

When God moves... ...His people get desperate

ACTS 1:8, 12-14

INTRODUCTION:

- In 1857, Jeremiah Lanphier, a businessman burdened over the spiritual condition of his day, knelt in the back room of a small church in New York City with a broken heart and a simple request: *“Lord, what will You have me to do?”*
- God birthed in his heart to begin a businessmen’s prayer meeting at noon one day a week for an hour. His invitation simply read, *“Come when you can, leave when you must.”*
- September 23, 1857, he launched his prayer meeting and sat alone praying. Finally after ½ an hour someone joined him—then another and another—until there was six.
- The next week there was 20...the next week 40. By January 1858 (3 months later), they were meeting simultaneously on three floors of the same building.
- By March, 6000 gathered daily in NYC, 6000 in Pittsburgh, 2000 in Chicago, 4000 in Philadelphia...meetings were also held in Washington D.C, Baltimore, Cincinnati, New Orleans, and Mobile.
- By May, 50,000 people in NYC had trusted Christ for salvation. A newspaper reported that in New England several entire towns had come to Christ—meaning there were no unsaved adults!
- It was estimated that for a period of months, 50,000 people a week were accepting Christ across America. By early 1859 (18 months after 1st prayer meeting), 1,000,000 people had accepted Christ in the U.S. (Population of U.S. in 1859 approx. 30million)

“No great spiritual awakening has begun anywhere in the world apart from united prayer—Christians persistently praying for revival.”—J. Edwin Orr

- **I don’t know about you, but I long for a fresh move of God—in my life, in my family, in our church, in our city, in our nation, in our world...**

- When I look at our world...we are in need of a move of God! Racial tension, economic instability, moral collapse, violence, wars...its time we as followers of Jesus stopped talking politics and started getting broken over the hurt and pain of a world without God!
- The ONLY HOPE for our city and our world is the GOSPEL!
“Oh, that You would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains might quake at Your presence!”—Isaiah 64:1
- **Good news:** God desires to move through His people!
- In the opening pages of the book of Acts we read the story of God beginning a movement through His people—the local church!
- **READ TEXT—Acts 1:8, 12-14**
- God desired to move through His people and we see their response—*Desperation!*
- Two Ways We See the Desperation of God’s People:

I. THERE WAS AN ATTITUDE OF DESPERATION—THEY HAD A PASSION FOR GOD TO MOVE

- *“These all with one mind...” (v.14)*
- *“all” (πας) a totality or the whole*
- *“one mind” (ὁμοθυμαδον) compound word ‘homos’ = of the same kind and ‘thumos’ = mind, will, or passion; they were all together with the same passion; they had all wrapped their hearts around something*
- These people had a passion for God to move and together they wrapped their hearts around it!

The sad reality is that in the American church we are so content with our comfortable lives and creative, contemporary, ‘make me feel better’ worship experiences that we have no attitude of

desperation...there is NO passion to see God move in our lives, our churches, our society and our world!

- God has been dealing with this in my life in my personal devotional time...it started early in the year when reading Jim Cymbala's book, *Spirit Rising*

"I sometimes wonder, if the early Christians were around today, would they even recognize what we call Christianity? Our version is blander, almost totally intellectual in nature, and devoid of the Holy Spirit power the early church regularly experienced...everything we read about the church in the New Testament centered on the power of the Holy Spirit working in the hearts of Christian believers. Sadly, for many of us, this has not been our experience. I believe its time to return to the kind of faith we see in the New Testament church. They believed in Christ's word, they expected the Spirit to do great things, and he came through as promised. He will do the same for us today."—Jim Cymbala

- Illus.—read journal entry from Oct. 25, 2014

II. THERE WAS AN ACT OF DESPERATION—THEY PRAYED FOR GOD TO MOVE

- "...were continually devoting themselves to prayer" (v. 14)
- "prayer" (προσευχω) the most generic term for prayer in the NT
- Prayer expresses our total desperation for God—when do you pray the most? Answer: when I'm the most desperate

Reality: Prayer is motivated by a sense of desperation for God.

- These people were desperate for God! In Acts 1:8, Jesus had clearly laid out the plan how He desired to move through them to change the world...and notice what happens next: **READ Acts 1:9-11**
- Then they ran back to Jerusalem and they...
 - ...established a committee to plan how God would move
 - ...held a think-tank to discuss creative ways to promote God's movement
 - ...did a demographic study of their community to see if they would be open to a move of God

- NO—they gathered together in desperation and prayed for God to move!
- We will NOT see God move apart from prayer!

Spiritual Reality:

God in His sovereignty has chosen to limit His activity to the prayers of His people

- You say...explain that...I say, "I can't"

"God rules the world and His church through the prayers of His people. That God should have made the extension of His kingdom to such a large extent dependent on the faithfulness of His people in prayer is a stupendous mystery and yet an absolute certainty. God calls for intercessors: in His grace He has made His work dependent on them. He waits for them."—Andrew Murray

Do we have a passion for God to move?

Are we praying for God to move?

RESPONSE TO GOD'S WORD: