

Acts 4:23-35  
What Does This Mean?  
WRCoB 5.19.24



He was a one-eyed, 34-year-old  
Son of former enslaved parents  
Whose name was William J. Seymour.

He led revival services  
In an old run-down empty building  
Formerly used as a horse stable.



It was located on Asuzu Street in downtown Los Angeles.

What started out as a three-day revival  
Turned into three years.

It was known as the Asuza Street Revival.

They conducted three service a day  
Seven days a week.

The thousands of people that came to the services  
Were overwhelmed by the presence of the Holy Spirit!

Many began speaking in tongues  
Others were miraculously healed  
All were impacted by the power of the HS.

William J. Seymour became known as the father  
Of the Pentecostal/charismatic movement in the US.

It came during the turbulent times of Jim Crow.

Black Americans fled to the north and west  
To escape the south's severe oppression.

In that regard, the Asuza Street revival was very unique  
In that it was multi-ethnic, multi-cultural  
And multi-socioeconomic.

*People from a diversity of backgrounds came together to worship: men, women, children, black, white, Hispanic, Asian, rich, poor, illiterate, and educated. People of all ages flocked to Los Angeles with both skepticism and a desire to participate (Wikipedia).*

*The intermingling of races and the group's encouragement of women in leadership was remarkable, as 1906 was the height of the "Jim Crow" era of racial segregation, and fourteen years prior to women receiving suffrage in the United States (Wikipedia).*

It really goes to show you  
What the Spirit is capable of doing.

The other really amazing thing  
About the Asuza Street Revival was its spontaneity!

It simply happened!

The church had no paid clergy  
No denominational guidelines  
No well-known guest preachers  
No famous musicians  
No great upscale venue

No huge city-wide evangelistic thrust  
By some big-named Christian crusade!

It was just a simple invitation  
By a woman in California  
For Seymour to come and preach.

The congregation was about our size  
Averaging thirty in attendance

But from its humble beginnings, it took off!

One participant made these observations:

*No instruments of music are used. None are needed. No choir- the angels have been heard by some in the spirit. No collections are taken. No bills have been posted to advertise the meetings.*

*No church organization is back of it. All who are in touch with God realize as soon as they enter the meetings that the Holy Ghost is the leader.*

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The Holy Spirit was its leader.

That first revival meeting took place on February 26, 1906.

Now fast-forward 42,716 days

To February 8, 2023 to Wilmer, Kentucky

To the Asbury University Chapel.

It started out as a typical Wednesday chapel service.

As it ended, 18 or 19 students lingered in prayer.

And the Spirit blew over them.

And the service continued for sixteen more days

24 hours per day/7 days a week

It was attended by 50 to 60,000 people.

Who came from 300 different universities

And from almost every continent.

<https://youtu.be/ybNG4RHN3Fw?si=9ZxPkESOne2cgNiG>

Like the Asuza revival, the Asbury revival brought unity.

In that moment, people no longer defined others  
By race, ethnicity, or social class.

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The first great outpouring of the Spirit  
Began 50 days following the Passover  
When Jesus was crucified.

It happened during a festival called Pentecost.

The followers of Jesus had gathered in one place  
And were deep in prayer.

When suddenly the Spirit blew across them  
And tongues of fire rested on them

All were filled with the Holy Spirit  
And spoke languages  
Represented on that festive day

Over sixteen languages are mentioned.

It was absolutely amazing.

What does this all mean, someone ask?

Another said they might have had one too many.

Regardless it was THE defining moment for the church.

From this initial outbreaking of the Spirit  
Over three thousand new converts were baptized.

The next day five thousand came to faith.

And the world has never been the same since!

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Over the years when churches get sleepy  
Or complacent, or heading in the wrong direction

The Holy Spirit charges in and stirs things up.

Now it is not to say that the Spirit  
Is only present in a revival.

But it is to say, that is a revival  
The Holy Spirit comes with force.

Charles Spurgeon said,

*“Revival is to live again, to receive again a life which has almost expired, to rekindle into a flame the vital spark which was nearly extinguished.”*

Revival comes to a church or gathering  
When three things are present.

