

Spiritual Experiences of Priceless Value

by Oswald J. Smith

Oswald J. Smith's sermon calls for a deeper, more authentic spiritual experience through self-examination, prayer, and reliance on the Holy Spirit.

Scripture: Jeremiah 33:3, Matthew 7:7, Mark 16:20, John 14:13-14, Romans 12:2, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Ephesians 3:20, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, Hebrews 11:1, James 5:16

Topics: "Revival", "Faith and Prayer"

Description

Oswald J. Smith emphasizes the necessity of self-examination in the Christian life, urging believers to challenge their preaching, prayer, and overall spiritual experiences. He reflects on the importance of faith and the power of prayer, sharing personal struggles and victories in seeking a deeper relationship with God. Smith recounts moments of revival and conviction during his meetings, highlighting the transformative power of the Holy Spirit in the lives of individuals. He expresses a longing for a more profound experience of God's presence and a return to the fervor of early Methodism. Ultimately, he calls for a revival of spiritual fervor and a deeper commitment to prayer and faith.

Transcript

MAY 22nd

IT is coming to me more and more to challenge my work; to test and prove everything. I feel quite certain that one of the outstanding reasons for failure lies in the fact that we do not judge ourselves. I must challenge my preaching. God claims that His Word is a fire, a hammer, and a sword. Now if it not this, then there is something WRONG. God has promised fruit. There must be results. He must make His Word what He says it is. I challenge my prayer life. Have I power to prevail with God? If not, why not? Has God not most emphatically stated that "he shall have whatsoever He saith?" If I pray and do not get answers there must be something wrong. I must challenge my Christian experience. Do I feel any uprisings, any temper? Is there anything contrary to love in my heart? Am I growing in grace and going on with God? Have I complete deliverance from sin? Do my nearest and dearest believe in my religion? Lord judge me, and bring me to a higher level spiritually.

Weeks ago God gave me the gift of faith, and I knew He was going to work, but after a few hours I let it go. Weeks passed and finally on a Thursday afternoon He again gave me the same wonderful gift only far more glorious. For a week I held it in conscious joy, and then once again lost it. Oh, what a failure I am! Why can I not believe God? Has He not said that "all things are possible to him that believeth?" This is

where David Stoner failed. Lord, increase my faith.

"That mighty faith on me bestow

Which cannot ask in vain;

Which holds, and will not let Thee go

Till I my suit obtain."

MAY 24th

Spent the day in prayer and fasting. On Wednesday night at the prayer meeting I announced that we would set aside the holiday when most were in the parks and places of amusement, as a day of prayer and fasting unto God. So we met at nine this morning and prayed through until nine tonight. The time passed very quickly and was a great blessing to many. Our prayer was for an outpouring of God's Spirit. Oh, how the people prayed! "What hath God wrought!"

Have been greatly blessed in reading the story of the glorious Irish revival of 1859.

MAY 26th

Preached tonight on the Judgment. God gave me marvelous liberty. There must have been about a thousand present. The wife of a leading business man was greatly affected. Used her handkerchief[Sic.] freely and finally pulled her veil down to hide her tears. Our leading soloist, for whom we have been praying much, kept her head bowed all through the sermon and appeared to be deeply concerned. Others were also under conviction. Praise be to God for answered prayer! May we continue to "hold the fort" until He comes.

MAY 27th

I have come to the place where I realize that I know almost nothing about experimental religion. I have the "form of Godliness," but not the "power." It is in my head but not in my heart. My religion is theoretical, rather than experimental. Mrs. John Fletcher, Wm. Bramwell, and John Smith had something to which I am a total stranger, As a result of much reading I am convinced that the Early Methodists were nearest to the apostolic experience of any body of people I know. Would to God they had never lost their power! Oh, what God has in store for His saints. Experience it I must, cost what it will. May the Holy Spirit be my teacher as I read, pray and meditate. Oh, for the faith to believe!--the faith of those wonderful men and women of a century or two ago.

MAY 29th

Wonderful meeting! Marvelous exhibition of God's power! Was unable to give the message prepared but spoke with liberty as He led. Conviction very deep. Some quite mad. Six came and knelt at the front without an invitation. One who had been very angry because we prayed for her was deeply moved tonight. She had sworn that she would never come as a penitent, would never bow at the front. But she came, nevertheless. Hallelujah!

JUNE 2nd

We made Saturday our second day of prayer and fasting, pleading with God for eight hours and had a very blessed experience.

