

The Awe of God - "Power to Change the World"

Ecclesiastes 12:13

God has given us the ability and the power to change the world. We are a room full of world changers, difference makers, and culture shapers, and God has given us conferred authority to literally make a difference in this world. This world doesn't *have* to look like it did when we came into it, and right now, we could use some revival and some spiritual awakening.

Why not here, and why not now?

God can take what looks to us to be hopeless and broken, and pour his Spirit out and revive and re-ignite the revival fires of what he wants to do. *Wherever* it comes, we want to celebrate it and to be a part of it. As we enter this season of Advent, we have a hopeful expectation of the coming arrival of Jesus - not to necessarily take us out of here - but to *revive* us and include us as part of the solution.

We began this series called "The Awe of God", talking about the fear and reverence of God - living a life of awe and wonder - not cowering in fear of God, but embracing, welcoming, and acknowledging who he is and how high and lifted up he is. That's the awe of God. *"Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him."* (Psalm 33:8 ERV). We want to live a life where we stop asking *"How?"* and just start saying, *"Wow! Wow, God! You're amazing, and thank You for what You're doing!"*

As we continue to engage people in our spheres of influence, and the issues we deal with in our culture (especially in our homes and families), there are three things we should remember: 1] We should always play the long game with our families. It is not incumbent upon us to get on a soapbox in our living room or at the dinner table at Thanksgiving and preach to somebody in our family, but we are trusting the Holy Spirit to speak directly into the situation.

We should never go where we're not invited. It's up to the Holy Spirit to bring conviction to somebody. Our job is to stand on what the Bible says - to love them and trust Jesus to change them. 2] We always lead with love. *"speaking the truth in love, may [we] grow up in all things into Him who is the head - Christ..."* (Ephesians 4:15 NKJV)

We are on this journey of growing up, therefore we lead with love. 3] We always trust the Holy Spirit to speak into the mind, heart, and soul of others, because, at the end of the day, he loves them more than we *ever* will. Whatever we can talk someone *out* of, the devil can talk them back *into*. They need their own revelation from God, himself. No one can *truly* transform their lives without a revelation.

We pray for our friends and families for a revelation - that their eyes would be open, their ears would be open, and their spirits and hearts would be open to the wooing of the Holy Spirit. We don't initiate that unless God does it. We always love.

The Great Prayer Meeting Revival started on September 23, 1857 in New York City. Jeremiah Lanphier was a businessman in a time of a tanking economy and political chaos, where it literally felt like the sky was falling. He rented a meeting hall and put up a sign that simply said, "*Prayer Meeting from 12 to 1. Come for awhile if you can or stay for the whole hour.*"

He was the only one there for the first thirty minutes before someone else wandered in, but by the end of that first prayer meeting, six businessmen came in to pray for their imperiled businesses. Two days after that meeting, the Bank of Philadelphia failed, and soon people began meeting every day. On October tenth, the stock market collapsed and the meetings exploded in attendance.

Sometimes God will shake things in our lives, or will allow things to be shaken so that certain things can fall out and the needful things can remain. God may be doing some shaking in our own culture right now to create a setup for revival. Within six months of that first prayer meeting in 1857, ten thousand people were gathering daily in New York City alone to pray and beseech God.

Ultimately, people gathered by the thousands all across the nation and the world. In Scotland, England, Wales, Australia, Ireland, Europe, and islands of the South Pacific, people were impacted by the revival on Fulton Street in New York City. Within two years, a million converts were added to the churches in America.

The Lewis Island Revival in Scotland sprang up in the midst of mostly religious but otherwise spiritually dead churches. In November of 1949 on one of the Hebrides Islands, two sisters - both in their eighties, one blind and one bent over from arthritis - were burdened by the depressed spiritual state of their village and the church on Lewis Island.

They sensed the Lord speaking to them Isaiah 44:3: *“For I will pour water on him who is thirsty, and floods on the dry ground; I will pour My Spirit on your descendants, and My blessing on your offspring...”*, and they believed with all their hearts that that’s what God wanted to do there. They were moved by that to pray in their small cottage two or three nights a week from 10 pm to 3 am the next morning.

