

## WHEN JESUS PASSES NEAR - Pete Greig

- Where have you seen God at work in your life this week? (Share any brief examples and encouragements).
- Was there anything from Sunday's message which you found particularly inspiring or challenging?
- Was there anything else you particularly noticed?

***Luke 18v35-43 the story of blind beggar (ed: Bartimaeus in Mark 10v46-52)***

Pete senses that the Spirit of the Living God is doing something. It's a bit like the beggar sensing Jesus passing by and, despite the crowds trying to silence him, calls out and Jesus responds: "What do you want?" When Jesus passes nearby in our lives it is important how we posture ourselves. The beggar cried out and Jesus responded. Likewise we need to articulate what we want the Lord to do for us as he passes nearby.

Reflecting on Asbury - 8 Feb 23 an extraordinary and significant movement of the Holy Spirit began in the college chapel. Students came to get their hearts right, a deep pungent sense of God, confessing sin, choosing Jesus, 100k came in the first 2 weeks. It's become a "popcorn effect" with similar things happening elsewhere around the world. Even at Emmaus - 4 became Christians last Sunday and 12 responded by confessing sins of addiction after a recent service. It is worth taking risks for the kingdom.

Edwin and Chris both had visions of "wave upon wave of folk coming to our church" Are we ready? In Hackney recently 116 young people spontaneously became Christians at a church there.

David Yezhneggar shared from a recent trip to Turkey. A young lady in Iran had a dream of 2 named people calling at her house. Next day, 2 people knocked on her door, gave their names as in the dream and she led them to the Lord. They returned to their village and led 4 others to Christ. God is at work!

Two marks of the Holy Spirit: Hunger and Holiness.

- Hunger in the church for more of Jesus Christ. Maybe after a season of suffering, brokenness, dryness there is sense of Psalm 42v1 *As the deer pants for streams of water.... My soul thirsts for the living God.*
- Holiness - "Holiness to the Lord" is the sign over the chapel in Asbury. Every metric in society shows the opposite: brokenness, addiction, psychological confusion, mental health issues. The Spirit wants us to look more like Jesus Christ. Holiness is happiness, joyful, colourful, creative, free, forgiven and forgiving, life-giving, generous. The fruit is Gal 5v22-23.

Maybe we're nervous of the hype and intensity that can flow from "Revival" especially in this digital age. Some people may think "we've been here before". This is not escapism - we already have comfortable lives, we have enough! Jesus died for us, we're forgiven, placed in his family and we're caring for the poor. BUT... there is more!

Ps24v3-6 triggered the last revival in UK. Sisters aged 84 and 86 in Barvas, Hebrides were praying and had vision of youth in the church. Minister told to pray! Weeks after nightly prayer one elder read this psalm and then began to confess his sin asking for clean hands and pure heart. Holy Spirit came in power. Islands transformed - folk awoken to confess sin. Folk came from afar to experience the sense of the Spirit. "The atmosphere seemed charged with a power of almighty God" (Campbell)

In 1858 a revival on the eastern seaboard of USA could be sensed by sailors on the sea heading towards land. 1859 - Ireland: school boy said "I have Jesus" many others cried out to God. Neighbours heard the noise and likewise responded, filling the school. Revival is bigger than religion!

1906 Azusa St awakening - now 565m Pentecostal Christians - folk were "seized with conviction".

1904 Welsh revival - miner's language so changed that pit ponies didn't understand orders!

Hab 3v2 *I have heard of your fame...Repeat them in our day* Heb 3v7-8 *if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.* "Seek God" 191x in NT. Ps105v4 *seek his face always.* The theme verse of early Christians.

Pete gave some practical pointers and it would be good to discuss them and act upon them!

- Push into prayer; evening service is a space for seeking God; 24/7 prayer room; Kingdom Come; fasting
- Formulate your response to Jesus' question: What do you want me to do?
- Confess our loss of hunger and thirst - it's a dangerous prayer!
- Review our hands and heart. Are they clean and pure? Focus on Jesus

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