

Return

Malachi 3:7 Yet from the days of your fathers you have gone away from My ordinances and have not kept *them*. **Return to Me**, and I will return to you,”
Says the Lord of hosts.

Today we see that many ministries have become logistical masterpieces with slick production, multiplatform branding, polished messages timed and choreographed to perfection – but with no weight of conviction, people walking away feeling motivated yet empty.

The crowds are energetic, but few are living in the freedom and spiritual authority Jesus Christ died to provide for us.

Question: If God is still in the miracle business, why – in most churches – are the altars empty, the strongholds in people’s lives still present, and the hearts of people hardened?

This is the sign of a watered-down gospel that doesn’t save or deliver people.
The essence that marked the early Church was:

- **Radical repentance**
- **Supernatural signs**
- **Life transformation**
- **A unified community of believers affecting their communities**

Many churches have become attached to **Program** and **Performance** rather than the **Presence of God**.

- The leaders are concerned that a genuine move of Holy Spirit with people being delivered would offend or scare people away from services.
- Concerned for the effect of “**Noses and Nickels**” if they lose people, they will lose finances.

The early church didn’t live in revival – they lived in **Revolution**.

Acts 17:6 Paul in Thessalonica had many come to the Lord, which made the religious leaders envious. They couldn’t find Paul and his companions, but they found Jason, a church leader, and brought him before a council crying out:

“These who have turned the world upside down have come here also.”

- In reality, the early Christians were turning the world right-side up back to God’s order.

Real conviction of Holy Spirit will bring:

- Reverential fear of the Lord in the room & in the hearts of people
- God's people filled with fire
- God's people emboldened to share the truth of Jesus' Gospel
- A brokenness and surrender to the will of the Lord
- Not feel-good, self-help messages; but the truth from the Word about sin, justice, and divine judgment to help people prepare for eternity

Peter declared: Repent and be baptized...and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:38

- The same message Jesus Himself preached: Repent, for the Kingdom of God is here.

The power of the Gospel is not about speaking words; but it uproots, it unsettles, it sets captives free.

Reverence of the Lord is established in the hearts of people and righteous living is the result.

The Gospel is not meant to be entertainment – it is Transformation.

Many in today's church label an altar call non-essential and call Biblical conviction as legalistic.

- Many limit the Lord and believe He's interested in our comfort zone.
- He's more interested in your character than He is in your comfort.

This type of limitation was predicted, and we are warned about it by Paul:

2 Tim 4:2-5 Preach the word! Be ready in season *and* out of season. **Convince, rebuke, exhort**, with all long suffering and teaching.

³For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, *because* they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; ⁴and they will turn *their* ears away from the truth and be turned aside to fables. ⁵But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

We need to keep focused on the Word of God because man, by his natural instinct, does not *want* God's revelation. He would rather hear what he wants to hear – something to satisfy his **itching ears**.

“itching ears”: “Endless curiosity, an insatiable desire of *variety*; and they get their ears tickled with the *language* of the person, abandoning the *good and faithful preacher* for the *fine speaker*.”

There is currently a shaking by Holy Spirit, awakening a remnant church to arise. Prodigals and misfits are coming back home to the Gospel, people are stepping into their calling, trading hype for holiness, algorithms of media for altars, virtual lives for real encounters with a living God.

We are commissioned to: Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that MY house will be full. Luke 14:23 – Jesus’ words.

We need to lead people into real discipleship that affects radical change/transformation to become more like Jesus.

**Acts 2 Christianity and the Gospel hasn’t gone out of style,
it’s just out of practice!**

- The thinking that new methods will replace “fresh fire of Holy Spirit” is error.
- We need Holy Spirit fire that comes from repentance – prayer – surrender – obedience.

The Spirit Formed Church –

This is not a new idea or concept of church growth – it is the Original Design of God.

