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Baptism in and Filling with the Spirit

1 Corinthians 12:13

- In 1959, the great Welch preacher Martyn Lloyd-Jones was addressing a conference that had assembled to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the great revival that swept through Great Britain in 1859.
- His central point was that the church really doesn't change, and neither does the world. The basic issues are always the same: man in his sin, the gospel as the power of God for salvation, the church in a weakened, almost helpless state, unable to meet the challenges of its day... knowing the truth, doing some good ministries, but unable to make any significant progress; suddenly the power of God is poured out from on high, the church is revived, it moves out in power and many in the world are saved and transformed genuinely. He would also say that revivals follow a course, at some point the power is dissipated, and the church returns to a weakened state needing the power of God to be poured out again from on high.
- Lloyd-Jones argued that this pattern was established from the beginning in Acts 1-2, at the Day of Pentecost. Those who say that Pentecost will never be repeated again are robbing the church of its ongoing power.
- Lloyd-Jones was very clear on the distinction between the filling of the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18) and what he calls the baptism of the Spirit (revival):
- "Now that is precisely what happens in revival. It is God pouring forth His Spirit, filling His people again. It is not that which is talked of in Ephesians 5:18, which is the command to us, 'Go on

being filled with the Spirit.' That is something you and I do, but this (revival) is something that is done to us. It is the Spirit falling upon us, being poured out upon us. These are the terms, 'I will pour forth my Spirit.' God alone can do that. But it is you and I who are responsible for going on being filled with the Spirit. We must not grieve the Spirit, we must not quench the Spirit, we must give obedience to the Spirit. And as long as we do that, we shall go on being filled with the Spirit. But this is different, this is the Spirit being poured out upon us until we are filled to overflowing..."

- The Holy Spirit is responsible to take the finished work of Christ on the cross and at the empty tomb, and spreading it to the ends of the earth.
- This he does by two basic methods... first, his **ordinary** ministries done week by week, year after year in the lives of ordinary Christians. Second, however, he does by his **extraordinary** ministries... sudden outpourings of his power on the people of God, moving them rapidly ahead in holiness and evangelism.
- Some folks have called the second of these the "baptism of the Spirit..." I think this is a wrong name for a TRUE EXPERIENCE... today, I want to talk about the baptism of the Spirit at the beginning of the Christian life... and the filling of the Spirit throughout the Christian life... and the outpouring of the Spirit in revival power.

Laying my cards on the table:

- Baptism of the Spirit happens to every Christian at conversion and never needs to happen again. Pentecostals and others who say you must seek the baptism of the Spirit are not following scripture, for scripture never commands that Christians seek the baptism of the Spirit.
- The filling of the Spirit happens again and again in the Christian life, empowering Christians to make progress in the

Two Journeys of holiness and evangelism. The Bible does command Christians to be filled with the Spirit. (Eph. 5:18)

- The filling of the Spirit comes in both ordinary and extraordinary measures... the ordinary filling of the Spirit has been sufficient to make awesome progress over twenty centuries of church history and should not be minimized as though it's nothing.
- BUT the extraordinary filling of the Spirit (sometimes called revival) is awesome and fruitful and powerful and should be sought through prayer. It also should not be minimized... neither should it be overemphasized as though until we get a revival nothing can happen. Church history has shown that all revivals eventually wane and end. And usually they do not appear again for decades. But they do make amazing progress!
- So, healthy Christians should see BOTH the ordinary and extraordinary ministries of the Spirit as blessings from God... the BEST OF BOTH WORLDS
- I. What is the Baptism of the Spirit? When Does It Happen?
 - A. Baptism Began with John the Baptist
 - 1. Baptism means literally IMMERSION... plunging
 - 2. The ritual of baptism was never seen in the Old Testament; it was introduced by Jewish leaders in the intertestmental period as a step to cleanse Gentile converts to Judaism
 - 3. Along came John the Baptist... and he was a powerful figure, blazing with the fire of zeal through the Holy Spirit

Isaiah 40:3 A voice of one calling: "In the desert prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God.

