

Scriptures and Doctrine :: Holy Laughter?

Holy Laughter? - posted by FireinmyBones1 (), on: 2004/7/8 10:55

Greetings brothers and sisters in Jesus' Name!

I'm writing today concerning a post which received many reply's entitled, "Kenneth Hagin and the Laughing Revival". I must say that after viewing the video much of what I saw did indeed bother me. It was not so much the laughter as it was the language and other things being used.

I must however say that I was slightly disappointed with the responses from both sides on this issue. Those who disagreed with the content came with what seemed to me to be a judgemental attitude, and those who supported it also came with a harsh, judgemental, know-it-all type of attitude. I understand that I am absolutely 200% capable of making mistakes so my judgements in this matter could be wrong.

I personally have been in attendance as a very young man at a service conducted by Rodney Howard Browne. I must say that as a young man I was frightened by what I saw, and when I refused prayer I and my siblings were almost rebuked in front of the church by this brother. That disturbed me. Yet I will still make no blanket statements concerning his ministry because although I have seen things that I disagree with I have also seen some good fruit. I have also been in meetings that were local, where the whole congregation was caught up in "holy laughter". I know for certain some of those who were laughing were men and women of God, not one doubt about it in my mind. On the other hand I know for a fact that there were people laughing hysterically for the sake of getting attention. One young woman wound up pregnant by a man she was not married to weeks later. All of these things put somewhat of a sour taste in my mouth concerning this issue.

Yet I would simply bring a word of caution that we not throw away or label something as demonic that could be a genuine manifestation of the Spirit. Although there have been MANY abuses and MANY excesses. History shows us that some of the greatest revivals and some of the greatest men of God have experienced similar manifestations. For instance, Praying (John) Hyde, one of the greatest intercessors of all time, experienced what was called "Holy Laughter". Pages 25 - 27 of the 3rd edition of the book "Praying Hyde" document this experience. It is said that while in prayer with a certain friend brother Hyde would begin to laugh in mid-prayer, and then return to praying. They believed this was God's way of giving them joy in the midst of heartbreaking intercession so that they would not be so overwhelmed with sorrow that they would lose heart. They said that God was showing them that He was the "God of Issac", Issac meaning laughter. Now I'm sure that Brother Hyde was not thinking in "Holy Ghost Bartender" terms when this would happen to him. But Nevertheless, he was indeed experiencing a manifestation of the Holy Ghost that caused him to laugh.

In the "Nature of Revival" John Wesley writes of an occurrence which took place on New Years Eve of 1739 where many were knocked to the ground and cried out in "Holy Joy". Whether this is a reference to Holy laughter I'm not 100% sure about.

A letter to George Whitefield describing the Welsh Revival (1700's) under Daniel Rowlands Ministry says this

"While on is praying another is laughing; some howl and beat their hands together; others are weeping and groaning; and others are groveling on the ground in a swoon, making all kinds of antic postures; then they all laugh at once, and continue laughing for about a quarter of an hour. The power then continues with Rowland in uncommon."

It is also written of the Revivals in Africa under C.T. Studd's ministry

"The whole place was charged with an electric current, men were falling, jumping, laughing, crying, singing, confessing, and some shaken terribly. It was a terrible sight . . .

This particular one can best be described as a spiritual tornado. People were literally flung to the floor or over the forms, yet no one was hurt . . . as I led in prayer, the Spirit came down mightily sweeping the congregation. My whole body literally trembled with power. We saw a marvelous sight, people literally filled and drunk with the Spirit."

Now in posting this I am by no means setting myself up as one who is involved in the laughter movement. All I am saying is that although I myself am somewhat skeptical and KNOW that there have been many abuses, we may not want to be so quick to make blanket statements.

For two years I was privileged to live in the midst of the Brownsville Revival. I know that prior to that precious move of God, Pastor John Kilpatrick became so desperate for a touch from God that he invited a man who was involved in the "laughter movement" to speak at Brownsville. Pastor told the man to preach the word and then to turn the service back over to him and he would decide whether or not to continue. At the end of the message (which was a very biblical message on revival), the man said, "The Holy Ghost is all over me quick run to the altar now, I'm gonna lay hands on you!" Pastor Kilpatrick immediately jumped up grabbed the mic and said that there was a strange spirit in the church and that the service was over! The church quickly emptied out, all except for around 50 people who came with this man. They all got i

n aisles and began chanting, "ICHABOD, GOD HAS LEFT THIS PLACE, ICHABOD!" The ushers literally had to drive these people out of the church. Then after being kicked out, these people began picking up rocks and trying to break the windows! Talk about putting a bad taste in your mouth!

I know several times in the revival those who were laughing were escorted out because they were disrupting the preaching of the gospel.

I like you have my problems with the excesses, my only caution to beware of blanket statements.

Blessings

Jeff

Re: Holy Laughter? - posted by jeremyhulsey (), on: 2004/7/8 11:58

Jeff,

I would not condemn "holy laughter" as a manifestation in its self. If that's what is condemned then we're chasing after the wrong culprit. As far as those like Rodney Howard Browne, John Arnott, and other promoters of the false laughing revival goes, it's not the manifestations but the doctrines that are the root of the problem.