Have been reading the marvelous life story of Mrs. Fletcher. How little I know of her wonderful walk with God. Oh, how she suffered! What patience, faith and confidence! It drives me to my knees and I have to cry out as I see my unworthiness. Lord, deliver me from everything that does not glorify Thee. Keep me each moment in Thy will. Give me a little of what John Fletcher possessed. Oh, how I yearn for more! How my heart hungers after righteousness.

JUNE 5th

Wonderful meeting tonight. Four backsliders came and knelt at the front. All got through. The people then began to testify and the singing was deeply spiritual. Finally I said to them, "Don't you want to go home? No," they answered from all sides. "Well," I replied, "it is now twenty minutes to eleven." They were amazed. "I wonder," I continued, "if this is the revival?" The joy was very great in many hearts tonight. To Him be all the glory!

I find as we advance spiritually and go deeper that we lose our relish for the lighter and more popular hymns, and develop an amazing love for the grand old standards that were so greatly used of God in other days. Over and over again now we sing, "Come Ye Sinners Poor and Needy," "Oh, Could I Speak the Matchless Worth," "Oh, for a Thousand Tongues to Sing," "Depth of Mercy," "Arise, My Soul, Arise," "Oh, for a Heart to Praise My God," "Oh, Love Divine," "Give Me the Wings of Faith to Rise," "Faith, Mighty Faith."

JUNE 9th

This morning on my way to church the peace of God filled my heart to overflowing. Passage after passage of Scripture came to me and I sang as I walked along. Especially was that verse precious:

"Jesus, the name high over all,

In hell, or earth, or sky;

Angels and men before it fall,

And devils fear and fly."

I wondered at the unusual presence of God and asked myself if such peace could remain in times of trial and persecution. After the service I was greatly encouraged by two who told me of fetters snapped and wonderful blessing received. Trial and bitter opposition followed. Satan is still busy. Even some of our best church members are allowing themselves to be made his tools to hinder the work and put obstacles in the way.

JUNE 18th

While the message was being given tonight a man suddenly rose from his seat and with a deep groan sank down on his knees at the front. The light soon broke and turning to the audience he said: "Well friends. I have found Jesus. I have found Jesus." Oh, the marvelous power of God! How wonderfully He works in answer to the prayer of faith.

This morning I left the house at 6:30. Walked to the church and began to pray at 6:45. But was so weary, tired and sleepy that I laid down after trying in vain for some fifteen minutes to get in touch with God, and slept for an hour and a half. Then at 8:30 I began to pray again and for the next hour and a half I had wonderful liberty and great blessing. God was very near and I believe I was able to prevail. I then had a quiet feast on the Word and noted specially the power of a righteous and holy life.

JUNE 19th

This morning four of us met for prayer from eight to twelve and had a blessed time. At the meeting last Thursday some took exception to what I said and felt that I was complaining, scolding and criticizing because I had urged them to more prayer. But at the service tonight we gathered in a new consecration and there was great joy on many faces. However, it has shown me that it is useless to try to work it up in the flesh, that only God can lay the burden of prayer upon others, and that I must leave it to Him. When people are really burdened by the Holy Spirit they will not require any urging. Thank God, real prayer-helpers have been raised up.

JUNE 21st

There are two verses which have been specially blessed to me lately. The first: "Call unto Me and I will answer and show thee great and mighty things that thou knowest not" (Jer. 33:3). Lord, enable me to grasp it by faith and let me see the "great and mighty things" that I call unto Thee for. And the second: "And they went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the Word with signs following" (Mark 16:20). Am I sure that the Lord is working with me? What proof have I unless I see the Word that I preach confirmed by signs following. Am I satisfied to go on without the assurance? I must see conviction of sin culminating in the salvation of souls.

JULY 1st

Spent this day in prayer and fasting along with five or six others whose hearts the Lord has touched. Satan's resistance was strong; nor were we able to pray through and prevail.

AUGUST 5th

The Devil has been busy once more. One man is determined to stop his wife attending the meetings. He was very angry and threatened many things. But a meeting was held in his home upon the invitation of his wife at which he was convicted, brought to see his error and is now convinced that he is not right. Satan does not mind people attending the ordinary church at all, but as soon as his kingdom is invaded he is up in arms at once. There are several who have forbidden their wives attending our meetings.

