

Truth and Spirit Ministries

Time of Refreshing

The Keys to Revival

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God has been pouring out times of refreshing on his people since the inception of the Church. The Holy Spirit came in great power upon the Church on the Day of Pentecost shortly after the death, resurrection and ascension of Christ. (Acts 2) On this momentous day as the Apostle Peter preached Christ, he spoke these words while under the anointing of the Spirit:

“Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord...” (Acts 3:19 NIV)

Some may believe that God was only promising these times of refreshing (or an outpouring of the Spirit) to those present on this historic day of Pentecost but when we take a deeper look at this scripture, we will learn that God has promised times (seasons) of spiritual refreshing to all of those who are in Christ down through the age of grace and up until the time of the return of the Lord in the last days. The promise of God that was uttered through Peter was not a one time event (time of refreshing) but God has promised his people **times of refreshing** throughout the dispensation of the New Covenant. The Living Translation brings this out more clearly.

“Now change your mind and attitude to God and turn to him so he can cleanse away your sins and send you wonderful times of refreshment from the presence of the Lord and send Jesus your Messiah back to you again.” (Acts 3:19-20)

Notice that these times of refreshment are promised to those who repent and turn to God. This is speaking of those in the Church. Only those who have repented and turned to God are promised this spiritual refreshing. This comes as a result from a divine visitation of the Lord. In the presence of the Lord we will not only have love, joy and peace, we will also have our spirits souls and bodies refreshed physically and spiritually. How? During an outpouring of the Spirit, God will move mightily upon his people with prayer, prophecy and other gifts of the Spirit, healing, deliverance and save the lost.

So what does this word refreshing mean? Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible defines *refreshing* as: *a recovery of breath, i.e. revival.* [403] The Amplified Bible gives greater detail concerning this recovery of breath:

“So repent (change your mind and purpose); turn around and return [to God], that your sins may be erased (blotted out, wiped clean), that times of refreshing (of recovering from the effects of heat, of reviving with fresh air) may come from the presence of the Lord; And that He may send [to you] the Christ (the Messiah), Who before was designated and appointed for you--even Jesus...” (Acts 3:19-20)

This gives us a definite time frame as to when we, as God’s people, are able to receive these times of spiritual refreshment- it begins after our conversions and will continue up until the time of the Second Coming of Christ. God has promised us these times of spiritual refreshing in order to revive our spirits and souls when we most need it. We will find that there are times in our lives that we are in great need of spiritual refreshing and rejuvenation because of the trials, tests, disappointments and persecutions that we must suffer for the sake of Christ. As believers, we all go through the effects of heat (i.e. those fiery trials that can drain our spiritual strength).

It is not just fiery trials that can drain us spiritually; it can also be because of a lack or void of the presence of the God among us as well. Today many are spiritually unfulfilled due to the lack of the living presence and power of the Spirit of Christ in Church assemblies. Many brethren go to Church services and leave thinking that this is all God wants them to have but are still spiritually hungry and thirsty when they walk out the door. When Churches lack the presence, power and freshness of the Spirit or the services get stale and dry, believers and ministry alike are in need of a spiritual refreshing or revival.

The Lord sends the fresh air of his Spirit (revival) to refill us and rekindle our spiritual fire. There are many in the Body of Christ right now in desperate need of a time of refreshing but are at a loss as to how to actually obtain it. We must understand that when we are speaking of and asking God for a time of revival or refreshing we are really asking for a *move of the Spirit*. These terms are synonymous. In order to have a move of the Spirit, we must invite the very Person or the One that will bring the spiritual refreshing, move or revival. When we have God’s presence among us, we will also receive all that we could ever need or want but first we must learn what hinders the Spirit from moving and also about the spiritual keys that unlock the door to revival.

We will be addresses two major things concerning Revival or a move of the Spirit. First we will be speaking of those things that hinder or stop the Spirit from moving in our midst. Secondly, we will be speaking about how we can create an atmosphere where God can move mightily among us.

