

The Manifest Presence of God- Welsh Revival (John 14:21, 23)



This Scripture must be a pursuit for the church, '...he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to Him (by the Holy Spirit)...If anyone loves, Me, He will keep My words; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.' (John 14:21, 23)

1. Spread of Welsh Revival

a. Condition of Wales: The overall condition of Wales at the time was very dark. Bars flourished, and football, cockfighting, gambling, and prostitution captured the soul of the working class. Murder, rape, and other vices were on the rise and law enforcement was losing control.

b. Spark by a Testimony: One Sunday morning, in a prayer meeting of young people Ps Jenkins asked for testimonies of spiritual experiences. Several tried to speak on other subjects, but the pastor stopped them. At last, a young girl named Florrie Evans, who was gloriously saved a few days before, stood and with a trembling voice said: *'I love Jesus Christ with all my heart.'* With these simple words the sparks that God had planted in many hearts burst into flame, and great Welsh Revival began and the fire began to spread out to Wales.

c. Evan Roberts, the Spearhead of Revival: Evan was born in Loughor on 8th June 1878. Evan began to work in the coal mine when he was just 9. His father Henry broke his leg, so Evan had to help him in his job earning 75c a week. Evan was born again at 13, and he had a great hunger for deep spiritual life.

He had one burning question, *'What if the Holy Spirit came and our flesh was absent?'* He was determined to have the Holy Spirit at any cost. As a young boy when Evan wanted to play with his friends, he said to himself, *'Remember your resolve and be faithful'* and he decided to attend prayer meetings throughout the week - *Monday prayer meeting at Moriah, Tuesday at Pisgah, Wednesday at Moriah, then Thursday and Friday at other prayer meetings and Bible classes.*

For 14 years Evan did this and prayed for a mighty visitation of the Holy Spirit, until one day he broke through. *'I prayed for 10-11 years for revival....'*

d. Heavenly Encounters - In the spring of 1904 Evan had visitations from the Lord every morning from 1am to 5am, which he calls it Mt Transfiguration experience.

'For a long time, I had been much troubled in my soul and in my heart thinking over the failure of Christianity. Oh, and it seemed such a failure. Such a failure. And I prayed and prayed. But nothing seems to give me any relief. But one night after I was in great distress praying about this I went to sleep. Then one o'clock in the morning, suddenly I was awakened out of my sleep and found myself with unspeakable joy and awe in the very presence of the Almighty God. At 5 o'clock it seemed to me as if I had again returned to earth.'

'Were you night dreaming?' *'No. I was wide awake. And it was not only in that morning, but every morning for 3-4 months. Always I enjoyed 4 hours of that wonderful communion with God. I cannot describe it. I felt it and it seemed to change all my nature. And I saw things in a different light. And I knew that God was going to work in the land, and not in this land only, but in all the world.'*

'Did you put on the paper all that you remembered of these times of communion?' *'No. I wrote nothing at all.'* Later Evan describes it, *'He came and spoke face to face with me.'*

e. Blaenanerch Blessing – At this time a convention was being held at Blaenanerch led by evangelist Seth Joshua (of the Forward Movement of the Calvinistic Methodist church). On Thursday 29 September 1904, Evan Roberts and 19 other young people attended the meeting. Seth Joshua had a burden for revival. For 4 years Seth Joshua had been praying that God would take a lad from a coal mine to revive the work in Wales even as the Elisha was taken from the plough. He asked God would not take a man from universities which might feed pride in intellectualism, but rather use a simple lad that the glory might go to God alone.

Seth kept this prayer to himself, until at last he shared it with this group of young lads. Young Evan Roberts was among them. Evan was deeply affected by this. He said in a diary, *'I have built an altar and laid wood*

and had prepared the offering. I have only to wait for the fire.' The young Elijah was ready. The fire fell the next day.

The next morning at the 7am prayer meeting Seth prayed, 'Lord, bend us.' That sentence hit him so hard. It was as if the Holy Spirit whispered to Evan's ears, '*That is what you need.*' At the 9am prayer meeting Evans began to pray, '*Oh Lord, bend me. Bend me. Bend me. Bend us.*' His tears were flowing. Evan thought his heart was going to burst. He thought blood was gushing out of him. Then such love of God came over young Evan. He said, 'What bent me was God's amazing love.' Then waves of peace came over Evans.

Then he thought of the people who will be bent on the judgment day. Evan's heart was filled with compassion for those who will be bent on that day and he wept for the lost. From this moment on Evan's heart was filled with the love for Calvary and the love for the lost. This was the answer to Seth's prayer for 4 years.

