

THE PENTECOST

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Hello! In this October, 2007, issue of *The Pentecost* we will be digging into subjects such as spiritual hunger and revival. We will look further at Jesus' words on thirsting for Him, coming to Him, drinking from Him, and the rivers of living water. We will study more of revivals from the First Great Awakening and from the Ministry of Charles Finney and we will learn from the Old Testament revival during Josiah's rule. God bless you.

Shawn Stevens

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THIRSTING, COMING TO, DRINKING OF JESUS AND THE RIVERS OF LIVING WATER

- Part 2 -

On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, 'If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.' But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. (John 7:37-39).

In our last issue of *The Pentecost* we discussed these words of Jesus and focused on thirsting for God. Jesus' word to the thirsty is that they should come, come to Him. We often think of coming to Jesus as something converts do in the moment of their conversion; they come to Jesus in saving faith. While this is true, coming to Jesus is something that a Christian does at every stage of his spiritual walk, and hopefully does so daily. In fact, Jesus is calling for the thirsty ones to come to Him, not to a ceremony or a ritual or a philosophy, but to Him, personally. Isaiah 55:1 says:

*Ho! Everyone who thirsts,
Come to the waters;
And you who have no money,
Come, buy and eat.
Yes, come, buy wine and milk
Without money and without price.*

This is one of the great "come" scriptures in the Bible. Similarly, Revelation 22:17 says:

And the Spirit and the bride say, 'Come!' And let him who hears say, 'Come!' And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.

King David also thirsted for God, thinking of himself as a thirsty deer. He said:

*As the deer pants for the water brooks,
So pants my soul for You, O God.
My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.
When shall I come and appear before God?
(Psalm 42:1-2).*

Here, David asks, "When shall I come and appear before God?" David puts the question to himself. He, and we, are the ones who make the decision to come to Jesus and drink. The question might also be asked by God; "When shall you come and appear before Me?" It sounds as if David is waiting for God to call David to come in some special way or time. This is a response which many people exhibit.

While David seemed to be waiting for God to call him to come in a special way, so was Peter, the Lord's disciple. In Matthew's gospel we read of the disciples being out in a boat during a fierce storm. An amazing miracle is preformed as Jesus walks across the water towards them. The disciples see Jesus walking across the water and are afraid. Jesus speaks to them, telling them not to fear. After hearing Jesus, Peter says, "...Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water." (Matthew 14:28). Jesus did say "Come" and Peter, too, is miraculously enabled to walk on the water towards Jesus.

There are some things for us to see in this passage. Firstly, we see the spiritual thirst of Peter. When he heard the voice of Jesus, He immediately wanted to come to Him, even if that meant walking on water. He was the only disciple who responded in this way. It was not enough for him to wait in the boat, while Jesus was afar off walking. He had to be close to Jesus.

The second thing we can learn from this passage is that Peter was crying out for Jesus to call him to come. He seemed to want a special invitation. We can make allowances for Peter because one wrong move in a situation like this could mean sinking to the bottom of the sea. However, how many times have we, in a less threatening situation than this, been like Peter and asked for God to call us to come to Him before we will come ourselves. God has already called for us to come to Him. His Word is full of such calls. How many times are we still waiting for an extra special invitation and saying; "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You."

Jesus has been calling for us to come to Him. The call has not been ignored by all. There are many thirsty ones who have come and are now drinking from Jesus. Horatio Bonar testifies in the words of this poem:

*I heard the voice of Jesus say
Behold, I freely give
The Living water; thirsty one
stoop down and drink and live
I came to Jesus and I drank
Of that life giving stream
My thirst was quenched, my soul revived
And now I live in Him*

Horatio Bonar
(MacArthur Commentary)

Dear Jesus, we come to You today. We come to You not just when we are saved, or when we are in trouble. We come to You now, today, because we need You today. We need You, Yourself, not a ceremony, or a ritual or a philosophy; we need You. We thirst and come to the waters that we may drink of them freely. Even as a deer would come to the brook, so we come to appear before You. Lord, we have heard Your call for us to come. We have read it in Your Word. Now meet with us we pray. Amen.

Shawn Stevens

JOSIAH

Under the rule of two wicked kings, Judah had drifted away from the LORD, her God, and was in spiritual ruin. She needed a leader who would bring her back to God. God provided a leader for Judah who had a tender heart to serve Him, King Josiah.