- 4. Jewish people from that whole region went out to him in the desert
- 5. Confessing their sins, John BAPTIZED THEM—JEWISH PEOPLE—in the Jordan River... AMAZING!!!!

John was saying "You Jews are no better than Gentiles! You are just as filthy as they are! You have indulged in the same idolatries as the pagans! And you also need to be washed like they do!"

The central work of John was to PREPARE THE WAY for Jesus

- B. John Predicted the Baptism of the Spirit by Jesus
- C. Jesus Either Immerses a Person in the Spirit or in Eternal Fire
 - 1. John the Baptist said "I do not deserve to carry his sandals"
 - 2. WHY? The significance of their baptisms

Matthew 3:11-12 "I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.¹² His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

- a. The "unquenchable fire" is the key to the passage... for it clearly refers to hell
- b. Jesus has the power to immerse sinners eternally in hell... this is a role given to him by God the Father as Judge of all the earth... at the end of the world, all people will be gathered before his Judgment Seat... he will separate the people

Matthew 25:41 he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

- c. But Jesus will never plunge a person in the Holy Spirit and then later plunge them into the fires of hell
- d. So, since John the Baptist was speaking clearly to a MIXED GROUP (including people he called "a brood of vipers") it is best to see this statement as an EITHER/OR proposition...
- e. Jesus will EITHER immerse you in the Holy Spirit OR he will immerse you in the unquenchable fires of hell

- 3. The water baptism of John was a mere outward symbol of a sinner's repentance; Jesus' baptism is infinitely more significant
- D. Baptism of the Spirit Happens at Conversion
 - 1. Jesus baptizes every one of his true converts in the Holy Spirit
 - 2. But WHEN does this happen?? Our text tells us the answer

1 Corinthians 12:13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body-whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free-- and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

- 3. Every individual Christian is baptized by the Spirit the moment he or she becomes a member of the Body of Christ...
- 4. When does that happen? At conversion!
- 5. The immersion of the Spirit is a positional statement; we have been rescued from Satan's filthy cesspool of sin and were plunged into the eternally cleansing pure influence of the Holy Spirit
- 6. This is true of every single Christian all over the world—Jews and Greeks, slave and free; ethnic background and socio-economic status mean nothing in this... we are all ONE IN THE SPIRIT, baptized at conversion into the ONE BODY of Christ
- 7. Beyond this once for all plunging into the ocean of Christ's cleansing grace by the Spirit, we are also given the of the ONE SPIRIT to drink
 - a. This drinking I believe refers to the ongoing experience of the Spirit's deeply satisfying presence in our souls
 - b. It reminds me of two magnificent statements in John's Gospel
- To the Samaritan woman at the well, who was proud of the well given them centuries before by their ancestor Jacob...
- John 4:13-14 Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

The Second Statement occurred at the Feast of Booths in Jerusalem

John 7:37-39 "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. ³⁸ Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." ³⁹ By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive.

c. John Piper's THREE comments

- *First, the gift of the water is free.* The condition you must meet is need. "If anyone is thirsty." That's the condition. And the action you must take is to drink. Receive the gift. There is no thought here of earning or meriting. Anyone who knows his own thirst is invited.
- Second, the human soul has thirst. We know he is not talking about physical thirst. That's clear. But what he is saying is that the soul has something like physical thirst. When you go without water your body gets thirsty. And the soul, when it goes without God, gets thirsty. Your body was made to live on water. Your soul was made to live on God.
- This is the most important thing to know about yourself. You were made to live on God. You have a soul, a spirit. There is a you that is more than a body. And that your soul, if it does not drink from the greatness and wisdom and power and goodness and justice and holiness and love of God, will die of thirst.
- Third, implied in the word "thirst" is that what Jesus offers is satisfying. The aim of all theology, all study, all biblical learning, all preaching is to spread the satisfying banquet for you to eat with joy, and to protect the kitchen from poison. The aim of cooking is eating. The aim of digging wells and clearing springs is drinking. Everything Jesus came to do and teach is aimed at providing the soul with food and drink that satisfy forever.

