

# Nurturing Revival Towards an Awakening

## PRIORITIZE FREEDOM OVER ORDER

### 1. Nurturing Revival Towards Awakening – Action steps:

- a. Birthed and carried in Intercessory Prayer.
- b. Create a Revival Culture.
- c. Develop a life of power that is Naturally Supernatural.
- d. Frequent and repeated Testimonies are a key to sustaining faith.
- e. Showing the Goodness of God is the bedrock of revival.
- f. Understanding our identity brings the gift of righteousness.
- g. Live in expectancy with a personality of Hope.
- h. The greatest of these is Love.
- i. Honoring one another is the value system of Heaven.
- j. Prioritize freedom over order.**
- k. Joy - the atmosphere of Heaven.
- l. The Church functions with limitless restoration as believers constantly walk in forgiveness.
- m. Unity among God's people shows the world the truth of Jesus.

### 2. Order or Life: Prioritizing for Freedom

- a. 2 Corinthians 3:17 ...Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty.
- b. Testimony about Freedom over Order:
  - i. While a speaker was sharing a message about the grace of God and the transforming power of His love.
  - ii. In the middle of the message, a woman on the third row let out a horrifying scream that seemed to go on forever and then turned into uncontrollable shaking and moaning.
  - iii. She had everyone's attention
  - iv. The deacons rushed to her with intention to escort her to a separate room for deliverance.
  - v. The ministers first thought was "demonic," He felt a check in his spirit and asked them to just let her be.
  - vi. When she had calmed down enough, he asked her to share her testimony.
  - vii. She first told about the horrible lifelong abuse she had suffered and then explained what had just happened.
  - viii. As she heard the message, the love of God touched her heart with a profound revelation of being fully accepted into His presence.
  - ix. The healing power of love went to the deepest part of her being and freed her from guilt and shame and in a moment changed her identity.
  - x. The sound we heard did not sound beautiful, but it was the sound of freedom!
  - xi. Though it seemed out of order it was life.
- c. Pastoring in Revival the life of the spirit is challenging.
  - i. Most revivals are marked by increased:
    1. salvations,
    2. healings,
    3. restorations,

4. transformed lives
5. unusual manifestations.
- ii. When people encounter and respond to the power of God, things can get a bit crazy.
- iii. Almost every revival in recorded history there is spiritual activity that is outside of the norm.
- iv. Unusual manifestations give room for:
  1. Those so inclined to be offended,
  2. It makes the task of discerning between flesh and Spirit crucial.
- v. Not everything we see in revival comes from the Spirit of God.
  1. When the Spirit touches people who are both soul and spirit
  2. It is difficult to determine if a response is soul, spirit, or a mixture of both.
- vi. We believe that revival should produce maturity,
- vii. Yet, immaturity will be present in any revival.
- viii. Revival is messy business:
  1. If you want it to be neat, you will have difficulty allowing the freedom necessary to create a revival culture!
- ix. The First Great Awakening
  1. Jonathan Edwards faced criticisms over a variety of manifestations that occurred in his meetings.
  2. In the Cane Ridge Revival,
    - a. young children began to preach
    - b. This caused some to reject the movement.
  3. For the Quakers it was their jerking and shaking that led to major opposition and persecution.
  4. In the Azusa Street revival
    - a. Race became the major issue
      - i. blacks and whites worshiped together and served in leadership together.
  5. Add to the mix other common historical manifestations in revivals like:
    - a. laughter,
    - b. falling down,
    - c. running,
    - d. shouting,
  6. The outcry will be, "Out of order!"
- x. Pastoring manifestations of the Spirit requires that we understand and walk the tension between life and order.

### **3. OUT OF ORDER**

- a. In 1 Cor. 14:40 Paul says that everything should be done decently and in order.
  - i. Decently and in order has become the catch phrase for many complaints leveled against the work of the Holy Spirit.
- b. We often use the phrase "out of order" to mean that whatever is going on needs to be regulated or brought under control.
- c. The way we use it has little to do with what Paul meant.

- i. The context for his statement was not to forbid the flow of the gifts but rather that they would flow in an orderly manner.
- d. There is a world of difference between:
  - i. order as direction and order as control.
- e. The Greek word for order means to arrange in order.
  - i. Webster's first definition of order:
    - 1. "to arrange in proper sequence,"
    - 2. Seems to fit what Paul had in mind.
  - ii. Paul's stated concern was that prophetic words be given one at a time so that they would be heard and so that there would be no confusion.
- f. When we spend time discussing moves of the Spirit:
  - i. We have heard the phrase out of order:
  - ii. However, it is used to justify someone's dislike or lack of understanding.
  - iii. Pastors have used it to criticize manifestations:
    - 1. They did not like
    - 2. Or did not understand.
  - iv. Jesus came:
    - 1. As the prophets foretold,
    - 2. Not as the people expected.
    - 3. Even John the Baptist:
      - a. Struggled because Jesus did not meet all his expectations (Matt. 11:2).
  - v. This issue of unmet expectations is huge in times of revival.
    - 1. It is easy to judge things that occur and decide they are "out of order."
  - vi. Out of order has a variety of meanings.
    - 1. Sometimes it means, "I have not experienced this."
      - a. Things we have not experienced can feel out of order, because we have no point of reference for them.
    - 2. "I am not comfortable with it."
      - a. Something out of my experience can make me feel uneasy or unsettled.
    - 3. At times there could genuinely be something wrong,
      - a. but more often the Holy Spirit is challenging our presuppositions and it is making us uncomfortable.
    - 4. Our religious backgrounds may define out of order as,
      - a. "that is not the way we have always done it."
        - i. We all have ways of behaving and activities we believe are normal and acceptable.
        - ii. These things get codified into a set of acceptable activities that make us feel secure,
        - iii. As soon as something moves outside of that norm we immediately think out of order.
    - 5. Another meaning ascribed comes from fear.
      - a. This meaning is reinforced when deacons visit the pastor to remind him that:
        - i. "Some people won't like this,"

- ii. "People won't understand."
- iii. These two come with the implied threat that if you do not correct this, something bad will happen.

#### 4. ORDER vs. LIFE

- a. One day Jesus stopped at a well in Samaria while
  - i. His disciples went on ahead into town.
  - ii. While Jesus waited, a Samaritan woman came for water.
  - iii. The encounter that followed was by local standards very out of order.
  - iv. Jesus was talking to a woman,
  - v. a Samaritan woman at that,
  - vi. He was alone with her.
  - vii. When the disciples returned, they struggled with the situation.
  - viii. The woman was transformed by the life flowing in this supernatural encounter,
  - ix. The disciples missed it because the life felt out of order.
  - x. Their concern with appearances blinded them to something powerful that God was doing.
- b. What comes first - order or life?**
  - i. Of course, the answer is life,
  - ii. Life produces order that protects the life.
  - iii. When the order, which protects life, becomes the focus, it restricts the new life God is releasing.
- c. By all appearances David was out of order when he brought the Ark into Jerusalem,
  - i. His wife Michal seemed to be the one following proper protocol.
  - ii. Yet her judgment of David left her barren and without life (2 Sam. 6:16-23).
  - iii. She had an order in her that did not protect life; it attacked life.
- d. Many movements of the Spirit appear a little chaotic at the onset.
  - i. This apparent disorder can lead to reactionary attempts to bring order
    - 1. If it is not done with great sensitivity,
    - ii. easily slips into control and the movement soon ends in order but without the life.
- e. The goal must always be life, and order must always remain subservient to life.**
- f. Order does not produce life but can maintain it by protecting the environment.
  - i. Correct order maintains life
  - ii. Controlling order quenches life.
- g. The order that life needs is birthed in honor not control**
  - i. Order birthed in honor has the capacity to maintain life.
- h. It is a fallacy to believe that if you get the order right, life will come.
  - i. John 6:63 we see that life is not birthed from order; life is birthed from the Spirit.
- i. The second law of thermodynamics.
  - i. It states that in the natural realm things tend to run down and tend to move from order to disorder.
  - ii. This is true unless energy is added,
  - iii. "the flow of energy maintains both order and life."
  - iv. Both life and order are essential.

