



# SHOWERS OF BLESSING

*A. Lionel*

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*Dedicated To All  
Those Who Are  
Expecting The  
Latter Rains*

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# PREFACE

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As we are nearing our Lord's Second Coming, it is apparent that we need to prepare ourselves and others.

This preparation includes more time for prayer, Bible mediation, fellowship, personal soulwinning, neighbourhood evangelism and frontier missions.

I believe this book is a step in that direction. It imbibes the spirit of revival which is the main thrust of Blessing Youth Mission.

This book also elucidates various important teachings like the Anointing of the Holy Spirit, Small Groups, Youth, Evangelism and Brotherly Love which are our core emphasis.

I also expect this book would be a guiding-post for the forthcoming generations who would like to minister along with us.

These are the days we cannot keep silent. We need to move on. Our only role model is Jesus Christ and our only authority is the Word of God.

It is my prayer that this book will help you realize your responsibilities in the Kingdom of God.

20 May 2017

A. Lionel,  
Chennai



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I praise God that He has enabled us to  
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A. Lionel



# INTRODUCTION

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We are living in the Dispensation of Grace.

*Jn 1:17 - "The Law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ" (Jn. 1:17).*

We also read in Titus 2:11-13 - *"The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ."*

The Lord in His kindness is extending the "grace period" so the Church may complete her mission on earth. Let us not "receive the grace of God in vain" in this "day of salvation", but do our utmost for the Highest and reach the uttermost parts of our Nation with the Gospel of Christ (2 Cor:1,2).

What we need is not small rain drops here and there, but we need 'Showers of Blessing.' This is promise that God gave us several years back. It is for this blessing that we eagerly wait. Let us not be satisfied unless we experience a dynamic revival in our personal lives and fellowships.

We have very little time left before the return of our King. Hence, let us give ourselves to more holiness, more love, more prayer, more giving, more sacrifice and more labour.



# CHAPTER 1

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## HOLY SPIRIT REVIVAL

We live in desperate times. There are news of wars, natural calamities, floods, disasters and diseases all over the World. Sin has increased a thousand fold. The standard of Christianity is in the lowest ebb. Biblical morality has been redefined to suit the modern trends. But on the other hand there is a Good News. God in His Word has promised that he will pour out His Spirit in the last days (Joel 2:28).

We all need Revival. Before we meditate on Revival, we should understand what revival is and what it does. Revival rekindles the fire that is about to be extinguished. It brings renewed spiritual power. It alters dry waste lands into watered gardens. It revolutionizes Luke warm Christians. It energizes inactive believers. It brings new life. It elevates mediocre spirituality. It reshapes institutions. It rebuilds broken relationships. It facilitates inner transformation. Yes! This is what Revival does! And we all need this kind of Revival.

Prophets Joel and Ezekiel prophesied about the end-time revival. Even during the Apostolic era there was a revival. There were also several revivals during the period of John Wesley, Finny and D.L Moody.

In every revival there was a specific pattern and it differed from time to time. For example, the revival during the times of John Wesley was named as the 'Holiness Revival' because it transformed the lives of Christians. In whatever pattern the revival came, there was always an explosive evangelism, joy among God's people and voluntary involvement among the laity in God's service. As we study the past revivals, our hearts really long for such God-sent Revival to be poured out in our Nation and in our times.

I strongly believe that we are going to experience a mighty outpouring of the Spirit in the days to come.

There are several common characteristics for all Revival. I want to bring to your attention the important keys to Revival.

## **HOLINESS**

*"Blow the trumpet in Zion; consecrate a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather the people. Consecrate the congregation; assemble the elders; gather the children, even nursing infants. Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her chamber"* (Joe 2:15,16).

Joel here calls for a solemn assembly. He also urges that the assembly be consecrated. We are not called to sit in big seminars and listen to big sermons. We are not called to sing and dance. We are called for a solemn assembly. We find that no people were exempted - elders, children, nursing infants and even the newly wed couples. None is excused. All people should come together, so that they can sanctify themselves. Our God is a God of holiness. He is the Lord who sanctifies the people so that His blessings may come upon them.

God can't use a person if He is not holy. A holy

man is a useful instrument in the hands of God. We may have talents, we may have gifts like singing, playing music etc., but, if we lack holiness in our personal lives, we will be fruitless. We may look very beautiful, delivering beautiful sermons but it will have no effect on the people.

We now have large gatherings for evangelistic meetings, faith seminars and leadership trainings. It is good. But unfortunately the doctrine of holiness is hardly preached and almost forgotten. But as you read the Bible and see what God did during the times of revival, you will find that revival was very much related to holiness.

There was a revival during the period of King Hezekiah. He was a very successful king. What was the reason behind that revival?

*“In the first year of his reign, in the first month, he opened the doors of the house of the Lord and repaired them. He brought in the priests and the Levites and assembled them in the square on the east and said to them, “Hear me, Levites! Now consecrate yourselves, and consecrate the house of the Lord, the God of your fathers, and carry out the filth from the Holy Place” (2 Chronicles 29:3-5).*

When he became King in the age of 25, He wanted the leaders to be sanctified. He wanted all the rubbish to be removed from the house of the Lord. His priority was sanctification. The Bible says that it went on for almost two weeks. Likewise in our personal lives, all the unwanted things like back biting, hypocrisy, lust, envy, slander and hatred should be removed from amongst us. God hates all these things. We need to sanctify ourselves. When we sanctify ourselves and the people who are under our care, then revival is sure to come.

We may be like the Laodicean Church which was lukewarm. In Revelation chapter 3 we read that the Lord was standing outside, knocking the door. The Lord was pushed outside! Our God is a God of holiness. As you read the book of Malachi, you find the Lord is compared to a launderer (Mal 3:3). Yes, He is a purifying God.

Many of us have absolutely no quiet time. Our godliness is like morning dew and a passing cloud. If we have to be a cause for the revival God is going to send, then we need to sanctify ourselves. God is the purifier of silver. He is the one who purges the dross from the gold. He purifies and sanctifies that we may be an offering that is acceptable to the Lord.

A ministry may be praised by men but will not be approved by God when Holiness is not present. We need to leave all the bitterness (Eph 4:31,32). We should not grieve the Spirit of the Lord (V30). Let us stop ministering for awhile and have a time of sanctification. If God's people could come together for a time of sanctification say for a week or a month and if they could search their hearts and sanctify themselves then revival is not very far away.

## UNITY

Psalms 133:1-3 - *"Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity! It is like the precious oil on the head, running down on the beard, on the beard of Aaron, running down on the collar of his robes! It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion! For there the Lord has commanded the blessing, life for evermore."*

A revival is like an anointing of a precious ointment on the head, running down the beard flowing

through the body. Wherever this person goes he takes the revival with him. Finny was so full of God, so full of the presence of God that revival came wherever he went. When people came in contact with him, they cried out of deep conviction of their sins. People held the pillars of the cathedrals and wept for several days. Bars were closed. Cinema theatres were closed. Several people came for prayer meetings. We want to see such kind of revival. It all resulted because of the oneness among the brethren. We see this in the New Testament Church.

*Acts 1:14 - "All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer."*

*Acts 2:1 - "When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place."*

When they came with one accord, there was a rushing mighty wind, and then came the tongues of fire. The Holy Spirit came like a wind and fire. A very interesting fact was that both "wind and fire" was present on the day of Pentecost. Wind and fire together. Normally it is very difficult to quench the fire when a strong wind blows over it. Fire and wind together brought a great revival in the days of the Acts of Apostles. The basic key was unity. We read it in Acts 2:14, *"But Peter, standing with the eleven."* Peter was a great man. But he did not act independently. He stood along with the eleven. No more independent ministry, it was a team ministry. He never said, "I am the big man, everybody listen to me." There was a team of twelve people standing up together clarifying the doubts and questions people were asking about this revival.

The Lord told that He will gather the sheep on right and goat on left side. Why the Lord compared His children to sheep? Sheep go together. Goats are very

cunning and always have a fighting Spirit. We are not called as goats but sheep. Not groups among group, but one group.

Proverbs 6:16,19 - *"There are six things that the Lord hates, seven that are an abomination to him ... - one who sows discord among brothers."*

The Lord hates the one who sows discord among the brethren i.e., division among the brethren. Let us do all things to promote unity. We may have difference of opinion, which is not wrong in a family. But we should come together and do the things with oneness. That is what the Bible says in Ephesians 4:3 - *"Eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."* No more egos. Let us not spoil unity.

It was the frequent prayer of revivalist Evan Roberts - "Bend me, O' Lord and Bless the Church." He was an ordinary mine worker not so well educated. He was just praying with 7 to 8 mine workers and God sent a revival. It shook all the Wales. Some people's neck is so stiff that they don't want to bend. "No longer I that live but Christ that lives in me," said Apostle Paul. I remember how we used to pray in Karaikudi Engineering College way back in the late 1960s - 2 to 3 people praying every nights from 10 pm for two hours. There was unity and oneness. Unity can shake hell and send the blessings out of Heaven.

Have meetings for reconciliation. Let there not be any bitterness. It not only destroys us but also defiles the Body of Christ (Heb 12:15). It will bring trouble to other members of the Body as well. Instead of becoming a blessing in the Body of Christ, we would bring trouble to it. So be reconciled to the brethren.

## **AGONIZING PRAYER**

James 5:17,18 - *"Elijah was a man with a nature like*

*ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit. "*

Elijah was a man like us. He had his discouragements. But the secret behind the power in his ministry was that he prayed earnestly. Not a casual or routine prayer but agonizing prayer. On Mount Carmel, first thing Elijah did was to repair the altar of God. It was the altar of prayer and commitment. All the broken things were set right. And then the fire came from Heaven. The people shouted, *"The Lord, He is God!"* But Elijah was not satisfied with that. He wanted rain with thunder showers. Some excitement might be there, some drops might be there, but we should not be satisfied with that. We should cry to the Lord until He sends the showers of rain.

*1Kings 18:42- "Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Mount Carmel. And he bowed himself down on the earth and put his face between his knees."*

In this instance there were no clouds when the servant watched for six times. Only when he noticed for the seventh time, there was a small cloud. The small cloud brought in dark clouds and heavy rains (1 Kings 18:45).

