward manifestations during revivals, but the most important part is **transformed lives**. At Pentecost, God used the signs and wonders to draw the crowd, but it was the proclamation of **truth** about Jesus and man's sinful condition that brought repentance and faith that day when 3000 were saved. - Acts 2

'When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart. - Acts 2:37 NIV

One day of God's favor is worth more than decades of man's labor. Revival generated evangelism is far more effective than man-planned evangelism. Evangelism in the Gospels and in Acts was spontaneous encounters set up by God. God advances his agenda through daily divine set ups but also through mighty movings of His Holy Spirit. The Azuza Street Revival in 1906 in Los Angeles was the mightiest revival in America since the Great Awakening in the 1700's. In only 6 months the Azuza outpouring had resulted in 38 missionaries being sent out, and in two years over 50 nations had been impacted.

Before people entered the building, the presence of God could be felt. Several times the fire department was called as people had noticed flames of fire which appeared over the outside of the building on Azuza Street. The 50 foot flames were none other than the glory of God ascending from inside the meeting place. That is when amazing miracles took place. In our next message, we will look at some of those stories and share some insights about some people who were involved with this mighty outpouring of God's Holy Spirit.

'Revival is a community saturated with the presence of God.'
- Duncan Campbell / Hebrides Revival 1949

'Your people shall be willing (volunteers) in the day of thy power.' - Psalm 110:3

The 120 at Pentecost were willing to **pray the price** based on a command and a promise Jesus gave to them. They enjoyed that day of power, but that was just the beginning, for they also experienced more fillings after that. Revivals in history inspire us, but God has called us to be more than spectators. He wants us to be history makers and shakers. It begins with hunger, willingness, desperation and simple obedience to God's call for us to draw near to Him.

'Come near to God and He will come near to you.' - James 4:6 NIV

God is no respecter of persons, places or centuries but responds to simple faith and hungry hearts that are committed to Him. - 2 Chronicles 16:9a. It is a blessing to read about past revivals and moves of God. How much greater to be part of making history.

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