To "Come to Jesus and drink" is the same as believing in him:

John 7:37-38 "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. ³⁸ Whoever <u>believes in me</u>, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him."

- Piper: "So be done forever with the sad notion that saving faith that believing on Jesus is a mere decision to believe facts. No. It is a coming to him as a feast. A treasure. A banquet. A spring in the desert when we are dying of thirst."
 - d. What will happen when you come?
- John 7:38: "Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."" Literally, it says, out of his belly. But the point is our inner being, call it belly, heart, soul, spirit. What does this mean?
- It means that when you come to Jesus to drink, you don't just get a single drink, but you get a spring, a fountain, a well. You get Jesus. Rivers of water will flow because a River-Maker is in you. That's the point. You will never have to search again for a source of satisfaction for your soul. Every river that needs to flow for the joy of your soul will flow from Jesus. When you come to him, you get him. And he never leaves."

This is also what I think it means that we get the Spirit to drink:

1 Corinthians 12:13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body-whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free-- and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

- Your soul will experience a perpetual cycle of satisfaction in Christ followed by a new thirst for satisfaction... thirsty again! The world, flesh, and devil stand ready to lie to your soul and offer a God-less, Christ-less, worldly satisfaction – offering you a poisonous drink that will ultimately kill your soul
- Illus: Hot bus ride in Port-au-Prince, Haiti; kids offering us Fanta bottles with aluminum foil at the top; one of the poorest places I'd seen in my life, with nasty muddy puddles of water ... we all knew that it was very likely that, however hot and thirsty we were, to buy those bottles and take the foil off the top and drink the beverages they were selling us would almost certainly lead to disease.

- Satan and his world system is better at disguising the alluring drinks it offers to your thirsty souls, but it is POISON nonetheless
- You were meant to get thirsty to feel again your need for God and go to Christ to be satisfied... God has given us one Spirit to drink
 - E. Water Baptism is a Symbol of the True Baptism
 - 1. Jesus commanded his church to make disciples and baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit
 - 2. This water baptism doesn't save anyone; it is an outward, visible symbol of the real baptism that has already happened... by Jesus, baptized in the Holy Spirit into his One Body
 - F. What About the Other Outpourings of the Spirit?
 - 1. Pentecostal and charismatic churches have used the phrase "baptism of the Spirit" to speak of a "second experience of grace" that happens separate from conversion
 - 2. Pentecostals zero in on the individual Christian, and press this on their consciences, saying you need to be baptized in the Spirit and display it by speaking in tongues
 - 3. They also link it with holiness, and have a whole theology of holiness centered around a second experience of grace they call "baptism in the Spirit"
 - 4. Martyn Lloyd-Jones uses this same expression—the baptism of the Spirit—to describe the extraordinary outpourings of the Spirit on the church CORPORATELY in answer to united prayer, empowering the church for holiness and evangelistic power— REVIVAL
 - 5. It is a repeat of the Day of Pentecost, without minimizing the uniqueness of that day
 - 6. Lloyd-Jones rightly cites many historical accounts referring to these experiences and says this is the greatest need of the church today

- 7. In a moment, I will seek to put those real experiences in its proper place, calling them the "Extraordinary Ministries of the Spirit"
- 8. But first, I want to educate, elevate, and celebrate the ORDINARY MINISTRIES of the Holy Spirit
- II. What Does It Mean to Be Filled with the Spirit?
 - A. The Command in Ephesians 5:18

Ephesians 5:18 Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.

