

Times of Refreshing  
2 Chronicles 20  
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Now as you are turning to the Old Testament book of 2 Chronicles chapter 20, I want to ask you two personal questions: **when was the last great movement of God in your life?**

Here's another question for you to answer: **when was the last great movement of God in our church?**

We talk about the need for spiritual awakening in America and I don't suppose there has ever been a time in my life-time, that America needs a spiritual awakening anymore than today.

May I just speak straight to you? Our nation's spiritual condition is a reflection of our churches' spiritual condition and our churches spiritual condition is a reflection of our spiritual condition. Spiritual awakening or revival will never come to America until it first comes to the churches. And it will not come to the churches until it comes to the members starting with this pastor.

Spiritual awakening will not start at the Whitehouse or the school-house, it will start at the church-house.

**When was the last great movement of God in your life?**

**When was the last great movement of God in our church?** Roswell Street Baptist Church is in great need for a fresh wind to blow upon us! Our greatest need today is a need that I cannot meet.

I can provide leadership and lead you.

I can produce messages and preach them.

But I cannot put into your heart a passion for holiness. I cannot put into your heart a desire to live godly in Christ Jesus.

I cannot put into your heart a burden for the lost.

I cannot put into your heart a spirit of generosity.

I cannot put into your heart a love for things that are holy and a hate for the things that are unholy. Only the Spirit of God can put those things into your heart.

I cannot study more, preach harder or visit more to meet our greatest need. Nor is what's needed more programs, pep and pizzazz. What is needed is what only God can do and that is to send a spiritual awakening into our lives. What's needed are times of repentance and refreshing. God can do more in a moment than I could ever do in a lifetime.

We cannot go any further without Him nor should we want too.

Martin-Lloyd Jones said,

“And in movements of the Spirit the first thing that happens and which eventually leads to a great revival is that one man or a group of men suddenly begin to feel this burden and they feel the burden so much that they are led to do something about it.”

Now look with me 2 Chronicles 20 where we find Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, surrounded by his enemies. He reminds me the Lone Ranger and Tonto who were riding North and saw Indians approaching so they headed East. After a while, they saw Indians approaching from the East so they headed South. After while they saw Indians approaching from the South and headed West. After a while they saw Indians approaching from the West.

The Lone Ranger said to Tonto, “Tonto, we are surrounded by Indians.” Tonto replied, “What do you mean we, Kemosobie?”

Jehoshaphat, King of Judah appeared to be surrounded by his enemies and we read in verses 3-7, “And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. So Judah gathered together to ask help from the LORD; and from all the cities of Judah they

came to seek the LORD. Then Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court, and said, "O LORD God of our fathers, are You not God in heaven, and do You not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations, and in Your hand is there not power and might, so that no one is able to withstand You? Are You not our God, who drove out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel, and gave it to the descendants of Abraham, Your friend forever?" Verse 9, ".. We will stand before this temple and in Your presence (for Your name is in this temple), and cry out to You in our affliction, and You will hear and save."

And then Jehoshaphat said to God in verse 12, "O our God, will You not judge them? For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; NOR DO WE KNOW WHAT TO DO, but our eyes are upon You."

Verse 15, ".. Thus says the LORD to you: Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of the this great multitude for the battle is not yours, but God's." Tomorrow go down against them. They will surely come up by the Ascent of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the brook before the Wilderness of Jeruel. You will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, who is with you, O Judah and Jerusalem. Do not fear or be dismayed, for the LORD is with you." And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem bowed before the LORD, worshipping the LORD."

20 So they rose early in the morning and went out into the Wilderness of Tekoa; and as they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem: Believe in the Lord your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper."

21 And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed

those who should sing to the Lord, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army and were saying: “Praise the Lord, For His mercy endures forever.”[a] 22 Now when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated. 23 For the people of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir to utterly kill and destroy them. And when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, they helped to destroy one another. 24 So when Judah came to a place overlooking the wilderness, they looked toward the multitude; and there were their dead bodies, fallen on the earth. No one had escaped.”

The King didn't know what to do in the face of a massive defeat. There are times in our lives that we don't know what to do. As a parent, as an employee, as a spouse, as a member of a Sunday School class; there are time we don't know what to do.

That's where the King was! But did you notice what he DID DO back in verse 3, “to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah,” and then in verse 4, “together to ask help from the LORD.”

