

OUR NEED FOR A GREAT AWAKENING

Increasing wealth has led people away from spiritual things.

In this day of dot.com wealth and instant millionaires, it is hard to dispute that statement. It is certainly a declaration of concern for our day. Yet, that quote is not from this year but from more than 250 years ago. It is a quote from Jonathan Edwards who was a leader in the First Great Awakening in America.

It is easier to know that our society has spiritual needs than to know how to make a positive impact. I believe the life and ministry of Jonathan Edwards are solid examples of how we can pursue a “Great Awakening” in our generation.

First, Edwards promoted evangelism with a series of sermons on justification by faith. Awakening began that same year. He said, *The Spirit of God began extraordinarily to set in and wonderfully work among us...This Work of God, as...the Number of true saints multiplied, soon made a glorious Alteration in the Town; so that in the spring and summer following, Anno 1735, the Town seemed to be full of the Presence of God; it was never so full of Love, nor of Joy, and yet so full of distress, as it was then. There were remarkable Tokens of God's Presence in almost every House. It was a time of Joy in families on account of Salvation being brought unto them...More than 300 Souls were savingly brought home to Christ, in this Town, in the Space of half a Year.* Not only was evangelism a focus for Edwards, but it became central in the ministries of other pastors, as well.

Second, Edwards promoted personal holiness. He not only proclaimed the Gospel of Christ but illustrated the power of Christ in his life. This is evident in the following selected resolutions.

- *I will do whatsoever I think to be most to God's glory.*
- *To be endeavoring to find out fit objects of charity and liberality.*
- *To maintain the strictest temperance in eating and drinking.*
- *To study the Scriptures so steadily, constantly and frequently, as that I may find, and plainly perceive myself to grow in the knowledge of the same.*
- *After afflictions, to inquire, what I am the better for them, what good I have got by them, and what I might have got by them.*

As I consider the life of Jonathan Edwards, I am reminded of a saying from Professor Howard Hendricks of Dallas Theological Seminary. When he was impressed with an individual, Prof would say, *May his tribe increase.* May the likes Jonathan Edward's tribe increase in our day. May we be people of God with a passion for evangelism and hearts for God. May a *Great Awakening* start in the midst of the Coronavirus Pandemic.