

## REVIVAL NEWS

From Revival Ministries Australia

P.O. Box 2718 BC TOOWOOMBA Q4350 Australia

Phone: 61-7-46130633; e-mail: [rma@revivalministries.org.au](mailto:rma@revivalministries.org.au)

Website: [www.revivalministries.org.au](http://www.revivalministries.org.au)

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# REMEMBER THE LOST

It is important for us to be focused on discipleship. It is important to be equipping ministers. It is important to be teaching and preaching the mysteries of Christ and bringing the Church to maturity *“growing up in all things into Him who is the Head – Christ” Ephesians 4:15*. In growing up in all things into Christ we must also make sure we are learning to carry His heart for the lost. As we grow in the vision for a perfect *“glorious church”* we must remember the lost and actively, purposely and intentionally be seeking to win them to the Lord Jesus. It is easy to be caught up in so much Christian endeavour that all we do is spend time with other believers. The Holy Spirit though is speaking to us to make sure that winning souls to Jesus is also of utmost importance and priority. There is a fresh release of evangelistic grace for us all to pick up on. We are to be zealous to see sinners converted and starting a life of discipleship to Jesus and His Word.

## A Faithful Saying

When the apostle Paul was writing to Timothy he made a powerful statement of Christ's purpose, *“This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief” 1 Timothy 1:15*. Why did Jesus come into the world? Paul says that Jesus the Messiah came for the purpose of *saving sinners*. If that was the Messiah's purpose of coming into the world, how much more should we give ourselves to this awesome purpose? Jesus said, *“for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost” Luke 19:10*. Lost souls are what Jesus came to find. Let's join with Jesus in giving ourselves to save sinners.

## Remember where you have come from

It is good to take time to remember your own conversion and how you turned to God through faith in Jesus Christ. Remember what person you were before. Remember how Jesus *“delivered you from the power of darkness and conveyed you into the kingdom of the Son of His love” Colossians 1:13*. Remember how He brought you out of darkness into *“His marvellous light” 1 Peter 2:9*. Remember the love, the joy, the peace and the Presence that came into your life the moment Jesus came in. Recall the awesome dawning of the revelation that Jesus died for you; that He took your sins away; that you were forgiven; that you were set free; no more guilt, shame or condemnation. Remember the glory of coming into a real, living, personal relationship with God as your Father. As you remember, let your heart be filled with a burning passion again to let others know of the love of God that is only found in Jesus the Messiah.

## Share your testimony

It seems the apostle Paul was always ready to share his testimony of salvation in Jesus. Before he told Timothy the *faithful saying*, he was reminding Timothy of his former life as a *“a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent [literally ‘violently arrogant’] man”* but he *“obtained mercy...and the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus”* 1 Timothy 1:13-14. When we remember our former life and remember how Jesus saved us, we begin to mention *mercy*; we begin to talk much about *grace*; we talk about *faith and love which are in Christ Jesus!*

## The Word of our testimony overcomes

We overcome the devil by the *“word of our testimony”* (Rev.12:11). We overcome the devil by expressing the powerful weapons of *mercy, grace, faith, love, forgiveness and restoration that are all in Christ Jesus*. We come out of the realm of judgement and criticism and come into the realm of *“mercy triumphing over judgement”* (James.2:13). If you have not done so for a while, share your testimony with somebody and draw on the love and grace that was shown you by Jesus, in order to reach out to others. People can argue about the existence of God, the truth of the Bible and Theological ideas, but they cannot argue with your testimony. The *word of your testimony* overcomes and is powerful in opening up hearts to consider the kingdom of God.

## Do not grow cold

Jesus said, *“And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold”* Matthew 24:12. We see the world we live in becoming increasingly wicked, immoral, unrighteous and violent. We must not let this extinguish the fire of God’s love in our hearts. Again, we should remember, *“For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another”* Titus 3:3. We serve a supernatural God. Despite how we may have been and how the world around us looks, He is the One who has the ability to transform lives of sin into wholehearted devotion to Him. We must remember that *“the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared...that according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit”* Titus 3:4-5. Paul again says, *“This is a faithful saying and these things I want you to affirm constantly”* (Tit. 3:8) so that we can stay fervent in our love for the sinner, loving them by *“testifying the good news of the grace of God”* Acts 20:24.

## A challenge we face

In the Western World we are faced daily with a violently aggressive push for homosexuality to be considered normal; we are being told that people’s gender is not biological but subjective to how one feels; and anti-Christian sentiment has become fashionable in the public arena. In reaching out to the lost we will increasingly be met with those identifying as homosexuals, transgender and people who have been brought up by same sex couples. The temptation is to become more separate and isolated as Christian groups rather than reach out. But we see in the days of the early church this challenge was not uncommon. Paul says of

homosexuals and sodomites, *“And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God”* **1 Corinthians 6:11**. In the midst of this darkness we are to proclaim the name of Jesus and believe in the sanctifying, washing and renewing power of the Holy Spirit! Christ came to save sinners!

