

November 2000: A Fresh Touch

by Aaron Greenway

As of today, November 1, 2000, we are officially in the “holiday season.” Walmart, Target, Hobby Lobby and all of those are now putting out their advertising gimmicks in preparation for Thanksgiving and Christmas. Reading what Dr. Charles Swindoll said about the season (in *The Grace Awakening*) hits the nail on the head, “...we get turned off in mid-October when we see all those fake trees being set up at department stores and [in spite of] the dreaded commercialism and crowds and *Jingle Bells* played 3000 times in the mall....”

It is very easy to get into the rhythm of the season and not be in step with the Spirit of God, because our precious celebrations (such as Thanksgiving and Christmas) have been turned into moneymaking schemes for the world. Such a shame! However, it does not mean that God cannot make Himself known to us in new and fresh ways. There is an expression in Spanish that is used when God makes something or Himself known, *dar(le) a conocer*. God has made Himself known through His Word and by the illuminating power of the Spirit of God.

In the past several weeks, it has been evident to me and to others in my church community that God is doing something fresh among us. For example, a lady named Arlene, who is disabled, has been making gift boxes for people in the church, for no other reason than to encourage them. Another lady named Mary, from south Dallas, couldn't pay her rent. Somehow \$200 mysteriously ended up in her lap so she could pay her bills. People have been weeping and groaning over our assembly, interceding that the Spirit of God would make Himself known and that there would be a deeper consecration and love as never before.

Do we ever feel that we are just going through the motions, that our love for God is reduced to

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nothing more than our obedience to Him? We ask, “Where are the miracles?” There is certainly nothing wrong with obedience. This is how we display our love for our Lord, but many times our lives becomes “humdrum” and we are reduced to a cliché-driven life, caught in the clutches of a busy week with a few quick prayers somehow thrown up so we can survive it.

How do we overcome this trap? It has got to begin with God Himself. It has got to begin with us falling to our knees, in humility and submission to Him, no matter how we feel. It requires a time (preferably everyday) where we can be alone with God, reading His Word, listening to his “still, small voice” and talking to Him.

I have learned that it is better to be real with God and tell Him exactly what is on my mind and how I feel rather than telling Him what *I* think He wants to hear, because I am not sure that God is impressed with all our false piety and attempts to show Him we are spiritual. The fact is, He knows we are not spiritual unless we have a fresh touch from Him, unless we have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit. He even knew our thoughts before we were created. It is certain that God wants worship, respect, and obedience, but not out of a spirit of legalism, but out of a spirit of love.

In Ephesians 5, Paul speaks of being filled and refilled with the Spirit and the results that come out of that. Let’s take a look at it:

And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another in the fear of God (Ephesians 5:18-21).

In the Greek, the word for “being filled” with the Spirit is *plerousthe*, which means to “be being kept filled.” When we are continually refreshed by the Spirit of the living God and when we are willing to submit to Him on a daily basis, then the singing, the melodies, the giving of thanks and the submission will come. When we are refilled with the Spirit, gift boxes get passed around, the needs of people in the Church are met, people are praising God, hearts are tender which makes our spiritual lives conducive to a revival of the Spirit.

How many of us are sick and tired of the “humdrums?” How many of us are weary of clichés and are wondering where God is in our lives? While we cannot operate on feelings, the Spirit of God transcends feelings and will “make Himself known” as we continue to call out to Him in humility and brokenness. This will mean giving up our own lives, learning what it is to be broken, to walk with Jesus.

I must make a warning however. Those of us who wish to see a “fresh touch” from God will also be those confronted with our hidden sins. That is a virtual fork in the road. When the Spirit is calling for a refilling, we will be faced with the decision to either continue in our clichés, masking our hidden failures, or we will go on with God to a higher plain in which He can use us more mightily and effectively in our broken world.

So now what? What do we do to see God work in our lives in incredible ways? How do we see revival brought about? And what do we do with it when it gets here? The key is surrender, submission everyday. The key is praying for the saints in anguish, as if the survival of the Church depended on it. The key is running from mediocrity whether we feel like it or not. The question is, what route we will take when faced with it? But that may be...another question.

RESOURCES:

Two great books that address many of these issues are *Why Revival Tarries* by Leonard Ravenhill and *The Priority of Knowing God* by Peter V. Deison.