Judah had seen some good days under the rule of King Hezekiah but Hezekiah was succeeded by a wicked king, Manasseh. Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king and he reigned for fifty-five years. The Scripture says; "But he did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel." (2 Chronicles 33:2). Manasseh rebuilt the places of worship to foreign gods. He even sacrificed some of his children in ritual sacrifices to those gods. He consulted mediums and practiced witchcraft and sorcery. It is believed that he had the prophet Isaiah executed. He even set up an idol in the temple of God. By all of Manasseh's evil deeds, he led Judah into sin. We read; "So Manasseh seduced Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to do more evil than the nations whom the LORD had destroyed before the children of Israel." (2 Chronicles 33:9).

Was Manasseh's and Judah's backsliding as a result of God ignoring her? No. We read; "And the LORD spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they would not listen." (2 Chronicles 33:10). Because Manasseh and the people would not listen, God raised up Assyria and enabled her to capture the city of Jerusalem and take its population captive.

When Manasseh lost Jerusalem he was greatly humbled and prayed to God. God mercifully returned him to Jerusalem and let him rule again. He did repent and led a weak reform, but he did not live long enough to correct all of the wickedness which he had committed and led Judah into. He was succeeded by his son, Amon. Of Amon, we read;

"But he did evil in the sight of the LORD, as his father Manasseh had done; for Amon sacrificed to all the carved images which his father Manasseh had made, and served them." (2 Chronicles 33:22). The wicked life-style of Amon even offended his own servants and they killed him.

Amon was succeeded by eight-year-old Josiah around 642 B.C. Josiah would still be a youth when he began his reforms and he was like a breath of fresh air to Judah. His heart was for the LORD and we read; "...he did what was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the ways of his father David; he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left." (2 Chronicles 34:2).

Josiah walked straight. He walked straight towards the Lord and led his people with him. The first two things that we read of him doing was that he began to seek God and began to destroy Judah's idols. We read; "For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was still young, he began to seek the God of his father David; and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, the wooden images, the carved images, and the molded images." (2 Chronicles 34:3).

How thoroughly did Josiah destroy these articles of false worship? We read; "When he had broken down the altars and the wooden images, had beaten the carved images into powder, and cut down all the incense altars throughout all the land of Israel, he returned to Jerusalem." (2 Chronicles 34:7).

Not only did Josiah begin to seek God and begin to destroy idolatry in Judah, he also restored and repaired the house of the LORD. The temple had been destroyed by Judah's earlier kings and had not been used for probably about seventy-five years. Under Josiah, God's house would again be used for the service and worship of God.

While the temple was being repaired for the worship and service of God, a copy of the Scriptures was found inside of it. This was brought to the King and he had it read to him.

What was his response? When Josiah heard the righteous standards of God read to him, and when he reflected on how far they had fallen below God's standard, and how badly they had forsaken the LORD, he tore his clothing as a sign of grief. He was filled with a realization of how far they had strayed from the LORD. It was not until he heard the words of the Law read that he saw their sin for all of its ugliness. He was humble. Jesus taught; "Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:3). In Aramaic manuscripts this reads as; "Blessed are the humble, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Josiah had a humble heart like this. He was repentant, not resentful.

When Josiah learned how far his people had strayed from God, he was determined to bring them back. He gathered the elders, together with the common people, and he read the Scriptures to them. Next he made "...a covenant before the LORD, to follow the LORD, and to keep His commandments and His testimonies and His statutes with all his heart and all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant that were written in this book." (2 Chronicles 34:31). Not only did Josiah covenant with God for himself, but he led the people in covenanting with God. This commitment was to both moral and civil restraints in honor of the LORD. Together, they took a stand for the LORD. This verse describes Josiah's legacy;

"Now before him there was no king like him, who turned to the LORD with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses; nor after him did any arise like him." (2 Kings 23:25).