### **The sick need a doctor**

Jesus said, *“Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick...I desire mercy and not sacrifice. For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance”* **Matthew 9:12-13**. He said this in response to people criticising Him to His disciples saying, *“Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?”* v.11. We who have the remedy are to help the sick. In order to help the sick, we must decide to be around the sick and offer the help.

My wife, Rhoda, and I, Nick, four years ago moved into an area of our city which was troubled. Drugs, alcohol, domestic violence and lawlessness has been some of the characteristics of the area. We knew it was in the will of God to come to this area and in those four years our neighbourhood has changed dramatically. It is not yet perfect but there have been people born again, baptised, filled with the Holy Spirit and continuing as disciples in our street. There has been a notable change in the spiritual atmosphere of our community. Through the power of prayer and the Holy Spirit, drugs have decreased markedly in our street and on the way to complete eradication. We carry the Presence of God. We carry Jesus. He came into the world to save sinners. He is the remedy and He is in us. The sick world will be healed through Jesus in us! We are to go where the remedy is needed! The sick need the Doctor and the Doctor is in you!

## **EQUIPPING CHRIST’S BODY FOR EVANGELISM**

### **Grace to reach the lost**

Jesus *“Himself gave some to be ... evangelists”* **Ephesians 4:11**. Jesus gave evangelists to reveal and represent His evangelistic nature to the church. He gave them to *“equip the saints”* (v.12) with this needed evangelistic grace to reach out to others. At our base in Toowoomba we do not have a ministry-gifted evangelist among us. There are saints who love to do evangelism but no one with the out standing gift. We are seeking God afresh in this season for the release of evangelistic grace among us as we are all called to *“do the work of an evangelist”* **2 Timothy 4:5**.

In this context, we organised a day, as a company, to come together to discuss and inspire each other concerning evangelism. It was an awesome time where we shared and strategized with the Holy Spirit and each other how to go forward individually and as a company in evangelism. We are not looking for the latest method on evangelism but to see every saint equipped with the grace to represent Jesus the Evangelist effectively and to see more lost souls coming into the kingdom and entering a life of discipleship among us.

## **A Lifestyle**

When we think of evangelism many of us can immediately think of crusades, preaching in front of masses, preaching on the street and can become disheartened and decide to not even try as this is *too hard* for us. The early church had a lifestyle of continuing ***“steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread and prayers...all who believed were together...continuing daily with one accord...breaking bread from house to house...and the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved” Acts 2:42-47.*** Into a company of on fire disciples the Lord adds. Those outside were seeing people live a different way and they were attracted to the life they saw. Are you fostering the lifestyle that others can enter into or are you simply having meetings? Salvation is to bring us into a community of loving disciples of Jesus. People will find Jesus in the community and lifestyle of the disciples.

## **A loving community**

The early church was obviously welcoming, inviting new ones into their houses to experience fellowship in the Spirit and people were coming to faith in Jesus, being baptised and filled with the Holy Spirit in this community of disciples (**Acts 2:41**). This has happened on a much smaller scale in our community. People who would have never set foot in a “church” building, have been comfortable to come to a house and have found Jesus and found a loving family in Christ. Among us, this has not happened through large meetings, but through relationships, connecting people to Jesus and His Body.

## **Prayer is the key**

The successes we have had in evangelism have followed a similar pattern. It involves praying for the lost specifically and then receiving the strategy of how to reach them from the Lord. It starts with prayer and seeking God. We are to pray ***“for all men, for kings and those in authority...for God desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” 1 Timothy 2:1-4.*** As we pray for people specifically to be saved then we also must listen for how God wants to use us to co-operate with Him in reaching them. It could be as simple as inviting that person over for a meal. It may be offering some practical help that will open their heart to you so that you can become a friend to them and share the good news as the window of opportunity opens. God will reveal the way to go forward as you become specific, focused and rightly prioritising the lost in your prayers.

## **It is time to seek God**

The Gospels and the Book of Acts are filled with such exciting accounts of Jesus and the apostles stepping out in evangelism and seeing the lost be set free, found and saved. In those accounts there is everything from preaching to multitudes to speaking to the one person. It is actually amazing though how much time is given to accounts where one person was the focus – for example the woman at the well (**Jn.4:1-42**), Zaccaheus (**Lk.19:1-10**), the demoniac (**Mk.5:1-20**), Lydia (**Acts 16:11-15**) and the Philippian Jailer (**Acts 16:25-34**) just to name a few. God is interested in every encounter we have with people. It is time to seek God to be more intentional in evangelism, reaching those that are ready to be found by Jesus. We are to co-labour with Jesus in the great adventure of reaching the lost!

## **There is much joy**

Remember Jesus said that, ***“there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents”*** **Luke 15:10**. When new ones are in the midst there is much joy and giving of thanks to God. No matter if you have been successful in evangelism or not, this short exhortation is to encourage all of us to press into God to see a greater release of evangelistic grace among us, that all the saints be equipped in this evangelistic grace and that we begin to see the reality of the ***“Lord adding to the church daily those who were being saved”*** **Acts 2:47**.

Nicholas Jackson