

Hattie Hammond

Although her name may not be familiar to most, Hattie Philetta Hammond (1907-1994) was one of the leading evangelists of the early Pentecostal-holiness revival. She was born in Williamsport, Maryland, and was a powerhouse, preaching a simple gospel message of relentless passion for Christ.

From very early childhood she was well aware of the call of God and initially planned to serve Him on the mission field. As a small child, her cousins would come to visit and enjoy playing church, converting and baptizing all the dolls in the neighborhood. When she had no other audience she preached to the cows and chickens, and to her own reflection in the mirror. At school she passed out gospel tracts, and took a keen interest in the continent of Africa.

She contracted typhoid fever at the age of twelve, and because she wasn't expected to survive her pastor was led to anoint her with oil and pray. It wasn't long before her 106-degree fever broke and she regained her health.

Throughout her teenage years, though she loved God, she found church rather stuffy, and would sneak off to do other things.

At age fifteen, she passed a large tent where Rev. John J. Ashcroft (grandfather of Senator John Ashcroft), was holding evangelistic services. It piqued her interest, so that she went inside and was gloriously converted and baptized in the Holy Spirit.

Hattie then became a passionate soul winner, preaching in her high school to anyone who would listen. She had lost her former shyness and had little interest in things of the world. At age sixteen she gave her life to full-time ministry as an traveling evangelist.

Not long afterward, Rev. Ashcroft asked her to join him and his wife for evangelist services in Martinsburg, West Virginia. Night after night he preached, with little in the way of results. Then one night he asked Hattie to preach.

Throughout the song service, she cried out to the Lord, and the Holy Spirit impressed her heart with the Scripture in Galatians 3:1: "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that you would turn from serving the living God?" She got up to preach, but instead of praying or preaching, she simply repeated that text over and over.

After the third reading, a woman ran to the altar and cried out in repentance for backsliding. Abruptly, the power of God filled the place, and even sparked a spontaneous resurrection in the neighborhood. Hattie's seventy-one year ministry was off to a stunning start.

Following the Martinsburg meetings, Hattie was preaching at a church in Cleveland, Ohio, when once again the power of God fell hard on the audience. From that time on, wherever she went, amazing healing miracles occurred. Consequently, she grew to become known as "the girl evangelist" while she was still in curls. In 1927 she was ordained by the

Assemblies of God and received invitations to speak in major cities all over the United States, preaching at conferences and conventions among Full Gospel circles as well as overseas.

By the 1930s, she was one of the most highly effective Bible teacher/evangelists in the Pentecostal movement, often preaching at large camp meetings. Her message was uncomplicated, encouraging total abandonment to the things of the Spirit. Ultimately she inspired a deeper walk of holiness that had a huge impact on the culture of her day.

Her message was not an easy one to hear, calling believers to submit to the refining process of God, that is much like the making of wine. Just like He came to earth to become broken bread and poured out wine, He takes us through crushing, milling and other hard places, so that together with other crushed grapes, we become one with Him and each other, losing our identity in exchange for His. In fact, we may often feel like we've had the very life crushed out of us, as an offering, a sweet sacrifice, which, in the end, is exactly His intention.

In 1981 Hattie spoke at the Fredericksburg Assembly of God, where the Spirit of God moved as never before, and many were transformed by His mighty power. It was clear that her anointing was from God and not of men.

In the August 18, 1928 issue of the *Pentecostal Evangel* she wrote these words in an article entitled *Drawing Nigh unto God*: "As we enter into the presence of the Lord we should realize we are in the presence of a great, almighty, eternal God." She encouraged readers to soak in the presence of God and wait for Him to speak to them. She went on, "We should not rush into His presence with haste, nor come as though we were coming into the presence of an earthly friend. We should take time to realize that He is God and beside Him there is none else."

In this sermon she also spoke of the need for personal salvation, consecrated times of prayer, and the importance of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. She taught and modeled the importance of becoming still, and knowing that God is the Great I Am, to whom we owe great honor and a deep sense of respect. She felt strongly that we must invite the Holy Spirit to keep us true to the cross and to the Person of Jesus, and to learn to truly choose to stay the course, no matter what the cost.

Her devoted life and preaching left a mark that is rarely seen anywhere. Even today, her example speaks volumes to convict those who have left their first love. In light of these truths it behooves each of us to examine our hearts for evidence that we've chosen to stay that same course, no matter what, because it will take that kind of passionate commitment in all of us, to win the world for Christ.

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