*"It is time to seek the Lord until..."* Yes! We need to persevere in prayer - "Lord! We will not leave you until you send revival"

*Let this be our desperate cry!*

We are not called to be passive at the back seat and do nothing about revival. God is having a great expectation on you. Please start all night prayer

meetings in your districts, fellowships and Churches. Let there be prayer cells in every street. (Every Street a Prayer cell (ESAP) is a prayer program launched by BYM in 2015). Have you started a prayer cell in your street? Blessing Youth Mission was born out of revival. Prayer is the wheel on which BYM runs and so the wheels of prayer should keep on running. No prayer, No Power; No Prayer, No Revival. Therefore, give yourself to fervent prayer.

*“Arise, cry out in the night, at the beginning of the night watches! Pour out your heart like water before the presence of the Lord!” (Lam 2:19)*

## **WORD OF GOD**

Psa 19:7 - *“The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul.” Without reading the Word of God, the soul cannot be revived. “Revive me according to your Word”, says the Psalmist(Psa 119:25, 119:107). The Word of God revives the soul. It brings revival. All other revivals which are not based on the Word of God are pseudo-revivals. We are living in a world with many problems and afflictions. There are several forces that are pulling down our spiritual life.*

Revival came during Nehemiah’s time when people heard the Word of God.

Nehemiah 8:1 - *“They told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses that the Lord had commanded Israel.”*

People had respect for the Word of God. All the people stood up as the Word was read. It was a spontaneous move. The people were alert. Revival will bring joy especially when we obey God’s Word.

Isaiah 66:2 - *“This is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.”*

Today people have lost the fear and reverence for the Word of God. There are so many false doctrines that are taking away the fear of the Lord. Do we have the fear of God? Are we casual before God? Are we lethargic in hearing and meditating the Word of God?

Nehemiah and Ezra made people understand the Scriptures. The people compared their lives with that of what God expects from them through the Word of God. In repentance, they wept before the Lord.

So beloved, start Bible studies in your localities. Teach people from the Word of God. Let Bible be our standard. Only then can we expect revival.

## **THIRST**

1Corinthians 14:1- *"Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy."*

Isaiah 44:3 - *"For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants."*

Thirst is another ingredient for Revival. We need to thirst for the spiritual gifts. The last days revival will restore the gifts of the Holy Spirit. We need not be afraid of the devil. The Lord will use us like the prophets. We need to fan into flame the gift of God. There is no revival other than the revival brought by the Holy Spirit. Not by power nor by might but by the Spirit (Zec 4:6). Let our hearts be burning.

Without revival in our personal lives we cannot bring revival in other lives. When Ezekiel prophesied, the dry bones moved but there was still no life in it. Only when the Holy spirit came on them, they lived and stood up on their feet as an exceeding great army (Eze 37:10). When Elijah was about to be taken away,

Elisha determined not to leave him. He wanted the double portion of the Spirit. Elisha received the mantle of the Spirit from Elijah. He was thirsty to see God at work and he became a power-packed man. Do we have that kind of thirst in our spiritual lives? Do we want the Holy Spirit to move mightily amongst us? Let us thirst for revival; let us pray and sanctify ourselves. Let there be revival in our personal lives, in our fellowships and Churches!

**“Send a revival O’ Lord and start that work in me”**

## CHAPTER 2

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### THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

I was already a believer when I joined Engineering College in Karaikudi in 1965 for my graduate studies. But the first thing that Brother Stanley and his prayer group members in the campus wanted to know was whether I had received the baptism of Holy Spirit. I was not quite comfortable with this question because of my church background. However I was very impressed with the lively worship and powerful witness of this group. I started studying the Book of Acts afresh. Before I had hardly come to the end of the Book, I was convinced that the first blessing I should seek from God after was the gift of the Holy Spirit. The other passage that appealed to me most was Apostle Paul's first question when he met a dozen disciples in Ephesus, "*Did you receive the holy Spirit when you believed?*" (Acts 19:1,2).

By the Grace of God, I was baptized with the Holy Spirit in a couple of weeks. I soon found myself helping others receive the baptism of Holy Spirit. An unworthy vessel as I am, the Lord has been using me to lead hundreds and thousands of believers to experience the infilling of the Spirit. I have put together in this article

what I have learnt from the Scriptures and observed from experience to encourage you to receive the Holy Spirit and also to lead other into this experience.

### **Stay Aflame!**

*“Spiritual fervency is a must if we are to be effective instruments in the hands of God. “Not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord” (Rom 12:11). Apollo was “fervent in spirit” and he greatly helped” those who had believed (Acts 18:25,27).*

Fire begets fire. Spend sufficient time each day with the Lord, in prayer and Bible meditation. Walk transparently before the Lord claiming the cleansing of His blood every moment. Give God the first place in all your affairs. Obey His revealed will in every area of your life. God is the Source of all blessings but we are the channels. *“All people will be blessed through you”* (Gen 12:3c). Stay full of the Spirit (Eph 5:18,19). See that nothing blocks the flow.

### **Thirst Is Must!**

The Pentecostal experience of the disciples followed days of expectation. The Lord Jesus had evoked in them a genuine interest in the baptism with the Holy Spirit by explaining to them the blessings and benefits. It applies to us also. We should also help the people to understand the blessings of this experience. Unless we help to create in them a deep thirst and intense hunger, their prayers will be half-hearted and they will go empty. God fills the hungry with good things but sends the disinterested away empty (Luke 1:53).

### **Blessings Of Infilling**

Among the numerous blessings of the infilling of the Holy Spirit, the following are the primary ones that a believer needs to understand.

## **1. Love of God**

*“God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit” (Rom 5:5).*

The love of God manifested in the sacrifice of Christ is immeasurable. It is the Holy Spirit who makes us understand and appreciate this divine love. Christian life is nothing but a positive response to the love of God. *“We love Him because He first loved us!”* (1 John 4:19).

## **2. Joy of Assurance**

When we believe on Christ we instantly receive an inner assurance through the Holy Spirit that we are the children of God (Rom 8:16). This assurance is further confirmed when we get filled with the Spirit. He makes us cry out joyfully spontaneously - *“Abba, Father!”* (Rom 8:15). The Holy Spirit is called the “seal,” the “guarantee” and the “deposit” of God’s ownership on us for the day of redemption (2Cor 1:22; Eph 1:13; 4:30). Even in moments of defeat and despair, the Holy Spirit quickens our spirits to realize our son-ship in God’s family.

## **3. Help in Prayer**

Everyone is weak to some degree in prayer. *“The Spirit helps us in our weaknesses. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express”* (Rom 8:26). Prayer is energized when offered in the Spirit (Jude 20). Prayer is no more a drudgery or mere duty but becomes a delight when we are filled with the Spirit. See how the prayer life of the Disciples of Christ was transformed following Pentecost.

## **4. Understanding of Scriptures**

Who can explain a book better than its author?

The Bible is authored by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet 1:20, 21). Jesus introduced the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Truth who would guide us into all truth (John 16:13). The Holy Spirit not only enlightens our understanding of the Scriptures but also interprets the message of the text practically for our personal needs and situations.

## **5. Victory over Sin**

The Holy Spirit fights against the works of the flesh (Gal 5:16-21). He enables us to say no to the lusts of the flesh. As His very name suggests, He creates in us a passion for holiness and leads us in the paths of righteousness. The Holy Spirit makes a holy people. Our part is to open up ourselves to His fullness and possession.

## **6. Relationship with Fellowmen**

Apostle Paul lists nine virtues as the fruit of the Spirit. Note that almost all of them are relevant to interpersonal relationships. *“Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control”* (Gal 5:22,23). Relationships become smooth when oiled by the Holy Spirit. Loving the unlovable is impossible without the Spirit of God’s love.

## **7. Power to Witness**

The disciples who deserted Jesus and denied Him became daring witnesses of His resurrection when the Holy Spirit filled them (Acts 1:8, 4:31). It is possible for a believer to witness for Christ and manifest certain gifts of the Spirit before being anointed with the Spirit. But newer dimensions and fuller manifestations can be experienced in ministry when we receive the Holy Spirit in His baptismal power (1 Cor 12: 7-10). Though Christ is the very Son of God, He worked in the power of the Spirit rather than His own strength and abilities, thus giving us a pattern (Acts 10:38).

## Clearing doubts!

Explaining the benefits of the Spirit baptism alone may not suffice for certain believer. Depending upon their background they will have several questions. Though it is not always possible to satisfactorily answer every question, it is necessary that the basic questions are tackled and deep-rooted doubts cleared. I have normally come across the following questions.

### **1. Don't I already have the Holy Spirit because I am a child of God:**

Those coming from Brethren and non-charismatic Evangelical background usually pose this question. This genuine theological question must be answered clearly from Scriptures. The names of the disciples was already written in Heaven (Lk 10:20) before the Day of Pentecost. Even before His ascension, Christ breathed on them saying, "*Receive the Holy Spirit*" (Jn 20:22). This cannot be dispensed as a mere symbolic act. The disciples did receive a measure of the Spirit at that instant, but they received the Spirit in His fullness as a "baptism" (indicating totality) several days later (Acts 2:1-4).

Crowds of men and women in Samaria were baptized by Philip when they believed in Jesus Christ. When the news reached Jerusalem, the apostles came down to visit the new believers. They found that they had not yet received the Holy Spirit. Therefore they laid hands on them and they received the Spirit (Acts 8:12-17). Note that the Spirit baptism is distinct from conversion. Saul is another example. He accepted Christ as the Lord on the Road to Damascus but he was filled with the Holy Spirit three days later (Acts 9:6, 9, 17), So also the case of the Ephesian disciples which is self-explanatory (Acts 19.1-6).

Though some people may experience rebirth and Spirit baptism simultaneously, one cannot deny that they are two distinct experiences. In the first we are baptized by the Spirit “Into Christ” and in the second we are baptized by Christ “Into the Spirit”. Apostle Paul has put them orderly one after the other in 1 Corinthians 12:13 “... by one Spirit we were all baptized “INTO one Body” and have all been made to drink “INTO one Spirit.” Conversion is the work of the Spirit applying the benefits of Calvary. Spirit baptism is the work of Christ applying the blessings of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit leads us to Christ (Jn 16:8) and Christ baptizes us in the Holy Spirit (Jn 1:33).