- 1. Once we have been baptized by the Spirit at conversion, we now begin the daily Christian life
- 2. It is a life of the TWO JOURNEYS... the internal journey of growth in personal holiness; and the external journey of evangelism and missions... leading other people to faith in Christ
- 3. The Holy Spirit is given to us to empower us to make continual progress in these two journeys
- 4. The command in Ephesians 5:18: PASSIVE IMPERATVE... "be being filled"
- YOU MUST (that's the imperative) HAVE SOMETHING DONE TO YOU (that's the passive)
- 5. Since the Holy Spirit came on the Day of Pentecost like a wind and a fire, the word "filled" can be pictured as a sail billowing and then FILLED with wind, impelling the mighty clipper ship of your soul and body to move in God's direction; the fire fills you with passion and zeal for the glory of God
- 6. It is vital to acknowledge that there is NO CORRESPONDING COMMAND concerning the baptism of the Spirit for Christians; though we are commanded to be filled with the Spirit, we are never commanded in any text of the New Testament to receive the baptism of the Spirit
- B. The Continual Need for the Filling of the Spirit

- 1. The Filling of the Spirit Can Be Lost and Regained
 - a. Though the baptism of the Spirit is once for all time and can never be lost, yet we can lose the filling of the Spirit
 - b. We lose it only one way-through sin
 - c. However, sometimes the joy and power of the Spirit that we felt so strongly yesterday has **receded** somewhat today just simply because you had a night sleep and you're not a morning person and the Spirit wisely recedes sometimes to make you pursue him anew, afresh... like the sails in a clipper ship are flapping, you must TURN THE SHIP a little where the wind is blowing
 - d. So if it's just a new day, don't assume you've lost the filling of the Spirit; just pursue him in your quiet time and by faith in Christ come to him and drink... Drink... DRINK again
 - e. On the other hand, if you have lost the filling of the Spirit through conscious willful sin—you've violated your conscience and you know exactly how—then confess your sin and come to the cross again to remind yourself of Christ's all-sufficient once-for-all atoning blood; name your sins clearly and renounce them; then pray for the Spirit to fill you again
 - f. Make the command of Ephesians 5:18 "be filled with the Spirit" to be a promise that he WILL fill you with his Spirit again
- C. The Effects of the Filling of the Spirit
 - 1. In Ephesians 5: **Joyful worship**... singing psalms, hymns, spiritual songs, speaking to one another, joyful hearts; in other texts...
 - 2. Personal holiness... a "Spirit-filled Christian" wages war on sin

Romans 8:13-14 if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, ¹⁴ because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

3. Fruit of the Spirit... a "Spirit-filled Christian" is like this:

- Galatians 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.
 - 4. Energetic service... a "Spirit-filled Christian" works hard for Jesus
- Romans 7:6 we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.
 - 5. Bold witness a "Spirit-filled Christian" boldly shares the gospel

Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

- D. The Spirit-Filled Christian Life
 - 1. The filling of the Spirit is essential to the fruitful Christian life
 - 2. It is possible to be born-again and not be consistently filled with the Spirit
 - 3. You should realize that the Holy Spirit is given to us to be "with us forever" as Jesus said (John 14:16)
 - 4. If you are not consistently filled with the Spirit, begin by getting alone with God in prayer, confessing all known sin

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

- 5. Then pray to be filled with the Spirit, and believe by faith that he has filled you... then act accordingly!
- III. What Are the Ordinary Ministries of the Spirit?
- A note on the terms "ordinary" and "extraordinary"... the "ordinary" work of the Holy Spirit on a Christian's heart is still SUPERNATURAL! It is not to be minimized at all!
- Actually, though I will discuss in a moment some amazing and extraordinary works of the Holy Spirit, yet I believe with all my heart that the ordinary ministries of the Spirit that he does DAY

AFTER DAY, generation after generation in Christians all over the world is sufficient to do the overwhelming majority of the work God wants to do in the world. We do not need a revival or a new Pentecost to be holy or to share the gospel. But such EXTRAORDINARY works of the Holy Spirit are still powerfully effective, and we should seek them in prayer!

