

A WAVE OF BROKENNESS



David Wilkerson May 14, 2015

A half-day of preaching by Ezra wasn't enough for the hungry Israelites. They wanted even more of God's Word, so they formed groups, with seventeen elders besides Ezra leading them in Bible studies the rest of the day. "[They] caused the people to understand the law . . . so they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading" (Nehemiah 8:7-8).

As these people grasped God's law, they began to mourn over their sin. "All the people wept, when they heard the words of the law" (8:9). Picture the scene: Fifty thousand people lay scattered on the ground, mourning their sin in unison. Like a hammer, God's Word had broken their pride. And now their weeping echoed over the hills for miles.

Is this what revival is all about? Is it a word so piercing that people are driven to their knees, weeping and repenting before God?

I have experienced such holy gatherings myself. When I was a child, our family attended "camp meetings" at the Living Waters Campground in Pennsylvania. Jesus' Second Coming was preached with such power and authority that everyone was convinced He would return within the hour. A holy fear fell, and people were driven to their faces. Some cried as if they were hanging over hell by a thread—wailing, broken, sorrowing over sin.

Often, God's Word was preached all day and into the night. Early the next morning, people could still be found lying prostrate in the prayer room, grieving over their sin. Some even had to be carried out.

It was on such a night that the Lord called me to preach, at the age of eight. I was in the Spirit for hours, broken and weeping, God's Word coming alive in my heart. Christ's return burned within me as an imminent reality and I will never forget that wonderful experience.

God's testimony is never that His people are lying on their faces, crying rivers of tears. No, the testimony He wants to bring forth in His people is joy—genuine, lasting joy. "The joy of the Lord is your strength" (Nehemiah 8:10). This joy—which results from biblical preaching and true repentance—brings true strength to God's people and draws sinners into His house.

Most Christians never associate joy with repentance. But repentance is actually the mother of all joy in Jesus. Without it, there can be no joy. Yet, any believer who walks in repentance will be flooded with the joy of the Lord.

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