## **2. Should I not become holy enough to receive the Holy Spirit?**

Over the years, people have heard Bible teachers say, “Who would pour milk into an unclean vessel?” This illustration has led believers into a misconception that they must become holy in order to receive the Holy Spirit. But the truth is that the Holy Spirit does not fill us because we are holy but in order to make us holy. Sanctification is through the Spirit (1 Pet 1:2). No gift of God can be merited by our worth or works. Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are God’s gifts. Salvation through Christ is “*not of works lest anyone should boast*” (Eph 2:8, 9). In the same way the Gift of the Holy Spirit is our inheritance because we are inducted into the family of God (Acts 2:38,39).

This of course does not mean that the reception of God’s gifts is void of human responsibility and cooperation. When we come to God for Salvation through Christ, what is expected of us is repentance and faith (Mk 1:15). When we come to God for the Gift of the Holy Spirit, what is required of us is faith

and obedience (Acts 5:32). Water baptism is a basic step of obedience in Christian life. That's why Peter told the enquirers on the day of Pentecost, *"Repent ... be baptized ... and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit"* (Acts 2:37, 38). Though God in His sovereignty may baptize in the Holy Spirit some of those who are not baptized in water, it does not negate the need for water baptism. See Peter commanding the Spirit-baptized congregation in Cornelius' house to be baptized in water (Acts 10:44-48). You don't need to send a thirsty believer away to come back only after water baptism, but do check whether there is a willing mind. God honors the attitude that precedes the act (2 Cor 8:11,12).

While we are saying that God does not expect us to be perfect to receive the Holy Spirit, we must ensure that the known sins are confessed and cleansed by the blood of Christ. Typically in the Old Testament, sprinkling of oil on the unclean followed that of blood (Lev 14: 13-18). While seeking the Lord for the anointing of the Spirit, He usually brings to our mind the matters to be restituted and the persons to be reconciled with. Obedience brings blessing.

### **3. Is speaking in tongues necessary?**

The tongues controversy has been the main hindrance for many Christians for receiving the glorious infilling of the Spirit. There are two extreme views concerning tongues. One is that everyone must speak in tongues; otherwise he is not baptized with the Spirit. The next belief is that tongues have ceased with the apostolic era; and the tongues spoken today are just gibberish and not a genuine gift of the Spirit. Both these views are wrong as they are unscriptural. No one can prove from the Scriptures that speaking in

tongues is the only sign nor that speaking in tongues is not for today. The Biblical understanding of this phenomenon is more balanced.

Instead of getting into unhelpful arguments, we need to focus on the benefits of speaking in tongues, most of which are listed in 1 Corinthians 14:

- (1) Speaking in tongues is one way of praying to God in the Spirit (v2,14)
- (2) Speaking in tongues builds up oneself spiritually (v4)
- (3) Speaking in tongues enhances praise and worship (v15-17)
- (4) Speaking in tongues may serve at times as a convincing sign to skeptic onlookers, as on the day of Pentecost (v22; Acts 2:6-13)
- (5) Speaking in tongues usually prepares the speaker to move into the operation of the other gifts (Acts 19:6).

The supernatural and the miraculous aspect in Christian life cannot be fully explained but they can be experienced by simple faith (1 Cor 13:9,12).

Though speaking in tongues is not the only sign of the baptism with the Holy Spirit, we need to turn to the Biblical examples and see how this gift was a manifestation associated with most of the instances of the Spirit's outpouring (Acts 2: 1-4; 10:44-46; 19:6).

I have found that people who are more thirsty for the infilling of the Holy Spirit are least bothered about these things. In any case, we need to encourage the believers positively. We should be careful not to answer to questions someone does not ask.

## **Leading Believers In the Anointing of the Holy Spirit**

We have now come to the final step.

a) Tell the believer to BELIEVE that God is more interested in filling him with the Spirit than him. The Gift of the Holy Spirit is “the Promise of the Father” to His children (Acts 1:4). “God who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all — how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things?” (Rom 8:32).

b) Encourage the believer to ASK God for the Gift. Following His teaching on prayer, the first thing Jesus encouraged His disciples to ask for the Holy Spirit (Lk 11:13b). True praying means asking until receiving, seeking until finding, and knocking until entering. But in most instances people get filled instantly when they pray just as they get saved instantly when they believe. People who lead others can also pray for the person seeking infilling (Acts 8:15). Some would prefer to pray alone for the Holy Spirit whereas others would find the presence of other Spirit-filled believers supportive.

c) Stir the believer to RECEIVE the Holy Spirit with thanksgiving. “If we know that God hears us — whatever we ask -we know that we have that we asked of Him.” (1 Jn 5:14,15). Some have a notion that they must “tarry” in order to receive the Spirit. Explain to them that waiting was necessary before the Holy Spirit was sent into the world. Now that He is already here, we need to simply take Him in. People who lead others can lay their hands on the believers so that it would help them increase their faith. But laying hands is not a must in every case. There was no laying of hands when the Holy Spirit filled the believers (Acts 2, 10). In the other incidents (Acts 8, 9, 19), the laying of hands was

by the apostles. In the case of Paul for whom it was just an ordinary disciple, Ananias. With these observations I would advise not to discriminately rush to lay hands on everyone.

Some people shake the believer's head and push them. Such things must be avoided. The Bible does not specifically speak laying hands on the "heads" of people, rather just on "them" — may be gently on shoulders. Don't blow on people to receive the Holy Spirit. Christ blew on His disciples because the Holy Spirit was His own, as the Father had given Him the Spirit without measure (Jn 3:34). We should not exceed our limits.

d) Encourage the candidate to SPEAK out the words the Holy Spirit prompts within (Acts 2:4). The source of every gift is God, but no gift operates without our cooperation. We cast out demons in the power of Christ's Name but nothing happens until "we" cast them out. Healing the sick is by God's power but "we" have to lay hands on them. In the same list of gifts comes speaking in tongues, (Mark 16:17,18). The prompting is by the Spirit but "we" must do the speaking. Because our spirits are subject to our control, we normally will not be able to speak in unknown languages (1 Cor 14:27,32). There is a deliberate choice on our part to speak in tongues. But we must not coach the believers to speak in tongues by shouting into his ears or screaming.

Some people fear that a counterfeit spirit might make an entry into flesh. It was to alleviate such fears that Christ gave the examples of stone for bread, serpent for fish, and scorpion for egg. Make the believer read for himself Luke 11:11-13. Fear leaves and faith comes by hearing the Word of God.

## **Allow variety!**

Though the Gift of the Spirit is one in its essence and nature, the response of candidates to its reception may vary according to so many factors like the background of the person and his emotional make-up. Therefore don't insist on uniformity but allow variety. Some may jump and shout whereas others may quietly rejoice and whisper praise. Physical manifestations are not the indicators of the depth or reality of the experience. The most important and conclusive evidence is that the candidate will "know" that he has received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit by an inward assurance.

If after prayer a believer is not sure that he is filled with the Spirit, encourage him to go home seeking the Lord and trusting His Word. Several people receive the Spirit while on their way back home or working in the kitchen. The Holy Spirit is known for surprising us with His "sudden" descent (Acts 2:2; 10:44). We can quote the right Scripture texts, give correct answers to the believer's questions, and follow the steps diligently; but the outpouring is not guaranteed. Our job is similar to that of a midwife.

I quote the reply of a king of Israel to a woman who cried for help - *"If the Lord does not help you, where can I get help for you?"* (2 Ki 6:27).

## CHAPTER 3

# REVIVAL AMONG YOUTH

I am pointedly reminded of the promise of the Lord from which this ministry was launched: *“I will make them and the places all around My hill a blessing; and I will cause showers to come down in their season; there shall be showers of blessing”* (Eze 34:26). We have witnessed the literal fulfillment of this promise consistently all through the past years. Whenever and wherever we gathered, His presence (“My hill”) was there and the Holy Spirit fell on us in Revival blessing. When we got back to our respective places of dwelling and work (“the places all around my hill”), we became a blessing to others. Thus our twofold vision of Holy Spirit Revival and New Testament Evangelism is getting realized. Praise the good Lord for choosing us and using us!

While we are witnessing the hand of the Lord in every area of our ministry, the move of the Spirit is significant in the student’s ministry. Youth are getting saved and filled with the Holy Spirit in large numbers. The campus cells are active in many places of our country. The Campus cells focus on Bible study, prayer and witnessing. Young people who have committed

themselves to Christ are like “*arrows in the hand of a warrior*” (Psa 127:4a).

We have great hopes on them for the future. Almost all the top leaders of BYM were saved in their teens.

As you know the youth are the arrows in the hands of the warrior. Their strength and their energy should be used for the Kingdom of God.

*Joel 2:28 - “I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh... Your young men shall see visions” .*

The vision of BYM is revival among Youth and Evangelism through Youth. This has lost emphasis over the years.

Now let us turn our headlights on the youth. They need to be encouraged and given more opportunities to use their talents for God. 50% of the population in India are youth and it is essential to tap their resources. The youth are longing for love, care and concern. *“The young children ask for bread but no one breaks it for them”* (Lam 4:4).

Saul, like a fire-breathing dragon, was threatening to kill and persecute the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. While Stephen was stoned to death, the witnesses laid their clothes at the feet of the young man Saul. But on his way to Damascus he was struck down by the power of God and he committed his life to the Will of God. Scales fell off his eyes. His whole life was transformed by that vision and he went to work for God. Most of the New Testament Epistles were written by him and several churches were established through him.

We don't appreciate the youth, trust them, give them responsibilities and encouragement and

train them. Rather we despise and marginalize them. All these scales and many more need to fall off our eyes if we need to rope in the youth and use their full potential. Let youth be our focus.