Hindrances to Revival

The hearts desire of many believers is to have a divine visitation of the Lord or to have his presence and power, yet so many Churches lack what they desire the most. Although a lot of people are spiritually hungry and praying for a time of refreshing or revival in the Church today, they are not seeing the results that they are longing for. Many have been praying for years or maybe even fasting for a move of God to come but still have yet to see the manifestation of what they have believed for. Some may think that God is withholding his presence and power for some unknown reason or that he has some designated time no matter what we do, but could it be that the Church is doing something wrong or that we are

ignorant of his ways? It is not God's will that we walk away empty, disappointed or unfulfilled. He has so much more for us but it is up to us to ask him how we can better conform to his will so that he can do all that he desires to do in and through the Church.

So, what will hinder or stop the Spirit from moving powerfully among us? The scriptures teach us much about this subject. Although we will not go into great detail, due to time constraints, we will only touch upon some major points. The first one would be something that some ministers and believers alike would not think about. *It is lack of recognition, honor, reverence and fear for God.* Most would automatically believe that they are giving God these things but we may be surprised at how many Churches ignore God and dishonor him by not acknowledging his presence or honoring his plans, purposes and will while he is in their midst. Many want to meet God on their terms when we should be meeting God on his. The Church in the first century had fear, honor and reverence for the Lord and his Spirit, they saw him move mightily. When we do the same, we will too.

We can obstruct the divine work and flow of the Spirit by having our own human agenda's, religious traditions, legalistic rules and regulations or by ignoring his Person and ministry among us, both as individuals and as a collective body as well. God has plans and purposes that he wants to fulfill in the lives of his people. The only way that he can fulfill his perfect will is if we yield to and follow his leading. The Word declares, **"Those that are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God."** (*Romans 8:14*) When we allow the Spirit to lead our lives, we are proving that we are indeed God's children. God has a plan for each one of us and for his Church as a whole but how is that plan to be fulfilled? We are only able to fulfill God's will and destiny for our lives by following the Spirit. We need to lose our agendas and receive his. When we do, we will experience the Holy Spirit's presence and power!

Some ministers and believers alike have in many ways neglected the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit in the Church today. God wants to open the eyes of his people to the importance of our divine Helper and his role in our lives today. The Lord Jesus Christ is bringing a great awakening to his people and bringing them back to the knowledge of his supremacy as the Head of the Church. He is also dealing with the hearts of his people regarding their neglect and lack of reverence for the Person of the Holy Spirit and his place and ministry in the Church.

Do Not Quench the Spirit

We are commanded in the Bible to not quench the Spirit. (*I Thessalonians 5:19*) The NIV version reads, **"Do not put out the Spirit's fire."** The Holy Spirit is a Spirit of fire and he is on the inside of us. He came on the Day of Pentecost as a mighty rushing wind and as cloven tongues of fire as well. (*Acts 2: 1-4*) John the Baptist said that Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire. (*Matthew 3:11*) Some Churches unknowingly put out the Spirit's fire by forbidding or rejecting (through unbelief) the works or ministry of the Spirit. Besides the signs, wonders and miracles, these works would also include all of the gifts of the spirit listed in I Corinthians 12: 4-11. Many reject or quench the Holy Spirit's manifestations because it does not line up with their theology or denomination. Where such unbelief and out and out rejection exists, is it any wonder that so many Churches lack the presence and power of God? (*II Timothy 3:5*)

Grieving the Spirit

We are also commanded to not grieve the Spirit, yet believers do it all the time. (*Ephesians 4:30*) When the works of the flesh are in operation in a Church instead of the fruit of the Spirit, this grieves the Holy Spirit and he will draw back his presence from that Church or people. (*Galatians 5:22-19-26*) Why does he do this? He is waiting for people to humble themselves before the Lord, acknowledge their sin and repent. When they do, he will come back in great power. (There will be more about this later.) Not only do works of the flesh grieve him but so does unbelief, ongoing, unrepentant sin, lack of love and a host of other things. The Holy Spirit is grieved over the fact that many are following something or someone else rather than the Lord. He cannot lead and guide others if they are not following the Lord.

