

# FIRESTARTERS 5

## PRAYER TOOL

Igniting Prayer for Revival in our City • 5 Minutes to Read • 5 Minutes in Prayer

**FOR THE WEEK OF May 9th - May 15th, 2021** - Vol 54

### THEME VERSE:

*For what shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world,  
and loses his own soul?*

**Mark 8:36**

### THE GOD OF REVIVAL:

#### The 1927 Chinese Awakening: John Sung

During the time of China's civil war (1927-1949AD), the period was tumultuous and the political arena was fierce as leadership factions battled it out. Yet, it was also the time when God would take the young fledgling Church in China - birthed in the fires of early revival - and deepen it, test it, and forge a resilient and vibrant Church through profound spiritual awakenings. Although God raised up many servant-heroes in this season, one of the most influential was a minister named John Sung.

John Sung was the son of Pastor Sung, who had been a frontline eyewitness to the Hingwa Pentecost of 1909. As a young boy, John followed his father around and tried to imitate him as he ministered. He eventually earned the nickname "Little Pastor" as he preached to his classmates and excelled in his studies at the local school. He inherited his father's fiery temperament, which often led to childhood clashes with his parents, but would also serve to embolden him later when faced with ungodly leaders. The Hingwa Pentecost of 1909 definitely left its mark on him as a young boy, as he experienced the powerful move of the Spirit to bring repentance to a city.

After finishing his studies in his hometown, he yearned to study abroad in America to prepare for ministry. This was far too expensive for John's family, but God arranged for a missionary sponsor to gather the needed resources to give him a scholarship to study at Ohio Wesleyan University. Upon his arrival in Ohio in 1920, John chose to specialize in Chemistry as his major. He earned high marks in college, graduating in just 3 years, earning a Master's degree by 1924 and a PhD by 1926. Unfortunately, all during this time, John let slide his time in God's Word and in prayer. The secular praises and accolades almost convinced him to abandon his plans for ministry. Yet, in 1926, he honored his earlier decision and registered at Union Theological Seminary in New York. While there, the liberal and atheistic teachings completely derailed him and caused him to walk away from his faith. But God was not done with John.

In January 1927, John found himself attending an evangelistic meeting whose main preacher was a phenomenal evangelist, the 14 year old Uldine Utley. Her messages on the cross of Christ stuck in his mind, and a few weeks later, he experienced a seismic shift in his heart: He completely surrendered to the Lord. He began to passionately share the Gospel with classmates and professors alike. So radical was his conversion that some in the faculty conspired to have him put into an insane asylum. While in captivity for more than 6 months, he hunkered down and voraciously read the Bible several times over, and when he was released, he returned to China.

John traveled throughout the Fujian Province for several years as an itinerant evangelist. Wherever he went, he focused on the cross of Christ and called for repentance. He emphasized the need to live by the Spirit but not necessarily dwelling too much on the gifts. Certainly, he used his prophetic gift often as he preached, in order to expose hidden sins and exhort sinners back to God. He prayed for many people, with tens of thousands of them seeing miraculous healing. Yet he always deflected men's praise and pointed it all back to our Savior.

God used John to ignite revivals all throughout China, with more than 100,000 souls receiving salvation. God's presence would stir up people's conviction of sin and also elicit a deep-felt joy in knowing Christ. John would courageously preach the Gospel during the invasion by Japan and also during the persecution by the Communists. He would be sent to carry the fires of revival to Indonesia and Singapore and many other Asian nations. It is said that the greatest distinctive of his ministry was not just his extraordinary preaching, not his deep knowledge of Scripture, not even his unwavering commitment to pray for others. It was how normal it was to see palpable expressions of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit wherever he went. Although sometimes impatient or critical or tinged with pride, he was formed and forged by God to be one of the greatest revivalists of the 20th century.

## **THE GOD WHO ANSWERS PRAYERS:**

- Praise God for the coalitions of prayer and community action being formed around the city. Praise Him for ministries like **Jesus Now Awakening** and **For Charlotte** who are engaging with churches citywide to be a solution to the brokenness we are facing in this nation.

## **PRAYER REQUESTS THIS WEEK:**

### FOR THE NEEDS OF THE CITY:

- **SERVING THE VULNERABLE.** Pray that God would guide the Church to know how to effectively serve and care for the homeless population in our city. Pray for true unity in mind and spirit to present the Gospel powerfully while caring for people's emotional and physical needs.
- **THE PANDEMIC.** Thank God as the outlook for COVID-19 in the USA stays optimistic and is improving. Pray that there would be no confusion nor panic as the city sorts out the irregularities in their rules and regulations while the lockdown loosens up. Pray for God's protection from new variants of COVID-19. Pray for truthful information on prevention, treatment, and vaccines to be revealed. Pray for the Lord's ongoing healing and presence among the sick.

### FOR THE WORLD AND MISSIONS:

- **INDIA.** Pray for the people of India as they face a devastating second wave of COVID-19 infections. With over 230,000 reported deaths, and 21 million confirmed cases, the surge has overwhelmed India's healthcare system. Those already living in poverty are in even more desperate need. Pray for God's provision of life-saving treatments and divine healing.
- **MEDIA: THE CHOSEN.** Pray for God to use the worldwide distribution of the video series called The Chosen, which chronicles the life of Christ using a modern approach to storytelling. May the series stir up interest in Jesus and the Word of God, leading many to seek salvation in Christ.

### FOR LOCAL MINISTRIES AND REVIVAL:

- **DIVINE STRENGTH.** Pray for local pastors and other Christian leaders to be strong in the midst of great temptations and spiritual warfare. May the Spirit give them enough grace and resolve to fight against Satan's tactics and find victory over any discouragement or obstacle.
- **REVIVAL.** Pray that the Lord would refine and sharpen future leaders in the midst of all the struggles today. Pray that God's sons and daughters would embrace the cross and surrender to the Holy Spirit so that they will be ready to stand in the gap, to pray unceasingly, and to be agents of God's next great revivals around the world!

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