

Not Ready- Do We Really Want Revival?

by James A. Stewart

The paramount reason why many believers are not filled with the Spirit is that they are not ready to receive this priceless blessing from God.

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Revival"

Description

James A. Stewart preaches on the importance of being ready to receive the priceless blessing of the Holy Spirit, emphasizing the need for a genuine appreciation of this blessing and submission to God's dealings. He warns against superficial prayers and the danger of receiving the fullness of the Spirit unprepared. Stewart highlights the necessity of revival, urging believers to embrace the vibrant, life-transforming work of the Spirit, even if it disrupts their sense of orderliness. He stresses the importance of humbly glorifying God and being watchful against pride and self-glory, emphasizing the need for continual brokenness and renewal in our walk with the Lord.

Transcript

Lest I should be exalted above measure. - II Cor. 12:7

I believe the paramount reason why many believers are not filled with the Spirit is that they are not ready to receive this priceless blessing from God. Either they do not know what it is they ask, or they have not submitted themselves to God's preliminary dealings with them. The gift of the fullness is the greatest blessing that can come to a child of God. God is not going to give His choicest of blessings to one who has not in some measure a real appreciation of the glory of the blessing, as the Holy Spirit is so wonderful!

How many believers pray glibly: "Oh God, fill me with Thy Spirit." The superficiality of their prayer is an open witness to the fact that they have no true realization of the grandeur of such a blessing. It is seemingly a mere repetition of evangelical phraseology.

If it were possible to conceive that God, in His infinite mercy, would give the Holy Spirit in His Fullness to those who are not ready to receive Him, that experience would prove a grave danger.

How many times have you, as a parent given costly presents to your precious child, only to discover that he was too immature to appreciate the value of it. Again, would you give your child your valuable watch to play with, just because he asked you for it?

No! you would be afraid that he would misuse it because he is not yet ready to receive it. In the spiritual realm, think of Paul having to receive "a thorn in the flesh" to keep him humble.

"And lest I should be exalted above measure, through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure" (II Cor. 12:7). If the mighty apostle was in danger of becoming conceited through the glory of his spiritual experiences, how much are we! But God, in His infinite mercy and wisdom does not give us the fullness of blessing until He knows we are ready to receive it.

Many want a "dignified" revival

Many want a "dignified" revival or no revival at all. They do not want anybody's feelings hurt or people's sense of orderliness insulted. That blessed man, Duncan Campbell, told me once that after speaking to a ministerial group concerning the mighty manifestations of God in Hebrides, one pastor declared, "If that is revival, I for one, do not want it!" What a tragedy. As E. W. Mills has so beautifully stated:

"Revival has to do with life and more life; rich life, abundant life, zestful life, spacious sparkling life, overflowing life, victorious life, colorful life, and many-splendored life. There will be nothing tame and dull when the Spirit works. It will mean goodbye to deadness, to dullness, to boredom, to complacency, to sophistication, and all the other features of second-rateness."

The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious. - Isa. 60:13.

God's Hush Over Gathering

Let us stop dictating to the Holy Spirit.

Because the blessed Spirit of God is wounded in the house of His friends, the church languishes and fails to "bring forth" while sinners go carelessly down the broad road to hell.

How familiar is this pattern becoming! A blessed messenger tells in a quiet conservative manner something of the mighty workings of the Spirit. The hush of God is over the gathering. They the chairman's closing remarks throw cold water over it all. He intimates to the believers that they must not expect- nor even desire- such unusual manifestations of deity.

Many do not want their beautiful, cut-and-dried programs upset. They want everything to go according to time and pattern. Such people should read the Book of Acts on their knees for warning. They will see how again and again the Spirit is limited and suppressed by a disobedient church. His greatest battle is to break through the convention of the church and upset its carefully calculated plan of evangelism.

Some say they are afraid of wild fire and thus must suppress anything that is not on the planned program. Now, we do not deny the possibility of the flesh; we detest and deplore any cheap playing upon the people's emotions by psychological tricks from the preacher. We do not deny also the possibility of Satan's seeking to counterfeit the workings of God in the heart of revival. We have experienced this in our own ministry, but we have also discovered that the Holy Spirit is more powerful than the work of soulish believers or the work even of demons.

In the true manifestation of revival the Spirit works mightily upon the consciences- and consequently the emotions- of the people. Such scenes of emotions and seeming confusion have never failed to call forth strong and disapproving criticisms at such times. Witness Jonathan Edwards' masterly vindications of the supernatural workings of God in his ministry. See Murray McCheyne standing before his brethren in The Church of Scotland to give an account of the unusual happenings during the revival in his church. Surely it is scarcely reasonable to expect that men and women should NOT have their emotions affected to an unusual degree when the Spirit of God is present in an extraordinary manner. In defense of the upsetting of our ordinary routine, Jonathan Edwards says: "I do not think this is confusion or unhappy interruption, any more than if a company should meet in a field to pray for rain and should meet in a field to pray for rain and should be broken off from their exercise by a plentiful shower. Would to God that all the public assemblies in the land were broken off from their public exercises with such confusion as this next Lord's day! We need not be sorry for breaking the order of meetings by obtaining the end for which that order is directed. He who is going to fetch a treasure may not be sorry if he is stopped by meeting the treasure in the midst of his journey!"