Pride, Arrogance and Rebellion

The Holy Spirit cannot minister to or work through men and women that operate in pride and arrogance or assert their own will over the Lord's. God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble. Those who operate in pride and arrogance are in direct enmity with God. God cannot teach or lead those who know it all or have it all. We should see our need for God, depend on him and desire to cooperate with his plans and purposes. The Lord can only work with those who walk in humility and who will submit themselves under his mighty hand.

Those that also resist God's dealings with them over and over have a spirit of rebellion. A lot of people would believe that this is practically non-existent in the Church, but this is not so. There are people in the Church that knowingly go against God's Word and this is rebellion. The Lord still deals with those who rebel against his authority and word. He may speak directly to their hearts, he may speak to them through others that they would not expect or through one's circumstance, but he still chastens every son that he loves. (*Hebrews 12:7-11*) Those in the Church that have been sinning against God in this way should ask God for to forgive them and then they will see the glory of God.

Creating an Atmosphere for God

The saints of God can create an atmosphere in which the Holy Spirit can and will work powerfully. There are great keys to receiving the person, presence and power of the Spirit among us and we will be covering some of these keys in this Word in Due Season. Our ministry is dedicated to teaching believers about the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the Church today. God wants the Church to be aware of what is preventing him from moving among us and he wants to remove these things out of the way. People block the very thing that they seek and desire the most. They think the problem is on God's end but it's not. It's up to us to seek the Lord for the answers that we so desperately need. When we turn to him, he will surely give them to us.

Many brethren in the body of Christ think that if we only pray a lot, that this will usher in a move of God. We need to understand that times of refreshing do not come through prayer only but they come also by repenting of those things that we have been doing wrong or that have been quenching or grieving the Spirit of God and preventing him from manifesting

powerfully among us. Remember, repentance means to change our minds, attitudes and purpose. When we grasp the true meaning of **repentance**, we will see that we that must do the changing. We must do things God's way instead of our way. We must be willing to let go of wrong thinking, attitudes and our own agendas and start conforming to God's will if we want to see the demonstration of the Spirit's power.

Many today may not realize this but there is certain conditions that must be met if we desire the Holy Spirit to move among us in great power as he did at the inception of the Church. As we meet these conditions, we are actually creating an atmosphere in which God is able to work in a mighty way. Many are waiting on God to move, when in fact, God is waiting on the many to move. He wants us to come into alignment with what he has already given us in his Word. In times of true revival there must also be a **reformation** or a *time of setting things right*. The Lord wants to set some things right within the Church. We need to yield and submit to the Lord's hand upon us so that he can send times of refreshing once again.

So how can we create an atmosphere that God is able to work in? First, when we assemble together as the body of Christ, we should not come with any of our own agendas; instead we should look to God for his. If we come to submit and yield ourselves to him, he will lead and guide us in the direction that he wants us to go in. The most powerful Church services are those in which the Holy Spirit is leading the congregation. Oftentimes meetings lack the power and presence of God because the flesh is ruling and reigning instead of the Spirit. There will be no demonstration of the Spirit's power when the flesh (including works of the law) is in operation. Paul taught the Church that the flesh and the Spirit are at enmity with each other. (Galatians 5:16-18) Jesus also said, **"The Spirit gives life, the flesh counts for nothing."** (*John 6:63*)

Not only is repentance a key but so is **humility** and **yieldedness (which means voluntary surrender)** to God if we really want to see God move mightily upon the Church and the unsaved as well. Not only do many in the Church have their own agendas, traditions and teachings that do not line up with God's word but also the spirit of the world has infiltrated many Churches. God does not want his people to be like the world however. The Word teaches us that the world is at enmity with God. Any believers that side with the world will become his enemy too. The world is proud and rebellious against God. They are carnal but we are to be spiritual. The Apostle James had rebuke for those in the Church who had become like the world.

"Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double minded. Grieve, mourn and wail. Change you laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord and he will lift you up." (*James 4:1-10*)

The Apostle Peter echoed similar words:

"All of you clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time." (*1 Peter 5:5-6*)

God wants to lift his people up in the Spirit but we must first humble ourselves before him. He wants to take us to new heights spiritually but a lot of saints are preventing that from happening. Churches that operate in the works of the flesh hinder the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Pride, envy, jealousy, backbiting, quarreling, variance and strife are present in many Churches yet believers and ministry alike wonder why God doesn't manifest mightily in their meetings. When we grieve the Spirit, he draws back. He waits for us to seek God in repentance and humility; *he is waiting for us to yield to the mighty hand of God*. Some are ignorant of the fact that when they are operating in the works of the flesh; that they are acting just like the world who is in the flesh. But scripture teaches us that our flesh is sinful and is at enmity with the Holy Spirit. (*Galatians 5:16-18*) Many do not realize that by their actions, they are opposing the very One that they worship, praise, pray to and seek. Is it any wonder that God will not do more?

Hear What the Spirit Says

Jesus promised all of his disciples another comforter, the Holy Spirit. Some in the Church believe that the written word is all we have today but that's not true. When people say this they completely ignore the fact that the words that they are reading were spoken by a living God. We must remember that the written word is only ink on paper until the Spirit of God breathes life into it and *speaks to our spirits*, bringing the revelation or understanding of what God intends for us to have regarding that word or passage of scripture. The Holy Spirit has a *voice* and *speaks* the word of God to us. (*John 16:12-13*) This is why it says in the Bible that the word is *living* and active. (*Hebrews 3:7-8, 4:7, 12*)

The Holy Spirit brings life to the Word. God is a *personal* God and desires to have personal relationships with His people. Sadly, some do not have this because they have relegated the person of Jesus to be a historical figure of the past but do not comprehend and receive the *Living One* today who has already been resurrected in glory and power and presently sits at the right hand of the Father. (*Revelation 1:17-18, Acts 7:55-56*) God is not in a time warp and His word is not confined or limited to a certain time period but He speaks perpetually. (*Hebrews 3:7*) The Lord speaks personally to his Church today.

Before Jesus ascended to heaven and even after he sat down at the right hand of the Father, he instructed the Church to receive, listen to and follow the Spirit. (*Acts 1:8, John 14:15-17, 25-26, 16:12-15*) In the seven letters to the Churches in the Book of Revelation, Jesus said, "**He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the Churches.**" (*Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 29, 3:6, 13, 22*) Jesus has instructed us to hear the Spirit. The Spirit speaks to the Churches. (If we do not have an ear, we should pray for one.) What is he telling us? He is telling us what Jesus, the Head of the Church, wants us to know. He is ministering to us what Jesus paid the price for us to have through the Cross. The Lord wants to minister to and through his Church. We should obey the Lord by hearing the Spirit and obeying whatever he tells us to say and do.

The Church must no longer neglect the One whom Jesus has sent. We should honor and reverence the Holy Spirit when he is in our midst. When we honor him, we are also honoring the One who sent him (Jesus). When we assemble together and come into his presence with praise and worship, we should take the time to wait upon him, hear him and obey his directives. Everything the Holy Spirit leads us to do will glorify Jesus and draw us

closer to him. When we allow him to orchestrate our services, *we will see him move in great power and glory.*

We can have times of refreshing today; we just need to do what the Lord instructs us to do. God desires to pour out his Spirit once again but he wants us to be prepared for it. He wants a *sustained* revival. Jesus prepared his disciples for the first outpouring of the Spirit and he wants to prepare his modern day disciples as well. As we submit to the mighty hand of God, we can see the mighty acts of the Holy Spirit once again.