



Nigeria 2012

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Pure Religion and Undefined

“Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.” (James 1:27)

Nigeria is like no other place I have been. As the most populous country in Africa, the pressure of their dense population tends to make them a stronger, more aggressive culture. That is both good and bad – that which is bad is really bad, but that which is good is really good. I saw some of the really good this evening.

The church where I am preaching at for three days is on a campaign to start a true Holy Ghost revival. As the revivalist guest speaker, I am a major part of that plan. I tell them what to do to have revival, and they go out and put it into practice. My goal is that they will grab hold of a vision that will claim their entire community for Christ, and have the faith to believe that they can change the world. And they can ... they just have to have to want it bad enough.

It has to start somewhere, and tonight they started with an open air crusade. Outdoor crusades do not work well in America - at least as far as I have seen – but they sure work well here in Africa. At the end of the service tonight, at least 50-60 souls came to the altar to get saved, got plugged into one of the local churches here, and were instructed on what to do next in their Christian walk. This is pure religion. It does not get any better, deeper, heavier, or more important than this.

In contrast, our churches have developed a more layered and sophisticated way of operating. I guess it is only natural given that the Church today has become very much like a corporate business. Aspiring pastors apply for positions at various churches just like a job applicant fresh out of business school. Once hired, salaries are set, job descriptions and responsibilities are defined, and positions are secured. They start at Youth Pastor (why do we put our most inexperienced clergy in the most sensitive position?) and move on up through the different departments until they arrive at the pinnacle of Senior Pastor. Programs are instituted, goals are voted on, methods are applied, and the whole machinery of church is organized.

This is denominational religion. Like it or not, complain, criticize, or praise it, this is how it is done -- and I suppose it works well enough for what it is supposed to accomplish -- but what I experienced this evening was pure religion. This was raw “go out and get ‘em” Christianity -- out in the street, face to face where they live. Nothing complicated. Just do it.

I tell the churches I preach at that if they are sitting in church waiting for souls to come, they will wait forever. They’re not coming. You know why? Because they are afraid they will become just like us. (You can always hear everyone groan when I say that). “Go ask them”, I tell them, “They will tell you.”

What they want is the real thing. They’ve already heard the message – probably know it better than most “church people” – but they’re not interested in what you believe, what you say, or what new fancy programs you got going. They want the real thing – they want to see the power. They don’t want the Gospel that is the philosophy of God – defined, analyzed, organized, packaged, and digested in your theological books and scholastic dissertations. They want the Gospel that is the power of God unto Salvation. Raw power; raw truth. And if they don’t see it in your church, is it a small wonder why they are not coming?

Proverbs tells us that he that winneth souls is wise. This evening, over fifty people out here changed their eternal destination and escaped burning in Hell for Eternity. I saw more wisdom in the simple zeal

and faith of these people to go out and do this one thing than in all the sophisticated Bible College programs that our modern religions can muster.

I'm sure the scribes will object ... but then, they always have, haven't they?

"Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out.

He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

(Luke 14:34-35)

Childbirth

It's the eyes that get you.

All the shouting and the praising is great, but it is when you look into their eyes and see the sincerity of their heart that you really know that God is doing something special here. It's not just another meeting to sing some songs and hear about how much God wants to bless you and bring you into some vaunted abundant life. The stuff we saw tonight is down to the roots of the soul – serious dedication to do whatever it takes to have revival.

Nigeria is very different from East Africa in that this is a serious people. You do not see the color and gaiety here that you find in Kenya, but neither do you see the lackadaisical attitude that you find in East Africa. Nigerians work hard and have a more serious outlook on life. Their approach to the Gospel reflects that same attitude. Whereas in Kenya, the shouting and singing may be louder initially, their ardor begins to wane when it comes time to dig in and do the work of the Gospel. Nigerians, on the other hand, may not be so open and emotional, but they seem to have a more serious fixation on the hard facts of the price that must be paid to have a true revival.

A prominent pastor here told me that they have been fasting and praying for revival but God is not answering. Something is wrong, and they want to know what it is. Now that is a serious cry for revival! This is past the singing and dancing and enters into the serious reality of what God requires. The Altar of God is not a place of singing and dancing, but of blood and sacrifice and death.