- j. Implications of the word energy.
  - i. Our English word energy comes from the Greek word, meaning, “to work.”
  - ii. Paul used this word to describe the activity of the Holy Spirit in distributing gifts.
    - 1. 1 Cor. 12:11 But one and the same Spirit works all these things...
  - iii. He used it again to describe
    - 1. Eph. 3:20 ...the power that works within us.
  - iv. When we apply Paul’s usage of the word energy, there is a direct application of the second law to revival culture.
  - v. We see that both order and life come from the Holy Spirit and are maintained by the Spirit.
    - 1. The same Spirit that breathes life also brings order.
    - 2. We see this in creation when the Spirit hovered over the chaos and brought both order and life to this earth.
- k. During times of revival,
  - i. one of the greatest mistakes we make as leaders is
    - 1. to receive life from the Holy Spirit,
    - 2. Then turn to our experience for the order to maintain it.
  - ii. To sustain a revival culture both order and life must come from the Spirit of God.
  - iii. The Holy Spirit will give order to the life that He brings.
    - 1. we must trust Him to do it.
- l. Even though it appears that order and life are opposites, they are not in competition.
  - i. Both are essential to revival, but they must be kept in priority.
  - ii. Paul warned the church, 1 Th. 5:19-21 Do not quench the Spirit; do not despise prophetic utterances. But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; abstain from every form of evil.
    - 1. Both order and life are at work in this verse.
      - a. Life is at work providing freedom for the prophetic to flow
      - b. while order is at work examining the word for accuracy.
  - iii. The danger for us is that the desire to examine the word can become such a priority that we quench the Spirit.
    - 1. If we quench the Spirit,
      - a. we suppress life
      - b. introduce control instead of freedom.
  - iv. There are times when a person giving a prophetic word may need some correction.
    - 1. But how this is done can either maintain the flow of life or kill it.
    - 2. Treating people with honor means they are far more important to us than the messes they make.
    - 3. These kinds of discussions need to take place primarily in private.
      - a. Public corrections are one of the most damaging things we can do as leaders.
      - b. They communicate to everyone present:
        - i. “It is not okay to try and fail in this place...”

## 5. VALUE FREEDOM

- a. In a culture of revival one of the highest values is freedom.

- i. We must first allow freedom for the Spirit to move,
  - ii. then we must give freedom for people to experience God without fear of public rebuke or correction.
- b. Paul tells us in 2 Cor. 3:17 The Lord is the Spirit and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty
  - i. The context is:
    - 1. The veil has been removed
    - 2. Every believer is invited to come into the presence of God without restriction.
- c. The liberty of the Spirit is:
  - i. at liberty to break free from the restrictions of legalism under the law
  - ii. To discover the joy of intimacy with the Father.
  - iii. The Holy Spirit, who brings life and freedom to us, also introduces a “new order.”
  - iv. It is an order that places us under the rule of King Jesus.
  - v. As we surrender ourselves to His Lordship,
    - 1. He invites us into fellowship and intimacy.
- d. **The life that comes from this intimacy creates an atmosphere of freedom.**
  - i. This atmosphere is so full of grace
    - 1. People feel free to try and fail,
    - 2. knowing that even if they make mistakes, they are loved unconditionally,
    - 3. They will be treated with honor and respect.
- e. Life in the kingdom comes with abundant freedom,
  - i. Remember: “where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty.”
  - ii. This life of freedom is an unstoppable force compelled by love,
  - iii. Love which spreads out from the church into the community.
- f. It feels daunting for leaders to give this kind of freedom.
  - i. Leaders often speak words that express freedom
  - ii. Then manage that freedom so tightly that no one really feels free.
  - iii. It only takes one inappropriate correction to shut someone down for years.
  - iv. Leadership must bear the responsibility for creating an environment where risk is encouraged,
  - v. Where it is okay to try and fail.
  - vi. We must create an atmosphere so free,
    - 1. If someone goes too far, they feel secure because the boundaries of order are safe.
- g. God designed His church as a place of freedom without fear.
  - i. As leaders we must learn that it is much easier to deal with excess than with death.
- h. Jesus’ relationship with Peter is a perfect example of freedom being refined.
  - i. One moment Peter wanted to call fire down,
  - ii. the next he tries to correct Jesus’ theology,
  - iii. Then he reacts the night Jesus is arrested by cutting off an ear.
  - iv. But Peter who pushed boundaries also walked on water.
- i. An example from Dayspring:
  - i. A visiting speaker at a church who was a college professor and friend.
  - ii. The Pastor had not seen him in almost twenty years.
  - iii. As the worship began the presence of God was amazing and people began to respond.