He asked God's people to stop eating until God prevailed in their situation. Jehoshaphat knew that to fast before God was the best way to show his complete helplessness and humility before God. He learned something you and I must never forget: **he renounced the natural to invoke the supernatural.**<sup>1</sup>

They cried out, “God, I don't want food, I want You!” Seeking God through prayer and fasting are essential for revival. Jehoshaphat proclaimed a fast for his people so they could once again see the face of God! They sought God and kept their eyes on Him. When they become desperate enough, they placed their focus on God and off their desperate situation. It was their choice and it's also ours.

When we become desperate enough, we too will drop to our knees, seek God and keep our eyes fixed on Him!

We are in the same condition as God's people during the time of the prophet Joel. Joel 1:9-20: "The grain offering and the drink offering Have been cut off from the house of the Lord; The priests mourn, who minister to the Lord.10 The field is wasted, The land mourns; For the grain is ruined, The new wine is dried up, The oil fails. 11 Be ashamed, you farmers, Wail, you vinedressers, For the wheat and the barley; Because the harvest of the field has perished. 12 The vine has dried up, And the fig tree has withered; The pomegranate tree, The palm tree also, And the apple tree— All the trees of the field are withered; Surely joy has withered away from the sons of men. Gird yourselves and lament, you priests; Wail, you who minister before the altar; Come, lie all night in sackcloth, You who minister to my God; For the grain offering and the drink offering Are withheld from the house of your God.14 Consecrate a fast, Call a sacred assembly; Gather the elders And all the inhabitants of the land Into the house of the Lord your God, And cry out to the Lord. 15 Alas for the day! For the day of the Lord is at hand; It shall come as destruction from the Almighty. 16 Is not the food cut off before our eyes, Joy and gladness from the house of our God? 17 The seed shrivels under the clods, Storehouses are in shambles; Barns are broken down, For the grain has withered. 18 How the animals groan! The herds of cattle are restless, Because they have no pasture; Even the flocks of sheep suffer punishment.[a] O Lord, to You I cry out; For fire has devoured the open pastures, And a flame has burned all the trees of the field. 20 The beasts of the field also cry out to You, For the water brooks are dried up, And fire has devoured the open pastures."

Verse 14, "Consecrate a fast, call a sacred assembly; Gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the

house of the Lord your God, and cry out to the Lord.”

I’m hearing alarms going off today around the world. God is trying to speak to us through the global crisis of today as He was in Joel’s day.

They had nothing left to offer! They wept and wailed before God of heaven. They humbled themselves through fasting. They demanded national repentance by calling for a solemn assembly to cry out to the LORD. Their tears were expressions of grief.

How broken are you today over your sin?

When was the last time you were broken with grief over your own sins?

When was the last time you confessed with tears that you were playing church games, just showing up so that you could show off.

When was the last time you interceded on behalf of your boss, colleagues at work or members of your family or Sunday School class?

When was the last time you fasted and prayed over your own spiritual condition and over the condition of our church and community?

When was the last time you sensed God’s calling you to repent of anything? It is time that Roswell Street Baptist Church be called to a sacred assembly to cry out to God to forgive us from our sins: our racial prejudice, greed, lust, apathy, complacency, love of material things, and anything else that stands between us and God.

That assembly is scheduled for October 19<sup>th</sup> starting at 6:00 PM in the Vision Center. I’m calling us to fast and pray as we seek the LORD for times of refreshing and for spiritual awakening. I began three weeks ago fasting one day a week for our prayer gathering on October 19<sup>th</sup>. I’ve asked our ELT to join me in fasting one day a week in preparation for the prayer gathering on October 19<sup>th</sup>. Starting today and over the next several weeks, we’re going to prepare ourselves for

what God wants to do in our lives.

And as we prepare, I am begging God for a fresh visit in our lives that night. I'm anticipating this prayer gathering to be that night that we will be referring to for years to come: "Oh, that was the night that God did a work in my life and in the life of our church."

There was a time in our life that we sought God; but I'm afraid that after we found Him, we stopped seeking Him. Hebrews 11.6, "But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those WHO DILIGENTLY SEEK HIM."

Our lack of seeking Him as brought us to where we are. We need to pray, "O God, show us Your glory."

How we need Times of refreshing! We read about that refreshment in Acts 3.19, "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord ..."

We need a fresh wind to blow across our lives!

**When was the last great movement of God in your life?**

**When was the last great movement of God in our church?** I'm praying for both! I'm looking for both! And we may not know what to do, but like Jehoshaphat, that's the time to "seek the Lord, proclaim a fast and but get our eyes back on Him."

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<sup>i</sup> Floyd, Ronnie. *The Power of Prayer and Fasting*. (B & H Publishing Group, Nashville, Tennessee, 2010), p. 15.