

OH GOD REND THE HEAVENS AND HEAL YOUR CRIPPLED CHURCH AND OUR DYING NATION

This short but highly pertinent article is presented this month as our feature article. It was written by Pastor Shane Idleman from Westside Christian Fellowship in America for that nation's National Day of Prayer.

I'm sure we can all agree that evil surrounds us in America and other western nations. Daily we are bombarded by reports of heinous crimes and lawlessness being committed throughout our lands. How can Christians not only remain peaceful and hopeful during these turbulent times but also dare to anticipate revival, perhaps a Third Great Awakening? I believe we can. But we must be willing to wait on God and seek Him like never before because "He acts for the one who waits for Him" (Isaiah 64:4). This type of waiting expects something to happen and waits patiently for it. When we wait and pray, anger doesn't influence us, impatience doesn't drive us, impulse doesn't derail us, and fear doesn't stop us. The disciples prayed in the upper room until heaven opened and the Spirit came down. The filling of the Holy Spirit forever changed them. They were hungry for more of God. Can you say the same?

If we are to expect God to heal our crippled churches and our dying nations, we must pray like Isaiah, "Oh God, rend the heavens and come down" (Isaiah 64:1). And like the woman in the parable of the unjust judge, we must keep asking (Luke 18:1-8). Prayer must be brought back into our churches, real prayer that searches the soul and penetrates the heart. Many years ago, a very old man who experienced a revival when he was younger was asked why the revival ended. His eyes were filled with holy fire when he cried, "When you lay hold of God, never, never, never, never let go!" Let his burden be a warning as well as a reminder to never let go.

When you were first born again, you had this fire, didn't you? And then life happened. Prayer and reading the Word gradually became an afterthought. Yet nationwide revival begins with personal revival, believers one by one begin to seek God again, and before long, there are family revivals and then church-wide revivals and then community revivals. Yes, it can happen, but the seeds must be planted by individual members of the body. In other words, it begins with you. Are we welcoming this type of downpour in our churches and positioning ourselves for a downpour of God's Spirit, or are we extinguishing it because of pride, sin,

doubt, unbelief, and prayerlessness? It's time to break up our fallow ground and seek the Lord while He still may be found (Hosea 10:12). We provide the sacrifice; He provides the fire.

Source: *Pastor Shane Idleman from Westside Christian Fellowship in America*