One of the biggest lies that Satan has sold the Church is that we can just sit in our little pews and God will have mercy on us and send us revival. Sorry, but if you do nothing, nothing will happen. Mercy is not handed out free – it must be paid for. Mercy begets mercy, unto the merciful He will show Himself merciful, and as James tells us, judgment shall be without mercy on those who have shown no mercy. What a trip the devil has put us on! And we believed him! Or should that be in the present tense?

But these guys know differently. They know there is a price to pay for everything in God – everything. And the price for a full Holy Ghost revival is extremely high. That's why they are so rare – nobody wants to pay that price. That is precisely why you have to be desperate in order to see revival come. So desperate that you are like Rachael in Genesis 30:1, "Give me souls or else I will die!" So desperate that you are willing to give your life so that souls can be saved. If you are not, you will not see a real Holy Ghost revival because you won't do what it takes to get one. You'll just have some really good "church".

But these people tonight have had enough of "church". They are ready for whatever God has placed before them and are ready to answer the call of the trumpet that is blowing in Zion – the call to the last battle between God and Satan for the souls of Man.

You could see it in their eyes as they came in droves to kneel at the altar. The entire church came down - even the ushers! They emptied themselves of their self-interest and pride as they ripped their hearts

wide open to repent and surrender all to Jesus. The passion at the altar was only surpassed by the cries of “hallelujah” that were so loud that my ears over-amped! There was victory in the church tonight.

When you see a serious dedication like that, you can expect serious results. I have no doubt that their passion will carry them into the Word of God to give them the power to fast and pray for God to build a fire in their church. And then watch as that fire spills out into the streets to bring in the lost and dying into that same Holy Ghost blaze.

Just as in childbirth, revivals are birthed in pain and labor and travail. They also end up with the same kind of rejoicing.

Piercing the Cloud

Nigeria is a very different place. I’m not sure how different it is from the surrounding countries in West Africa, but it sure is a lot different than any of the other places in East Africa that I’ve been to.

Your first impression when you get off the plane feels slightly out of focus. On the surface, everything seems the same as other African countries, and yet there something that lies just beneath it that you can’t quite put your finger on. It’s just different somehow. A somber blanket lies in the air that lends a subdued feeling to everything. There isn’t that feeling of color and laughter in the air. It’s as if Nigeria has stepped out of Technicolor into a world that is colored in shades of grey. Life is a serious undertaking here.

Is it the culture? Is it just the way it is? Or is it something deeper than that makes everything seem so drab – something deeply spiritual in nature?

I have spent the last two weeks bringing a message of revival to several churches whose hearts are turned to God for something other than the same old stuff that they have been hearing. Something different has to happen. Their desperation for a true move of God is rising and pushing past the ineffective platitudes of blessings and good things that have been promised to them free of charge. It’s not working and they know it. I am embarrassed to say that these messages of false prosperity and unmerited blessings have poured forth from America, and so many innocent people have believed that, because America has been so blessed, this message must be true.

By now, however, they are beginning to realize that it’s not working. Something is missing. This is not the same gospel that our grandfathers preached and they are not getting the same results. We have forgotten something along the way as we followed the Pied Pipers of Prosperity and Blessings off into a modern Gospel that is softer and more “loving” than that old message of repentance and the fear of God. Our Bible colleges churned out a new generation of pastors and taught them to discard the old God of Judgment for a new God of Love. And in the process, we lost something so vital in the Church that we don’t know how to find our way back.

Satan has done such a complete job of turning our focus onto ourselves that we don't even realize how far we have turned from the Cross. The message that I bring is predicated upon the concept that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is not about you – it is about others – and revival will not come until we turn our focus to the lost that are dying in sin. But no matter how hard I drive this message home, I will often hear another preacher get up right after me and promise the same people all kinds of new blessings, new deliverances, new miracles in their lives ... all for free! And the crowd that just bowed their heads in recognition of their own self-serving ways will jump to their feet and cheer as this new preacher promises them all kinds of blessings and negates everything that I just preached. Just human nature, I guess.

Revival is not free -- neither is it cheap -- and breaking through this cloud that covers their Pollyanna Gospel mindset, not only in Nigeria but all across Africa, is essential before any move of God will come. Is this the spiritual cloud I feel here that sucks the life and joy out of the very air? Could it be that Satan has entrenched himself here in Nigeria as his last stand of resistance to stop revival at any cost? Is Nigeria the last bastion of darkness that must be conquered to allow the Great African Revival to break forth?

Many here believe that Nigeria is highly chosen for this great move of God and that is why Satan has concentrated his darkness to destroy this nation. It is not the sinners he must control; it's the Christians. And what better way than to lull them into a false sense of security with a "love gospel" that has worked since he first used it in the Garden of Eden. It's all about you. Don't worry. Hakuna Matata. Thou shalt not surely die because God loves you. Here, take a bite.

There are heroes here in Nigeria. Men and women who are willing to take a stand that will invoke the ire of the Church in an attempt to wake them up. Many will hear the call of the trumpet and rise to the challenge. Many will not, but will resist and attack those who will. Battle lines are forming, choices are being made, and destinies are being decided. It is a time for war, and Nigeria is the battleground.

"Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand;" (Joel 2:1)

Nigerian Pharisees

Nigeria has been hard. I knew there would be a battle, but I didn't expect the intensity of what we have faced here. But it is in the thick smoke of battle that warriors are forged, and I expect we will see God raise up a crop of serious Christians who, because they were born in adversity, will rise to the challenge He has placed before them. I just hope I'm not one of them, because I'm getting tired in my old age.

Beyond the accompanying physical troubles and afflictions that I and those who are with me have faced here, the greatest challenge Nigeria faces is to be able to pierce through the smoke of satanic deception.

The real enemy to be concerned with is not the Muslims extremists or any of the sinners – it is the Church.

What's new? Christianity's perpetual enemy has always been the organized "ecclesiastical powers that be". Who sold Joseph into slavery? Who chased David in the wilderness? Who delivered Jesus to be crucified? Who slaughtered millions of Christians throughout the Middle Ages? What is this deep animosity that possesses the soul of the Church once it becomes entrenched into society? Within a few generations, a moment that was once birthed in blood and persecution often becomes the persecutor.

As you walk down any street in Nigeria, even out in the rural villages, you can count the churches lining up every few hundred yards or so. You may have three and four of them in the same building! Posters are everywhere proclaiming the showers of blessings, a night of miracles, and your time of deliverance if you will just come to their meeting.

If you rise up to expose these lies, you are threatening the very existence of these preachers who have sucked the fat out of these poor people, and they will work tirelessly to stop you. In the same way, Jesus threatened the power of the Pharisees when He preached about repentance and took away their power of Levitical judgment. And they killed Him for it.

Satan knows that no revival will come without repentance, and that is where he must draw his battle lines. He is armed with a myriad of lies that have worked for 6,000 years and his polished talents as the world's smoothest liar. We, on the other hand, are armed with the Word of God, but we need courage to swing that sword in battle. Sounds easy, but come to Nigeria and start exposing these lies of prosperity and false blessings and you will see your stamina, your courage, and even your faith challenged like you have not experienced anywhere else.

Revival is coming, but it will not come without a fight. This will be a fight, not of physical challenges, but of the ethereal issues of spiritual deception – a much more difficult and insidious struggle than we face in the flesh. This is not for the faint-hearted. Only those who have the wisdom and spiritual discernment that comes from the fear of God need apply. All others would fall into the delusion of Satan's hypnotic sway.

And that is what has happened to so many in the Church who, at one time, launched into the Gospel with all fire and zeal, only to become sophisticated and succumb to the Sirens of Prosperity and a Worldly Gospel.

Leaving Abuja

My time here in the capital of Nigeria is half over. Tomorrow is Sunday and I will do two services in the morning and one last service in the evening at another church. Then we head for the Delta State in the south where I expect it will be a much different experience.

The first 3 days took place at a conference for pastors and leaders to launch a new networking organization. Their aim is to bring together churches and resources for a revival in Nigeria. It was okay. The Lord did reprove me about trying to be "nice" and released me to bring them a much harder message of repentance in the church than I had been bringing. Released. That not really the correct word. More like He ripped my head off for being too soft to make a difference. I got pretty severe on the last day and thought they'd pretty much run me out of there, but they actually welcomed it. That's a pretty good sign.

