



## **Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire: What Happens When God's Spirit Invades the Heart of His People**

*Jim Cymbala, Dean Merrill*

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The Brooklyn Tabernacle pastor discusses how he built up a broken-down church to a membership of six thousand.

## **Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire: What Happens When God's Spirit Invades the Heart of His People Details**

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## **From Reader Review Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire: What Happens When God's Spirit Invades the Heart of His People for online ebook**

### **Rachel says**

My first finished book of 2018. There was power on every single page. I feel inspired and excited for the plans God has for my life this year. All of it based on the power of prayer and submitting to his full authority on my life.

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### **Leah Beecher says**

This is an excellent book for any Christian who wants to discover what "The Church" is supposed to look like, and act like. Jim Cymbala is humble and authentic. His passion for Christ comes through on every page. With much wisdom and insight he gives a very balanced view on issues dealing with spiritual warfare and culture issues. His stand and hard-hitting truth is always saturated in scripture. He makes the important and often looked-over point that the "problems with the world" is not secularism, immorality, or liberalism, but rather the problems lies with The Church (us Christians that is). We do not really take God for His Word, we are not serious about prayer, nor do we humbly seek Him for all things, knowing that we can do nothing good in our strength. I was greatly encouraged, and energized to start doing my small part in my home and in my local church to take a stand for truth and holiness and simply call out to God and pray. This book is a must for anyone interested in starting any prayer group in their home or church.

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### **Josh Miller says**

A very inspirational read from a humble man. An evangelist friend of mine visited the prayer meeting service of the Brooklyn Tabernacle some years ago and was quite moved.

Several items I took away from the book:

- 1) The strength of one's church does not lie in the attendance to any of the preaching services...it lies in the attendance to the prayer service. I wonder how many people would show up to our mid-week services if we announced that it would only be a time of praise and prayer?? The author continued by stating that preaching all to often becomes a time of entertainment for many churches...people just want to hear a good sermon rather than see the power of God.
- 2) The importance of Holy Spirit life in a church. The author downplays the oratorical skills of a pastor and magnifies the work of the Holy Spirit. He emphasized both God's power and our action working together.
- 3) Nobody is beyond God's grace! Some of the illustrations given concerning the people reached and the power of prayer to change their lives resonated with me.

After having read the book, I am impressed to visit the Brooklyn Tabernacle to see this life-changing station in the middle of Brooklyn.

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## **Julie says**

Cymbala's testimony of God's work is fascinating. We spent years in churches with great doctrine and plenty of programs, but very little evidence of the Holy Spirit at work. How much more does God want to do in each of our lives and our churches if we would only devote ourselves to prayer and allow the Holy Spirit to work? Inspiring and refreshing!

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## **Frank says**

Book Review: Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire By Jim Cymbala

In 1972, a young married man who did not have a background in ministry took over a dying congregation in a tough, inner-city neighborhood at the urgent request of his minister father-in-law.

Less than twenty people were attending services, the building was in disrepair and there was no money for even basic necessities. Yet within a few years the congregation was much larger and thriving. It eventually began to number in the thousands and developed a nationally-known choir. But the biggest change of all was within the lives of the pastor, his wife and the members.

What happened?

The Holy Spirit happened. Answered prayer happened.

Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire is the first-hand account by that pastor, Jim Cymbala and his experiences with the Brooklyn Tabernacle in New York City. He writes of how the tiny church was almost ready to close its doors when one Sunday, he was unable to even preach the sermon. He stopped speaking, said he couldn't go on and asked the congregation to pray.

Afterward, things began to improve a little. Then he instituted a weekly prayer meeting in which the members would pray for the pastor, the church service, that God's will would be done. Over time, the little church began to grow spiritually and numerically.

That doesn't mean that circumstances became easy. The church was located in a rundown neighborhood that was a hangout for alcoholics, drug addicts and prostitutes. Sometimes one of the locals would wander in off the streets and into services. In other cases, members would actively walk the neighborhood and tell the residents about Jesus. Through the members' testimonies, example and yieldedness to God, some people with even the most desperate of lifestyles accepted Christ and God turned their lives around.

Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire tells story after story of profound hope, of God changing lives. Cymbala is very emphatic that all of this was in response to the continual prayers of the members. He makes a strong case that prayer is the backbone of a church, that only group prayer can revitalize a church and turn lives around.

He also said that historically, all Christian revivals have been preceded by massive amounts of prayer. His book is not only an inspiring read but one we all need to apply.