We must be watchful

Glorify God. ---I Cor. 6:20

Many who have known intimate relationship with the Lord become backslides because they have gloried in their experiences and become proud of themselves. Even Paul was in danger of glorying in his revelations, so that he was given a "thorn in the flesh," lest he should be exalted above measure. Mr. Moody only on rare occasions mentioned his first mighty experience with the Spirit of God on Wall Street, New York. We must walk prayerfully and carefully, lest we lose the anointing of the spirit and the sweet manifestation of the Lord's presence. The deep, intimate, sacred dealings of God with the soul cannot be proclaimed from the housetops. It is only by direct permission from the Spirit Himself that we may be free to relate to others these experiences, and that for the glory of God alone.

We must ever be watchful lest self and Satan hinder the blessed Spirit in His endeavor to lead us into the light of the knowledge of the glory of God. Let us be ever ready, with prepared hearts, to receive by faith any fresh revelation of Christ which the Spirit could bring to our souls.

Broken.....

Blow ye the trumpet in Zion. - Joel 2:1

During the mighty days of revival in Latica when God brought His church out of bondage into a glorious elevated position with Christ in the Heavens, I discovered, over a period of four years that it was necessary for us all to be periodically broken down before the Lord, and to renew our vows of devotion and loyalty.

There was always a tendency to relax in our fervor and to rely upon a past experience. We soon realized the necessity to watch and pray and keep abiding in Christ by the systematic reading of His Word and prompt obedience. One of the local churches that had experienced possibly the mightiest awakening of all and who saw the mighty movement of God in the salvation of souls, within nine months was found sleeping.

The first night of my series of meetings on my return to that church, I was appalled at the deadness and coldness I felt in their midst. I was heart-broken as I told the group of some five hundred believers that it was impossible for me to preach that night, and that unless they repented of their sin and came back to their "first love" we might as well close the meetings.

The Spirit dealt faithfully and tenderly with them until Calvary's Love broke them down afresh before the face of the Lord God. In bitterness, humiliation and shame they confessed that they had taken the Lord's presence for granted as He had been so gracious and glorious to them during the past months.

Their biggest sin was their presumption upon the continued unsought blessing of the Lord. They had let their fire burn low in this careless attitude. The majority of these dear saints had been mighty intercessors, but now were seldom found in their prayer closets. I knew that drastic action was necessary, and so called at once a late prayer meeting along the line of Joel's prophecy, chapter two: "Blow the trumpet in Zion."

Often times not allowed to preach

I have known the Holy Spirit to take away from me the human control of the campaign and make Himself the chairman of the meetings. Often times, I was not allowed to preach, as the meeting was under the control of the Spirit by day and night after night. I simply sat on the platform bowed in prayer. I prayed that the Spirit of Pentecost would restrain or constrain and that no demon in hell would be able to work - that so powerful would be His presence that there would be no possibility of a fleshly manifestation. We can testify to God's glory that the gatherings were kept under the Spirit's control as He led the believers one by one to praise, pray, expound, and testify. Instead of only myself taking part, hundreds of ordinary believers ministered in the meetings during several weeks. We were "borne along and impelled by the Holy Spirit" (II Peter 1:21).

Like an amateur walking a tight rope,

As I ponder on my knees before God this deep mystery of the suppression of the Spirit, I have come to the conclusion that people are afraid of something they do not understand - something they have never experienced. Brought up in an atmosphere which has never known revival, they are like the amateur walking a tightrope, afraid of the unknown way.

Oh my brother, why not trust the Spirit of God? If you really want Him to work, then allow Him to work. Hands off! Let us stop dictating to the Holy Spirit

He restrains as well as constrains

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. - Isa. 35:5-6

Surely we can trust the Holy Spirit to take care of His own work. If we can trust Him for small manifestations, why can we not trust Him for mighty ones? In the Book of Acts, we see how He restrains as well as constrains. He vindicated His deity when He restrained sin in the church through the death of Ananias and Sapphira. His restraining influence is again seen when He forbade Paul on two occasions to enter into fields of his own choosing. We need not be afraid of the Spirit.

He has safety-checks of His own. We need not be deceived by false manifestations. I Corinthians 12:7 declares, "But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal" (ARV). If a brother or sister is speaking under the Spirit's anointing, he or she will be edifying the church. The Spirit's ministry is always to profit. Again, the Word of God declares, "He shall glorify Me: for He shall take of Mine and shall declare it unto you" (John 16:14 ARV).

The Holy Spirit always glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ, and thus any testimony or exposition that attracts attentions to self is false. In all mighty gatherings where the Spirit of God is working, the center of attraction is Christ, the Son of God. All things go out to Him as the Adorable One:

Thou who was rich beyond all splendor, All for love's sake became poor; Thrones for a manger didst surrender. Sapphire-paved courts for stable floor. Thou who was rich beyond all splendor, All for love's sake became poor; Thou who art love beyond all telling, Saviour and King, we worship Thee. Immanuel within us dwelling, Make us what Thou wouldst have us be. Thou who are love beyond all telling, Saviour and King, we worship Thee.

Frank Houghton

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