

A Movement of Renewal



As movement leader of the Kingdom Network, I spend a fair amount of time praying and asking God, “what are you up to in this movement and how can we join you?” This advent in my prayer times I have been reading and reflecting on the prophecies in the Older Testament about the coming of the Messiah, particularly from the prophet Isaiah. This week I was struck by the words of Isaiah 11 and sensed the Holy Spirit highlighting these words in relation to my prayers for the Kingdom network. Listen to these words...

*A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.
2 The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him — the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the Lord—
3 and he will delight in the fear of the Lord. (Isaiah 11:1-3)*

During Isaiah’s day, the promises God made to King David in 2 Samuel 7 - Promises of an enduring and blessed Kingdom - seemed broken. The House of David resembled a chopped down tree. However, the promise of Isaiah is that from its dried stump a Spirit-filled branch would emerge: Jesus, the son of David. He would Unite both Jews and gentiles and draw all people to himself. Now, of course this prophecy has an already and not yet component. In his first coming he ushered in a new Kingdom of peace, life, joy, and healing, but as we know, this Kingdom is here, but will be completed when Jesus comes again. Isaiah goes on to describe the not yet heavenly Kingdom in vv. 6-9...

The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling^[a] together; and a little child will lead them...⁸ The infant will play near the cobra’s den, and the young child will put its hand into the viper’s nest.

Can you imagine the age to come? Imagine saying to your infant child, “Honey why don't you go play with that nice Viper, I'm kind of busy right now.” We are definitely in the tension of the already and not yet, and as the body of Christ, we as the church get to carry on the work of Jesus, being his ambassadors of peace, love, reconciliation, life, joy and healing. What a privilege!

However, I believe the Holy Spirit is whispering more to us as a movement. Like Isaiah's day when the promise to King David seemed broken, and in Jesus’ day when the religious system of the time was broken, we come from a denomination that is in many ways broken. Stemming from a centuries-old wineskin or structure that no longer serves the church well, and through decades of infighting, posturing and politicizing, it has seen a radical decline - the old branch was not bearing as much fruit as it could.

What If?

What if God is raising us up for such a time as this? What if God is raising us up like a shoot from the stump of the RCA? What if we were filled with the Spirit of the Lord, filled with wisdom, understanding and the mighty power of the Holy Spirit? What if we delighted in the wonder, awe and glory of our Living God, and if we truly lived for his Kingdom and His glory above all else? What if we didn't get caught up in the myriad of distractions of our day but lived sold out and passionately to bring his Kingdom to earth - in our lives and churches. What if God was calling us to lead a movement of renewal in his church and revival in our land? What if God were raising us up as a shoot of new life to bring peace, reconciliation, healing and joy? To be friends on a Kingdom mission together helping each other to truly live out a Kingdom vision. This is what the Spirit of God is stirring in me, and I hope in you too!

One Practical Step...

Friends I don't think this renewal is going to happen by mistake or just passively waiting for God to move. God always invites his people to play an active role in what he is doing. I love the quote by John Wesley who said, "God does nothing except in response to believing prayer".

In my President's address at our launch gathering I challenged us to be a movement characterized by prayer and fasting. I reminded us that in this cultural moment we are facing an enemy that is not just flesh and blood but "against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." Our primary weapon in this battle is not our great strength or wisdom, but our primary weapon is prayer. Without prayer and the power and presence of the Holy Spirit it's like going into a tank battle with squirt guns - we are gonna get crushed. Prayer forges humility and opens us up to the love of God out of which we work for renewal and revival together. Prayer and fasting allows the spirit to work deeply in us and to confess our powerlessness and our desperate need for the living God so we can face and engage the challenges from a deeper place. A deep move of God in this hour literally won't have a prayer if we don't have one.

Here's The Step: First Thursday Prayer and Fasting

What if all the pastors and key leaders in our network churches gathered for 1/2 hour on the first Thursday of every month at noon. Fast a meal or fast for the day; however you feel led, to make space at lunch to feast on God and fellowship with brothers and sisters. This gives us a chance to see and connect with each other, to pray for renewal and revival, and to pray for each other - specifically for needs or new initiatives. Can you think of a downside to this? We desire to be a spirit filled movement of friends on mission, running together to advance the Kingdom. Here is one practical way to do this... so let's do it!

First gathering of *First Wednesday Prayer and Fasting*: January 5, Noon (Zoom link will be sent).

Format: ½ Hour 12-12:30 pm (Central Time)

- **5 Min. Word from a Kingdom Network Leader**
- **Prayer for Personal and Church Renewal**
- **Prayer for each other for needs or new initiatives**

Have a joy filled and blessed Christmas season and see you virtually January 5 at noon,
Dave