-- Frank Lewandowski

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### **Seth Little says**

This is an inspirational account of one pastor's experience serving an urban congregation through a period of profound transformation and growth. Pastor Cymbala attributes the Brooklyn Tabernacle's success (and sustenance through difficulty) to the miraculous power of God accessed through radical commitment to prayer. I sensed an anti-intellectual bent here, but the point of the book is clearly to inspire a faithful dependence on God that transcends expectations too often limited by reason. It's been years since I first read the book, but I often remember the stories and draw "fresh" inspiration to invest in prayer and to expect God to respond generously.

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### **Mandy J. Hoffman says**

#### **MY REVIEW:**

I think it was the title...but for whatever reason this is a book I had seen many times and just never bought for myself to read. But recently when a dear man of God recommended this to our church leadership I immediately found it on PaperBackSwap and began to read it.

WOW!

This book is not about the how-to's of prayer like so many other books are, but about the why we pray and the power of prayer. And for those of you in my circle, it's not "out there" either. While there are a few things I can't say I agree with, there is a whole lot more that I heartily say "Amen!" to and long to see happen in the local churches around here.

It's hard to pull apart this book to determine my favorite part..but if forced to make a choices I would say it was the chapter titled "*The Lure of Novelty*" where Cymbala speaks frankly on the the power of prayer against casting out and binding. I really appreciated his very balanced approach to this issue and his loving way of stating the truth.

I highly recommend this book for those who want to understand prayer more and be challenged to pray more. I don't know how anyone could not be excited after reading this book filled with a multitude of testimonies from Cymbala and his congregation. Teens and adults of all ages need to read this book and practice it's passion!

#### **BOOK OVERVIEW:**

Pastor Jim Cymbala shares the lessons he learned when the Spirit ignited his heart and began to move through his people. This book is for anyone seeking to live at the center of God's purposes, through experiencing the power of his Spirit. This softcover edition includes a study guide.

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### **Ciara says**

I wasn't convinced I would vibe with this book. I have been having a hard time with church to say the least. But holy crap! This guy's story is good and he tears down all the falsehood and hypocrisy of churches today and what we have made Christianity and going to church to become. In looking for a church, I have just been wanting to find somewhere that loves God and loves people (aka EVERYONE: the poor, homeless, gay, scary, etc.) to the best of their ability. Jim's church does exactly that well and highlights the importance of prayer and a spirit filled congregation. To all who aren't sure what the heck is going on with the church-READ THIS.

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### **Simon Bale says**

It wasn't that I disliked the book's core message: that prayer and the Holy Spirit are what matters in Christian community today. It was the way the message was communicated.

I felt beaten up and beaten down by the onslaught of marshal metaphors, and seriously unnerved at the prejudice shown by Cymbala on matters of family life, sexuality and relationships.

The core message could have been got across in a dozen or more pages, and the rest could be left out. It is a truly serious and valuable message, but I have been forced out of really engaging with it because I can't get past the extreme conservatism and fear of the world around those who work out of the Brooklyn Tabernacle. The world is not the crazy dangerous place Cymbala portrays it as. If you read uncritically, you could be forgiven for thinking that to venture out into the streets is suicidal, or at the very least is an invitation to debauchery and addiction.

Such thinking, and, importantly, the communication of such thinking, reinforces the lifeboat mentality of such churches. These churches seem to exist as bubbles in the world. The church I want to engage with is not a bubble, but a glorious portrayal of God's love in the world.

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### **Aaron says**

Jim Cymbala was a familiar name to me, as I had read some of his articles in Charisma magazine. The Charismatic books are the most widely read books in Christendom. I've not really been impressed with one to date—there is always a running theme under them all which I do not adhere to.

Jim was thrown into the role of Pastor by the hand of his father-in-law. Jim had no formal ministerial training (and I suspect still hasn't), and make no mistake about it, he takes pride in that fact.

Preaching the word systematically isn't important to Jim—only giving the Holy Spirit time to work in 2 hour services with no thought put into them is. This mode of thinking is to say that the Holy Spirit could not inspire man's reason, could not inspire his writing, or a sermon. This goes against the essence of the Scriptures themselves. C.S. Lewis argued that reason itself was the supernatural element within nature, and I agree with him. The Charismatics though have made reason synonymous with the carnal mind. This is

eisegesis and not exegesis. The carnal mind is not synonymous with the human mind. The carnal mind is biblically defined as the mind which is sinful, which is unrepentant. We are transformed by the renewing of our mind—we don't throw our mind out as being hopelessly carnal.

More than anything else, Jesus taught. The Word opens the way for the Holy Spirit. Prayer is vital, worship is vital, letting the spiritual gifts operate within the church are vital, and the preaching and teaching of the Word is vital. If a church comes to only focus on any one of these things, at the expense of the others, they are lacking.

