

# Espousal Newsletters

By Jim Golden — Article Four — Revival vs. Refreshing!

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In the United States as well as around the world we have been hearing reports of increasing activity by the Holy Spirit. The outcome of this activity is quite plainly marked by the conversion of sinners, as well as the refreshing of and renewed zeal of God's children. Signs, wonders and miracles accompany the preaching of the Gospel. So, what's new? Isn't that what Scripture declares will happen? What I hope to address in this article is something I feel is a subtle but major difference between revival and "times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord."

In Acts chapter 3 we see something very interesting taking place. "Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord..." (Acts 3:19). Notice Peter said times of refreshing not revival. Now let's look at something Paul says later in the same epistle. "In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent." Acts 17:30. While I understand that the context here is speaking of men worshipping false gods and their images, a truth is also being conveyed on a much greater scale to us, and might just reveal the secret to fulfilling the cry of our hearts.

One day as I pondered these verses in my heart God began to speak to me concerning the difference between revival and times of refreshing from His presence. He told me that what we have called *revival* is not revival at all, but times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. These seasons are always accompanied by multitudes of unbelievers repenting and being converted. He went on to tell me the reason many have not seen the manifestation of his Spirit in a similar manner is because we have been asking for the wrong thing. The Scripture suggests that God commands people to repent and as a result of His command and our agreeing with Him in our individual regions we see the sinner converted and times of refreshing come from God's presence, resulting in what has been historically know as *revival*.

On the other hand I have sat and watched as many believers have felt passed by or over looked because none of them were receiving the same manifestations of God's Spirit as everyone else. Here is where the distinction between revival and refreshing comes in. As a believer you have already repented and given your life to God. You no longer have a need for your "whole body" to be washed, just your feet, from time to time. Even this responsibility Jesus has reserved for himself as he demonstrated during the Last Supper. It therefore follows that you will not experience the same thing as the new convert dynamited into the Kingdom of God during one of these "seasons." As believers we can and should be living in a revived state. However, if you have not yet come into this place of power in God you may very well enter along with the newly converted.

Once, as I sat alone listening to God he said to me, "If Jesus IS the resurrection then the Holy Spirit IS revival." I wasn't sure if this was a question or a statement, but as I embraced its truth my life was changed. For over 33 years God has allowed me to give the gift of his Holy Spirit to others through the laying on of hands. Seeing

people fall down under the presence of God's Spirit is nothing new to me. Yet as I was ministering once where literally hundreds of people fell under God's power I felt a piercing rebuke come from Jesus. I had often coveted more *miraculous* gifts like healing, etc. However, when God opened my eyes I realized that there was no greater gift to be given than his Holy Spirit. It was during this period that God spoke to me about the difference between revival and refreshing. He told me that Satan had all but stolen His revival life-presence from his children by twisting the word and defining revival as times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. While a little of both goes on in such moves of God as we are seeing in Lakeland, revival is an ongoing intimate relationship with the Holy Spirit. This incredibly powerful relationship is not only available to every believer, but it is the reason Jesus gave his life at Calvary. Each of us not only has the *right* but the responsibility to enter into this relationship of power and intimacy by seeking God for His promise.

Moses said that there is only one thing that sets us apart or distinguishes us from the rest of the peoples of earth, and that is God's glorious presence. Think about that for just a minute. Onetime when I came out of my prayer closet God's presence was on me so thick I walked by one of my children and without me touching them or even saying a word to them they were "slain in the Spirit." What more do any of us need but the manifested presence of God's Holy Spirit abiding on and in our lives? It is his presence alone that is the definition of true ministry, of REVIVAL. His presence can accomplish more than a thousand words. His presence can cure the sick and deliver us from our chronic sin and failures. As His children, His presence is the substance of our lives, and in His presence is fullness of joy and pleasure for ever. To me the word fullness means full not half full or still lacking and pleasure forever isn't a once in a while thing, but continual. We are as His Church, His children the REVIVED ones, Hallelujah!

My concern is two-fold at this point. First, that Satan is no longer allowed to steal the presence of God from those who have been born again, by defining it as some future point in time where God may or may not move on a region by his Spirit. Secondly, that when we pray we pray with power and understanding, agreeing with, and asking God to speak to our region and command all men everywhere to repent. The result will be that their sins are blotted out, so that we might all rejoice in times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, which is wonderful. However, it is mainly to convert the sinner not to amaze and entertain or rehydrate the dehydrated saints of God.

We seem to rely on and cry out for these "revivals" because we have somehow lost that overwhelming sense of God's presence, yet Jesus said that He would never no ever leave us or forsake us. We tend to walk more by sight than by faith so that what we see or feel with our natural senses we interpret as truth or reality instead of what God's Word says is true. Maturity is having our senses trained to discern between good and evil or the truth and a lie. Satan's power comes from his ability to get us to believe something that is not true. One of our biggest battles is the battle for the mind!

It is the longing of my heart to see God command the Washington DC Metropolitan area to repent. But there is an even a greater longing in my heart to see God's people come into a place where we live in a revived state, the state of abundant life that Jesus declares He came to give, a state that is not shaken by what our five senses say. I include myself in this group. We all must walk through times of

darkness, when we seem to have no light, no feelings and no explanations for why we are on this road. Scripture tells us to beware and not kindle strange fire on the altar. I think that this may mean that during these times we need to accept and embrace what God says is true no matter what it looks or feels like. He is faithful and He will perfect that which concerns us.

The Kingdom of God is righteousness peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. It is the realm that overcomes the world not that is overcome by the world. Our most desperate need is not that God would send *revival*, but that He would expose the deceptive lies of the enemy that have stolen the true reality of His salvation from us and caused us to exist in the realm of our senses rather than in the realm of faith, faith in His Word and His salvation.

We are not to be subject to what appears to be the "ebb and flow" of the Spirit's activity. He is an unstoppable mighty river flowing crystal clear from the throne of God. Yet the devil has somehow gotten us to believe that God will one day benevolently pour out His Spirit and then withhold it on another day. God is the same yesterday, today and forever. He does not change; it is our perception that changes through the deceitful activity of the enemy undermining the truth of God's great love and provision. I am not saying that revived Christians don't go through valley or mountain top experiences. My life has been one big roller coaster ride as He has patiently taught me to walk in faith. What I am saying is that our personal relationship of intimacy should not and need not be dependant on those wonderful times when our entire being, natural senses included, experience the weighty and glorious presence of God to walk in the truth of His Word. Those who live just for the sensations often fall away in the valley. In season and out of season we should be able and ready to give an account of the hope that is within us. We often birth the sweetest fruit in the valley.

The writer of Hebrews declares that without faith it is impossible to please God. Jesus poses the questions of whether or not he will find faith on His return to the earth. While this question is, I'm sure, rhetorical it should provoke us to serious thought and assessment of just where we are in our theology and relationship with Him. May God grant us all the grace not to neglect such great a Salvation. He has already given us everything we need. We just need our eyes opened like the prophet's servant to see the reality that those that are with us are more than those that are against us. In closing, I have often wondered just what faith truly is. God has given each one of us the measure of faith. I have come to believe that faith is simply the grace or ability to come into the Father's presence and there He may give us whatever we need for the moment. I have also come to believe that "faith" is not a credit card that will allow us to get whatever we want without even needing our Heavenly Father's input or approval. The whole reason He sent His Son was to bring us back to HIM. AMEN!