After that, we moved on to a smattering of different churches where my biggest challenge was to encapsulate as much of the message into a single service as I could. There was only one church that I was able to preach for three services. Not surprisingly, the message would pour out with a life of its own and would touch the hearts of the whole congregation. For pastors who are trained to “prepare” their message, it is a bit surprising to see this happen two or three times a day every day without any preparation or planning - just stand up behind the pulpit and let it rip.

But what is the most amazing is the anointing that rides through the message. As usual, I can’t feel anything, but they can. Sometimes I wonder and hope that it isn’t just my passion or zeal that they feel, but that it really is the Spirit of God. They assure me that it is. One thing is for sure, something is breaking their hearts and bringing them to their knees.

I can’t say that the services have had the dramatic results that we have seen in other countries, but Nigerians are very different from others. I will say, however, that they have been dramatically challenged. Outlooks have been turned, hearts have been opened, and fires have been ignited. One church told me that they will not fail God in this call to revival – they will not fail! Wow. That’s good enough for me. I don’t need anything more supernatural than that.

The last two nights have been at a fairly well established church. Last night they had what they call a vigil. It starts at 10pm and lasts until 4 am. The prayer times are interspersed with mini messages and singing, so the time flies by. I delivered my soul for an hour and after I was done, the pastor requested a prayer line to form so I could “impart an anointing” into each person’s life.

For the next hour or so, I prayed over one person after another. You can actually feel the anointing flow like a river of oil. It’s almost like you’re in a different medium, just floating along as the Spirit of God flows through you into their lives.

When I would look down the line, it seemed to keep getting longer, as if they were multiplying like rabbits down there. The line never ended ... and then all of a sudden, it was done. Something transforming had just taken place in the lives of these people and in the soul of this church. I believe they will never be the same.

They touched the Throne of God.

Cast Your Bread Upon the Waters

I haven’t been sending much out in the way of reports on this trip to Nigeria because it’s as if I have been in a cloud. I feel like I am walking under some kind of spiritual oppression and I just can’t seem to get a grip on what to tell folks back home.

The first two weeks here have been good. My messages were breaking ground with a lot of pastors because they remember that 40 years ago when the old powerhouses were here preaching and revival was burning, this very same message that I am preaching was alive in the churches here. As one pastor put it, they used to be so desperate to win souls that they would go out into the streets to take the Gospel to the lost, but now they have retreated back into their churches, waiting for the sinners to come to them instead. Something died in the Church when that happened, and they want it back.

My core message is that the Gospel is not about you, but is about others, and this resonates loudly with many of these pastors. They get it. But there are some who do not. The prevalent message of blessings, prosperity, and a more abundant life in Jesus always has more appeal than a message of blood, sacrifice and death.

Most of the people out in the congregations get it also, but sometimes it is only for the moment. Put one of these prosperity preachers up behind me that will proclaim showers of blessings and that this is your day of victory and deliverance, and the people jump to their feet cheering, forgetting everything that I just told them. Like any good con artists, these charlatans know exactly which buttons to push to get people on their feet. I watched in aghast after one of my messages when, as the bishop was dismissing the crowd, gave one more prosperity call to give him money – the obvious promise, of course, being that if you want God to bless you, you have to bless the bishop. He stood there with his hand out taking money like a man selling raffle tickets. At least with raffle tickets you stand a chance of winning something.

After so many years of being fed this American version of the Prosperity Gospel, it is going to take patience to turn this ship around. Many have itching ears and are more willing to heap to themselves teachers that will tell them what their ears itch to hear than to offer their lives as a holy sacrifice.

But not everybody. Many have come back to me to tell me that the message has transformed their outlook and that they will take the message and carry the torch to others. God will raise up those whom He will use to change the world. There may not be many. Jesus only had eleven men to entrust the entire world to and look what they did.

All we can do is cast our bread upon the waters and let God do what only He can do.

Balaam in Nigeria

I have left Abuja and Benin and am now in the Delta State with a bishop who is in charge of a large network of churches throughout Nigeria. The people I am with now are so excited that they have given me a place to stay and have provided for anything I need. They won't even let me pay for my own laundry soap. What a welcome change! The place is nice, quiet, and secluded. Perfect for me.

