

The Awe of God - "Engaging Revival"

Ecclesiastes 12:13,14

A good word for 2024 is *"engage"*. It's time for us to engage culture, warfare, and *people*. We should all be *engaging*, by asking real questions as a Spirit-led *in-line* into people's hearts. Most people are hungry to open their lives to someone who genuinely cares about them and is willing to express *love* to them. The enemy would have us to believe otherwise, but *family* is what most would say that they're thankful for. That's a door into their lives, and God can use that as we seek to engage people on a daily basis - when we care enough and take the time to ask about their lives and situations.

People want to be *seen* - they want to be listened to, and they want to be noticed by someone who cares. We, as followers of Jesus, have these opportunities where, if we'll lean into the creative heart and nature of God (*Elohim* - the One who created the earth and the heavens), and ask him to give us a way in - to show us what we can do - he will give us creative ways to engage people.

People *need* to be engaged, and we all should step into that together, because we live in a culture and a world that badly needs a spiritual awakening. And, if not us - *who*? If not now - *when*? Let our prayer be, *"Lord, why not here? Why not today? Why not now? Would You release an outpouring of Your Spirit, like we've heard about and read about?"*

God can grow a prayer meeting of one into a movement of many thousands when he answers a call for revival. We are *due* for a revival and a spiritual awakening in our communities - *here* in the hill country - and we should contend for just that - contending *with* and engaging culture by speaking what needs to be said. We should be clear about what is our calling to proclaim the Word of God - the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

2 Timothy 4:1-5 NIV

"In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the word [the Truth]; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke [arrest and stop] and encourage [inspire courage] with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry."

The reason churches are not impacting culture - not being salt and light that Jesus called them to be - is because they've have grown anemic. They've taken a step back out of a fear of man instead of from the fear of the Lord. Instead of speaking Truth in love and addressing unbiblical lifestyles, they toss out everything they had built their life on, thinking that is love, when really it's the fear of being rejected as a "hater" by standing for the truth.

We *can* take a stand and yet do it in love. We need a spiritual awakening that overrides the decisions we make, what we've been taught, and what has been spoken into our lives. We don't have the luxury to decide what we think about those things, because when God's Word has spoken clearly on them, then the Word of God is our choice, and we don't move off of it even if culture moves away from it.

We've already made our decision, so no matter how far the culture moves away from the truth, we don't have the liberty to change what we claimed already to believe just because we want to be accepted by people or culture. This is where we live, and this is what's going on in front of us. Let's be clear. The whole world is "politics" - it's the politics of *life*. It's not about partisanship - conservative, liberal, woke, or maga. This is about something much larger than what we're experiencing here on this earth.

We definitely will speak *into* politics, because that's what's on everybody's minds. So, we have to speak - to open our mouths. Everybody else in the world is, so why shouldn't *we*? We don't want to say at the end that we should have said something but were too afraid of offending somebody. We *should* be more afraid of offending *God*. We have to speak up. We have to engage and get involved.

"As a people, as a nation, and as a Church, we've lost our way. We have allowed ourselves to be defined by the world rather than God. We've become so confused, we don't even know who we are anymore. We have allowed the world to redefine our gender, our race, our parenting, and what constitutes as marriage as it was defined by God, who created us.

And as a result, we're more divided than ever. We're divided pollically. Our families are divided - our churches and a whole lot more. The source of that division is demonic, and we've become so blinded to the Truth, we are fighting against one another, rather than the common enemy - Satan. We have to take a stand. We continue to allow our own sinfulness to masquerade as righteousness." - Byron Monzon

Taking a stand starts with *us*. Judgement begins with the house of the Lord - It *begins* with us. We can point our fingers all day long - getting mad at culture and at decisions that are made, but we can't expect lost people to act like *saved* people. But, we should expect *saved* people to *act* like saved people - people who name the name of Christ to act like they are Christians - to vote like they're believers, who study and pray, asking the Holy Spirit before they vote.

We need revival and spiritual awakening.

"Our society can no longer distinguish the good and the beautiful from the depraved and diabolical." - John L. Cooper, author of *"Wimpy, Weak, and Woke"*.

We are off the rails as a nation, but we need to judge ourselves lest we be judged. We need to ask ourselves, *"Where do I stand? Where, on this spectrum, do I stand?"* We shouldn't stand with *politics* - with the right or the left - but we *should* stand with God, and wherever he says we should land on the spectrum.

As we read and saturate ourselves in God's Word, that pushes us to a place of his choosing, not our own, where we stand, operate, vote, and speak the Truth - always in love. We *will* lose popularity, but we'll gain respect. If we give up our stand and our voice and just acquiesce to the river - the flow - the current of culture - it will cost our respect, dignity, and self-respect.

God's Word > Reformation > Revival > God's presence > Power for Transformation

We need to speak up and say what *needs* to be said - what the *Word of God* says. We won't have a revival until we have a *reformation* - a return to the Word of God. Revival is a return to the presence of God, which in turn leads to power for transformation. Do we want to see *change* in the world? It will not start apart from a reformation where we return to God's Word as *the* gold standard *for everything*. It's the *one* and *only* absolute that's in this world, and it becomes the lens through which we view the world.

Ephesians 4:14-15 NIV

"Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ."

So many of us are caught up in a cultural world-view - where we're just going with the flow and wherever that takes us - right or left - but God's Word cuts through culture like a hot knife through a stick of butter. The Bible talks about not being tossed between two opinions like a wave of the sea. (*"Elijah went before the people and said, 'How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him., "* - 1 Kings 18:21 NIV)

We, as followers of Jesus, have to grow a backbone and begin to speak *into* our culture - *in love* - and to value being respected more than being liked - to elevate our voice *above* the culture's voice. People are broken, hurt, and lost. The lost world needs the Church of Jesus Christ - in America and around the world - to stand up and be the Church again - the Bride of Christ.

There's a lot of hopelessness surrounding us right now, but that's actually a set-up for revival, reformation, renewal, repentance - even revolution. People need the Gospel of Jesus Christ to come in like a flood and overwhelm the darkness. We need to *be* what we say we are - the Body of Christ - called to be Jesus - building bridges of Life and Hope where we live, where we work, and where we play - *we need to be the salt and light that Jesus called us to be.*

Prayer

Father, we honor You. Thank You for Your Word. We say Amen, we are in agreement! Help us to stand firm and to be firmly planted in Your Word - and to stay there - not being tossed to and fro by every wind and doctrine. Thank You that Your words leads us into Truth and understanding. Help us to be light in this dying world every single day. Let us be a living testimony to those around us.

We want revival, but we know we need to return to Your Word, to rightly divide the Word of Truth. Let it take root in our hearts. Guard this Word from the enemy who tries to steal it from us. Let us be inspired and never turn away from Your Word of Truth.

In Jesus' name. Amen