

FIRESTARTERS 5

PRAYER TOOL

Igniting Prayer for Revival in our City • 5 Minutes to Read • 5 Minutes in Prayer
FOR THE WEEK OF Mar 27th - April 2nd, 2022 - Volume 98

THEME VERSE:

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Matthew 6:21

THE GOD OF REVIVAL:

The Revivals of the Carolinas: The Shearer Schoolhouse Revival of 1896

It was around the year 1896 when God began stirring up a longing for revival in the hearts of the people in Murphy, North Carolina. Murphy was a town located near the Cherokee area mountains, close to the Tennessee border, and 200 miles west of Charlotte. Since 1892, Pastor W. F. Bryant had preached for a local Baptist congregation in Murphy, and he had formed a strong friendship with R. G. Spurling, a pastor of a church in nearby Turtletown, Tennessee.

Spurling was a 2nd generation preacher, and for years his family had ministered and prayed for spiritual breakthrough among the inhabitants there. His church had been birthed out of a gathering of Baptists, Presbyterians, and Methodists who had covenanted with God to reject mere traditions and to embrace living in community purely by the Word of God. The leaders of Christian Union, as this church was called, carried the Gospel faithfully into the nearby mountains and established numerous churches.

Both Spurling and Bryant were men of prayer and the Word. Their hearts resonated with Father God's heart for spiritual awakening, and they yearned to see the lost around them be saved. They eventually decided to merge their two churches, which was only 4 miles apart, despite being in different states. They established their unified church near Murphy, North Carolina, borrowing the publicly available Shearer Schoolhouse in which to teach and conduct worship. It was a match made in Heaven, and this partnership prompted the congregants to enthusiastically fast and pray together, eagerly looking forward to a mighty harvest of souls.

Their prayers did not go unnoticed. God opened up the Heavens in the summer of 1896, as the church sponsored a 10 day revival meeting led by a handful of evangelists. Word spread quickly, and bands of people from the hills and ranges were drawn to the event. A spirit of revival swept across the attendees from the first day. Folks experienced the hand of God to convict their hearts of personal sin and remove any doubts or skepticism they were harboring. Everyone there seemed to personally encounter the living Savior. At one meeting, over 100 people collapsed under the tangible touch of the Spirit. Those who were sick received divine healing at these gatherings. Many hundreds more surrendered their lives to follow Jesus Christ. It was such a powerful time that, even after the event concluded, the people continued to meet in their homes or in public areas to worship. It continued to spread in Murphy and to the surrounding counties.

However, in the midst of great blessing, there was also marked persecution. The leadership of the local Baptists took a vote in 1899 and excommunicated 40 members of this church, including the pastors Spurling and Bryant. In addition, the governing body sought to ban the church from using the Shearer Schoolhouse. When someone donated land across from the schoolhouse to build a log building, the religious leaders became enraged. They tried to demolish the building with dynamite, without success. Then, they gathered a mob and pried the building apart log by log, burning each log in turn. Even with this tragedy, the church persevered.

Over the next 6 years, Christian Union church faced relentless opposition. Homes were targeted and vandalized. Well waters were tainted. People from the church were even abused and whipped. But these believers, who had experienced a Pentecost-like outpouring of the Spirit in the rugged mountains of the Carolinas, would not abandon the blessing God had poured upon them. They forgave their enemies, rebuilt their places of worship, and pressed on with God's grace. They had tasted revival, and they would fan those flames and carry them outwards to new towns and even nations in the ensuing days.

THE GOD WHO ANSWERS PRAYERS:

Praise God for the trend of decreasing COVID-19 numbers of infections and serious complications in our city and nationwide. Thank God that many communities are ending lockdowns and mandates while still providing help to the most vulnerable. We need to keep praying that any Omicron variant surge in the United States will be short-lived and mild.

PRAYER REQUESTS THIS WEEK:

FOR THE CITY:

- **MEDIA TRUTHFULNESS.** Pray that in this time of many crises and challenges - war in Ukraine, COVID-19, and spiking inflation - for media outlets and producers to be held to higher accountability to report the facts. Pray that any propaganda and lies will be exposed and that any knowing perpetrators will be punished for their role in sowing division, confusion, and hate. Pray that honest debates and discussions be encouraged and for censorship to end.
- **COMBATTING HUMAN TRAFFICKING.** The city of Charlotte in 2021 was noted as the worst city in North Carolina for human trafficking. Pray for God to grant law enforcement and local ministries the opportunities to end the groups responsible for causing so much human suffering in our communities. Pray for increased awareness among our churches and the general population. Pray that many of its victims - mostly women - will be rescued out of this.

FOR THE WORLD AND FOR MISSIONS:

- **INDIA.** Pray for the widows and abandoned children in India. Pray for a means of work for the widows and a sense of belonging. Pray for abandoned children to be accommodated in Christian homes or cared for in mission centers.
- **NORTH KOREA.** Pray for the believers in North Korea - for Scriptures to be provided and for fellowship. Pray for an end to government oppression and for full freedom to worship Jesus.

FOR LOCAL MINISTRIES AND REVIVAL:

- **LOCAL CHURCHES.** Pray for local churches to become sources of healing and restoration for what is broken in our cities. Pray for Christians to become conduits of Christ's life to others. May we be people who demonstrate God's peace and hope in troubled times. May the churches love and serve those in need around them. (Ezekiel 47:9, 12; John 7:37-38)
- **FOR REVIVAL.** Lord, we know You are looking for good fruit in our lives. Revive and restore Your people to great fruitfulness. Enable despondent or fruitless believers to be lifted into the light of God's presence. Help Christians everywhere be stretched to take up spiritual disciplines in order to draw them into intimacy with You and to be able to serve more powerfully. (John 15:1-2, 5)

FOR MORE, VISIT WWW.THINKREVIVAL.COM

For Discussion Questions, go to: www.thinkrevival.com/Stories/HistoricBlog/