

THE BOTTOM LINE – REVIVAL AND AWAKENING

In the last three articles we have been discussing how we can make our community better through prayer. We noted that we have no power to do anything about our communities, but God does. He will use us to make a difference if we ask Him to and make ourselves available to Him.

In this final article, I want to make the *bottom line* clear. We, whether believers or not, have been the beneficiaries of God's grace and mercy. He alone provides what we need. He alone gives us life and breath. But we need more! There is an old hymn, *There Shall Be Showers of Blessing* (lyrics by Daniel W. Whittle), the chorus of which says, "Showers of blessing, showers of blessing we need: mercy-drops round us are falling, but for the showers we plead." We are living a mercy-drop era, but we need a deluge of revival and spiritual awakening!

Much of the church has slipped into lethargy and complacency. We are neglecting the job Jesus gave us to do, sharing the Good News about Him and making disciples. (Mark 16:15-16, Matthew 28:18-20) But it is carrying out this task that God will use to change our communities!

We have talked about the need for kingdom praying – emphasizing spiritual issues and conditions that have to do with our sin, our righteousness, our need for repentance, the spread of the Gospel to the world, the discipling of believers and the need for righteousness and safety in our communities. Let me suggest that a major part of our kingdom prayer should be begging God to invade our space, driving out our lethargy and complacency, and filling us with His Holy Spirit, setting us aflame with zeal to make Him known. Ask Him to transform us individually and as congregations so that our lives lift Him up and make Jesus known. Ask God to bring us to Godly sorrow that leads to repentance (2nd Corinthians 7:10) of treating Jesus as anything other than our first love (Revelation 2:4). In short, we must continually be asking God to send us *revival*.

At the same time, we must be concerned for the salvation of our families, our neighbors and people around the world. God wants people from every ethnic group worshipping Him around His throne (Revelation 7:9-10). How will they get there if we don't reach them? It is imperative that praying for spiritual awakening among the lost and for our involvement in sharing the Good News must be a major part of our kingdom praying.

We need an extraordinary movement of God's Spirit! **We must beseech God for it!**

A WORD TO OUR PASTORS AND PRIESTS

Revival is God's work alone. We can, however, place ourselves and our people in a position to be revived by God's Holy Spirit. All the revivals of which I am aware began with a few people crying out to God – sometimes for years – to move among them. Until we leaders come before our Lord in real desperation, we will not see our congregations do so. Until they do so, we will not see our people being very effective in leading people to Christ, making disciples or affecting our communities. Fervent prayer is the key to this. If this requires that we change our programs or the way our congregations operate, then so be it. We must begin to be serious about seeking God's face!