Similarly the Prophet Isaiah, after he had a vision of the Lord, cried saying, *“Woe to me for I am a man of unclean lips.”* He heard the voice of the Lord saying, *“Whom shall I send and who will go for us?”* Isaiah responded to the call. Our vision should be to challenge the youth for reaching the unreached and encourage them to go as Missionaries.

Programmes designed to propel youth in personal evangelism will have to be planned. Youth of various churches will have to be revived through programmes specially planned for them. Bible Quiz competition may be organized. Special meetings may be conducted for parents of youth. Counselling sessions can be arranged for them in order to tackle the youth. Mobilizing prayer force for youth must be top most in the agenda of this year.

My heart is thrilled even now to think of the great things the Lord is going to do in and through the youth.

Total evangelization of the world is still an unfinished task. It is late but not too late. Let's speed up the work, unmindful of oppositions and threats. Gates of hell cannot prevail against the building of the Church of Jesus Christ. Living for Christ is strengthened by a readiness to die for Him.

*Revival Among Youth!*

*Evangelism Through Youth!*

## CHAPTER 4

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### LITTLE FLOCK AND GREAT VICTORY

All of us desire to do something great for God. But when we don't find sparks 'big crowds' in our meetings we tend to get discouraged. This is one of Satan's master tactics to paralyse us. If we believe in the following promise of Jesus, we will never loose heart:

Luk 12:32 - *"Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the Kingdom!"*

History reveals that the Lord has used small groups to achieve great things. A small group may apparently be weak and powerless. But with God's help, this minuscule will do valiantly.

#### **Power of Small Groups**

What is this small group? It is the "two or three" coming together in Jesus' name! (Mt 18:19). It is not even five. Just two or three!

We long for crowds. We are often disappointed when just one or two turn up for prayer. We expect our prayer group to expand with the addition of

newcomers every week. Our aspiration is good. But if we let disappointment overtake us when that doesn't happen, we lose sight of what the two or three can achieve. I would like to draw your attention to four such small groups in the Bible.

## **1. Daniel and his friends**

This small but strong group existed in the city of Babylon. They did not go unnoticed in that thickly populated city, for they literally shook the city. They were just four members but were deeply dedicated to God. They stood for holiness and refused to compromise. They would not touch anything that might defile them. They were captives from Jerusalem but would not partake in the royal food and wine (1:8). While the other young men who came with them enjoyed the delicacies of the palace and revelled in the roasts, the fussy four preferred sambar (An ordinary Indian dish!) and vegetables.

When king Nebuchadnezzar dedicated a gigantic idol of gold and commanded that everyone should prostrate before it, the funny four flatly refused. They boldly replied: *"O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and He will rescue us from your hand, O king. But even if He does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up" (3:16-18).*

They were a little flock indeed; but firm and zealous for God. They were a praying people. When the king was troubled by a dream and commanded that all wise men who could not reveal the dream and its meaning be butchered, this prayer cell did not tremble with fear. When Daniel told the matter to his

friends, they prayed. Then God revealed the secret to him (2:17,18).

Human wisdom could not reveal the dream or its meaning. But the four joined hands and cried to God. When the answer came, the king said to Daniel, *"Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and a Revealer of mysteries"* (2:47).

If the king of a heathen nation could say that, you can imagine the impact this little flock had made on that nation. The king decreed, *"The people of any nation or language who say anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego be cut into pieces and their houses be turned into piles of rubble, for no other God can save in this way"*(3:29). Yes, the small group generated great power and accomplished a mighty task.

## **2. Esther and her maids**

Again the setting is captivity. A captive girl was made queen of a heathenish kingdom. But she did not compromise her faith. Wherever God's people are, there will be enemies. The enemy played a trick and a date was set to destroy God's people. The situation seemed hopeless. Letters of execution were already sent. Can anyone reverse what was already done? Yes, a small united group of people can.

Esther, though the queen, was not ashamed to kneel down with her maids. The heavily laden banquet table languished for three days and nights as Esther and her maids fasted. What was the effect of the prayer of this small group? It was a chain reaction reversing the king's order. It did not stop with that. The prayer slaughtered the enemy. The king lost his sleep and happened to read the history of his rule. The little

flock's prayer directed him to the page where it was written about Mordecai. So Mordecai was honoured. Then Haman was hanged and the king's order to massacre the Jews was cancelled. The Jews were granted to subjugate their enemies. *"And many people of other nationalities became Jews because fear of the Jews had seized them"* (8:17). This is the power of the small group that can change the course of history.

### **3. Mary and fellow believers**

We see another praying group in a home in New Testament (Acts 12:12). Herod killed James with a sword. When it pleased the Jews he put Peter too in prison. *"But the church was earnestly praying to God for him"* (v5). The church was not sleeping. It did not organize a strike or prepare a petition to be presented to Herod. They gathered in a house and prayed. They just prayed!

What happened when they prayed?

An angel was released from heaven to do what the poor church members could not do against the king's power. Angel took Peter past the first guard and then the second guard. When they came to the Iron Gate which was leading to the city... it opened like the 20th century automatic doors! Peter was out of prison, on the streets!

Can you believe it? All because of a home prayer cell.

The church has failed in this area miserably. It has failed to encourage its' members to gather in homes in twos and threes to pray. Churches are jam-packed for Sunday worship services. But how good are the members in intercession? Our churches have not learnt the art of prayer. The early Christians were gathering and praying wherever possible. Let churches

take up the challenge to form small groups. Such small praying groups have been responsible for the outbreak of great revivals.

#### **4. Lydia and her friends**

Some women regularly gathered by the riverside for prayer in Philippi. Paul and his companions knew this place of prayer and so they went and spoke to the women gathered there. One woman by name Lydia responded to the message that she and the members of her household were baptized (Acts 16:13-15). She took the team to her house and later on, her house became a church. Remember that there were no church buildings in those days (Rom 16:5).

Small groups can be places for people to receive special spiritual experiences. You never know who will be touched by what and when. Lydia was the first European convert and through her the gospel travelled to another continent. Who knows what they were praying for? They longed for God, and to keep the flame alive were gathering regularly and praying. God honored their faith and not only blessed them but blessed others through them. There can be no better example of the dynamism of a small group than this little flock through which the Good News crossed the continents.

#### **The advantages of small groups**

*As compared to large gatherings, small groups have following distinctive advantages:*

- 1) Each one can have an intimate fellowship with the other.
- 2) Oneness is much easier in small groups.
- 3) Individuals receive better attention and training in small groups.

- 4) Both the shortcomings and gifts of individuals go unnoticed in large groups.
- 5) Questions of seekers and growing believers go unanswered in large groups.

### **How to start?**

Wherever you may be, get in touch with one or two Christians close by who can join with you for a short time of Bible meditation and prayer daily. If you are students you can gather in a hostel room. If you are housewives you can get together after the children go to School in the afternoon. If you are working in an office you can profitably use your lunch hour.

Remember, the small group is not a substitute for the local church. It should not be the motive of a small group to expand into a church and draw members from other churches. If the number increases, split into two groups and gather separately. However the members of a small group may come from various churches.

Sing a song, worship and meditate a scripture portion briefly for 10 to 15 minutes. Each one can take turns to share. Allot maximum time for prayer. Pray for one subject each day. One day you can pray for the country, another day for a Mission or student's ministry, spiritual leaders, revival, world evangelisation, etc. You may also include personal prayer requests.

Notice that the end result of all the four small groups that we meditated was evangelisation. At least once a week you should involve yourself in neighbourhood evangelism. Don't be waiting for invitation. Just go knocking at doors. We are not doing God a big favour by serving Him. Rather, He honours us by allowing us to serve Him.

The Bible records an incident in which the Israelites went out to fight the Arameans:

*“The Israelites camped opposite them like two small flocks of goats, while the Arameans covered the countryside” (1Ki 20:27).*

Yet the Israelites overpowered the Arameans.

You may appear insignificant in your own eyes especially when you see the teeming millions around you held by the power of darkness.

But remember, it is the Father’s good pleasure to give the Kingdom to the little flock.

So fear not, little flock! Go ahead.

The Lord will accomplish great things through you!

# CHAPTER 5

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## TWO WINGS

*Isa 40:30,31 – “Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.”*

Prayer and Bible Meditation are two wings for our spiritual life. Only when we give priority to these two things, our spiritual life will be soaring high. Let us now meditate these two important Christian disciplines in detail.

### **1. Intercessory Prayer**

The situation in our country calls for more prayer and greater unity on the part of Christians.

Each time when a New Year dawns, people hope and wish that things would be better. But the opposite is happening. There is no day without the news of terrorism, sexual violence, accidents and natural disasters. As these things are on the rise, people have started to feel insecure and hopeless.

Jesus said that in the last days we would hear of wars and rumours of wars (Mat 24). At a time like

these, our responsibility of sharing the Good News to our fellowmen is of paramount importance. We cannot be slack in this moment. If we wait for favourable circumstances, punishment will overtake us (2 Kin 7:9).

*A “quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence” will only be a dream unless “supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks” for all people becomes our first priority (I Tim 2:1,2).* We can never pray too much or work too much for God’s Kingdom. Time is short and the task is big. This calls for sacrifice on our part.

God is seeking for intercessors who will plead before the Throne of Grace for the salvation of people. Abraham stood before the Lord and interceded for Sodom and Gomorrah as their sin was very grave. Had not Abraham interceded, Lot might have perished along with other people.

Similarly, when God’s wrath was kindled against the Israelites when they worshipped the image of a calf, Moses pleaded with the Lord to turn from His fierce wrath. Then the Lord relented from bringing punishment upon the people (Ex 32:14).

On hearing the report of distress and reproach of His people in Jerusalem, Nehemiah wept and mourned for many days. The Lord granted favour in the sight of the King, and helped him to rebuild the broken walls within fifty two days. This in spite of the fact that he faced several threats and oppositions (Neh 6:15).

Prophet Jeremiah who is known as the “Weeping Prophet,” lamented, *“The whole land is desolate because no one takes it to heart” (Jer 12:11).* Isaiah too cried when he saw the apathy of the people- *“Justice is turned back... truth is fallen in the street...the Lord saw it and*

*it displeased Him... and He wondered that there was no man to intercede” (Is 59:14-16).*

If we do not intercede for the perishing people the Lord may pour out His indignation upon the nation (Eze 22:30-31).