Josiah was a child when he came to power and a youth when he began his reforms, but he did not let his age intimidate him from implementing the major decisions and actions needed to bring the people back to God. God had tried to correct Manasseh, gently at first, but he would not

listen. He would not listen until strong chastisement was brought upon him. Then he heard and began making some reforms. However, he had spent his life and did not get to make a full reformation. Josiah decided early on that he was going to follow the LORD. He didn't know what all of that would entail, but he began walking in the light which he had. He began seeking the LORD, tearing down idols and rebuilding God's house. In the process, the Word of God was found and he learned more of God's ways. What he learned was humbling and he was repentant, not resentful. Friend, how about you? How about me? Are we a "Josiah?" Are we humble and poor in spirit? Are our lives like a breath of fresh air to the godly? Let us stand together for the Lord in a place of commitment to Him. Let us pray:

Lord Jesus, we have been like the people of Judah. We have served other gods and have done what is evil in Your sight. All the while You have not been ignoring us. You have been calling us back. Your Word had been there as a light and a lamp all along. With Your Word has been Your Spirit calling, calling, calling us. Like in the life of Manasseh, much time has been wasted by us and, yet, there is still time for us to throw ourselves upon Your mercy. We do so now. Forgive us our sins and our running from You. We relinquish our pride. We tear our hearts and not our clothing. Lord, in the time remaining, let there be a great reform of Your Church. Let us walk straight after You and not turn to the right or to the left. We had offered You a bit. You have wanted all. Now we give You all of ourselves. We seek You now. We tear down our idols. We want to do what is right in Your sight. Lord, Your people are Your temple, Your house. Just like the temple in Josiah's day, we are in need of repair, restoration and revival. Turn to us and touch us. As in the other temple, as You are restoring us, may it be that Your Word is found in us. Quicken it to us. Enliven it to our hearts and consciences. We want to be used for Your worship and service, Lord. We want to follow You with all of our heart and with all of our soul. We now trust in Your grace. Amen.

THE GREAT AWAKENING

In our last Issue, we looked at some revival accounts from the Great Awakening. In a further account from the Great Awakening, this one from the year 1741, a Mr. Crocker was preaching to a group and we read about the meeting:

The next day, being the 23d day of November, 1741, Mr. Crocker came. We began about one. He preached from Romans 8:1. This he opened largely; giving the characters of them that were in Christ; and inferred the misery of those who found not the characters in themselves of their being in Christ; there was nothing but condemnation for them; showing what damnation was, & c. After sermon there was an exhortation delivered. Many now melted down. After the blessing, the people generally stayed, till some cried with terror, which flew like lightning into every breast; I suppose, none excepted. I have written accounts of seventy-six that day struck, and brought first to inquire what they should do to escape condemnation. This inquiry awakened many. There were a number of professors of religion that day, whose lamps went out. They discovered there was no oil of true grace in them. There were four persons that this day, being left alone in the several houses to which they belong, were I suppose savingly awakened that day, by the consideration that they were left. After a stay with the distressed in public, many followed us home. Those that we had not opportunity to ask openly the state of their souls, and the reason of their outcry, repaired to us. They tell us, they see now what they never did before; their original guilt and actual sins, and fear of the dreadful wrath of the Lord. This filled them with unutterable anguish. They seemed to be stepping into hell. This drew trembling fear and cries from them. They complain of hard hearts, and blind eyes! That they should never see before! Especially unbelief! O! how dreadful to give the God of truth a lie! They now complain they cannot believe, find their hearts full of enmity to God, to Christ, to [H]is holiness, [H]is word, and saints. Scores, this day, told me of their hatred of me, above any one. But to hear the young people crying and wringing their hands, and bewailing their frolicking and dancing, their deriding public reproofs therefor, was affecting. O! how heavy now did their contempt and neglect of Christ appear to them, as the effect of these corrupt principles of pride, unbelief, and enmity, and vicious practices of

mirth and jollity! Their mouths are at once filled with arguments to justify God in their eternal damnation, and condemn those principles and practices they had been ruled by and led into; and this from Scripture. This the peculiar work of the Spirit, to convince of sin and unbelief.

Well, the next evening, we had another lecture. Though an excessive rain, yet many came, and the word was powerful. Thus the Lord began to hear, as soon as it was in our hearts to ask. From this time, there was an uncommon teachableness among my people. Scarce one word of council seemed lost, or a sermon in vain. From this time, they must have four sermons in a week; two Tuesdays, two Thursdays. The word of the Lord was very precious in those days. In a few days from that 23d of November, so greatly to be remembered, there appeared to be above two hundred awakened; and it was some days, and weeks, and months, before they were brought sensibly to close with Christ. Most of them tarried long in the birth; and, so far as I am capable to judge, gave as distinct and clear an account of their espousing to Jesus Christ; the means, [H]is word of promise, and time, as they could of any action of human life. This, not all in the same manner under the preparatory work; but all came to the same espousing, closing act, when they were brought out of darkness into marvellous light; when the prison doors were opened, their captive souls set free; when set free from the oppressing burdens of guilt they so long bare; when the Lord led them into the wilderness and then there spake kindly to them, saying live. Now they understood what it was to have the everlasting gates and doors of their souls set open, and the glorious king entering. How pleasantly effecting to hear them tell of their submission to God's righteousness, resigning to the hands of justice, and how sweetly and speedily in a moment they found themselves enclosed in the everlasting arms of mercy! Who would not be encouraged to come to this submission? To hear them speak of the glories of the Redeemer and [H]is infinite fulness; how oft would they break out, O! we are sure, from God's word and our own experience, there is enough for all, every one in the world!