1. Some danced at the front,
  2. some lay on the floor,
  3. some laughed,
  4. some wept,
  5. and during it all someone gave a word of knowledge
  6. Several got healed.
- iv. This was normal to them, but the guest was accustomed to a more typical service
    1. One where we expect everyone to do what we deem appropriate in any given part of the service.
  - v. By the end of the service he was profoundly changed by the liberty he had experienced.
  - vi. **There is nothing like freedom to break the bonds of religious restriction.**

## 6. LEAVEN OF DISORDER

- a. Religion cannot tolerate freedom.
  - i. Religious systems are performance-based
  - ii. Use order to protect position rather than to protect life.
- b. Just after Jesus fed the 4000,
  - i. the Pharisees asked Him to give them a sign.
  - ii. Jesus answers them then turns to His disciples and gives them a warning.
    1. Mark 8:15 ...Watch out! Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod. It does not take much leaven to infect the whole lump of dough.
  - iii. Jesus warns that we must be aware of the things we allow to influence us.
  - iv. Order that comes from any source other than the Holy Spirit will
    1. adversely influence the culture of life in the body.
  - v. The leaven of the Pharisees is religion.
    1. When religious leaven is allowed into our leadership style,
      - a. it affects everything.
      - b. Instead of life and order from the Spirit,
      - c. tradition and position become the foundation for decisions.
      - d. Rules and punishment become the means of controlling the environment.
  - vi. Jesus' warning calls on us to:
    1. open our minds
    2. understand the distinction between what comes from religion and what comes from life.
- c. The Pharisees and experts in the law
  - i. Rejected God's purpose for themselves,
  - ii. They had not been baptized by John (Luke 7:30).
  - iii. They were experts at the law
  - iv. When life came, they were unable to recognize it.
  - v. It did not fit with their religious understanding.
  - vi. it was uncomfortable.
  - vii. They missed their day of visitation because they put order before life.

- d. There is a second leaven that Jesus warns of and that is the Leaven of Herod.
  - i. Herod was the political leader of his day and represented the political system.
  - ii. Political systems driven by image and position are contradictory to the model of Jesus' ministry.
  - iii. Church politics have no place in the body of Christ
    - 1. The political spirit is infected with a "divide and conquer" mindset.
  - iv. This leaven gives little value to people or to the truth.
- e. Both the political spirit and the religious spirit:
  - i. Operate in fear
  - ii. Are powered by the fear of man.
  - iii. These destructive systems are out of order and must be avoided in the church.

