

Jerry Emerson's Personal Testimony

Salvation:

When I was 9 years old I had a profound encounter with the Lord. One night before bedtime this presence came into my room. I knew it was the presence of the Lord. On one hand I was greatly convicted of my sinfulness and on the other, I wanted to know this man Jesus. I don't think I slept well that night as I considered my spiritual condition. I shared with my dad that I wanted to know the Lord and he took me to our pastor. The Rev. John Merk shared with me some passages of scripture, and to be honest I don't even remember the scriptures he shared with me I just wanted to invite Jesus into my life and into my heart. I remember kneeling down and inviting Jesus into my heart. I entered into a relationship with Him that was and is real and personal and I have never been the same since.

At the age of twelve I had another dramatic encounter. I was on a church weekend retreat along with my older brother. We did many camp type things, swimming, water balloons, silliness, Bible study and some mischievous activity were the norm but one night the leadership asked all of us in the room to kneel down and begin to seek the Lord. As we did, I felt this heavy weighty presence descend in the room. The next thing I know someone's hand is touching my back. I looked around to see who it was and no one was close enough to touch me. It was the hand of the Lord. It was a frightening experience one that I will never forget.

You would think that after encounters like this someone would serve the Lord all the days of their life. I wish I could say that I stayed faithful to Him through my entire life but I did have some years of my life spent on a side road. When I entered into eighth grade I began to do a lot of things that I knew I should not be doing and I began to drift away from the Lord. At the age of about 16 I purchased a drum set and that is when I did the unthinkable. I asked the Lord to leave me alone. It breaks my heart every time I even mention that. Although I know His hand was still upon my life, He did leave me to my own ways. One day after about 6 years of being away from the Lord, as I lay on my couch with a terrible viral chest infection, looking up to heaven I heard a voice say; **"I have a much better life for you than the one you are living."** As I lay on my back my response to Him was; "If you will heal me I will give you my life." He healed me of that debilitating infection and I have followed Him ever since.

Rejecting the Baptism of the Holy Spirit:

Religiously I have had an interesting upbringing. I was raised Southern Baptist but the Lord seemed fit to place me with friends that were charismatic. I was never really against speaking in tongues. My dad was, but I had a praying mother who was open to the ways of the Spirit yet never openly charismatic.

In collage I openly spoke against what charismatic's called the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and then during a bible study the director of the Baptist Student union where I attended college corrected me as I spoke out. He called my attention to Acts chapter 8 and I pondered what was said. Then, one night while attending a Christian concert a young man tapped me on the shoulders and asked; "Have you received the baptism of the Spirit." I looked him right in the eyes and arrogantly told him; "I have the Spirit," longing to know, as he walked away, if maybe there was something more that God wanted me to have or experience. Was he sent from God, because he didn't look as if he had come just to be at the concert? Maybe I was missing something? Maybe I was misunderstanding or misinterpreting something in the word of God.

Receiving the Baptism of the Holy Spirit:

While living in Texas one night I was on a local outreach with Beautiful Feet Ministries. That night God had placed me with, you guessed it, the charismatic's in the ministry. After our outreach was over, while parked in a van outside of the ministry I began to share with the men some of my struggles in ministry. As I was sharing one of the men suggested that I might need the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Actually he was a little bolder than that, he said; "you need the baptism of the Holy Spirit." This time instead of "I have the Spirit," my response was, "OK." The men gathered around me and began to pray. One of the men led me in a prayer inviting Jesus to baptize me with the Holy Spirit. They finished praying and nothing seemingly happened. I got out of the van and I got into my truck and started down the road. As soon as I had begun to drive away, it happened. The Holy Spirit fell on me and something blurted out of my mouth that sounded like tongues. I was immediately infused with the Holy Spirit and I began to laugh. I tried to get a hold of myself but the joy just kept coming. It was like I was drunk or something. I got to the place where we going to eat and as soon as I got out of my truck someone that was meeting us their looked at me and said; "What Happened To You?" I was physically manifesting the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. I went home that night and laughed myself to sleep. It was truly a joy unspeakable and full of glory. After that experience the gifts of the Holy Spirit began to manifest in my life, especially the word of knowledge and prophecy. I would walk up to people and I would know things about their lives, it was and truly is amazing. I also had a great desire to see people physically healed. As I considered what was happening to me I was drawn to the scripture to see if what was happening was validated by scripture. As I began to search the scriptures it was like scales were taken off of my eyes and I began to see the person of the Holy Spirit throughout scriptures clearer than I had ever seen before. I went back and carefully studied Acts chapter 8 and then Acts chapter 1 and 2 as well as 1 Corinthians chapter 12 and sure enough everything I was experiencing was indeed not only scriptural but to be desired.