As Far as Rodney Howard-Browne is concerned, there is not much doctrine to examine, it's more psychological manipulation and even intimidation if he feels you disagree with him. The Scriptures say that unstable men will be tossed about by every wind and wave of doctrine, and will refuse sound doctrine. It's because of this that I refuse to listen to these men. I love them and pray for them, but I wouldn't listen to them or suggest anyone listen to them, but not because of any such manifestations.

Now as far as real "holy laughter"? Yes I believe it can be a real manifestation, and I have also seen real manifestations of holy laughter. I would say that I have even experienced it. But it was from sheer joy of knowing my sins were forgiven, not from psychological stimulations in the face of unrepentance.

The problem isn't the manifestation, but a false manifestation can serve to cover the real problem and that's false doctrine.

In Christ,
Jeremy Hulsey

Re: Holy Laughter? - posted by crsschk (), on: 2004/7/8 12:02

Wow...

I must say thank you brother for an insightful and altogether different perspective here.

Quote:

-----I must however say that I was slightly disappointed with the responses from both sides on this issue. Those who disagreed with the content came with what seemed to me to be a judgemental attitude, and those who supported it also came with a harsh, judgemental, know-it-all type of attitude. I understand that I am absolutely 200% capable of making mistakes so my judgements in this matter could be wrong.

I believe you are right here. I think it is very possible that in attempting to defend our Lord we can be overtaken by zeal at times and stray off into character assault's which doesn't reflect our mandate to love one another as our Lord has commanded. And I too will up the ante and state that I could be 500% wrong as well (reminds me of a quip from Leonard Ravenhill I heard yesterday: 'I am proud of my humility!' He was KIDDING!)

It seems also to be a matter of perspective, to my fallible mind it seems particularly grievous to see such reckless abandon in a time when the church in large part is in the shape it is in. When your thoughts are towards those that are suffering reproach, torture and even cruel death in other parts of the world because of their witness for the Lord...When the Holiness of God has been lost...The state of this country and all the countries of the world for that matter who have brought reproach to the name of our God...

I just don't see what is so funny.

I digress, I am in a particular travelling mood of late over what we human creatures have done, even the best of us fall s

o far short.

As you stated in the past revivals, I can see where this has come into play, when a certain joy in the Lord would cause spontaneous laughter, yet it seems that in most of the cases it was in a mixture of weeping and brokenness, would expect as you well stated *"They believed this was God's way of giving them joy in the midst of heartbreaking intercession so that they would not be so overwhelmed with sorrow that they would lose heart."*

Another really troubling thing is how things have to be put up with these labels attached to them:

"Holy Laughter" it causes undue attention from both sides and causes extremes to form or so it seems. Why couldn't it just be said that 'some weep and others laughed' depending on the circumstances at the time?

But going back to the video itself, my spirit just revolted at what I was seeing and hearing, I don't know what else I can say.

But praise God for this, it is the first time I have ever heard anything of the sort from all the negative that has been reported in connection with Brownsville (and please, don't get me wrong we who were not there usually only get one side of the story and tend to concentrate on the excess's) That there was more of this kind of discernment:

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I know several times in the revival those who were laughing were escorted out because they were disrupting the preaching of the gospel.
I like you have my problems with the excesses, my only caution to beware of blanket statements.

Thank you brother for your honesty and your perspective.

Re: - posted by FireinmyBones1 (), on: 2004/7/8 12:35

Greetings in Jesus Name!

I find constantly in the body of Christ, that most who hear of the Revival in Brownsville have heard only rumors and of excesses that generally always came from visitors to Brownsville and not from the leadership themselves. I while living there heard nothing but messages on prayer, repentance and genuine revival. Never ONCE, did I witness a scene like that in the Kenneth Hagin video. On the contrary I have witnessed scenes where the whole congregation (thousands) were taken over with weeping and wailing in conviction and intercession, resulting in hundreds literally sprinting toward the altars. Nothing like the scene in the Kenneth Hagin video has ever taken place at Brownsville, the focus has always been on repentance, the cross, and holiness. Many have condemned Brownsville saying that the cross was not central, quite to the contrary I have never heard the cross preached with more passion and regularity as I did while at Brownsville. I have personally heard pastor John Kilpatrick say that if he ever heard the first animal noise the people would be hauled out. Brownsville was/is definitely not a movement one could lump together with the "laughing revival". Brownsville was a city impacting, repentance based move of God. The mayor of Pensacola himself stated that they no longer (during the height of the revival- 96-99) had to patrol the area around the church. Which is a VERY rough neighbourhood. Also in 97 in the state of Florida the crime rate rose 1% for every county except for two. Escambia county -where Pensacola is located-the crime rate dropped 13%. The Next county over the crime rate dropped 5%. The Mayor of Pensacola has attributed this to the revival. There were some wild manifestations at the revival, these were always for the purpose of bringing people to repentance however. The main "manifestation" unarguably would have to be the weeping and wailing of conviction and intercession.

Whenever God comes in Revival power he generally (in my estimation) comes to make two statements. That He is not who we think He is, and that we are not who we think we are.

Blessings,
Jeff