## 7. LEAVEN OF THE KINGDOM

- a. There is another leaven mentioned in Scripture and that is the leaven of the kingdom.
- b. Jesus says that the truth of the kingdom has an even greater power to permeate an environment than either religion or politics.
- c. At the Feast of Passover
  - i. leaven was taken out of the bread, representing death of the old nature.
- d. But at the Feast of Pentecost the leaven was put back in,
  - i. because the Spirit was going to be injected into us with power (Lev. 23:17).
- e. The leaven of the kingdom is the life of the Spirit.
  - i. When the Spirit of God is invited into the church body,
  - ii. He has the power to change the nature of the entire congregation if He is given the liberty.
- f. Jesus told His disciples to wait in Jerusalem until they were endued with power.
  - i. They needed the life that came with His power to do what they were called to do.
- g. For the church to receive this fresh empowerment of the Spirit,
  - i. we need to allow the Holy Spirit to help us redefine order so that life becomes the priority.
- h. To be a carrier of the life of revival means laying aside:
  - i. disappointments,
  - ii. unmet expectations
  - iii. the limits of past experience
- i. So that a fresh wind of the Spirit can blow through us.
- j. John 4:24 Jesus told the woman at the well that,
  - i. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.
    - 1. Worship brings a revelation of both Spirit and truth.
    - 2. True worship connects us to the heart of God,
    - 3. true worship will help us find the balance between order and life.
- k. As we learn to host the presence of God,
  - i. He will help us discern the difference between:
    - 1. order that maintains life
    - 2. order that kills it.
  - ii. We must learn this if we are to keep from missing our day of visitation.



- I. If we stay in tune with the Spirit of God, He will show us the balance between life and order.

## 8. CHAPELTOWN

### a. Testimony from Steve and Sally Wilson

- i. One of the most fulfilling ventures we experienced in England took place when we planted a church in an urban area of Leeds, called Chapeltown.
- ii. The Chapeltown race riots of 1987 had barely died away when we moved in.
- iii. Their family of four, plus four other young people, moving into an urban neighborhood full of drugs and violence.
- iv. The local police visited us early on:
  1. wanted to rent the top floor of their home to use as a spy base,
  2. They refused the request.
  3. Local drug dealers soon learned that they could hide drugs on their property because the police never searched there.
  4. When Sally discovered a stash in our backyard, she had to have a talk with one of the local dealers
  5. They were there to express God's love, not have them arrested.
  6. The process of building an interracial church in a cultural war zone had all the charm of a nest of hornets, but the result was amazing.
  7. The church became a living testimony to God's ability to unite His people across the races.
  8. We took our interracial worship team out onto the streets and watched as God did a wonder in that strife-torn area.
  9. The church became a testimony to the city, with a gratifying racial diversity.
  10. Even better, they genuinely liked one another.
  11. When they arrived in Leeds they began to reach out to the other pastors in the city.
  12. They knew that the challenge of racial reconciliation they were taking on was much bigger than them and they wanted their cooperation.
  13. They began praying regularly with different pastors and the support they felt was extraordinary.
  14. One of the most gratifying relationships was with the pastor of a large church in the center of Leeds.
  15. He had been praying for Chapeltown for years.
  16. He had made several unsuccessful attempts to get a satellite church started in the area where they lived and was excited to help them succeed.
  17. He and Steve began to meet regularly to pray and to strategize.
  18. His knowledge of the history and culture was invaluable.
  19. Then the phone call came from his apostolic oversight.
  20. The short version of the content of the call would be,
    - a. "Stop meeting with my leader unless you are going to join our organization."
  21. It was heart wrenching; order had just killed life!
  22. They went on with the work and God supplied others who stood with them until the breakthrough came,

23. but something had been lost which was on the heart of God.
  24. It was several years before the next phone call.
  25. By this time, they had turned the church over to others and moved back to the States.
  26. But the next time they were in England for a visit, the pastor from Leeds called and asked if they could meet.
  27. They had a great time of restoration and he told them that his overseer had recently repented of his sectarian attitude and they wanted to make it right.
  28. To their surprise and delight they organized a joint meeting in the city in which they repented, and they were restored.
  29. In that moment of repentance, life was returned to the citywide work.
- b. It is so easy to let our perception of order stand in the way of the life God desires.
  - c. When we place life before order:
    - i. we give the Father pleasure
    - ii. in turn He releases great joy.
  - d. The joy we experienced at that meeting was tremendous,
    - i. but the joy that comes as a manifestation of His presence is even greater.
    - ii. His joy is to become a part of our lifestyle.