So what are the ordinary works of the Spirit?

- A. Ministry to Christians
 - 1. Communication of God's Presence and Love to Our Spirits
- Romans 5:5 God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.
- Romans 8:16 The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.
 - 2. Illumination of the Scriptures

Psalm 119:18 Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law.

- Luke 24:45 Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures.
- John 16:13 But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth.
 - 3. Conviction of sin
- Psalm 139:23-24 Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. ²⁴ See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.
 - 4. Power to kill sin (Romans 8:13... by the Spirit! We just saw that)
 - 5. Guidance and Wisdom
- Isaiah 30:21 Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, "This is the way; walk in it."

6. Unity in Healthy Local Churches

- Ephesians 4:3 Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.
 - 7. Spiritual Gifts in Local Churches
- 1 Corinthians 12:11 All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.
 - 8. Empowerment for Witnessing (as we just saw a moment ago!)
 - B. Ministry to Non-Christians
 - 1. A powerful CONVICTING work
- John 16:8 When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment
- Acts 2:37 When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"
 - 2. Delivery of Sufficient Knowledge of the Gospel for Salvation
 - 3. [If elect] Conversion... the New Birth

Ezekiel 36:26-27 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

- IV. What Are the Extraordinary Ministries of the Spirit?
 - A. Ecstatic Experiences in Individuals
- Many examples I have cited over the years... but I want to zero in on D.L. Moody. Moody was the pastor of a significant church in Chicago... he preached the gospel clearly and people were converted. He was satisfied with his ministry. But two women were not...
- In the summer of 1871, two women of Dwight L. Moody's congregation felt an unusual burden to pray for him "that the Lord would give him the filling of the Holy Ghost and of fire." Moody would see them praying in the front row of his church

and he asked them what they were praying for... they said "We have been praying for you." "Why don't you pray for the people?" Moody asked them. "Because you need the power of the Spirit" they answered. "I need the power! Why? I have the largest congregation in Chicago, and there are many conversions." But these two women kept on praying for him to have a special anointing from the Holy Spirit for a special service. They triggered Moody's thoughts.

- Soon after that, the great Chicago fire came and swept away much of the city, including the building where he was preaching. Moody felt the vanity of his approach up till that time, and he began to cry out for the power of the Holy Spirit in his ministry:
- "I began to cry as never before, for a greater blessing from God. The hunger increased; I really felt that I did not want to live any longer. I kept on crying all the time that God would fill me with His Spirit. Well, one day in the city of New York – oh! What a day! I cannot describe it, I seldom refer to it. It is almost too sacred an experience to name. Paul had an experience of which he never spoke for fourteen years. I can only say, God revealed Himself to me, and I had such an experience of His love that I had to ask Him to stay His hand. I went to preaching again. The sermons themselves were not different; I did not present any new truths, and yet hundreds were converted. I would not now be placed back where I was before that blessed experience if you would offer me all the world – it would be as the small dust of the balance." [*The Life* of D.L. Moody by his Son, p. 148-149]
- After that experience, Moody began his work as an itinerant evangelist in England, Ireland, Wales, and in the U.S. From 1871-1899, he preached so effectively that hundreds of thousands, if not millions of people were brought to saving faith in Christ. That fruitfulness began that sacred night.
 - B. Outpouring of Power on Groups... Revival

The Holy Spirit also moves in power on whole groups that come together to pray and seek him. This is commonly called revival when God works this powerfully... just like this:

Acts 4:31 After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

- John Wesley: January 1, 1734 Journal entry: "Mr. Hall, Ingham, Whitefield, Hutching and my brother Charles were present at our Love Feast in Fetter Lane with about sixty of our brethren. About three in the morning as we were continuing instant in prayer *the power of God came mightily upon us*, insomuch that many cried out for exulting joy and many fell to the ground. As soon as we were recovered a little from the awe and amazement at the presence of His Majesty, we broke out with one voice, 'We praise Thee, O God, we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord."
- This is the very thing that Charles Spurgeon prayed for on a particular Tuesday evening, January 4, 1859. He was speaking to a vast gathering convened at Exeter Hall. Spurgeon was 24 years old, a preaching prodigy... the most celebrated preacher in England. But that meant nothing to him... this is what he said:
- "We must confess that, just now, we have not the outpouring of the Holy Spirit that we could wish... Oh, if the Spirit of God should come upon those assembled to-night, and upon all the assemblies of the saints, what an effect would be produced! We seek not for extraordinary excitements, those spurious attendants of genuine revivals, but we do seek for the pouring out of the Spirit of God... The Spirit is blowing upon our churches now with his genial breath, but it is as a soft evening breeze. Oh, that there would come a rushing mighty wind, that should carry everything before it! This is the lack of our times, the great want of our country!"

- Spurgeon's desire was fulfilled... in the spring of 1859, a widespread awakening began in Northern Ireland and in Wales... by the end of that year, Spurgeon could write "The times of refreshing have come from the presence of the Lord have at last dawned upon our land."
- In one of Spurgeon's most powerful sermons during that year of revival, a sermon entitled, "The Story of God's Mighty Acts", Spurgeon preached on this text:

Psalm 44:1 We have heard with our ears, O God; our fathers have told us what you did in their days, in days long ago.

- Spurgeon catalogued the mighty, powerful, sudden acts of God across eras of church history...
- He traced out the spectacular advance of the gospel over the first hundred years after the death of Christ, how the gospel spread rapidly over Europe and into Asia and how the heathen were baptized, sometimes thousands at a time in rivers:
- "The first spread of the gospel is a miracle never to be eclipsed. Whatever God may have done at the Red Sea, he did still more within a hundred years after the time when Christ first came into the world. It seemed as if a fire from heaven ran along the ground. Nothing could resist its force."
- But then Spurgeon continued with many other accounts in the time after the apostolic era through to the Reformation... he especially zeroed in on the Great Awakening under Whitefield and Wesley:
- Within a few years, from the preaching of these two men, England was permeated with evangelical truth. The Word of God was known in every town, and there was scarcely a hamlet into which the Methodists had not penetrated. In those days of the slow-coach, when Christianity seemed to have bought up the old wagons in which our fathers once travelled – where business runs with steam, there oftentimes religion creeps along with its belly on the earth, – we are astonished at these

tales, and we think them wonders. Yet... the wondrous things which God did in the olden times, by his grace he will yet do again.

Then Spurgeon said this:

- The old stagers in our churches believe that things must grow, gently, by degrees; we must go step by step onward. Concentrated action and continued labour, they say, will ultimately bring success. But the marvel is, all God's works have been sudden. When Peter stood up to preach, it did not take six weeks to convert the three thousand. They were converted at once and baptized that very day; they were that hour turned to God. So has it been in all revivals; God's work has been done suddenly. As with a clap of thunder has God descended from on high; not slowly, but suddenly.
- Friends... this is the EXTRAORDINARY WORK of the Holy Spirit... a powerful outpouring of his strength and power and influence resulting in Christians being committed as never before to personal holiness and bold evangelism.

God can still do that in our day! Pray for it!!

And to you who are as yet unconverted, I must PLEAD WITH YOU to come to Christ TODAY! Before his great change, D.L. Moody preached a sermon in Chicago which he regretted till his dying day. He presented clearly the person and work of Christ, how he died on the cross for sinners and rose again. But he did not press to the hearts of his hearers the need for immediate response and faith. Instead, he said "Go home, consider the claims of Christ, and come back next week and we'll discuss what to do about it." But the next day, the great Chicago fire came and many citizens of Chicago died in the blaze. Moody never saw the people of that assembly again. So it is today...

Hebrews 3:7-8 as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you hear his voice, ⁸ do not harden your hearts