- f. 100,000 souls – Shortly after this, one midnight Sydney Evans his roommate came into the room and found Evan Roberts' face shining with holy light. Astonished Sydney asked what happened to him. Evan replied he had just seen in a vision the whole of Wales being lifted up to heaven, and he prophesied, '*We are going to see the mightiest revival that Wales has ever known...*' Suddenly he stopped and with piercing eyes, he cried: '*Do you believe that God can give us 100,000 souls now?*'
- g. Fire falls at Loughor – Soon Evan found it very difficult to focus on the study as these thoughts began to dominate his mind. One day while sitting in a chapel, Evan saw in a vision some of his old companions and many other young people as a voice spoke to him saying, '*Go to these people.*' He said, '*Lord, if it is Thy will, I will do.*' Evan consulted with this mentor who encouraged him to go. Evan decided to obey the direction of the Spirit and returned to his hometown by train on 31 October which would become the beginning of a mighty outpouring.

When Evan came back, he found his brother Dan seriously ill with an eye problem. Evan prayed for Dan and Dan was immediately healed. Then Evan prophesied, '*Dan, you shall see there will be a great change at Loughor in less than a fortnight. We are going to have the greatest revival the world has ever seen.*'

Immediately, Evans asked his pastor to call for a special prayer meeting for youth after the adults' evening prayer meeting at 8pm. 16 adults and 1 little girl stayed behind. It was a very humble beginning, but it was to become a seed for the mightiest revival in Wales. The fire of God began to fall upon the nightly gatherings. Within 2 weeks Wales would hear about the move of God in Loughor. Within 2 months, over 70,000 names of the new converts were reported in the newspaper. Within 5 months, 100,000 converts were added to the churches.

- h. 4 Tenets – November 2 Wednesday night at Moriah Evan preached on 4 Points:
- (i) We must confess honestly before God and receive complete forgiveness for the sins of the past. The church must be cleansed of all sin.
 - (ii) There must be no cloud between the believer and God. If there is any doubt about the things that are questionable to you, you must forsake it. Have you forgiven everybody?
 - (iii) complete and immediate obedience to the Holy Spirit. Whatever the Lord says, do it.
 - (iv) Public and personal confession of Christ.

After teaching these 4 principles, Evan started to pray and urge the people to pray this prayer, '***Send the Holy Spirit for Jesus Christ's sake.***' The Holy Spirit began to move upon the people like waves. By November 7 Monday night, everyone in the service was moved to tears and many cried in agony. By midnight the presence of the Lord was so intense that it could hardly be contained. The people had never experienced such deep repentance or such deep joy. Those crying in remorse for their sins could not be distinguished from those crying in ecstasy at the nearness of God. It was after 3am before the meeting could be dismissed.

- i. Manifestation of the Presence – The awe of God was upon everyone, and His presence was felt everywhere in Wales. Spontaneous prayer meetings began in the mines, factories, schools, and shops.

Waves after wave of the Holy Spirit was passing over the land. The star football players were converted and joined the open-air street meetings to testify of the glorious things that the Lord had done for them. Soon the players were so captivated with the Lord that they lost interest in the games, and teams disbanded; the stadiums were empty. No one preached against sport for football – the people simply became so passionate for the Lord that for a season, such games just could no longer interest either the players or the people.

It was as if the nation had been converted in a day, and not just converted – transformed! Many came from far corners of the earth to witness this phenomenon. Many testified of being profoundly impacted by the presence of the Lord as soon as they touched the soil of Wales. Even letters and telegrams from Wales carried the fire of God – as they were read, souls would be saved and revival would break out. No one had ever even heard of anything like this before – and it was just beginning!

2. Anointed Prayer, Praise, Souls

- a. Anointed Prayer – The spirit of intercession is what fuelled the fires of revival. The spirit of intercession was so mightily poured out that the whole congregation would pray simultaneously for hours for the lost. Most often the unsaved loved ones were the focus of the intercession. Then those people would be compelled to come to the very meeting and get saved, which further fanned the flames of intercession! Garndiffaith a young man had been praying for this father's salvation. Just then his father came to the meeting and made a full surrender.

The meetings that were expected to be regular services, quickly became prayer meetings. Sometimes groups of people walking to work would start praying as they went. Soon they would be joined by a swelling crowd who were drawn by the anointing. Spontaneous prayer meetings would start in shops and homes. At times factories would be shut down so the workers could pray. At the peak of revival, the whole population of a town would march to a neighbouring town to pray for it, and revival would be ignited there.

These people were carrying the 'Ark of God's presence' on their shoulders through prayer and intercession. Their zeal for prayer was only matched by the love for the Lord and the holy fear of offending Him. Their goal was not even the revival itself which can turn into an idol. Their goal was to see the Lord Jesus exalted and draw all men to Himself.

- b. Anointed Praise – The great prayers of Welsh Revival was accompanied by spontaneous worship called 'singing in the Spirit', which was described as 'heavenly'. At times Bible studies or prayer meetings being held in the same city would all empty into the streets at the same time, following an unseen conductor. They would march around the town together singing praises to the Lord until the early morning hours.
- c. Souls – Welsh revival was considered one of the most intense and effective revivals in saving souls. But there is no record of organised classes or set strategy on how to reach the lost. It seemed like every Christian in Wales erupted simultaneously with burning agony for the lost. The joy of salvation could not be contained by these ordinary people. Even more than the preaching, it was the *witness of the common believers* which led multiplied thousands to salvation.