*The Lord is looking for people who will intercede for the Nation.*

*“I looked for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found none” (Eze 22:30).*

Our hearts go to God with tearful praises as He has enabled us to come thus far in the ministry of the Blessing Youth Mission. What are we that He has brought us this far? Let’s at this moment rededicate ourselves to labour for a Holy Spirit Revival and New Testament Evangelism, especially through youth. It’s appropriate that we spend a season of prayer. BYM was born out from a group of praying young men.

Apostle Paul desired that priority should be given for intercessory prayer.

I Timothy 2:1. *“Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all in authority that we may lead a quiet and peaceful life in all godliness and reverence; for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the Truth.”*

Intercessory prayer is different from other prayers. Prayer is just like a child talking to his father and asking for needs. Whereas intercessory prayer is pleading with God. It is “standing in the gap” on behalf of the people for His mercy. It is praying with great

compassion, concern and burden over the deplorable condition of the people. It is pouring our hearts like water before the Lord. It is praying with tears and groaning.

Jesus, while carrying the cross, turned towards the lamenting women and said *“Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me but weep for yourselves and for your children”* (Lk 23:28). The Bible says that Jesus poured out His soul to death and interceded for the transgressors (Is 53:12).

Hence let us give ourselves to half-night and all night prayers.

To effectively intercede we should have the details of the people, their condition etc. We should also be filled with the Holy Spirit and pray. The Holy Spirit will help us to pray as we do not know what we ought to pray for (Rom 8:26).

In all our programmes, time should be allotted for intercessory prayer. Frequent area-wise fasting prayers should be arranged. Immediate action should be taken to form small prayer cells in houses and Mission centres. Two are enough for this (Mt 18:20). In our college days, we myself and my friend used to pray for 2 hours everyday. This formed the foundation for a fruitful ministry ahead.

Praise God for the phenomenal growth in the fivefold ministries (a) Revival (b) Youth (c) Literature (d) Church planting (e) Social concerns and relief.

On the one side we have open doors for the Good News but on the other side we have many oppositions and threats. Let us not be afraid but increase our prayers. When the enemy comes like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord lifts up a standard against him.

## 2. Bible Meditation

May we never lose our grip in prayer but keep growing in it. To be much for God, we must be much with God. Our world has become too busy to let us spend unhurried hours with the Holy Book. The Lord is calling us back to the Bible.

In an interview, Billy Graham was asked this question: "If you had to live your life over again, what would you do differently?" He answered, "One of my great regrets is that I have not studied enough. I wish I had studied more and preached less. People have pressured me into speaking to groups when I should have been studying and preparing. Donald Barnhouse said that if he knew the Lord was coming in three years, he would spend two of them studying and one preaching. I'm trying to make it up."

The Bible can be read through completely in 70 hours and 40 minutes at the tempo usually read in public services. The Old Testament can be read in 52 hours and 20 minutes, and the NT in 18 hours and 20 minutes. By spending an hour each day, even at a lesser speed, you can read the Bible at least twice in a year. What a possibility!

Bible reading in family prayer is very important. Choose a translation the children can understand. Don't leave out any portion. The whole Bible makes a whole man. In several church services, all they read is a Psalm. Sufficient time must be allotted for the pulpit reading of the Scriptures. Jesus liked this public reading of the Scriptures very much (Lk 4:16,17). Paul admonished Timothy to "give attention to reading" (1 Tim 4:11). He actually meant the public reading

before a congregation. Churches can use a plan to read through the Bible in two years in their services. Faith comes by “hearing” the Word of God (Rom 10:11).

Let’s remove Biblical illiteracy from the pew.

## CHAPTER 6

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# REVIVAL IN GOOD DEEDS

*“We are God’s workmanship created in Christ Jesus for GOOD WORKS” (Eph 2:10).*

The Church worldwide is experiencing a revival by which the vertical dimensions of its spirituality namely prayer, praise and meditation are being restored. But it is still weak in its horizontal expression, which is ministry to the people especially to the POOR. Foreseeing this possibility the Scriptures have sufficiently forewarned us. The unknown author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, while encouraging us to *“continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God,”* exhorts us, *“But DO NOT FORGET to do good and to share”* (Heb 13:15,16). No wonder the senior apostles of Jerusalem pointedly told Paul the new enthusiastic apostle to *“REMEMBER the poor!”* (Gal. 2:9,10).

We are saved by the grace of God through faith. It is the gift of God. Though we are not saved by our works, we are created in Christ Jesus that we may perform good deeds to the glory of God and for the benefit of man. Good deeds do not justify any man but

God's purpose for the justified man is to perform good deeds.

Apostle James in chapter 2 verses 14-17 emphasizes the importance of Faith accompanied by works:

*“What does it profit, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them: Depart in peace, be warmed and filled, but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works is dead.”*

One cannot neglect the practice of good deeds under the pretence of faith. When we pretend to have faith but have no works of charity is utterly vain. We are God's workmanship designed for good works.

Apostle Paul left Titus in Crete to set in order the things that were lacking (Titus 1:5). One of the things lacking was good works. Paul repeatedly emphasizes this in his epistle to Titus:

- (i) Show yourself to be a pattern of good works (2:7).
- (ii) Be zealous for good works (2:14).
- (iii) Be prepared for good works (3:1).
- (iv) Learn to maintain good works (3:8,14)

Today we have many seminars on how to operate the gifts of the Holy Spirit, how to exercise our Faith, how to fight against the enemy, and so on. While the teachings on all the above subjects are essential, it is sad that practically there is no teaching on 'Good Deeds' which Jesus and other apostles had emphasized. Consequently believers are ignorant of this. Jesus said in His Sermon on the Mount, *“Let your*

*light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven” (Mt 5:16).*

We have sidelined the teaching on good deeds as ‘Social Service’ and consider it as less spiritual. But the Scripture abounds with references to this important teaching. The very purpose why God saved us is to do good works. We are not saved by our good works but we are saved for good works (Eph 2:8-10).

The day of Pentecost was the beginning of restoration of this vital truth. When the disciples received the Holy Spirit, the love of God was poured out into their hearts (Rom 5:5). The Baptism of the Holy Spirit totally transformed their lives and they started looking for the interest of others and caring for the poor and downtrodden. This set up a chain reaction reaching out to new contacts. Let’s see how Good Deeds was the life breath of the apostolic ministry.

## **1. Concern for the Poor**

The first miracle after the day of Pentecost was done to a poor beggar by Apostles Peter and John (Acts 3:1-8). They saw the lame man while going to the temple for prayer. They could have considered the alms deed after prayer. Usually mendicants are neglected and considered as outcasts. People don’t even touch them. We love to associate ourselves with the affluent. But the apostles touched him, had mercy on him and lifted him up. They might have remembered the Scripture, *“Whoever shuts his ears to the cry of the poor will also cry himself and not be heard”* (Pro. 21:13).

The ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ and His teaching about the have-nots must have had a deep impact in their lives. His teaching was, *“When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends,*

*your brothers or relatives, or your rich neighbours; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous"* (Lu. 14:12-14). God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with Him (Acts 10:38). Jesus not only preached, He also practiced what He preached.

## **2. Concern for Widows**

After Pentecost, a body was formed to look into the needs of widows (Acts 6:1). It was not an occasional food packet distribution or festival dinners. It was distribution of "daily food." See how much the Apostles were concerned about the daily needs of the poor. Though problems popped up, they were ready to steer it through all problems and undo the knots. Seven men of good reputation were appointed to take care of this responsibility. It is clear that it was not a casual throwing away of a few coins. It was a concern with a commitment. Even though the Apostles were neck deep in the propagation of the Good News, they did not ignore the ministry for the widows.

Apostle James defines pure and undefiled religion before God as *'to look after orphans and widows in their distress'* (Js 1:27). Widows are God's special concern. He commands, *"Do not take advantage of a widow or orphan. If you do and they cry, my anger will be aroused, and I will kill you with the sword; your wives will become widows and your children fatherless"* (Ex. 22:22-24).

### 3. Concern for the Persecutors

Jesus was no mere talker. He taught His disciples, *“Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?”* (Mt 5:44-48).

These virtues were perfectly exemplified in the life and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. In the Garden of Gethsemane, Peter cut off a man's ear. Jesus scolded Peter, touched the wounded ear and healed it. Following the teachings of Christ, Paul exhorts believers in Rome to feed the enemy if he is hungry and give him a drink if he is thirsty. *“Be not overcome by evil but overcome evil with good”* (Rom 12:20, 21).

How could Stephen plead for the forgiveness of his murderers? It was the teaching of Jesus Christ and the Apostles that had taken deep root in his heart (Acts 7:56-62).

### 4. Concern for Others

At Joppa, a certain disciple, Tabitha was full of good works and charitable deeds. She took ill and died. The busy Apostle Peter did not think it was a waste of time to attend a funeral. He came immediately to join the mourners. God performed a miracle through his hands. He knelt down and prayed and raised Tabitha to life (Acts 36-42).

Solomon the wise said, *“It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to a house of feasting.... The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning”*

(Eccl 7:2-4). The Apostle Paul admonishes us to weep with those who weep (Rom 12:15). We are the parts of the body of Christ and the parts should have the same care for one another. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it (I Cor 12:26). Our God is the God of all comforts and we need to emulate Him by being a source of comfort to others.

## **5. Concern for Saints**

The poor saints were reeling under a great famine. The disciples decided that each of them would send whatever they could to their fellow Christians in Judea to help out. The collection was so substantial that they thought to send it through the hands of Paul and Barnabas to the leaders in Jerusalem (Acts 11:27-30).

The ministers of the Gospel were also the ministers of charity. Paul had plans to visit the Roman believers. But he gave priority to the ministry for the poor. This is what he says: “FIRST, though, I’m going to Jerusalem to deliver a relief offering to the Christians there. The Greeks, who were new believers, all the way from the Macedonians in the north to the Achaians in the south decided to take up a collection for the poor believers in Jerusalem. They were happy to do this, but it was also their duty. Seeing that they got in all the spiritual gifts that flowed out of the Jerusalem community so generously, it is only right that they do what they can to relieve their poverty” (2 Cor 8 : 1-7). See how the congregation has imbibed the spirit of the apostles! It is not strange for saints to be poor. Penury is not a curse. Has not God chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the Kingdom? (Js 2:5).