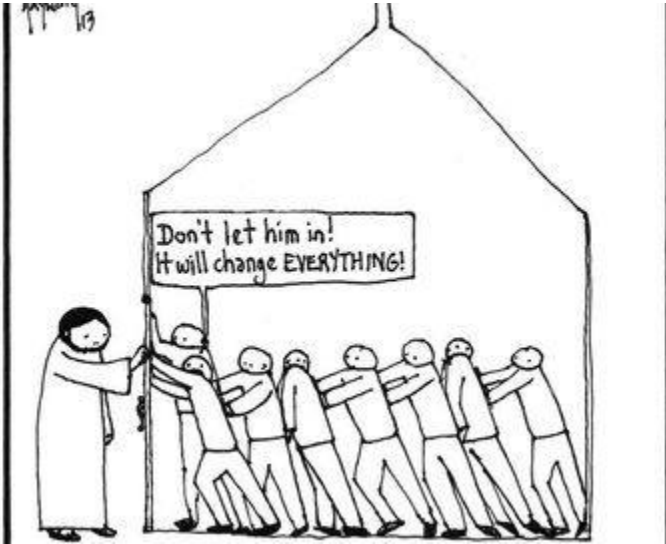
1. A unified need for God to change lives
2. A unified need to be in communion with God
3. A unified lifting our voices in praise and lament to God

The church needs to want to be revived.

But there's a lot of people out there  
And maybe in here too  
Who don't want to change.

They like the way things are  
They don't want to be revived

It makes them nervous  
No telling what might happen  
If you let the Holy Spirit in!



I am reminded of a story told by Fred Craddock.

He had finished preaching the morning service  
And had to leave quickly for another event

So, instead of standing at the doors welcoming folks  
He slipped out through the choir room.

He noticed one of the women choir members  
Taking off her choir robe and hanging it up.

"I appreciated very much the anthem this morning."

She said, "I hope so because that's it."

Craddock said, "What do you mean?"

She said, "That's it. I'm hanging it up."

She was putting away her robe. I said, "Are you retiring?"

She had been in the choir 103/104 years.

I thought maybe she was retiring.

She said, "No, I'm quitting."

I said, "You're quitting?"

She said, "I'm quitting."

"Oh, you're not quitting."

"I'm quitting."

"Well, why are you quitting?"

She said, "I sat up there in the choir loft this morning and looked around at the other choir members and I looked at the minister and looked at the worship leader and looked at the ushers and just looked out over the congregation, and I said finally to myself what has haunted me for years." I said, "What's that?" She said, "Who cares?"

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The church needs a revival.

Our church and the church in the US

We need to pray for revival.

The man in the crowd on Pentecost

Asked the others, "What does all this mean?"



Well, it means this.

It means when the Holy Spirits blows through  
And the flames alight on our heads  
Nothing will be left unchanged.

All will be renewed, revived, and rejuvenated.

It means, we draw near to God

We become acutely aware of God's powerful presence.

During a Welsh revival one pastor said:

*“The Lord had come down! A sense of the Lord's presence was everywhere. It pervaded, nay it created the spiritual atmosphere.”*

What it means is, when the Spirit blows  
We become aware of our brokenness  
Of our need for healing and wholeness

We realize our need for turning around and changing  
For coming clean  
For making right

For reconciliation with God and with one another.

What it means is, when the flames alight on us  
We become hungry for God and God's Word  
Thirsty to give God praise and thanksgiving

It means, when the Spirit blows  
The church becomes the Church!

There is more love  
There is more vibrancy  
There is a stronger sense of belonging

An increased desire to be together

A stronger desire for worship  
For serving others  
For working toward justice  
For sharing the gospel.

When the Spirit blows through the church  
Believers become more generous

We will give more of our time, talents, and tithes.

The church becomes the center of our life  
And Jesus, the cornerstone.

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This is me  
But I sense God is about to do a new thing  
At West Richmond

Many have prayed for revival  
Many wait on the Lord

Many ask God to send the Holy Spirit  
To blow through here and disrupt our lives.

I pray that you would too.

C H Spurgeon has a prayer for revival

I want to close with it.

O God, send us the Holy Ghost. Give us both the breath of spiritual life and the fire of unconquerable zeal. O thou who art our God, answer us by fire, we pray thee. Answer us both by wind and fire, and then we shall see thee to be God indeed.

The kingdom comes not, and the work is flagging. O, that thou wouldest send the wind and the fire! Thou wilt do this when we are all of one accord, all believing, all expecting, all prepared by prayer.

Lord, bring us to this waiting state. God send us a season of glorious disorder. O, for a sweep of the wind that will set the seas in motion, and make our ironclad brethren now lying so quietly at anchor to roll from stem to stern.

O, for fire to fall again, fire which shall affect the most stolid! O, that such fire might first sit upon the disciples, and then fall on all around!

O Spirit of God, thou art ready to work with us today even as thou didst then. Stay not, we beseech thee, but work at once. Break down every barrier that hinders the incoming of thy might! Give us now both hearts of flame and tongues of fire to preach thy reconciling word, for Jesus' sake. Amen.