A 4-year-old child in the kindergarten class asked her teacher, 'Please, teacher, do you love Jesus?' These words struck her heart like an arrow. There and then the teacher came to the Lord and she later went out to India as a missionary.

- d. NT Conversion: The new believer's first encounter with the Lord was not the promise of blessing, but a profound comprehension of his own sinful condition. When moved by the Spirit to come to salvation, the converts did not just raise their hands in the back of the building to acknowledge their 'decision'. They were wrecked with holy desperation for the mercy of the Saviour, and they tumbled to the floor as if in physical pain. Those under conviction would sometimes writhe in their own tears until they gained the assurance of forgiveness; then their grief would turn into overflowing joy impossible to contain.

As the meetings began to disband, often at two or three in the morning, new converts just could not leave and would continue singing, praying, and at times laughing uncontrollably until the morning prayer meetings started at sunrise.

3. Unique Features of Welsh Revival

- a. Question of Leadership: Some called Welsh Revival 'the Pentecost greater than Pentecost.' There was a great concern that the leadership of such a significant revival was in the hands of a handful of youths – Evan Roberts (26), Mary Roberts (16), Dan Roberts (20), Sydney Evans (20, Mary's future husband), 'Singing Sisters' (18-22).

The great preachers such as General William Booth, F.B. Meyer, G. Campbell Morgan, and many other renowned preachers from all over the world came to watch the revival unfold. They were all but dumbfounded as the great knowledge and eloquence bowed the knee to deep love and pure devotion. Though great preaching was necessary and loved by all, yet their great preaching had never produced the kind of presence of the Lord they encountered in Wales. G. Campbell Morgan testified that he would trade all of his learning for even a portion of the presence of God that accompanied these children.

- b. No Superstars: Definition of profanity - 'seeking of one's own recognition at the expense of God's glory.' Sometimes Evan Roberts would enter a meeting and sit in the front seat and say nothing for 3 hours. Then he would stand up, preach, pray for some 10-15 minutes and sit down. Other times he might preach the whole time or pray the whole time. Regardless of what Evan did, the people would carry on worshipping under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

Evan Roberts knew that he was popular, and he dreaded publicity and the adulation of men. He dreaded glowing newspaper reports idolising him. At times Evan would agonise over the fact that the people's eyes were on him rather than on the Lord. He refused interviews with reporters from all over the world, and the multiple requests from publishing houses seeking to write his biography. He even refused photographs except by the members of his own family.

Evan Roberts was a young man of humble origin, yet he is to be considered one of the greatest examples of a yielded vessel to the Lord. When God looked for a vessel of His glory, He did not look for the wise enough or educated enough, but those who are yielded and humble enough to risk everything to follow Him.

- c. Lack of Commercialism: From the beginning to the end this was one revival that could not be attributed to human charisma or promotional ability. There was an almost total lack of commercialism. There were no hymn books, no song leaders, no revival committees with set agendas, no choirs, no great preachers, and no great organisations. A historian of the Welsh Revival (James Stewart) researched newspapers and magazines published in Wales from 1904-1905, and he could not find a single advertisement or poster promoting a meeting under any evangelist's name.
- d. Spiritual Unity: All denominational barriers and prejudices completely collapsed. *This unity was not caused by the persecution of the saints, but by the glory and the presence of the Lord.*

4. Impact of Welsh Revival

- a. There had been a few spiritual awakenings in history that had global impact, but none had as much concentrated power and impact as Welsh Revival. It seems that the Lord was saying, 'I am going to show the world what I can do with just a handful of faithful servants who yield themselves to Me completely.'
- b. Headlines of crime, violence, and scandal were replaced by conversion counts, news from the meetings, the words to new hymns, and revival maps detailing where the Spirit was moving with the greatest intensity. Debts were paid off, stolen goods returned, and the taverns were closed. The revival had a substantial economic impact on Wales for good.

Problems developed at the mines because the horses so accustomed to miners swearing could not understand their simple commands after the miner's language was cleaned up. Political meetings were postponed because the members of Parliament were in the revival meetings. Theatre companies quit coming to Wales because no one would come to see their show. Magistrates were presented with white gloves in many towns to signify that there were no arrests. The prisons were emptied. Revival swept through the universities day after day for months.

- c. Welsh Revival quickly sparked off 30+ other revivals around the world, especially in Welsh-speaking colonies in America. Azusa Street's William Seymour and Bartleman in LA corresponded with Evan Roberts during the revival. India was swept through with the fire. All of Britain and Europe was invaded by the people carrying the same fires of revival. Rees Howells came out of this revival.

In Scandinavia, there are still hundreds of churches tracing their roots to the Welsh revival. Waves and waves of missionaries went to Africa and Asia, planting churches, schools, Bible Colleges. A young Latvian Bible college student went back to Russia and thousands came to the Lord and hundreds of churches were planted throughout Eastern Europe. The fires went even as far as Pyongyang, and sparked off the great North Korean Revival.