Apostle Paul admonishes us not to allow ourselves to get fatigued doing good. At the right time, we will harvest a good crop if we don't give up. Right now and every time we get a chance, let us work for good of all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers (Gal 6:9-10). It is our nature to do good to the near and dear but the Bible here calls us to do good to ALL. Some may thank us and others would not even acknowledge. But "trust in the Lord and do good." Just one out of ten lepers returned to thank the Lord, and he was a Samaritan. This was not a roadblock to the good works of Jesus. The Apostles ceaselessly prayed for their converts. What was their prayer? That they may bear fruit in every good work! (Col 1:10). All it takes is one good deed to touch the world! God is moving in our midst and our deeds will be rewarded when He comes (Rev 22:12).

PRAY more than ever before as the spiritual forces  
against us are overworking.

REACH more and more people with the gospel  
because the harvest is ripening faster.

GIVE more liberally than ever because the  
needs are multiplied.

May "God of the poor" keep you in His love  
throughout life.

## CHAPTER 7

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### "GO AND TELL!"

The angel at the tomb told the woman, *"GO quickly and TELL His disciples that He is risen from the dead."* Jesus Himself appeared to the disciples and told them, *"GO and TELL My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me."* Finally He commissioned them, *"GO into the entire world and PREACH the gospel to every creature."*

The world is in utter confusion. Go and tell the people, there is peace in Christ. Hearts are failing in fear. Go and tell the folks, there is safety in Christ. Men and women are condemning themselves with guilt. Go and tell them, there is forgiveness in Christ.

Youth are sinking in sin with no one to help them. Go and tell them, there is power in the Blood of Christ.

Families are breaking. Go and tell them, there is love and restoration in Christ. People are tormented with sickness and pain. Go and tell them. There is healing in Christ. Religionists are seeking salvation. Go and tell them, Christ is the Way.

Communities are clashing against one another. Go and tell them, Christ breaks down all barriers. Thousands are affected by floods and famine. Go and tell them, The Heavenly Father cares for them. Everyone is asking, what's the future for the world? Go and tell them, Christ is coming again, Foreseeing the dreadful consequent of the war, everyone is becoming gloomy. People everywhere are asking questions. We have the Answer. The Word of God says, *"You will hear of wars and rumours of wars. See that you are troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines pestilences, and earthquakes in various places... And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as witness to all the nations, and then the end will come"* (Mt 24:6-14).

Dear friends, please ask yourself these questions: Are you faithful in your job? Do your colleagues respect your testimony for Christ? Do you invest your time for souls? Are you systematic in your soul winning and evangelistic activities? Are you doing your maximum for God? While full-time missionaries go to the frontiers or regions beyond, neighbourhood evangelism is the responsibility of every Christian. I agree with T.L. Osborn who said, "The laymen will write the last chapter of church history!"

The first words of Jesus to His first recruits was, *"Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men"* (Mt 4:19).

Our country is going through one crisis after another. No lasting solution seems to be found for any problem. Undoubtedly the Gospel of Christ is the ultimate answer. There's no other hope. Addressing

His disciples Jesus said, *"You are the salt of the earth" and "You are the light of the world!"* (Mt 5:13,14). Let each of us penetrate into the world around us to enliven and enlighten it.

Brothers, Be Nehemiahs! Sisters, Be Esthers! Fathers, Be Abrahams! Mothers, Be Deborahs! Boys, Be Josephs! Girls, Be Miriams!

The Lord of the Harvest is loudly calling His people for the final thrust. There is an incessant urge in all missions and ministries to intensify and accelerate soul winning and evangelistic activities.

The crises in India today defy any human solution. Divine intervention alone can save the situation. The key to national prosperity is with the Church. We Indian Christians have slept enough. Let's awake, put on God's armour and march to combat the forces of darkness.

Jesus loved India. He knew that Thomas would go down to this land of 33 crores of gods and goddesses. After resurrection that was why He appeared exclusively on one occasion to Thomas to convince him that He was *"Lord and God"* (Jn 20:28). The Gospel came to India about 2000 years ago. But there are tens of thousands of villages without a single Christian. Most of India's villages are electrified but not evangelized. The population of 126 crores is increasing at the rate of 48 babies per minute.

God bless all the new strategies planned by various missions in this Decade. Stand with them helping in every possible way. This is an hour of emergency for our country. Unless the Christian ministries work with unity, the enemy will score. Let competitions between ministries stop. No more back-

biting or mudslinging. May a new love bind together all preachers and evangelists. Each ministry should be concerned with the needs and problems of other ministries also. We are in a relay. It's not enough if we reach "our" target.

We should be gripped with a new sense of urgency. We must not flinch but face the challenges. Let's pray, involve, give and sacrifice more than ever. More and more young people should step out into full-time service to reap the harvest. This is our last opportunity to evangelize our motherland. It's now or never!

## CHAPTER 8

### REVIVAL AND RECONCILIATION!

The word reconciliation means that we have an attitude of living at peace with everyone. In the Bible we see that reconciliation is a two dimensional truth. The first is that we be reconciled to God and second truth is that we live in peace with all man. Both these two aspects are equally important and cannot be ignored. Apostle Paul beautifully brings out how God reconciled us to Him.

Rom 5:10 – *“For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.”*

In this article, I want to focus on the second aspect of reconciliation i.e. being reconciled with man.

#### **Being Reconciled With Man**

When we are reconciled with God, our personal life is set right with God. In similar way, when we reconcile with man, our life is set right before man. The Bible gives equal importance to these two truths.

When Jesus walked on this earth, a teacher

of law questioned Jesus regarding the greatest commandment in the Bible.

*Note the reply that Jesus gives:*

*Mat 22:37-40 - And He said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."*

This truth was later reinforced by Apostle John in his epistle.

*1Jn 4:20, 21 - "If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother."*

We find this truth expressed all through the Scriptures (Heb 12:14, 1 Cor 7:15b, Matt 5:9). Our God is not the source of division but of peace. So living at peace with man is a very important aspect of Christian living. I want to bring six facets of Reconciliation and why it is so significant to us.

### **1.Reconciliation Is God's Priority**

*Mat 5:23,24 - "So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift."*

Jesus taught that the reconciliation with man should be done immediately. It should not be postponed. He considered it to be a serious precondition for a right worship. In the Old Testament

times altar was a place on which sacrifices were made. It is a place where we meet God. It is the presence of God. When we approach the altar and remember any wrong that we did to our brother, then we need to leave the offering right there and be reconciled with our brother first. God here prioritizes relationship with man as precondition for worship. He says, 'First be reconciled...'

*Further, if your brother has sinned against you, note what Jesus taught:*

Mat 18:15 - *"If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother."*

Jesus taught that we need to act regarding our relationship with the brethren. We should not keep everything in heart. Many of us fail in this area miserably. We keep lot of things in our heart and develop bitter feelings towards that person.

Again, when someone accuses you of some wrongdoing and goes to the court, note what Jesus admonishes:

Mat 5:25 - *"Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison."*

Here again we find Jesus urging for action. Hence reconciliation is an act that should be done immediately.

Many of us have relationship problems with our brethren because of the careless words that we speak.

Mat 5:22- *"But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever*

*insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire."*

We find here Jesus warning of three kinds of punishments – judgment, council and hell fire. All these three judgments were due to the wrong words that are spoken towards the brethren. If we have hurt other by our words and deeds, let us first be reconciled with them. If we want a closer walk with God and if we want our offerings be accepted in His sight, we need to, first be reconciled to people.

## **2.Reconciliation Brings Joy and Revival**

We pray for revival and hear many sermons about revival. Truly, we need revival in our personal lives, family and in our fellowships and Churches. But revival seems to elude us. One of the reasons we don't see the mighty move of the Spirit is that we are not still right with people. Maybe we argue that we are right before God but we have not fulfilled our responsibility towards people.

We go to Church and pray for revival. But we do not want to see each other face to face. We have so much against so many but still pray for revival. How can we expect revival when our life is not right with people? We all know the parable of the lost son. Note how he prayed:

*Luke 15:21 – 24 "And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to celebrate."*

The prodigal son confessed that he not only sinned against God but also his father. Many a times we fail to see this truth. We think our sins affect only God. But our sins are not only against God but also against people. We cannot say that I have confessed all my sins to God. We should also set things right before people. When the prodigal son returned to his father there was joy in the household (Lk 15:23). This is the true revival. And true revival brings joy!

*Ps 85:6 – “Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you?”*

Today we worship God without joy. There is no joy in our families and fellowships because we do not enjoy good peaceful relationships with one another. Let us take the first step. Let us forget who we are and set aside our egos and bring peace to our families and fellowships.

When we become right with God and also with man, God sends the revival. On the day of Pentecost the people were at one mind and one heart (Acts 2:1). There was no fighting or jealousy. They were with one mind. And God the Holy Spirit was poured out on them abundantly.

*Col 3:15 – “And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.”*

### **3) Reconciliation Makes Our Prayer Effective**

*Note the following verses:*

*Jam 5:16 – “Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.”*

Mat 6:14 -15 *“For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”*

Eph 4:32 – *“Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”*

When we do not forgive the wrong doings of the people, God will also not forgive our sins. Hence we should not have anyone in our lives whom we have not yet forgiven. When we do not forgive a person, it becomes a bitterness in our heart. The root of bitterness slowly develops and starts to spread in other areas of life. There is a possibility that person may fail to obtain grace from the Lord. How tragic and dangerous is this state. This is what we read in Hebrews 12:15, *“See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no “root of bitterness” springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled”*

Bitterness not only defiles oneself but it might affect others as well. It will affect our families and fellowships. How many of fellowships and families suffer because of bitterness of one person. Let us learn to forgive, so that our prayers will not be hindered.

