

'God Ignites the Embers of Cleansing'

by Mark D. Partin

Spiritual preparedness, particularly through corporate sin confession and repentance, is essential for revival, and humility is crucial in preparing for this experience.

Scripture: Leviticus 23:34, Numbers 29:35, Deuteronomy 16:8, Proverbs 28:13, Joel 1:14, Joel 2:12

Topics: "Revival Preparation", "Corporate Repentance"

Description

Mark D. Partin emphasizes the importance of spiritual preparedness for revival, highlighting the necessity of a pure heart and a cleansed spirit in order for God to hear our prayers and for us to hear from God. Through the concept of Solemn Assemblies, the Body of Christ is urged to come together to seek God's face, deal with corporate sins, and repent wholeheartedly. The passages from Joel vividly illustrate the urgency and significance of such gatherings, calling for fasting, weeping, and mourning as a means to return to God's grace and compassion.

Transcript

Spiritual preparedness is essential to any revival or any experience that one might hope to have with God. God seeks only those with a pure heart and a cleansed spirit. When repentance has not been sought for sin in our lives, God will not hear our prayers. And more importantly we will not hear God. By harboring sin, we place ourselves in a dark room where we will continue to stumble and confront obstacles while desperately seeking direction and light.

It was critical for us, as the Body of Christ, to come together for the purpose of seeking the face of God in order to deal with corporate sins, both past and present. We met together on three occasions for a time of Solemn Assembly: a Wednesday night, a Sunday morning and a Sunday night. Even though Solemn assemblies were common in the revivals of the Bible, it is a foreign concept to most professing Christians of today. The following passages from Joel paint a vivid illustration of a Solemn Assembly.

"Declare a holy fast; call a sacred assembly. Summon the elders and all who live in the land to the house of the Lord your God, and cry out to the Lord." (Joel 1:14) "Even now," declares the Lord, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning." Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and He relents from sending calamity. Who knows? He may turn and have pity and leave behind a blessing - grain offerings and drink offerings for the Lord your God. Blow the trumpet in Zion, declare a holy fast, call a sacred assembly. Gather the people, consecrate the assembly; bring together the elders,

gather the children, those nursing at the breast. Let the bridegroom leave his room and the bride her chamber. Let the priests, who minister before the Lord, weep between the temple porch and the altar. Let them say, "Spare your people, O Lord. Do not make your inheritance an object of scorn, a byword among the nations. Why should they say among the peoples, "where is their God?" Joel 2:12-17 NIV

From these verses you can grasp the sense of urgency and importance. A Solemn Assembly is a time that includes all; from the newborn baby to the elders. It is a time of priority and a time of great grieving over sin. It is an opportunity to return to God, to reclaim our inheritance as His child. It is a time to seek God face-to-face.

In his booklet, Solemn Assembly,³ Richard Owen Roberts states that a Solemn Assembly is:

to be a time when all daily work is set aside as instructed in Leviticus 23:34-36; Numbers 29:35; and Deuteronomy 16:8.

a time when the entire body of people affected by the righteous judgment are required to be in attendance.

a time of fasting.

a time for sacrifice.

of protracted duration. Solemn Assemblies are a call to meet for a longer period of time than a typical church service. The assemblies in the Bible lasted anywhere from one day to fourteen days.

a season of earnest prayer.

a mandatory occasion for corporate repentance.

an opportunity for Spirit-anointed preaching, of the searching Truths of Scripture to deeply touch afresh the lives of God's people.

a most wonderful opportunity for children to see their parents and elders demonstrating Christianity at its deepest corporate levels.

gives God an opportunity to respond to His people at a level He cannot possibly do when they are living in neglect of His Word or in direct violation of His commandments.

Prior to revival a group of about 30 people in our church were participating in a discipleship class based on Nancy Leigh DeMoss's book, Seeking Him⁴. In this book DeMoss addresses the issue of pride including a list of 30 ways pride can be manifested (see Appendix B - "Proud vs Broken" List). This list was a startling revelation to everyone in the group as to how many times we express pride and in turn deprive God of His glory. As a small group we were deeply convicted of this sin. I took this list before another small group of people mostly comprised of church staff. Again, there were deep convictions of pride. I then took this list before the entire church body during one of the pre-revival solemn assemblies. I asked everyone to examine pride, both corporately and individually. God's righteous judgment revealed that we were a church stagnated with pride and arrogance. Now that this sin was brought to light we were able to come to God in humiliation seeking repentance and forgiveness.

It was during the Solemn Assemblies that we became more aligned with God in preparation for revival. We were humbled at the prevalence of our sin that we had allowed to fester throughout our church. It was

alarming to know that we had been jeopardizing our relationship with God, either knowingly or unknowingly was irrelevant. We began to search our hearts even deeper and cry out to God to show us any other hidden sins that may be inhibiting our relationship. We had a fresh awareness of how much we really needed God, and how we couldn't afford to have anything separating us from Him. The small embers of a yearning to be completely cleansed and pure before God began to stir and glow. Little did we know that these small embers would burst into flames being fueled by the breath of God as the revival began.

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