The person of the Holy Spirit is wonderful and His gifts, power, presence

and friendship should be welcomed in our lives and in our churches.

Experiencing Personal Revival and Awakening:

At that time I was attending a Baptist church and I shared with the pastor what had happened to me. He suggested to me that I continue to seek the Lord, encouraging me to attend meetings outside of our Baptist denomination. I certainly was open to that, due to the fact that the Lord had placed me in relationship with charismatic's all of my life. So I began to attend training sessions on healing the sick and revival meetings that were occurring at that time. It was at these meetings that I began to experience a deepening hunger for the Lord. I was deeply touched through the worship. Don't be offended if you are reading this and you are Baptist but there seemed to be a deeper level of worship that I was not accustomed to experiencing in our Baptist churches. It was at services like these that I began to hear of names like Charles Finney, Smith Wigglesworth, Aimee Simple McPherson, George Whitfield, Evan Roberts as well as many others. I also came across a book by Henry T. Blackaby called *Fresh Encounter*. The entire book was on revival and awakening. It was not as popular as his *Experiencing God* book but it greatly impacted my life. One of the individuals he mentioned in this book was Evan Roberts. I had a particular interest in this man and it wasn't until just recently that I found a documentary about his life which included letters that he personally wrote describing in his own words what took place in Wales in 1904.

It was like God was using all this to prepare me for something. Then in the late nineteen nineties I heard about a revival meeting that was taking place in Florida. It was lasting for weeks and the number of people visiting was increasing. One summer after the revival had been going strong I was invited to be involved in a revival at a small church near Memphis. At the end of this service the pastor and a few members were planning on taking a trip to this revival and they asked me if I wanted to go along. They had decided to leave the last night of their revival service and drive all night. Now, I certainly was interested in the revival service but driving all night long in a van loaded with people, didn't sound so exciting. I really felt I was supposed to go so reluctantly I agreed. We arrived in Florida the next morning, got our hotel rooms and went to sleep. We woke up a few hours later and headed towards the revival. When we arrived there was a line of people already there waiting to get into the service. The building was so crowded that we were sent to an overflow room. After the service started I said to myself, "I've got to get into the main sanctuary." So I left the building and headed towards the main sanctuary. I got into the building and found a seat on the very back row. The worship was intense and the message compelling. At the end of the message this girl began to sing these words, "I'm running to the mercy seat." As she was singing people all around me began to cry out for the lost and it was not quietly. It was intercession like I had never experienced. They were crying out for people with such intensity almost as if life and death were dependent upon their prayers. As this was taking place the Spirit

of God was moving with such intensity, it was as if large arms were beckoning and drawing people into the kingdom. As I was listening to the intercessors pray the Spirit of the Lord spoke to me and said; "now you do it." He wanted me to pray. So I turned around in my seat and began to cry out to Him. I prayed like I had never prayed before. While I was praying I was impressed upon to pray for another man that came with us. I prayed for him with great fervency. I didn't find out until later that when I was praying he left his seat and headed for the alter. He was profoundly touched by the Lord and the last I heard was still serving the Lord faithfully. The intensity of the Holy Spirit moving in these meetings was truly amazing. We also had taken with us a very troubled teenager. The move of the Holy Spirit was so intense that she could not stay in the building. As for myself I experienced no outward signs of revival but inwardly it was like an explosion had gone off on the inside of me. When I arrived back in Fort Worth the very next Sunday people began to fill the alter while I was ministering. The greatest effect though was a greater desire for holiness and purity. As for what the Lord did for me and is still doing in regards to revival is hard to put into words. The only way I know how to describe it is I became impregnated with revival in my spirit and I believe we are on the verge of the greatest revival ever known to man. So rend your heart, cleanse your house and prepare the way for the Lord.