Nevertheless, I am constantly worn out and drained of energy. There is something in the air that is oppressive and heavy. My theory is that we are trudging through a spiritual warfare against the prince of the air. Yeah, I'll bet a lot of folks in America would dismiss all the talk about witchcraft as superstitious, but if you spend enough time out here, you will change your mind. Every day it feels like you're moving in a cloud. That's why I just can't seem to get up enough energy to write a column – I'm just too out of it. Today I could barely move, like I was drugged or something and I just couldn't snap out of it. Then the sharp pains started coming in my guts as I was getting up to the pulpit to preach. I don't know what the devil was afraid of, because I was so fuzzy-headed that I had no clue as to what I was going to preach about, but oh boy, was I in pain! I seriously started wondering if I was going to have to pack it in and head for the hospital. I can't die cause I'm not finished, but the devil can make it so that I feel like I'm dying.

And then, as soon as I started preaching through the pain, whoosh! It was gone. Yeah, just like that. That's always the case with this kind of stuff. As soon as the anointing comes down, the darkness flees. I can always tell that it is going to be a blockbuster message when I get horribly sick just before I get up to the pulpit. Today was even more pronounced. I did two services and headed back to the house to collapse on the bed. Honestly, I really think there is a concerted effort to resist me in the

spiritual realm. I can't prove it, and I know how crazy it sounds, but that's the only thing that makes sense.

But that also means that we are striking a nerve. If my theory is correct, Nigeria is the last spiritual fortress to conquer before revival can sweep across Africa. Satan knows it, and in order for him to delay the coming of Jesus and his own destruction, he has to stop the revival here. He's not going to rely upon the Muslims or Boko Haram or even the sinners to cause us trouble – he will use the Church. His biggest weapon is to lull the spiritually naïve into a lullaby of blessings, peace, love and focus their attention on themselves. This is how Satan used Balaam. And it almost worked. He's trying it again here in Nigeria. This is what I am fighting against, and it is a desperate battle for the soul of Africa and by extension, the rest of the world. If revival cannot break out here where people are so desperately hungry for God, how could it ever happen in America where we are so asleep that we are not able to admit that there's anything wrong with us?

Please hold Nigeria up in your prayers. I believe there is more at stake here than just a simple missionary trip. This may be the beginning of volleys before final battle between God and Satan.

Souls of the Needy

I woke up at 5:30 this morning to hands clapping and voices singing praises to God.

It was still dark and there was nothing else stirring outside. I had just been waking up and could feel the early morning stirrings around me, and then all of a sudden came these voices from the living room. First one, then another, and soon they were joined by everyone else in the house. What a wonderful way to open up the morning!

My host and I have been staying in a home on the outskirts of Agbor, Nigeria and last night we were joined by some of the pastors in his network along with their daughters to stay overnight and help with the house. They were all there in the living room singing when I stumbled in. After a song or two, one of the pastors read some scriptures and we started praying. We prayed short, directed prayers of thanksgiving for the different things that God has done for us. Then we prayed concentrated prayers against all the different ways that Satan would try to attack us this day. Africans are intimately aware of the reality of the powers of darkness and what they are capable of. Finally we rounded it up with prayers for God to bestow power and blessings upon our ministries today and send revival. Did we miss anything?

Do they do this every day? I think so. It seemed as natural to them at 5:30 in the morning as an everyday routine. Whether or not they will continue in prayer throughout the day is another thing, but they sure started it off right.

The African heart is more open and bare to God than ours in the West, and their souls are needier. God looms much larger in their lives and fills the horizon of their vision, whereas with us, God has to compete for our attention with all the distractions that we have filled our lives with. Small wonder He is so attentive to their prayers. Maybe why that's why there are so many miracles here.

Last night we had another healing line after services. Close to thirty people came up to be prayed over. They didn't come up to have the white man sprinkle fairy dust and share his blessing upon them; they came up to have God touch them and heal them. And He did. With only a few exceptions, I could feel the

anointing flow through them as God healed one after another. I would ask them to make sure, "Are you healed?" "Yes! The pain is gone!", as they would turn and raise their hands in thanks to God.

Yeah. It just doesn't get much cooler than this. And I get to have a seat right up front to experience it firsthand.

In writing about the Azusa Street Revival, Rick Joiner commented, "*When it was learned that the greatest demonstrations of the Spirit's power usually came in the darkest, neediest places, many were compelled to go on mission trips just to witness the power of God.*" Amen. Want to see the fire? Want to feel the Anointing? Want to witness the power? Want to see God move? Come to Africa!