#### **4) Reconciliation Helps To Testify About Christ**

Relationships are very important in this life of ours. When our relationships are right with one another, our testimony to the world would be strong. On the other hand, if we do not have right relationship with one another, we would bring dishonour to the Lord's Name.

*When Jesus was teaching regarding this,*

John 13:35 – *“By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”*

We read about love in the First Corinthians 13th Chapter elaborately. When we love one another with this kind of love, the world will know that we are disciples of Jesus Christ. Once God sent a revival to particular place. Because of this revival, many came to the Lord. When the unbelievers saw the transformed lives of the believers - the way they took care of the elderly, the way they behaved and talked, the unbelievers themselves came to the knowledge of the Lord in large numbers. The loving fellowship drew the people to Christ like a magnet.

I John 4: 20, 21 – *“If anyone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.”*

Good relationship within a family is very important. Today we find many infightings in families - Husband and wife; Parents and children and among the in-laws. The Bible has word for all – wives, husbands, children, servants and masters.

### **For Wives**

Col 3:18 - *“Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.”*

1Pe 3:1 - *“Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, when they see your respectful and pure conduct.”*

### **For Husbands**

Col 3:19 - *“Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them.”*

Eph 5:28,29 – *“In the same way husbands should love*

*their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church."*

In many instances the husband and wife live in the same house but would not talk with each other. Let us take steps to reconcile with each other. Let us humble ourselves and take the first step. Don't let your ego separate your family.

### **For Children**

Col 3:20 – *"Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord."*

We minister among the young people. We find young people complain about their parents and, similarly parents complain about their children. But the Bible encourages the children to obey their parents. Today children are not in a position to obey their parents. And the relationship is broken. Many children don't like their parents. They consider their parents to be their enemies. Similarly the Bible has a word for the parents as well.

### **For Parents**

Col 3:21 – *"Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged."*

Parents should not always pester the children. Many parents act like spies. And many others compare their children with others. In doing so they increase the burden on the children. Parents should try to understand the situation of the child and spend quality time with them. Only then relationships in a family will prosper. Jesus has warned that the house divided in itself will not stand.

### **For Servants**

Col 3:22 – *"Bond servants, obey in everything those who*

*are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord."*

Where ever you are working and whatever business you do, you should obey the earthly masters whom God has kept above you. You have to respect them and serve with sincerity. If you had been unfaithful to your Master by stealing then you may have to repay it back. Even people take things from the office and bring it home. But we need to replace it back. This is what Zacchaeus did. He said that he would repay four fold to people he had wronged. This is reconciliation.

### **For Masters**

*Col 4:1 – "Masters, treat your bondservants justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven."*

In the similar way Masters or Owners have to behave justly and fairly knowing that they have the Grand Master in Heaven. Are we treating our servants like beggars? Or are we treating them with respect?

### **5) Reconciliation Qualifies Us For Ministry**

*Rom 14:17, 18 – "For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Whoever thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men."*

When we live at peace with our neighbours, it qualifies us to be a witness for Him.

*Hence Apostle Paul concludes this way:*

*Rom 14:19 – "So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual up building."*

Apostle Paul writes about the qualification for Christian ministers in 1 Timothy 3:3 and Titus 1:7. He gives an elaborate list in which the relationship with

people and good testimony plays a vital part. Many of our ministers do not show these kinds of fruits. We get angry easily and pick up a fight suddenly. All these fleshly manifestations will disqualify us from the ministry. But on the other hand, when we are reconciled with people whom we have hurt by our actions, our ministries will be fruitful. It is no wonder, today, we do not experience New Testament kind of revival in our fellowships and Churches. We have become so critical of others. We are so careful in pointing out the wrong in others. But we fail to see the wrong in ourselves. We see the speck in our brothers' eyes when we have a plank in our eyes.

*Note what the Bible says:*

Rom 14:10 – *“Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.”*

## **6) Reconciliation Prepares Us For The Lord's Second Coming**

Act 24:14 -16 – *“But this I confess to you, that according to the Way, which they call a sect, I worship the God of our fathers, believing everything laid down by the Law and written in the Prophets, having a hope in God, which these men themselves accept, that there will be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust. So I always take pains to have a clear conscience toward both God and man.”*

Here we find Apostle Paul testifying that he had taken pains to keep his conscience clear before God as well as man. We are living in the last days. The Lord is going to come very soon. We need to take part in the first resurrection. We cannot lead a lethargic lifestyle. We need to self-examine ourselves everyday and be reconciled with people now and then.

1Thes 4:16-17- *“For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.”*

We do not know what would happen tomorrow. If we had hurt anyone; if we had angered any one, we need to be reconciled to them immediately, today itself. Let us prepare ourselves for the Lord’s second coming. He may come at any time. If the Lord would come today, will he find our consciences clear before man?

**Hence, let us be reconciled.**



## CHAPTER 9

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### HOW CAN I TOLERATE?

How can I tolerate? I believe this is not a sincere question! Most of us do not want to know the answer. We only want to say emphatically, “I just cannot tolerate.”

Tolerance is the power to bear with patience any discomfort and hardship for long. If practiced en masse, this world would be the most wonderful place to live in. Lack of tolerance has fractured families, splintered relationships and broken fellowships. The Bible admonishes us to look to Jesus and emulate His tolerance. *“Looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God”* (Hebrews 12:2).

In our Christian run, the hurdles we face are basically tolerance tests. Even iron nerves fail and some of us opt for the easier alternative of tit for tat.

Let us meditate on the areas we need to have tolerance in this spiritual journey of ours.

## Suffering For Doing Good

Heb 12:3 - *“Consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself let you become weary and discouraged in your souls.”*

When we do good and suffer, we complain, *“If I have done something wrong, then I am ready to accept punishment. But why is this treatment meted to me when I have done good?”* God’s Word has a different line of thought.

1 Peter 2:19,20 - *“For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer for it, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God.”*

Peter goes on to say that we are called to suffer, because Jesus Himself patiently accepted suffering and this has set up an example for us (1 Pet 2:21). Jesus taught said *“Whoever does not carry his cross and come after me cannot be My disciple”* (Lk 14:27). Our crosses may be different but each of us has one. For Jesus, it was a real cross — the worst of all. Our hardship is child’s play compared to what our Master underwent.

The Bible is replete with examples of tolerance. Hate and abuse did not embitter Joseph, rather taught him tolerance. Of all the congregations Paul visited, the Thessalonians were champions in enduring suffering (2 Thes 1:4). He admonished Timothy to put up with hardship like a soldier (2 Tim 2:3). A soldier cannot expect a dining table loaded with goodies or a bedroom with starched bed spreads and flower vase. Yet when the war is won, he rejoices at the past suffering, for it brought him a great reward. We are soldiers of Christ. Can we complain when we suffer?

Paul was not sitting under the fan in an easy chair, commanding his disciples to endure hardship. He himself was suffering in the hands of evildoers to the point of chains (2 Tim 2:9, 10). He testifies how the Lord delivered him from persecutions and afflictions (Tim 3:11). If we have a mind to suffer, we will be crowned (2 Tim 4:5,8).

The author of Hebrews calls it *“a great fight of afflictions.”* Fight indeed! For every time we are reproached we feel like throwing our hands up (Heb 10:32,33).

That’s why we are admonished not to faint. When Peter discouraged Jesus from going to the cross, Jesus rebuked him. Beware of the modern candy-coated gospel that looks down upon suffering. These honey-tongued prophets may call you a sinner if you suffer. It is good to examine ourselves and settle matters with God —if any. But there is no need to condemn ourselves whenever trials cross our path. Where from did the elders come to worship before the throne of God? - *“Out of great tribulation!”* (Rev 7:14).

### **Tolerating Difficult People**

Someone said, “The more people I meet, the more I love my dog.” That shows how easier it is to tolerate persecution than to tolerate people. To experience exuberance in this life is to learn to put up with people. Intolerance is self-defeating. The twelve disciples were a constant headache to Jesus. But Jesus was bent on being with them and developing them. If He had dismissed Peter for betrayal, Thomas for unbelief, James and John for greed, and others for similar reasons, He would have been left with no one. He rebuked them, but never forgot to give them a pat

when they did well. These were the ones who turned the world upside down. Jesus saw in them future leaders in the Church. Shepherds need to tolerate the sheep and leaders need to tolerate the second liners. There should be tolerance at every level.

Home is no home if members don't tolerate each other. *"Love endures all things"* (1 Cor 13:8). It is unscriptural to say, *"I can endure anything but this."*

The only intolerance a Christian can practice is towards sin. When parents can't tolerate children for their immaturity the young hearts are discouraged. We need to be extremely tolerant towards children, when we discipline them. We should never give up on any child. Without tolerance we can have no friends and without it, we cannot stick on to any fellowship. People are so diverse that living in this world itself is an exercise for tolerance.

### **Tolerating When We Are Chastised**

Heb 12:7 - *"If you endure chastisement, God deals with you as with sons."*

It is awful even to imagine if we despise God's chastisement. It is like a bitter pill which we want to spit out. Our hand is outstretched to receive His blessings but draws back with double haste from chastisement. When He chastises, our anger gives way to suspicion and unbelief. God has no other intentions but to make us like His Son. For a season we may be hurt and sorrowful but later on, it yields the fruit of righteousness (Heb 12:11). Let not our childish pettiness deprive us of it. Some stop going to church when they fail in an examination. Some others suffer monetary loss and cut out offering, and some of us stop our ministry when our plans are thwarted.

Getting aggressive with God is like kicking against thorns. Can a mouse wrestle with an elephant?

When David sinned, God chastised him by taking away his son. It was a devastating experience for David. But the ordeal only drew him closer to God. When God chastises us, we will know it. His Holy Spirit will convict us. When we repent and change, we will become more and more like Jesus.

### **Enduring Trials and Temptations**

James 1:12 - *"Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been proved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him."* Temptations are a blessing in disguise just like an examination. How much anxiety and how much trembling! But when we pass, we are promoted.

