

## ***Convocation 2014*** ***Why Are We Having It?***

Eph 3:14-21

- 14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
15 Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,  
16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;  
17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,  
18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;  
19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.  
20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,  
21 Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen. KJV

### **Introduction:**

For the last 4 years we have been hosting an event unlike any other that I know to exist. Preachers gather here from around the country for 3 days of prayer and fellowship. You are familiar with the words that we use; Awakening and Revival.

I am sure that each one of you has an understanding of some sort concerning what we are seeking and why we are praying, but I want to give you an explanation from my point of view as to why we began this and what we are hoping to accomplish.

You must know that we are living in a time of remarkable and swiftly moving moral corruption. There was once a time when a person could avoid hearing about ungodliness and immorality by avoiding certain kinds of magazines and certain kinds of movies. Today one cannot even listen to the evening news without being bombarded with information that is too corrupt for human consumption.

There is an endless parade of news concerning celebrities, politicians and even preachers, giving the gory details of their hideous and ungodly behavior. I doubt that there is doubt in any of your minds that we are rushing headlong toward complete moral degeneracy in our culture. I doubt that there is a family represented here today that has not been touched in some powerful way by the godless corruption of our day.

The powerlessness of the Christian church in our day to do anything to slow the stampede toward complete lawlessness is a shameful and hideous disgrace. This is not what we are called to be as the people of God. We are called to be a 'city set on a hill' and a 'light' to the moral and spiritual darkness around us. Jesus Christ Himself declared that His church would be victorious against the 'gates of Hell' that they would not overcome His Work in the world.

Yet, here we are, facing a full on attack from every corner of our world and seemingly powerless even to just stand still. We are losing ground it seems every day and that is not the way that it is supposed to be.

Look again at our text. We are to be strengthened with might, rooted and grounded in love, and filled with the Spirit of God. But that is not what we are.

And, in order for us to move from where we are to where God would have us be, to where the apostle Paul prayed that we would be, we need the help of God Himself.

Now, understand, the church has been here before many times. All through the history of Christianity from the first century until now the church has known times of decline and times of power. Even before the first century ended, as we discover in the book of Revelation, there were churches in horrible shape who were being more influence by their corrupt culture than the influence they were able to bring to bear on it. They were failing and about to die.

Time and again across the centuries, the church has stopped pressing forward in following Christ and has descended down a sad road of corruption. Each time, God has burdened some souls, usually not the elites of the church, to seek His Face, cry out before Him for help, and pray for Revival.

Now, here is the happy part of the story. Time and again, just like with ancient Israel, God has heard the cries of His people and visited them in power, restored them to what they ought to be and, sometimes, has changed the course of history.....simply in answer to the prayers of some of His people.

So, why are we having this Convocation, this Prayer Meeting, seeking Awakening and Revival?

**I. First of all, we are doing it so that God will be glorified.**

Look again at our text. Notice v.21. After praying for the Wondrous Visit of God upon the church, Paul declared that the ultimate outcome of his prayer and the answer to it would be the God would get glory to Himself through the church.

Eph 3:21

21 Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen. KJV

When the church acts and behaves as He has intended and instructed, when it is empowered by the Holy Spirit, God is glorified.

Just before Jesus departed this earth after His resurrection, He had this to say to that first church.

Acts 1:4-8

- 4 And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.
- 5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.
- 6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?
- 7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.
- 8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. KJV

The church is to bear witness concerning Jesus under the empowering of the Holy Spirit and, when it does, God is glorified by having a witness to His mercy, grace and power operating effectively in this world.

I do not fully understand why this is important to God but I know that it is. This was the goal of every apostle in the founding of every church that they formed. I know this because we have the record of their teachings, admonitions and prayers as well as the commendations and rebukes of the Lord Jesus Himself at the end of the century in the book of Revelation.

I am praying that this church be Revived, Awakened, empowered by the Holy Spirit so that God will be glorified in Nesbit, Mississippi, USA.

But I long for other churches to be empowered as well so that He will be glorified all over this country. So, I have invited other preachers to join with me with the anticipation that our collective prayers will be more powerful than any individual prayers. I long for their churches to know Revival so that there will be an empowered and enhanced witness to the glory of God in every city represented here this week.

**I. Secondly, I want you, as a church and as individuals to know and experience all that God has for you to enjoy in His service.**

I know that we have talked about this before many times but the church for whom Paul was praying, this church at Ephesus, was a really good church. It had been born in a time of Awakening when God's power moved mightily upon that city.

Acts 19:1-12

- 1 And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples,
- 2 He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.

- 3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism.
- 4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.
- 5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.
- 6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.
- 7 And all the men were about twelve.
- 8 And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.
- 9 But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.
- 10 And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.
- 11 And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul:
- 12 So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.

Some time had passed from this beginning of the church until the writing of the letter to them and yet one cannot find any rebuke in this letter for any bad behavior or failings on their part. Many years late when Jesus dictated the notes to the pastors of the seven church to John, they were still doing pretty well, only their pastor was somewhat failing in his love for the Lord.

Rev 2:1-3

- 1 Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;
- 2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:
- 3 And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

But, as excellent as they were, the apostle saw that there was so much more that they could know and experience, and he earnestly prayed that they might know everything and experience everything that God had for them.

Now don't be shocked or surprised, but *we're not Ephesus*. That means that there is even more that we might know and enjoy together of the wonder of God's empowering that there was for them. Some of the things they took for granted we have never seen.

I love you both as individuals and as a group and I want to see us all enjoying the outpouring of the blessings of God that are available to us. So, I am praying for Revival.

**I. Finally, I long to see the lost saved, particularly the lost ones that are part of our families.**

Every Wednesday night our prayer meeting begins with us taking notice of a long list of names. They are people that we know who are without Christ. Almost every one of them is related to one or more of us in some way.

I know from what I read in history that there has never been a God-sent Revival, a true Awakening that has not swept hundreds and thousands into God's Kingdom. In almost every one of them the conversions started in the homes of faithful members of God's churches.

Almost without exception we have children who need Christ. We have taken them to church, taught them God's Word, prayed for them and talked with them about their souls, yet they are still lost. What else can we do? Pray for God's power to fall on us and them so that they might be saved.

Then, beyond our families, there is a whole community here that needs to experience what Ephesus experienced. Now, I know that there are many saints in Bridgetown and Pleasant Acres who attend other churches. But there are also many who live here around us who know nothing of the saving power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I long to see them saved as well.

And then I also know that Real Revivals do not stop at borders, not family borders, community, state or even national borders. Revivals are like wildfires, they rage on and sweep through entire regions in spite of all efforts to resist or contain them.

There are people who believe that what our world needs is for governments to get the right leaders and policies in place. But what our world truly needs is for the Holy Spirit of God to set a Holy Fire and for it to burn through every nation on the planet.

**I. And, so, we meet and pray.**

No one is trying to be some spiritual 'rock star.' No one is trying to start some new 'movement' or denomination. I don't think anyone is trying to get glory to himself.

We are just asking God to get glory to Himself by empowering us by His Holy Spirit to bear witness with power in our community to the Lord Jesus Christ.