"For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy." (Psalms 72:12-13)

The Yard

I share the yard with some other creatures, as if I am a guest passing through who will be gone tomorrow while they remain. There is the tiny black and white bird with the long tail who has claimed a domain over the two skinny saplings out front. The trees are no bigger than 15 feet tall and only boast of some leaves at the very top like a green leafy cap resting upon their skinny heads, but they are his trees however small and emaciated they may appear to us.

His two split tail feathers are longer than the rest of his body and dangle and whip behind him like the tail of a kite. Whenever another bird comes to rest upon one of the branches of his trees, he immediately jumps into the air, fluttering and dancing in the air before them, whipping his tail back and forth, and chasing them from branch to branch until the intruder flies off for a more peaceful resting place.

At first I thought this was a mating dance that he, as the more colorful and plumed of the species performed in desperation for his prospective lady who would sit in her drably colored dress of dull brown feathers and decide whether or not he was good enough for her. But in seeing how he would aggressively pursue these little brown birds until they left, I now realized that this was not a love dance, but a territorial one. And maybe he wasn't a he; maybe he was a she who was guarding her future nest. I've known some women like that.

While the trees belonged to the little long-tailed bird, the ground belonged to a red and black lizard who I dubbed Big Red. He is a strangely colored animal – head a reddish-orange, body a dark purplish-black, his rump a stark white, and his tail following the same sequence of red, black and white down to the tip. He looks like one of those rubber toys you get for your little boys to play with – he doesn't look real. But he is most definitely in charge of the yard.

A worn-out wall of eroded blocks surrounds the property here. The blocks that are used in Africa are sandy and not as durable and strong as we are accustomed to, so rain eventually has a wearing effect on them making them look as if they are part of some ancient ruins. It is on this terrain that this king holds his court. No one is allowed here without his permission (unless, of course you are bigger than him). Nigeria is teeming with lizards. I have seen him chase other lizards, and if he did not think that they were sufficiently intimidated, he would grab hold of them with his mouth and shake them until they ran away. Tough little scooter.

I share this yard with them and a few others as a passing visitor. Nigeria is not my home, nor would I want it to be. This is a hard place. For many like Big Red and his feisty long-tailed neighbor, however, it is home and it is worth fighting for.

A General View

The message of revival that I bring takes about 6 to 10 services to deliver. There are actually about 15 to 20 messages, but they are all related. I can compress them into a few services, but that is like handing out snacks instead of delivering a full meal. Information goes in the brain, but what we need is the Spirit of God to deal with and change our hearts. That's the difference between lecturing and preaching ... or at least, it is supposed to be. The basics of the message can be found on my website at www.RevivalFire.org/foursteps.htm, and it can be downloaded from there to be read or printed. The message has grown and has morphed somewhat over the years but has remained basically the same.

When I come to a church, I need a minimum of three days, preferably with two services a day. While that may not always be possible, I will take what I can get. First, I need to expose the problem and rip off the covering that is upon our eyes. If you search through history, you will find that preceding every revival is a core presence of the holiness of God and the intense personal repentance that follows as a result. No revival comes without repentance. And you can't fix something if you don't know it is broken. To bring the church to a point of understanding, I show them the prophecies that have to do with the state of the Church in the last days. They need to hear it from God, not me.

Then I need to implant a vision in people's hearts and build a fire in the church. They not only have to want revival desperately, they have to really believe that they can do this. Again, I do that through the Word of God.

And then I have to show them how to build a fire. It is not enough to know that you need to be on fire – you need to know how to get on fire. What are the practical things to do that will not only start a fire, but fan the flames? Where does the power come from? How do we do this?

Next, I need to show everyone where the promises are of this great, supernatural revival in the last days are in the Word and prove to them that it is coming, not to their children, but to this generation. You need to know that you know that you know that this is true; otherwise you will not have the drive and stamina to pay the price that it will take. And it is only in the Word of God where your faith can be based. They need to see it in the Scriptures.

Lastly, it is not good enough to just tell someone what to do and how to do it – you need to show them. I would like to have the opportunity to take the people out into the streets and show them how easy it is to invite sinners to your church. That is an afternoon that will change their outlook forever. They will never be the same after that.

