

Truths Learned in My Youth

There are three truths I learned in my youth and hopefully am still gleaning from today. The Bible says, *“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ”* (Ephesians 4:14,15). *“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen”* (II Peter 3:18). Allow me to share with you the three truths that initiated quantum leaps in my growth in grace.

1. Pray in the Spirit.

As many of you know, the Lord coalesced my early ministry with men like Sammy Allen and Tim Lee. Let me share with you something I learned about prayer in my early years. On March 8, 1971, young Sgt. Tim Lee, USMC was point man walking a grassy trail in Quang Nam Province, Vietnam. In one cataclysmic moment, a land mine explosion severed Tim’s two lower limbs. That very day, even the very hour of the injury, Pastor Sammy Allen called Pastor Lee (Tim’s Dad) and asked if Tim was okay. As far as Brother Lee knew, Tim was fine. Sammy explained he had a tremendous burden from the Lord to pray for young Tim and could not stop praying and would continue to do so. Not until several days later, Pastor and Mrs. Lee were informed Tim was now missing both legs and his life was still hanging in the balance. Tim told me personally, he came perilously close to death eleven times and was convinced had not God notified Sammy Allen and had not Brother Allen been praying for him, he would have died. More things are wrought by prayer than we shall ever realize. Think of the number of souls that would not have been touched had not Sgt. Lee lived and become Evangelist Tim Lee.

This exemplifies what it means to pray in the Spirit. It is staying so close to God that He shares insights and burdens so that we may pray effectively and effectually (James 5:16b). *“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God”* (Romans 8:26, 27). *“What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also...”* (I Corinthians 14:15).

According to Jude verse 20, the Apostle tells us that praying in the Spirit will strengthen us spiritually: *“But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost.”* This will take abandonment to God

and a willingness to allow God to process, in time, what will benefit us for eternity.

2. Leave the results with God.

When I was nineteen years old I was caught up in the wonder of God, the manifested presence of Jesus Christ and three books 1) The Bible 2) The Holy Spirit, Who He Is and What He Does by R. A. Torrey 3) and Why Revival Tarries by Leonard Ravenhill. I wrote to Leonard Ravenhill, the evangelist from England asking for advice to a young preacher. In the introductory letter I told him of the ministry God was beginning to open up for me. I had just preached a revival meeting where 154 people walked the aisle to give their hearts to Christ. Over 60 who professed faith were baptized. I mentioned these statistics to Ravenhill. He wrote me a long letter of several pages. The outstanding statement in his reply to me was, "Concerning the results you mentioned in your letter to me: my advice to you is don't count the results of your meetings until five years later." This reminds me that Jesus said, *"...the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; Yet hath he not root in himself..."* (Matthew 13:20b,21a).

Ravenhill provoked me to pray that I would be real in my presentation of the Gospel, that I would lift up Jesus and leave the results to Him. By this one statement I have been encouraged to pray that the Word of God would do the work I could not do and that it would lodge in the hearts of my hearers. *"So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it"* (Isaiah 55:11).

3. Give God the glory.

I was in my early twenties when I heard Dr. John Moore speak. He was pastor of the church in Kent, Scotland that D. L. Moody had helped to start when he was holding revival meetings in the British Isles in the 19th century. Dr. Moore, being Scottish himself, was very interested in the famous Hebrides Revival that shook the Hebrides Islands off the coast of Scotland. It was reported that every accountable person on the Isle of Lewis got saved during this move of God that took place between 1949 and 1952.

Dr. Moore said he began to study the revival. He was immensely interested in the events surrounding the revival and especially what caused this visitation from the Lord. Dr. Moore said everything in his research was taking him to a little cottage in the village of Barvas where two elderly sisters - Peggy and Christine Smith lived. Peggy was almost blind, and Christine was bent over with arthritis. They were 84 and 82 years old. They also had been seeking God for revival in the days preceding the awakening, and to them came the promise, "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground" (Isaiah 44:3). In turn, these praying ladies had encouraged their pastor to call Evangelist Duncan Campbell to come to the Isle of Lewis and conduct the meetings. Campbell was reluctant, but after one prayer meeting with these sisters, God arrested his heart and the meetings began, which became one of the most earth-

shaking revivals of the 20th century. Time and space do not allow to disclose the amazing and miraculous things that occurred during these years of revival.

By God's grace, the sisters were still alive, although quite advanced in age, when Dr. Moore began to research the revival. He crossed from the Scottish mainland to Lewis with the specific purpose of interviewing these ladies. He could not believe how alert and still in tune with God these ladies were after all these years. As he leaned forward to ask the ladies for more details, Peggy, now in her nineties interrupted him and asked, "Are you writing this in a book?" She continued, "There was a man who wrote a book about this and he did not give God the glory!" Now in a most sincere and impassionate plea, Peggy said, "God is jealous over His glory and if we do not give Him the glory, He may never come back to our island again!"

I was young when I heard these words. How God pierced my heart with this truth! By this time in my ministry, in our Lord's pleasure, I had been invited to preach in some of the largest churches in America. I was impressed with how everyone was caught up in numbers. Pastors and laymen alike were consumed with these thoughts: How we can break our attendance record? What we can do to draw a crowd? Then once a church broke the records, seminars were being conducted on "How We Did It."! I have to admit, I was very impressed, yet there was a check in my spirit and a nagging question in my young mind: is this being handled properly? God says in His word, "*For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another*" (Psalm 75: 6,7). In my heart the day I heard Dr. Moore convey that story, I made a covenant with God to give Him the glory. This is what God requires and without this acknowledgment, we are doomed to have the works of our hands fail. "*Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it*" (Psalm 90:16, 17).

Let us wait on the Lord and serve Him in Spirit and truth and when He blesses, give Him all the glory! May we make these words our prayer: "*Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake*" (Psalm 115:1). One of the most valuable lessons I learned in my youth is to take seriously these words: "*That no flesh should glory in his presence. That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord*" (I Corinthians 1: 29, 31). And again, "*But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth*" (II Corinthians 10:17,18).

-Pastor Pope-

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