This awakes professors, very moral and blameless in life, to inquire into their own standing. The most find they built on sand, that they lived to themselves, rested in their duties, were mere hypocrites; and after a while, they joyfully tell me: 'I have found my feet on the rock. I never knew what it was to have my will subdued and heart changed and Christ there, till now....'¹

¹ Joseph Tracy, *The Great Awakening* (Carlisle: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1997, 1st pub. 1842), 173-175.

REVIVAL IN ROCHESTER, NEW YORK

The city of Rochester will always be special to Charles Finney because some of the greatest revivals in his ministry occurred in that place. The following is an account of some of the people who were converted in this city, in the year 1830. Rochester was the first city where Finney began employing the use of “the anxious seat.” This was a row of seats, at the front of the assembly, where those present in the meetings could come and sit in a humble, public and open act of declaration that they were anxious about their souls and seeking salvation. Finney says:

There were soon some very marked conversions. The wife of a prominent lawyer in that city, was one of the first converts that was much known in the city. She was a lady of high standing, well known, a lady of culture and extensive influence. Her conversion was a very marked one. The first that I saw her a lady friend of hers came with her to my room, and introduced her. The lady who introduced her was a Christian woman, who had found that she was very much exercised in her mind, and persuaded her to come and see me. Mrs. Matthews had been a gay, worldly woman, and very fond of society. She afterwards told me that when I first came there she greatly regretted it, and feared there would be a revival; and if so it would greatly interfere with the pleasures and amusements that she had promised herself that winter. On conversing with her I found that the Spirit of the Lord was indeed dealing with her in an unsparing manner. She was bowed down with great conviction of sin. After considerable conversation with her, I pressed her hard and then and there to give herself to Christ— to renounce sin, and the world, and self, and everything for Christ. I saw that she was a very proud woman, and this struck me as rather the most marked feature of her character. At the conclusion of our conversation we knelt down to pray; and my mind being full of the subject of the pride of her heart as it was manifested, I very soon introduced the text: ‘Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.’ This I seemed to be led to by the Spirit of prayer almost irresistibly. I turned this subject over in prayer; and I almost immediately heard Mrs. Matthews, as she was kneeling by my side, repeating that text: ‘Except ye be converted and become as little children’— ‘as little children’ — ‘Except ye be converted and become as little children.’ I observed that her mind was taken with that, and the Spirit of God was pressing it upon her heart. I therefore continued to pray and hold that subject before her mind

and holding her up before God as needing that very thing to be converted— to become as a little child. I besought the Lord to convert her, to make her as a little child, to put away her pride and her loftiness of spirit and bring her down into the attitude of a little child. I felt that the Lord was answering prayer. I felt sure that he was, and had no doubt, I believe, in my mind, that the Lord was doing the very work that I asked Him to do. Her heart broke down, her sensibility gushed forth, and before we rose from our knees she was indeed a little child. When I stopped praying and opened my eyes and looked at her, her face was turned up toward heaven, and the tears streaming over her face; and she was in the attitude of praying that she might be made a little child. She rose up, became peaceful, settled into a joyous faith, and retired. From that moment she was outspoken in her religious convictions, and zealous for the conversion of her friends. Her conversion of course produced much excitement among that class of people to which she belonged.