Whenever a church asks me to come, I tell them that they have to make their appointment with God. I do not set my own schedule. The fallow ground of our hearts must be broken up in order to receive the seed, and that requires prayer. As the people pray – and pray like they mean it – God will prepare their hearts to receive the seed. If not, then we are both wasting our time and money. You pray, God will answer, and I will come.

Meet for the Master's Use

The call to bring revival to a nation is not something that can be accomplished through any strength or wisdom that we possess in ourselves. No matter how badly you want to plunge into the fray and proclaim liberty in the land, the power to bring the presence and power of God that will ignite the Church is not something that can be flippantly learned in Seminary or produced with any carnally designed program. Only God can do that, and only in complete surrender are we able to lend ourselves as crucified vessels that He can work through. Frank Bartleman, in recounting an encounter he had with the Lord, wrote that the Lord told him after he had received the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, *"If you were only small enough, I could do anything with you."*

Ah, here's lies the crux, almost a Catch-22 if you would. How does one maintain, or better put, achieve that place of true humility so that God can use you to do His mighty works? On the one hand, we strive to get to that place of righteousness to have power in God while at the same time, try to be stay in that broken, crucified walk in God so we can be yielded to His power. How does one strike that perfect balance? Sounds simple ... or is it?

David had it; Saul did not. Perhaps that was because, for Saul, it was always about Saul. When he was little in his own eyes, he was hiding amongst the stuff, but a couple years later, he was such a big shot that he didn't think he had to wait on God's prophet. For David, on the other hand, it was never about David; it was always about God. Because of that, he was able to take on Goliath as a kid, and later as an adult with just two other guys, the entire Philistine army. (2nd Samuel 23:9)

Any man of God who has had the power of God work through him will immediately be attacked by the enemy. Whether it is miracle healings, dynamic preaching, or supernatural revelation, no sooner does one experience the touch of God's hand than that little wisp will pass through the back of his mind that, yes it was God's power, but ... ahem ... He did choose to use you! Satan will lightly sneak those thoughts in as subtly as he can. Obviously, if you think about it hard enough, you will recognize the devil's handiwork, so he keeps as light a touch as he can ... and then another ... and then another, merging them ever so slightly into the several streams of your thoughts until he can find an anchor somewhere in your heart to attach his lines of vanity and plant his seeds of pride.

The challenge that faces a man of God who desires to be used in a supernatural way, therefore, lies in how to be "meet for the Master's use" (2 Timothy 2:21) and yet keep his ego and self completely invisible. God does not bestow His power on just anybody. He may work through anybody, but He is careful to whom He entrusts His power. We must be careful that our desire to be used by God is not rooted in our own self-image or desire for position in God, but entirely upon the promotion of the kingdom of God. As I Corinthians 13 tells us, you can all the faith to move mountains, but if you do not have charity, it is worth nothing.

Easily said; not so easily achieved. Any fool can spout off religious platitudes that boast of unearned righteousness and spirituality, but it is an entirely different matter to fight your way through the spiritual swamp of fleshly ego and pride that you have to negotiate through to arrive at that place where God can use you.

I often hear young Christians naively spout off that they have been called to be a prophet. My first response is to tell them to pray and beg God to change His mind and please choose someone else because you will die a thousand deaths before you enter into that calling.

Ego, pride, and self-awareness must be burned out of you before you are ready to enter into that place of real power. God will give it to you in pieces – just enough to lift you up so He can break you down again. Line upon line, one step at a time, until you gradually become empty of self. Jacob had his Laban,

Joseph his prison, and Moses his desert, and you will have your desert place of cauterizing fire to take the “you” out of you so God can fill you up with Himself. His goal is not to change you, but to kill you. You are to be purified into transparent glass so that when people look at you, it is not you that they see, but the fire of God that is in you.

And so with the power that works through you, there is a deep innate understanding that it is not you but God who is working through you to do these miracles. You are nothing but dust and ashes; you don't even own the breath in your body. You are dead in Christ, crucified to the world, numb to pride and arrogance. Any place that Satan could have gotten hold of has been broken away. You have finally surrendered to God.

When you are no longer mindful about yourself or your spiritual place in God – when you just simply do not care anymore – then you are finally “meet for the Master's use” and ready to wield the power of God so that He, and He alone, will get the glory.

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