- Before there were buildings, choirs, denominations, youth groups, senior groups, creeds or hymns – THERE WAS AN UPPER ROOM!
- Where the wind and fire of Holy Spirit came upon a remnant of believers who were hungry to follow and obey Jesus with ALL their heart.

Acts 2 Pentecost was not the birth of a movement – it was the RESTORATION of the divine order of God.

- It was the Lord shaping His people into the image of His Son – not by power, not by might, but by His Spirit.

**THIS IS WHAT WE MUST RETURN TO IN ORDER TO BE MORE THAN CONQUERORS
IN THE DAYS AHEAD!**

- A body of believers shaped by the Word, empowered by the Spirit, alive with holiness and functioning in spiritual authority.

Jack Hayford, one of the fathers of modern Pentecostal movement said:

“The Spirit-formed church is the kind of church that is continually formed by the Spirit, not just informed by the Sprit. It doesn’t just talk about Holy Spirit or give Him

lip service during a service – it **Walks with Him – Listens to Him – Yields to Him** and is **Radically Transformed** by His presence. It's not a matter of style – it's a matter of lifestyle!"

It requires every area of the church's life: **worship, preaching, teaching, leadership, decision-making, outreach** – to be shaped and sustained by the power of Holy Spirit.

- Holy Spirit is never an **add on or an accessory** to the church's programs – He is the lifeblood of the church.
- Where and when He is grieved through disobedience or neglect; the church will become just a hollow shell, void of power, going through the motions while the world grows darker and darker.

2 Tim 3:1-5

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.

²For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

³Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,

⁴Traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;

⁵Having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

- Those who have a form of godliness are those who make an outward display of religion. They present themselves as godly, but it is all for show. There is no power behind their religion, as evidenced in the fact that their lives are unchanged. They speak of God and live in sin, and they are fine with that arrangement.

We must resist becoming culturally formed – and be Spirit-formed.

We cannot trade:

Revelation for relevance

Depth for entertainment

Spiritual power for corporate polish

Spirit-formed churches don't and won't blend with the world, they confront the world, resist the spirit of Babylon, and burn with the presence of the Lord.

To be Spirit-formed means:

- To be Word of God-rooted and Spirit-empowered – not diluted to make people comfortable
- To declare the Word with love and boldness, trusting the Spirit to convict – correct – transform
- To flow with the Spirit in prayer, worship, and the operation of the Gifts
- To not be afraid of allowing the Gifts to operate, knowing their purpose is to edify, exhort, and bring comfort to people

The Spirit-formed church is a holy people

- Not legalistic, but those who are in genuine pursuit of Christlikeness
- Marked by **Repentance** – **Reverence** – **Purity** because Holy Spirit comes to cleanse us
- Where those bound by sin, habits, addictions are set free – not by human achievement, but by Holy Spirit's delivery power.
- Where living in holiness is not a restriction – it is a **RELEASE** from the bondage of sin.
- Creating the atmosphere where the manifest presence of the Lord transforms hearts.

The Spirit-formed church is the church Jesus is looking for on His return to take His bride.

- He is coming for a Radiant Bride, not a compromised harlot!
- He is coming for a house of praying people.
- He is coming for those who walk in love – living and moving in authority and in the power of Holy Spirit.

You and I don't need more **innovation** – we need more **consecration**.

We don't need **new methods** – we need **the real outpouring and infilling** of Holy Spirit.

We need more than **strategies** – we need **surrender**.

Ps 127:1 Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it;

Unless the Lord guards the city, the watchman stays awake in vain.

- This is a call to Divine alignment – to God's original design for His people on earth.

Our mission is to make God known, not to promote a brand, not to chase influence, not to compete with others, but to Exalt the Lord above all others.

We are called to RETURN:

Return to our altars: whether at home or at the church

Return to the Word: as our sole source of guidance and direction

Return to the Spirit: He alone knows the mind and will of the Father and our future

May you and I be purged of pride and be sanctified with the fire of Holy Spirit so that the church can once again carry His presence and His prophetic word to this needy world.