01/05/25

Bring Us Back

“Return us to You, O Lord, so that we may be restored: Renew our days as of old.”

Lamentations 5:21 Amplified

If we would carefully examine the scriptures, we will find that the Lord is always the initiator of revival and restoration. The ultimate hope for restoration is based on God’s faithfulness to His covenant promises. Again 2 Chronicles 7:14 tells us that our responsibility in having God to return us back to Him comes through our ability to recognize first that we have allowed sin in our lives, and the church, then to seek His face and pray for the healing that we need in the land. Jeremiah 29:11-14 concludes what we know God thinks towards us in verse 11 by saying when we call upon Him and pray, He will hearken to our cry because “you shall seek Me, and find Me, when you shall search for me with your whole heart.” Jeremiah 29:14 then tells us that Gods says when we seek Him with our whole hearts, “I will be found of you…and I will restore your fortunes.” What we must fully understand is because God is a faithful and loving God, He will never abandon us even in our disobedience. What He has shown us is He will require us to turn from our wicked ways and go in a new way. No longer will He accept what we in time past have brought to Him and called it our reverence and worship. As we watched the ineffectiveness of our ministries, we became comfortable with a form of godliness that was void of any power to deliver and heal the people. Just like in time past when God repeatedly gave the Nation of Israel sign after sign to show that He was not pleased with their behavior, so we as well must take heed to warning that is before us to turn from our wicked ways and return to God. He is declaring through revelation that He has used these challenges which we as a body of believers have faced, as an opportunity to prepare His people to return to Him. We have not had the effect on the world as we should, but the church has allowed the world to influence it until we look like the world, and sound like the world, and even act like the world, until there is nothing to distinguish us in the world as the people of God. With all that the challenges and uncertainty that has caused the church to be stagnant and ineffective to influence, God is now preparing a new way for His people. We had become attached to the building and lost our connection to Jesus. Our form of what we called worship had pushed out the glory of God and the church could easily be called Ichabod. We have abandoned the glory for a commercial form of what looked like worship but had no power. Jesus told us in John 15 that the only way we as a body of believers can bear the fruit of righteousness was by staying connected to Him. And because the church had become ineffective, but rather had adopted that country club mentality, God allowed the doors to be closed so that we will have no other choice but to seek Him and not just a Sunday gathering. With no evidence of healing, deliverance, or breakthroughs, the old way needed to come to an end until we as a body recognize how far we had strayed away from God and seek Him for restoration. As we step into this new year, know that God has chosen a new way to bring us back to Him. So, as Paul stated in 1 Corinthians 16:9 when He saw that the fields were ripe for harvest in Ephesus, “a wide door for effective service has opened to me”, so today we must be prepared to walk into the Open Door that God will bring before us in this new year. God has shown us that He is not pleased with the arrogance and self-centeredness of His church and is guiding us in a new way so that we can be effective in our work for the kingdom. God is preparing to open this door to renew and restore us to seek holy living in every area of our lives. In Isaiah 43:18, 19a God says “remember you not the former things, neither consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing…” The former things for us are how we have turned away from God and allowed compromise into hearts and our place of worship. With all that we have experienced in the world, and the Nation, God is doing a new thing to bring us back to Him.