

Jonathan Goforth

by David Smithers

Jonathan Goforth's revival was a powerful outpouring of the Holy Spirit that swept China, resulting from his commitment to prayer, humility, and confession of sin.

Scripture: Exodus 25:11, Leviticus 6:11, Matthew 5:8, Titus 1:15, Hebrews 10:22

Topics: "Inner Purity", "Heart Cleansing"

Description

The preacher delves into the concept of purity, emphasizing the biblical roots of cleansing in both the Old and New Testaments. While the Old Testament focused on ceremonial cleanliness, the New Testament shifts the focus to inward purity of the heart and conscience. The term 'katharos' is explored, describing blamelessness, innocence, and being unstained by guilt, highlighting the importance of inner purity over external rituals. The sermon underscores the significance of having a pure heart and mind, which leads to a perspective of purity in all aspects of life, as true purity lies in the redeemed and regenerated heart, not just adherence to external commandments.

Transcript

"You must go forward on your knees," was the advice Hudson Taylor gave to a young Canadian missionary named Jonathan Goforth. Mr. Goforth faithfully and fervently followed this advice throughout all his missionary endeavors in China. Yet, after thirteen years of faithful praying and preaching, and what most would consider a very successful ministry, Goforth became restless and dissatisfied. It was at this time an unknown party from England began sending pamphlets on the Welsh revival of 1904. Goforth was deeply stirred as he read these accounts. "A new thought, a new conception seemed to come to him of God the Holy Spirit..." He then gave himself to much more prayer and Bible study. Goforth now found himself being driven by a fresh vision, a vision for a mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Soon he began to meet daily with other missionaries to pray for revival. These men vowed to God and to one another that they would pray until revival came to China. In 1908 Jonathan Goforth's prayers and dreams began to be realized. Goforth began going to different missionary stations and simply led his fellow missionaries in prayer. Then suddenly earnest prayer gave way to the open confession of sin.

It was when the Christians came clean, confessed and forsook their secret sin, that the Holy Spirit rushed in like a mighty wind. Truly it was this open and honest confession of sin that was the most striking feature of the revival. Everywhere Mr. Goforth went revival would spread, and almost always in the same way. First prayer was encourage among the Christians, which then spontaneously led to heart- breaking

confessions of sin. And then like a flood, the lost were brought into the kingdom by the thousands. "Men were searched as with fire." One after another broken-hearted believers emptied themselves through the uncovering of all secret sin. Mr. Goforth clearly identified unconfessed sin among Christians as a major hindrance to God-sent revival.

Walter Phillips describes for us one of Mr. Goforth's revival meetings: "At once, on entering the church one was conscious of something unusual. The place was crowded to the door and tense, reverent attention sat on every face. The people knelt for prayer, silent at first, but soon one here and another there began to pray aloud. The voices grew and gathered volume and blended into a great wave of united supplication that swelled until it was almost a roar. Now I understood why the floor was so wet - the very air was electric and strange thrills coarsed up and down ones body."

When Mr. Goforth preached, "The cross burned like a living fire in the heart of every address." It was the person of Jesus Christ who was exalted throughout the entire revival as a King and Savior who must be reckoned with. In the midst of this great revival Jonathan Goforth clearly saw that all of his previous sweating and striving had reaped only frustration. He came to the firm conviction that revival is only born through humility, faith, prayer and the power of the Holy Ghost. Goforth writes, "If revival is being withheld from us it is because some idol remains still enthroned; because we still insist in placing our reliance in human schemes; because we still refuse to face the unchangeable truth that 'It is not by might, but by My Spirit.'"

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