After several weeks, the blind sister had a vision of her church being crowded with young people while an unknown minister preached from the pulpit. Informing their pastor of this, the sisters said they sensed that the Lord would send a revival, and that he must get the church leaders to pray simultaneously with their own cottage prayer meetings.

So, the call for prayer and repentance was made throughout Scotland. A revival ensued and began to blow up to other Hebrides islands. Before this all took place, testimonies by participants noted that the churches were dead and in a spiritual winter. Legalism was extreme and young people wanted nothing to do with the Church. There was no life in it - only formality and tradition.

After a strange turn of events, an evangelist named Duncan Campbell answered an invitation to the church on Lewis Island and people were supernaturally drawn in the middle of the night, out of their homes and beds, to the church without even knowing why. As the church doors were opened, the people poured in and overflowed the church while Duncan preached till after midnight.

From the revival that began that night, conviction fell on people who were born on the island even if they had moved away to other parts of the world. Hunger for the Word of God was intense. It was no longer read out of tradition or duty, but it became *“living”*. Bars were emptied. Many ministers and missionaries received their callings. One recorded estimate stated that 20,000 converts were made during the first five weeks of the revival.

Seventy five percent of the conversions were said to have occurred before the people even got to the church building. Debts were repaid, courts became idle, and reports of those who backslid were practically unheard of. The question is, *“If God wants to bring revival like this to us, will we be willing to go with him when the move comes?”*

How revival comes: Reformation > Repentance > Revival > Transformation

God wants to pour out “new wine” on us. Revival starts with reformation, which is the return to the *Word* of God. Repentance is a return to the *ways* of God. Revival is a return to the Spirit of God. You need a return to the Word of God in order for there to be a return to the Spirit of God. You don’t get one without the other - we *must* come back to the Bible.

We live our lives in accordance with the Word - period. If it says it, then we take that as Truth and align our thinking to that Truth - we act out on that thinking. We are transformed by the renewing of our minds - by changing the way we think, to God and to his standard - the Word of God. Our world right now is jacked-up. We need to speak into what we’re dealing with - to answer the question of how do we live in this culture what do we do?

Nehemiah 7:73 - 8:4 NKJV

“So the priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, some of the people, the Nethinim, and all Israel dwelt in their cities. When the seventh month came, the children of Israel were in their cities.

“Now all the people gathered together as one man in the open square that was in front of the Water Gate; and they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded Israel. So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly of men and women and all who could hear with understanding on the first day of the seventh month.

“Then he read from it in the open square that was in front of the Water Gate from morning until midday, before the men and women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law. So Ezra the scribe stood on a platform of wood which they had made for the purpose...”

One of the greatest revivals recorded in the Bible is about a hunger for the Word of God. That is characteristic of every revival, both historical and biblical - a return to the Word of God. It is more than just an addendum to our lives. God intends the Bible to be *over* our lives - not us over *it*. We’ve got to come back to this Word which deeply examines us, speaks into our lives, and exposes us - but only so that we’ll repent and turn to God so we can be encouraged, lifted up, and empowered.

The Word is Life, and it is life-giving. We need to get it over our life - to *return* to the Word, so we can see what only God can do - and we get to *participate* - to join him in his work.

Prayer

Father, we are wholeheartedly in agreement - we're turning back to Your Word. We want You to be the Head of our lives, and Your Word to govern our lives every single day. Thank You for Your Word that is true. It is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. Thank You for the correction of Your Word that exhorts us and sheds light in dark places. Father, we're coming back to You. Thank You for the fire that You have ignited in us.

As You prepare us for an incredible move of Your Spirit, cause this Word to become deeply rooted in our hearts. May Your light shine bright in us upon those we encounter each day. Your Word is Truth and it sets people free. We thank You, praise You, and honor You! In Jesus' name. Amen