

Prayer Transformation Ministries Email Newsletter – Teaching for 5/2/07

A Higher Expectation

Perhaps you can remember as a child lying on your back in the grass and looking at the stars, believing that you were beholding the sum of God's universe. Or perhaps you remember blasting toy rockets into "space" or exploring distant stars with your telescope. Your expectations of magnificence in God's creation were most likely limited to what you could actually see.

But today you can go on the Hubble Telescope website (www.Hubblesite.org, go to gallery: picture album) and see incredible galaxy formations that are breathtaking and beyond anything you can imagine! You can see stars, planets, and solar systems that are exhilarating in their full color and fascinating designs. Really, you need to do this!

Suddenly you will realize that you have settled for lower expectations of the majesty of God. These unbelievable galaxies have existed all along under His watchful care. We just didn't know the reality of the things beyond what we could see by looking into the heavens on a starry night. Our expectations of God are far too low!

In the same way, we often settle for lower expectations of what God can do in our lives, our churches, and even in entire communities and societies. Because very few of us have actually experienced the true manifest presence of God, we become satisfied with whatever we can create with our own programs and efforts. The people who experienced the Hebrides revivals had no idea that God could overwhelm their island with His power and conviction. People who are currently experiencing transformation in Fiji (with healing of a polluted stream and the coral reef) did not realize that God was interested in healing His creation in miraculous ways—until they witnessed it firsthand.

Rather than be satisfied with what we can see or do on our own, we need to raise our standards of expectation related to the greatness of God. If He promises to "heal our land" in response to our humility, repentance, and seeking Him, then we should expect that God would do nothing less to bring glory to Himself. This is not something we can manufacture, but rather something only God can display through His greatness.

Startled by God

The story of Zechariah in Luke 1 is a fascinating and familiar story. Zechariah was the father of John the Baptist, who served as priest before God and was chosen to burn incense in the Temple. Zechariah went into the holy place to perform his duty and was suddenly confronted by the angel Gabriel. Zechariah was *startled and gripped with fear* (vs. 12). What is so fascinating is that for years the priests had been going into the sanctuary to burn their incense. Year after year they performed their priestly duties in a holy place, not realizing that it was actually empty of the shekinah glory of God! They had gotten so used to an empty sanctuary that an angel's presence was startling and fearful. Imagine what might have happened to Zechariah if God Himself had shown up in His manifest glory!

We are much the same way in our churches and ministries. We have gone on for years with the same routines, and same programs, getting much the same results. We have come to believe this is the normal expectation of the Church. We have wonderful worship sets with great preaching. People are well instructed in God's Word, and many even get saved. So that seems normal to us, but yet we don't realize that there is so much God desires to do. We may believe that God has shown up, but we know little of the "fire of His presence." Nothing will draw people more powerfully to our churches than God's actual manifest presence—it is the "divine magnetism" of God.

A Whole Different Standard

In his book, *The Fire of God's Presence*, John Wesley Adams writes:

Whenever genuine revival occurs, people are drawn there, not by clever advertising or human persuasion, but by the magnetism of God's manifest presence.... People could no longer be indifferent to God and what He was doing. People could still resist God and respond negatively to His invitation of mercy as some people did, but they could no longer view God as unimportant, irrelevant or coldly detached from current history. The reality of God and His salvation was like a blazing fire with amazing drawing power (pg. 74).

Solomon knew about this magnetism. In his prayer dedicating the Temple, he visualized people coming from distant lands "because of your great name and our mighty hand and your outstretched arm" (2 Chronicles 6:32). Keep in mind, Solomon had just seen the presence of God fill the Temple with a cloud of such glory that the priests could not perform

their duties (2 Chronicles 5:13-14). When Solomon finished his prayer and invited God's presence to come to the Temple, fire came from heaven and consumed the offerings (2 Chronicles 6:41-7:3). From that point on, we can assume that Solomon had a higher expectation of divine magnetism!

God is showing Himself in similar ways today in more than 500 places around the world in response to the humble, broken, desperate cries of His people. They are willing to pay whatever price is necessary to attract His presence and will not give up until He comes. Their fervency in prayer and persistent longing for God's presence are paying off in big ways—to their utter amazement! Ask the Lord to fill your heart with a hope that expects nothing less.