"The New Beginning" for Pastor Cymbala and his church came when he felt that the Holy Spirit prompted him to begin a prayer service. The total emphasis of the book is on prayer. Within the book there are several stories about how prayer brought about action on God's part: Jim finds a mysterious envelop filled with just enough money so that the church's mortgage payment may be made. Jim's wayward daughter receives a visitation from the Lord, and returns home repentant, after his prayer team focused on her. These are impressive stories that I don't believe can be refuted—they show the Holy Spirit working on the heart of man, bringing man to action, to repentance. I only wonder why there are not more of them, and less railing against what Jim has never been familiar with. At times Cymbala seems to depolarize, with critiques of the chaotic weirdness which has gone on in the name of the Holy Spirit. He recognizes there is a problem in the Charismatic world, and that the lack of biblical doctrines being taught is the cause. Then on the next page he says:

"Does anyone really think that America today is lacking preachers, books, Bible translations, and neat doctrinal statements?"

I would answer him, "No, but we are lacking in the use of those good materials, as people are lazy, and want a magical Christianity of expediency, which requires no use of their mind—and to excuse this, they have condemned the mind and head knowledge.

I don't disagree with Pastor Cymbala in that prayer moves the heart of God. The book is a wonderful testimony to that; however, the underlying theme that condemns learned expository preaching, that would condemn a series of sermons that a Pastor may have labored for months on, and says that because these sermons were not spontaneous, emotional, intuitive, and untaught, that the Holy Spirit could have no part in them—this is simply wrong. J. Vernon McGee said a man need not be educated to begin preaching; though he should wish to grow in the wisdom and knowledge of the Word, and hopefully Seminary is in his future plans. I believe if a man is proud of his lack of knowledge, something is terribly wrong with his doctrine—or un-doctrine rather.

There is such a bias in the Charismatic world against formal education, against reason, against science, which we call the general revelation of God. It's so sad. Pastor Jim Cymbala shows us there is no doubt at all that he is not educated in biblical doctrines by this statement:

"North American Christians must no longer accept the status quo. No more neat little meetings, even with the benefit of 100 percent correct doctrine." (153)

This is the underlying Charismatic theme: Biblical truths and the teachings of Christ inhibit the Holy Spirit. I would say that when a church is operating outside of biblical doctrines, THIS is what inhibits the Holy Spirit.

As you can tell, this highly irritates me. I could not enjoy the biblical truths that WERE in this book, for the glaring error in it. Perhaps someday I will come to the level of maturity where I can eat fish and spit out

bones, as my friend Pastor Alex says. It angers me so, because other people are choking on the bones. Pray for Jim and I....

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### **Daniel Mcchesney says**

This book is amazing. I believe a book i will read over and over again in my life. The spirits leading in the church of Brooklyn Tabernacle and Pastor Cymbala's story is encouraging and inspiring to my faith and walk with Christ and as a man in ministry with a church. This book lead me deeper into an understand of need for a dependence upon prayer in the church and how what is missing from the church today is truly and simply a calling out to God, which is what Prayer is. It is not make a scene or creating emotions, but it is truly God's people calling out for their God to truly work in their lives again. This book is so well thought out and the theology is true for all backgrounds of theology to accept and believe and see the truth in, which allows it to reach you no matter where you stand in theology. if you believe Jesus is God and the savior of this world, and you believe in the Bible, then the truth he brings here will be impactful and eye opening in ways you cant deny. It is a must read for any Christian in my opinion and no matter your level of knowledge it will be easy to understand and comprehend, but it is also deeply profound in ways that can impact the greatest biblical scholars. The stories that are given will open your eyes to see the impact that God can make on people's lives, if the church would only pray for God to use them and for God to move in their lives and in others. It is a beautiful book and I can't wait to read it again soon. I feel it is a book that will always inspire and challenge you to live for Christ more truly every time you pick it up. PLEASE READ!!! IF I CAN RECOMMEND ANY BOOK OTHER THAN THE BIBLE RIGHT NOW IN MY LIFE FOR BORN AGAIN CHRSITAINS TO READ IT WOULD BE THIS BOOK HANDS DOWN. So what are you waiting for! Go read it!!

