

FROM THE SPIRIT WITHIN

~Other Speakers A-F: Richard E. Bieber:

"...but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst; the water that I shall give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."
John 4:14

Revival has often been described as an atmosphere. When ever there is a revival that's truly coming from the Spirit of God, the characteristic mark of it is that when you walk into that area, or that house, or among those people, there is something in the atmosphere around you that gets hold of you.

Even if not a word has been spoken, or a song sung, you know that the very air you're breathing is drenched with the presence of God.

- You are lifted into a state of worship.
- Your heart prostrates itself before God in awe.
- Your spirit awakens, and knows it needs cleansing.
 - Perhaps your body trembles.

All of us who have ever tasted this kind of thing can testify that as long as that atmosphere of worship surrounds us, it's easy to serve God, easy to praise him, easy to do costly, painful things in obedience to his word, easy to defy our fears and walk through dangers and trials.

But this atmosphere of worship which brings us a foretaste of glory is always temporary.

Palm Sunday this atmosphere came on Jerusalem, and almost everybody praised God. Doubtless, if they hadn't praised God, the very stones would have cried out.

"Hosannah to the Son of David.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"

Men who hadn't named the name of God in years were weeping. Children were speaking prophecy. The daughters of Jerusalem were rejoicing in God with a joy those streets had never seen.

But then the atmosphere which God had sent to prepare the way of his Beloved Son, as he came to Jerusalem to lay down his life, was withdrawn. The air was earthly again.
Now who is praising God?
Who's worshipping?

By the end of the week there is only one man left --- Jesus --- worshipping the Father by dragging that bloody cross toward Golgatha. Offering himself to the Father as the perfect sacrifice for us, with his nail-pierced hands stretched out toward God.

"Lo, I come to do the will of God.
In the volume of the book it is written of me."

The atmosphere of worship that touches this earth at times of revival is like an oxygen tent. It's easy to breathe in the oxygen tent. But what happens when God takes the tent away? Do we keep on worshipping when we have to live in an atmosphere of polluted air?
God is raising up a people who, like his Son, keep right on worshipping him and doing his will when the atmosphere of revival is removed.

God is raising up a people who, like Jesus, continue to function as sons and daughters of God even in an atmosphere of heavy, earth-bound, filthy air. People who are no longer babies carried back and forth by the changing winds around them, but whose mature, solid, freely-willed worship of the living God goes on forever.

God is bringing us to the place where we worship, not because of the atmosphere around us, but in spite of it.

The Spirit who came to us in the atmosphere of revival is still with us, now that the revival is over. The

atmosphere has changed, but the Spirit is still urging us from within to defy the death and danger and dryness that surround us, and worship God.

When you're so depressed and confused you don't know which way to turn, the Spirit within you is still saying, "Worship God!"

You turn to your Bible looking for comfort and the message that comes to you is not comfort but an exhortation to praise,

"I will bless the Lord at all times.
His praise shall be continually in my mouth."

"Bless the Lord, O my soul;
and all that is within me, bless his holy name!"

The enemy keeps whispering alarming lies about your future.

- What if your health breaks?
- What if you lose your job?
- What if you have an accident?

And the Spirit of God within you counsels you not even to answer those lies,

"Turn your heart toward heaven and worship God."

You wake up one day and think you've run out of steam. Your zeal is gone. It seems that suddenly you feel no delight in serving God. You're sick of everything. Again the Spirit counsels you to do one thing: worship God.

If we listen to the Spirit who, from within, speaks to us this one command, we will go from strength to strength.

"They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up on wings as the eagles. They shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."

To wait on the Lord does not mean to sit in a chair and tap your fingers until another revival comes. To wait on the Lord means to worship God with all your heart to the point where your body becomes a living sacrifice even while your mind is constantly renewed.

But all too often, instead of obeying the Spirit within, we look around, see that the atmosphere has changed, nobody's waving palm branches anymore, and we quench the Spirit of worship in our hearts. All around us this is happening to thousands of believers who seemed to be on fire a short time ago. They were on fire but,

- now their flesh has taken over, and the fire has cooled down,
- now they're conscious of what others think of them, and they're afraid,
- they're on the rebound from their former "excesses"; they're becoming "sensible" --- and dead.