We know the parable of the sower. The seeds that fell on the rock typify people who hear and receive the Word with joy but have no root. They believe for a while but when temptation comes, they backslide. Crowds flock to revival meetings. The songs, praises and excitement are infections and there is an immediate response. But this response may not be consistent, when temptations dash against them and fall away because they have no root.

Jesus was tempted in every way just like us. But He was so grounded in the Word of God that when the Tempter came, He threw Him back on his heels by handling the sword of the Word. God will not let any unbearable temptation to assail us. He will provide a way for us to escape (1 Cor 10:13). Escape is possible only when the Word of God is allowed to take root in our hearts, watered and nurtured to grow. Only then will our eyes open to see the escape door which leads to freedom. Why endure temptation? Simply so that we may come out as pure gold.

## Bearing With Injustice

1 Cor 6:6,7 - *“Brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers! Now therefore, it is already an utter failure for you that you go to law against one another. Why do you not rather accept wrong? Why do you not rather let yourselves be defrauded?”*

It is a shame for Christians to go to the unjust and ungodly to settle their disputes. If it cannot be settled in the church, we are required to willingly give in and endure the wrong. God is a righteous Judge who will do justice for us when we are being exploited. It is better to be cheated than to be a cheat. When cheated in property, job, business or whatever; do not fight; leave it in the hands of God. Even Jesus Christ was not given a fair hearing or trial (Isa 53:8). But God raised Him up from the dead and seated Him on His right hand. You may even die without seeing justice. But God will reward you richly in heaven for what, you gave up on earth.

The Bible points us to Christ who endured, lest we become weary and die discouraged in our souls (Heb 12:3). Those among us who are facing suffering, chastisement, problems from people, temptations and injustice will naturally grow faint and discouraged. But if we keep looking up to Jesus who endured all these things and came out victorious, our hearts will be lifted up. Before we know it, there'll be a song on our lips and a lilt to our step. God will be so pleased with our endurance that He will shake hands with us and say, *“I know you have borne and have patience and have laboured for my name's sake and have not become weary”* (Rev 2:3).

So hold on.

Blessed is the man who endures (Js 5:11).

## CHAPTER 10

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# THE LORD OF THE HARVEST

The Lord of the Harvest asked His disciples to pray to God to send out workers into the harvest field (Mt 9: 38). His primary concern was to spell the good news and save the lost. This overriding desire to save man from sin caused Him to leave the comfort of heaven and descend upon earth in human form.

All through his life Jesus was keen to do the will of His Father, *“My food is to do the will of Him who sent me and finish His work”* (Jn 4:34). What is the will of the Father? The Bible in no uncertain terms states that it is the Father’s will that *“no man should perish.”* Jesus as the Son of God was eager to accomplish the desire of His Father that no man should perish.

To realize this mission, Jesus took upon Himself the task of teaching and preaching, moving from village to village, seeking after the lonely and strengthening the weary. Having lived a fulfilling life, at the close of His mission on earth, He charged His disciples, *“Go into the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.”* This commission is not merely a command to the early

apostles but to every believing Christian and disciple. Today, however, believers are engaged in their own pursuits and are caught in web of worldly affairs that restrict their usefulness in the Kingdom of God.

The mandate of Christ is clear: *“lift up your eyes and see the fields are waiting for harvest.”* His call to see the need around requires a positive response from us. Multitudes continue to live in sin and are deprived of the joy and peace that Jesus offers. The need is more urgent now than ever before for Christians all around to see the ripe harvest and respond. If we wait and not move, the blood of these souls will be upon our heads. We have no option but to follow the footsteps of the Master and proclaim the salvation of our God. Outlined below are important truths that should propel us to engage in the harvest field!

## **His Name**

The Angel of the Lord said that He would be named as Jesus because He will save His people from their sins. The name, “Jesus” means Saviour. There is no other name under Heaven given among men other than the name of Jesus by which we must be saved (Acts 4:12). No one other than Jesus came searching for the lost and gave His life as an atoning sacrifice. He is the *“Lamb slain from the foundation of the world”* (Rev 13:8). He is the “Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (Jn 1:29). Jesus firmly confirmed, “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life; no man comes to the Father except by me” (Jn 14:6). Having known that there is no other name through which salvation can be wrought, the onus is upon us to perpetuate this Name across the length and breadth of this land.

The early disciples knew the power in the Name of the Lord and ensured that the attention of

all seekers was focused on the Name above all names. Today's 'disciples' clamour for attention and are gratified when the same is lavished on them rather than on His Name.

Seeking to glorify self over the selfless Saviour and self-exaltation over the exaltation of the Saviour is the malady of Christendom today. The need of the hour is a group of faithful harvesters who will shun self-acclaim but invest their time and effort in proclaiming the Name of Jesus, the Lord of the Harvest.

The early disciples recognized the will of God and gave of themselves without restraint in carrying out His will. Today's disciples employ the will of God as a guise to disengage themselves from active evangelism. There is no other will than the stated will of God that "all men be saved" and this can be a possibility only if we will take the ownership for enabling His will to be done on Earth as it is in Heaven.

## **His Love**

God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. The love of God lavished on earth is the story of Jesus. The Love of Jesus that took Him to the cross should take us to our knees and out on the streets to knock at the doors of the unbelievers with the everlasting love of Christ.

The early disciples demonstrated an in-depth understanding of the love of Christ and allowed their entire lives to be so consumed by this overriding love. Paul the apostle states definitively that he would rather be accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of his brothers (Rom 9:3) Today's disciples have tasted the love but have lost their first love and are floundering in mediocrity. May the love of God constrain us as never

before to carry the message of His unchanging love to the corners of the earth.

## **His Vision**

Ungodliness is on the increase and wickedness is on an all time high. The present generation is looking for a model to follow. The whole creation groans and labours with birth pangs seeking for direction. Jesus demonstrated a clear vision of the lost. His eyes were sharpened and His intent was definite to go after one lost sheep. He did not allow His vision to be slurred by the transient and fleeting issues of the world. The need is to catch His vision and allow that vision to become a passion for the lost.

The early disciples had a clear vision of the lost and so allowed themselves to suffer enormous hardships—that the lost souls may somehow be gained. Their vision of the lost was complemented by a vision of eternity. The separation of an unsaved soul for eternity was far too gruesome for them to sit back and let time slip by. So they engaged in continuous work in the vineyard, counting all things that were gain to them as loss for Christ (2 Cor.4:18). Today's disciples are more concerned of being on television rather than carrying out His vision. The need today is that we be so gripped by the vision of the lost for eternity, that the temporal concerns of the world would be dispelled by the far reaching vision of the world.

## **His Prayer**

The model Jesus set in this regard is par excellence. To translate His vision into reality He spent significant time in prayer and urged His disciples that they pray that the Lord of the Harvest send labourers into His harvest.

The early disciples continued the practice of prayer in their personal and public lives and were often seen together meeting for prayer and thanksgiving. Today's disciples arrange for prayers but seldom pray. The need of the hour is prayer warriors who will continue to win battles on their knees before they set their feet on the streets.

## **His Commitment**

Jesus did not allow His physical discomforts to deter His commitment and perseverance in the pursuit of the lost. He tirelessly traversed through Jerusalem and neighbouring parts searching for the needy. No storm would stop Him, no opposition would deflate his resolve and no threats would squash his drive to proclaim the Good News.

The early disciples suffered afflictions, encountered persecution and braved martyrdom to proclaim the Gospel of Christ. Today's disciples are easily sidetracked by small rumours and insignificant intimidations. As the labourers of the Lord of the Harvest, we have no other choice than to renew our commitment to make Him known, despite all odds.

## CONCLUSION

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### STEP OUT IN FAITH!

Lord Jesus Christ is the Author and Finisher of our faith our hearts are filled with gratitude for His guidance, direction and faithfulness all through these years. Who indeed can despise humble beginnings? As a group of young college students when we met to pray in response to His unction, little did we realize that God would honour our faith and obedience to such gigantic proportions that today a college prayer cell has grown into a missionary organization. To God be the Glory!

We walk by faith and not by sight. It is worth meditating the achievements of our forefathers through faith. The Israelites' exodus from Egypt was conceived in faith and their possession of the Promised Land was achieved by faith. However, their faith walk was impeded with issues that detracted them from entering the Promised Land. They were to contend with an overflowing Jordan, counter many onslaughts and wander in the wilderness before reaching the land of milk and honey. All through their journey their faith was tested and retested! Walking in faith does not

mean a life without problems. On the contrary it is a life filled with problems of varied complexities. Faith drives us to overcome the challenges of the world. Our faith is the victory that overcomes the world (1 Jn. 5:4).

The lack of faith has serious consequences. It debilitates our growth, destroys our purposefulness and disintegrates the very fabric of our standing in Christ. On the contrary, moving enables us to lead a life of victory.

Let us step out for God by faith and lay hold of the victory. Our faith will be met with His faithfulness which in turn will help change our lives and those that we come in contact with.

Come let us walk in faith and dream the impossible, overcome the insurmountable and achieve the unattainable for God all through our life.

May God Bless You!

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## About the Author

Mr. A. Lionel came to the Lord when he was just 16 years old. Immediately after his Salvation experience he involved himself in serious mediation of the Bible and personal soulwinning. It was in the year 1965 when he came to the Karaikudi Engineering College, he came in contact with Mr. R. Stanley who was then leading the college prayer cell. Little did they realize that this relationship was going to be a foundation for a nation-wide ministry. Together they formed the 'Full Gospel Young Men's Association' in the year 1971. FGYMA was later renamed as 'Blessing Youth Mission.'

God blessed the secular life of Mr. Lionel as he served in the TNEB (Tamil Nadu Electricity Board) and retired as its 'Chief Engineer.'

He has been a blessing to thousands through his preaching ministry from Kanniyakumari to Kashmir. Especially he has led many in the anointing of the Holy Spirit. He continues to guide the ministries of Blessing Youth Mission as its General Overseer. Blessing Youth Mission has now about 391 full time missionaries and around 150 native workers based in 15 States of India.

Mr. Lionel's wife Dr.S.A. Kasthuri, who is a medical doctor is a great support to him during his hectic ministry schedule. They have been blessed with two children, Shirley and Edwin who are married and are now based in U.S.



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