I had never, I believe except in rare instances, until I went to Rochester, used as a means of promoting revivals, what has since been called ‘the anxious seat.’ I had sometimes asked persons in the congregation to stand up, but this I had not frequently done. However, in studying upon the subject I had often felt the necessity of some measure that would bring sinners to a stand. From my own experience and observation I had found, that with the higher classes especially, the greatest obstacle to be overcome was their fear of being known as anxious inquirers. They were too proud to take any position that would reveal them to others as anxious for their souls. I had found also that something was needed more than I had practised to make the impression on them that they were expected then and there to give up their hearts; and something that would call them to act, and act as publically before the world as they had in their sins; something that would commit them publically to the service of Christ, some public manifestation or demonstration that would declare to all around them that they abandoned a sinful life then and there, and committed themselves to Jesus Christ. When I had called them simply to stand up in the public congregation, I found that this had had a very good effect, and so far as it went it answered the purpose for which it was intended. But after all I had felt for some time that something more was necessary to bring them out from among the mass of the ungodly to a public renunciation of their sinful ways, and a public committal of themselves to God.

At Rochester, if I recollect right, I first introduced this measure. This was years after the cry had been raised of 'New Measures.' A few days after the conversion of Mrs. Matthews I made a call, I think for the first time, upon all that class of persons whose convictions were so ripe that they were willing then and there to renounce their sins and give themselves to God, to come forward to certain seats which I requested to be vacated, and offer themselves up to God while we made them subjects of prayer. A much larger number came forward than I expected...²

...Among other conversions I must not forget to mention that of Samuel D. Porter, a prominent citizen in that place. He was at the time a book seller, and in partnership with a Mr. Everard Peck, who was the father of our late Professor Peck. Mr. Porter was an infidel; not an atheist, but a disbeliever in the divine authority of the Bible. He was a reader and a thinker, a man of keen, shrewd mind, strong will, and most decided character. He was, I believe, a man of good outward morals, and a gentleman highly respected. He came to my room early one morning and said to me, 'Mr. Finney, there is a great movement here on the subject of religion, but I am a skeptic; and I want you to prove to me that the Bible is true.' The Lord enabled me at once to discern his state of mind so far as to decide the course I should take with him. I said to him: 'Do you believe in the existence of God?' 'Oh yes!' he said, 'I am not an atheist.' 'Well, do you believe that you have treated God as you ought? Have you respected His authority? Have you loved Him? Have you done that which you thought would please Him, and with the design to please Him? Don't you admit that you ought to love Him, and ought to worship Him, and ought to obey Him, according to the best light you have?' 'Oh yes!' he said, 'I admit all this.' 'But have you done so?' I asked. 'Why no,' he answered, 'I cannot say that I have.' 'Well then,' I replied, 'why should I give you farther information, and farther light, if you will not do your duty and obey the light you already have? Now,' said I, 'when you will make up your mind to live up to your convictions, to obey God according to the best light you have; when you will make up your mind to repent of your neglect thus far, and to please God just as well as you know how the rest of your life, I will try to show you that the Bible is from God. Until then it is of no use for me to do any such thing.' I did not sit down, and I think had not asked him to sit down. He replied, 'I do not know but that is fair,' and retired.

I heard no more of him until the next morning early, soon after I arose, he came to my room again; and as soon as he came in he slapped his hands and said: 'Mr. Finney, God has wrought a miracle! I went down to the store,' he continued, 'after I left your room, thinking of what you had

said; and I made up my mind that I would repent of what I knew was wrong in my relations to God, and that hereafter I would live according to the best light I had. And when I made up my mind to do this,' said he, 'my feelings so overcame me that I fell; and I do not know but I should have died if it had not been for Mr. Peck, who was with me in the store.'³ Finney goes on to say that after this experience Porter became known as a sincere, praying Christian man.

² Charles Finney, *The Original Memoirs Of Charles G. Finney* (Grand Rapids:Zondervan, 2002), 236-238.

³ Charles Finney, *The Original Memoirs Of Charles G. Finney* (Grand Rapids:Zondervan, 2002), 246-247.

WHEN I CAME TO JESUS

When I came to Jesus
Oh He lifted off a weight
And He filled me with His Spirit and His grace
And now I live for Him
Jesus, Jesus King of Kings
He is the Truth, He is the Life, He is the Way

No choir could ever sing
Of all the goodness that He brings
By His blood, and in His name
When my soul He did reclaim
He raised me up and set me free
And made a temple out of me
Holy, Holy, Worthy, Worthy is His name

He made my heart to know
The grace and mercy He bestows
When I cried unto His name
Like a shepherd, oh He came
He gave me light and eyes to see
And put a ring and robe on me
Holy, Holy, Worthy, Worthy is His name

Shawn Stevens