AUGUST 16th

Looking back in my diary I note that today marks one year since I was first burdened in a special way for a revival. We have made this a day of prayer and have reviewed the year's work before God. Some of the professed converts have gone back, though the majority are standing true. What kind of children have we borne? We must distinguish clearly between the genuine and the counterfeit, between the work of the Spirit and the work of the flesh. May our prayers prevail more than ever. Fruit must not be plucked before it is ripe. We want children who will love their parents, love their home, the place of their birth, and who will always be present at meal time. The other kind are unnatural. Some are going on wonderfully and becoming real prayer helpers.

AUGUST 24th

God is still working and answering prayer. We are seeing some mighty things. The converts are being called upon to suffer persecution. One of them tells of how the people next door ever since the change came into her life have acted as mean as possible, throwing dirty water and rubbish on her pathway and doing everything to make her angry. She never said a word but treated them just the same as she always has. She put one of our tracts in their letter box and believes she read it, for the next day the woman looked daggers at her. Well, the other day the woman was taken very hurriedly to the hospital for an operation. Our convert went to the husband who was very much surprised, and next day visited the woman in the hospital and prayed with her. The woman broke down and sobbed. Next morning the husband came and said, "Do you think the Lord can forgive me for all I have done?"

AUGUST 26th

Last week I wrote to George W. Stenton. of Peterborough, insisting that he come to help me in prayer. He came and we have had a wonderful time together. This afternoon when I announced that supper was ready he lifted his head from the floor with a look of amazement on his face. His eyes were filled with tears. He looked as though he had been in heaven and had been suddenly hurled to earth again, for he was all melted and broken up. God has given him a great faith and he knows how to hold on in prayer. The answers he receives are amazing. It inspires faith in others for he lives with God.

SEPTEMBER 9th

The Word is becoming more precious to me all the time. I delight in reading chapters from the old prophets. My heart hungers for a fuller experience of God's salvation and a closer walk with Jesus Christ. I want to be weaned from the world and all it contains. The more I pray the more I love to pray. God is my portion.

SEPTEMBER 15th

God has tonight set to His seal, borne witness to the truth, and confirmed His Word. While I was preaching a young woman, who was a stranger, rose to her feet and stood still for some time before I observed her. I stopped speaking, praised God, and asked her if she had decided for Christ. From her answer it appeared that she could not wait until the close of the service so deeply had she been convicted. Then I went on with my sermon. The effect was wonderful. An awe overspread the entire congregation and scores were deeply stirred. As I went on three men and two women were observed weeping. One man sobbed aloud. The young woman who had stood came to my study after the service and so far as I could tell was clear in her pardon. How we praised God!

SEPTEMBER 23rd

There must be more soul-anguish and deeper conviction of sin, but this is wholly the operation of the Spirit. Therefore nothing but the prayer of faith will avail. It is God who saves souls. The work of God is the operation of the Holy Spirit in answer to the prayer of faith. I have read the life of John Smith once again. What a man of prayer and faith he was! And how he aimed for souls! There are many books that describe revival and relate the results of God's work, but John Smith tells me how to get it, how to do it, the method, the only method that produces Holy Spirit fruit and procures an outcome for God's glory.

Am now reading the Journals of John Wesley for the first time. Four large volumes. Will I ever finish them ? I think so for I find them intensely interesting and helpful. Oh, what a man he was! And how wonderfully he proclaimed the great fundamental doctrine of salvation by faith alone.

Work on, Thou Spirit of Power, and raise up once more a people for Thy name! Grant us again a visitation from on High, a return of apostolic days, for surely this is heaven below! And in it all may Jesus Christ be glorified. Amen!

THE REVIVAL HYMN

Revive Thy work, O Lord!

And manifest Thy power;

Oh, come upon Thy Church, and give

A penitential shower!

Revive Thy work, O Lord!

Come now and answer prayer;

Oh, come in Holy Spirit power,

And save men everywhere!

Revive Thy work, O Lord!

And every soul inspire;

Oh, kindle in each heart, we pray,

The pentecostal fire!

Revive Thy work, O Lord!

And give abounding joy;

Oh, fill our hearts with perfect love;

And burn out all alloy!

Revive Thy work, O Lord!

And make Thy servants bold;

Convict of sin, and work once more

As in the days of old.

Revive Thy work, O Lord!

Fulfill Thy promise true;

Let Jesus Christ be glorified,

And great things for us do.

--O.J.S.

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