After a while we become homesick for the joy we had when we were prostrate before the throne of God. We begin looking around for someone who can impart to us that God-drenched atmosphere we once knew. But we need to be careful, because there will always be a false Christ waiting to offer you the revival atmosphere you're looking for.

"Lo, he is in the desert."
"Lo, he is in the secret chambers."

Don't go there. For the Christ you seek,

- is not in the desert,
- or in the secret chambers,
- or in some Christian hothouse where the atmosphere is a constant, humid 98.6.

The Christ you seek is in the Spirit who has already been sent into your heart. And, who, at this moment is calling you to worship God outside the oxygen tent.

1. The Spirit within is urging us to let our hearts go out to God in worship at the start of the day in spite of the fact that the day looks dull.

You have a headache. Your sinuses are blocked. Every thing, from your job to the weather, is depressing. But the Spirit within you cries, "Abba, Father," and will lift you, with all your problems, into the presence of Yahweh.

Instead of drawing worship from you as he did during the revival, God is now teaching you to let the Spirit within you raise you into the heavenly regions.

"Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst; the water that I shall give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

That spring never runs dry. The water is fresh every morning "every hour" even in the middle of the night.

2. The Spirit within is calling us to join our brothers and sisters to glorify God with one mind and one mouth in spite of how few and weak we are.

Do we have to have a thousand in the audience before we can get into worship of God?

Do we have to be some kind of super-fellowship before we can praise him?

So we're few, we're weak and confused, we have problems.

When will we learn that you don't need to set the stage to worship God?

We can worship God with the organ. We can worship God with guitar.

We can worship God with cymbals and drums. We can worship God with silence.

We can worship God with clapping hands. We can worship God on our knees.

We can worship God if we are 4000, or if we're only 2 or 3.

If the Spirit in you is the Spirit of God, and the Spirit in me is the Spirit of God, what else do we need? Do we have to have a 500 voice choir and blue lights?

3. The Spirit is calling us to join with the whole creation in the worship of God in spite of the fact that the creation is, right now, groaning in travail.

"And there will be signs in the sun and moon and stars and upon the earth distress of nations in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves. Men fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

For nation will rise against nation, kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines and earthquakes in various places."

You won't be standing at the window praising God for the sunset. The window will be broken and the wind and rain will be roaring through your house, and the earth will be trembling under your feet. And you'll still be praising God, because you know that the creation, even in her pain, is worshiping God and bringing to birth a new race.

And even now, when the travail is light, we worship God in the storm and the drought "not just in the golden harvest.

4. The Spirit is calling us to join the host of heaven in worshipping the Father in spite of the fact that the host of heaven is still invisible to us.

"For, you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem and to

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innumerable angels in festal gathering and to the assembly of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven."

And what are they doing?

- They are worshipping God with all their heart and soul!
- They are on their faces before his majesty.
- They are on their feet praising his glory.

And the Spirit who is in us now links us to them! We are brought into their midst though we see them not. And their song becomes our song, their joy lifts our hearts.

Therefore, with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious name, evermore praising thee and saying, "Holy, Holy, Holy."

And as we do, demons shudder, sickness flees, fear shrivels, death and hell shake in their boots.

We have come to a time when we are all being called to a level of obedience, love, sacrifice, self-denial, beyond anything we've ever known. To live the life to which God now calls us in this world as it now is, is only possible if worship of God becomes the constant inner condition of our hearts. If that spring of living water gushes up inside us, even when we are surrounded by burning desert.

Don't just sit there waiting for another revival.
Don't keep relying on that spiritual oxygen tent.

- Worship God by the power of the Spirit who is now in you.
- Be directed and encouraged, not by the atmosphere around you, but by the Spirit of the Lord within you.

And even as the world around you crumbles and collapses you will go from strength to strength as a minister of the living Christ in the final hour of this world's day.