

Mission Possible

“The Fires of Revival: Don't Be Found Sleeping!”

Acts, Chapter 20

Psalms 33:12 NIV

“Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD.”

Cultural engagement

We need to be aware of what's going on in our community and culture, especially as it affects us as believers. We need to be like the men of Issachar, who understood the times and knew what to do (1Chronicles 12:32). They were able to discern the times and what was going on, but they also knew what to do about it. We need to act and operate that way as well. These things need to come from the pulpit as we address what's going on in our culture.

For a hundred and fifty-plus years in our nation, the pastors were the educators in the local communities which originally gave rise to our freedom in the American Revolution. We've got to get back to saying what needs to be said and not being afraid to speak the truth. *What can we do?* We can pray for wisdom, discernment, and Godly strategies to bring our nation back to God's intended foundations of Faith, Family, and Freedom - and we can say “Yes” and show up.

Quick review - Acts chapter 19

We were catching up with Paul and his companions on his third missionary journey. They had been met with strong and even dangerous opposition and resistance almost every step of the way, and neither should *we* expect the world to welcome our message with open arms. In fact, if we're getting *no* resistance whatsoever, we may not be preaching the Gospel, because the Gospel always has its way of cross-cutting culture.

That doesn't mean we're out there being intentionally obstinate or antagonistic, but, just by showing up, we're creating disruption. People who know we're Christian go quiet when we come around them. That's a Holy Spirit effect we have on them - the *God-factor* in us - the *Imago Dei*. When we show up, it should *shift* things - the atmosphere should change when we walk into a room - “Christ in us the hope of glory” - Christ living in us *and through us*. We take that as part and parcel of who we are as believers.

Acts chapter 19 ends with a dangerous riot instigated by those profiting from the sale of pagan idols. People were getting saved as they turned away from the black arts of paganism and as they quit buying the idols, which affected the whole pagan economy. That's what causes the enemy to grow fangs and resist the Gospel message. When revival starts to impact the culture, those who scream the loudest will be those who stand to lose the most *money*. Just like now, public officials gained a lot of wealth above and beyond what their official salaries afforded them.

The Fire of Revival: Don't Be Found Sleeping!

If revival is coming like a wave, then we don't want to *miss* the wave. We don't *generate* the wave, we catch the wave. We ride it in and then paddle back out to catch another one. We don't want to be caught sleeping in the light and miss what God is up to. If he wants to bring revival in our town and in our time, then we need to be a part of it and not be sitting on our couch drinking Dr. Pepper, eating Pringles, and clicking the remote at the T.V. saying, "*Yeah, go get 'em!*"

No, we need to be out there on the field - in the arena - and not sitting on the sidelines. That happens by us showing up where we live, work, and play. It happens as we talk about our faith in the workplace or in the places where we hang out. When we get so full of Jesus, we will leak him out wherever we go, and whatever we fill ourselves *with* is what we will reveal.

Acts chapter 20 - the third missionary journey

Acts 20:1 NIV84

"When the uproar had ended, Paul sent for the disciples and, after encouraging them, said good-by and set out for Macedonia."

Acts 20:6-9 NIV84

"But we sailed from Philippi after the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and five days later joined the others at Troas, where we stayed seven days. On the first day of the week we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight. There were many lamps in the upstairs room where we were meeting. Seated in a window was a young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep as Paul talked on and on. When he was sound asleep, he fell to the ground from the third story and was picked up dead."

These were *real people* - not just characters. Eutychus was a slave or a servant name, so he was most likely in servitude to somebody - poor and young - and probably had worked all day and was very tired. It was hot up on the third floor, especially with many lamps burning and being crowded with people. It was late and Eutychus fell asleep and tumbled backwards out of the window. The Bible says that after he hit the ground, they picked him up - dead.

Because we don't want to be caught sleeping, there are times we have to talk to our flesh, while the Lord is trying to do something in our time. If we're truly in the last-of-the-last days, as many experts say, then what we're seeing is an unprecedented harvest occurring. There's a new generation of young people rising up and getting on fire for God. God is moving in an unprecedented way, not just in America, but there are meetings breaking out in different places all over the world. Some very *hard* places are having massive gatherings and worshipping the Lord.

The thing is, we can be asleep in the light while things are going on all around us. If we succumb to fatigue and brain-fog - caught up in our own self - we won't even notice that a revival is happening, and it can pass us right by. Tim Barton of Wallbuilders said that in the first and second Great Awakenings in America, the people didn't even know they were in a spiritual awakening. They didn't have the *means* to hear what God was doing around them and across the country.

We, however, live in a different time, where we can know in real-time what's going on, which brings on us a higher responsibility. We have a higher calling because revival is happening all around us and we can choose to ignore it just by flipping the channel or scrolling on by. We can go on to something else and miss what God is doing - but we don't want to be caught sleeping in the day.

Ephesians 5:11-16 NIV84

"Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for it is light that makes everything visible. This is why it is said: 'Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.' Be very careful, then, how you live - not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil."

We have a responsibility to expose the darkness in our time - to speak Truth into power - to speak The truth "because of" love. We're called to do this - to be salt and light. This is our Word from God - it's our *responsibility* - we're to expose those deeds. We live in a different day and the days are *evil*. We need to be like the sons of Issachar and discern the times and know what to do. We *must* be informed.

Romans 13:11-14 NIV84

“And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.”

1 Thessalonians 5:5-8 NIV84

“You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet.”

We'll be caught sleeping if we're just playing all the time and not being aware of what's going on in the world. This is why it's important that we address these things from the pulpit and not be shy about it. We must remain vigilant and alert, and not fall asleep “in the day”. This is what Eutychus did in a real way, but it's a symbol and metaphor for us when we fall asleep in the light.

Acts 20:10-12 NIV84

“Paul went down, threw himself on the young man and put his arms around him. ‘Don't be alarmed,’ he said. ‘He's alive!’ Then he went upstairs again and broke bread and ate. After talking until daylight, he left. The people took the young man home alive and were greatly comforted.”

This was a great miracle. We've seen that God did miracles in the Book of Acts. Do we believe that he still does miracles *today*? We need to not be afraid to believe God for the miraculous - for our children and our families. We need to believe that the seeds of the Gospel remain whenever and wherever they have heard it, and that God can still turn their hearts back to him.

We need to pray for them and dare to believe, and call them back in the spirit, and believe that God will reciprocate in the natural and material world. If God could raise Eutychus from the dead, can't he bring our family member back to life in the Spirit ...*that we can call our prodigals back home?*

Prayer

Father, we invoke the name of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit. We invoke Your will in Heaven be done on earth in our families who have walked away from You because of trauma, pain, suffering, unanswered prayers, disappointment, disillusionment, disenchantment, or any other reason. In the name of Jesus, we implore You now and release our faith towards our families. We fight and battle on their behalf and in our conferred authority to call them home. Wherever they are, we say, "Awaken and arise in the name of Jesus."

Father, give us wisdom to know the best way to reach out to them in love, even as we continue to pray for them. Don't let us be found sleeping in the light but give us a spirit of vigilance. In the name of Jesus, we come against any demonic interference that would try to hinder our families from returning to You - we cast it out and command it to "Go" from Your jurisdiction. Father, we thank You that Your light will dawn on them and that they will awaken, come to their senses, and come home to You. We thank You and love You, in Jesus' name. Amen