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### **Murray says**

Jim Cymbala is the pastor of the Brooklyn Tabernacle. Although he didn't find the tabernacle, it was just a handful of parishoners when his father-in-law gave him the assignment back in the early 70s. It now attracts some 8,000 weekly seekers and has satellites throughout the land. Ironically, Fresh Wind Fresh Fire is about not seeking numbers in your church but seeking the Holy Spirit. He, if given the opportunity, will grow your church and depth of worship. I've read numerous books by Jim but this is the most biographic and personal. The story of his daughter and her trevails away from God and miraculous return is a good example of Jim's ability to put The Word into the real and everyday. I use the words "miraculous" and "everyday" very purposely. God does work in the supernatural sense in the world today, both on top and under the radar. Jim is gifted in plain speak and approaches his ministry without haughty eloquence and claims of high standing. He argues that preaching is just a small part of the life of a church body. Any overemphaisis on the Sunday service is a detraction from the real work. Deep prayer and reaching out to the community is where the action is and belongs. I remember a story from the book where a woman gave an emotional, personal testimonial for the fifth service of the weekend and Jim was exhausted when the service ended. He was sat down on the steps leading into the sanctuary just as the service ended and noticed that a homeless man was approaching. When he got within five feet or so Jim was overwhelmed with his stench. He thought to himself how he just couldn't deal with this man just then and raised his hands to stop his approach. He started to give him some rote blessings when the man spoke and said, "I don't want that junk, I want what that redhead woman has who was just speaking." He rushed Jim and buried his head against his neck and wrapped his arms around him sobbing. Jim said he was imediately empowered by the Spirit. The man's

stench turned into a beautiful aroma that was more enticing than anything he had ever smelled. The Lord said to him at that moment, "Jim, if you and your wife have any value to me, if you have any purpose in my work--it has to do with this odor. This is the smell of the world I died for." Jim writes, " I can affirm the existence of Jesus Christ all I want, but in order to be effective, he must come alive in my life in a way that even the pedophile, the prostitute, and the pusher can see." Jim lives in Brooklyn where he has countless opportunities to address his particular calling. He is a true inspiration to me and reminds me that I need to be constantly authentic in my faith and always have the courage to testify my personal experience with the Lord and how I called upon Him after 40 years in the desert, lost and hungry without hope. I called for the first time with real purpose and brokenness and He answered. Jim has seen this time and time and time again and knows how to make it real and believable to the hardest skeptics and that's a gift. Fresh Wind Fresh Fire is a wonderful introduction to experience the gifts God has granted Jim in his ministry.

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### **Danny says**

Enjoyed this book about allowing God's Spirit to invade our hearts. Some of my favorite quotes include: "I discovered an astonishing truth: God is attracted to weakness. He can't resist those who humbly and honestly admit how desperately they need him."

"After all, people weren't hungry for fancy sermons or organizational polish. They just wanted love. They wanted to know that God could pick them up and give them a second chance."

"Because I had been a basketball player, it never dawned on me to evaluate people on the basis of color. If you could play, you could play. In America it would appear that there is more openness, acceptance, and teamwork in the gym than in the church of Jesus Christ."

"Each service is two to two-and-a-half hours long. We have always felt we had to give the Holy Spirit time to work; we couldn't rush people through some kind of assembly line."

"Yes, the roughness of inner-city life has pressed us to pray.... But is the rest of the country coasting along in fine shape? I think not."

"I have seen God do more in people's lives during ten minutes of real prayer than in ten of my sermons."

"What does it say about our churches today that God birthed the church in a prayer meeting, and prayer meetings today are almost extinct?"

"If the times are indeed as bad as we say they are; if the darkness in our world is growing heavier by the moment; if we are facing spiritual battles right in our own homes and churches, then we are foolish not to turn to the One who supplies unlimited grace and power. He is our only source. We are crazy to ignore him."

"We are like the church at Laodicea. In fact, we have so institutionalized Laodiceanism that we think lukewarm is normal."

"The apostles weren't trying to finesse people. Their communication was not supposed to be 'cool' or soothing. They aimed for a piercing of the heart, for conviction of sin. They had not the faintest intention of asking, 'What do people want to hear? How can we draw people to church on Sunday?' That was the last thing in their minds. Such an approach would have been foreign to the whole New Testament."

"Spiritual 'construction' that uses wood, hay and straw comes easy--little work, little seeking, no travail, no birthing. You just slap it up and it will look adequate--for awhile. But if you want to build something that will endure on Judgment Day, the work is much more costly."

"People pay attention when they see that God actually changes persons and sets them free. When a new Christian stands up and tells how God has revolutionized his or her life, no one dozes off."

"As we open up our church meetings to God's power, they will not always follow a predetermined schedule. Who can outline what God might have in mind?"

"Does anyone really think that America today is lacking preachers, books, Bible translations, and neat doctrinal statements? What we really lack is the passion to call upon the Lord until he opens the heavens and

shows himself powerful."

"Anytime people get hungry to truly know the Lord, the Holy Spirit quickly puts a shovel and broom into their hands."

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## **Shaun Marksbury says**

With recommendations from Drs. Joseph Stowell and Warren Wiersbe, it was a given that Jim Cymbala's *Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire* would become a bestseller. Full of relatable stories of struggle with sin, this pastor of the Brooklyn Tabernacle writes this engaging work that will encourage readers to turn the sufficiency of self to trust in the power of prayer. Even so, this is not a book I recommend.

First, irony opens the book: a man who wasn't called to be a pastor treaded water by gaining footing on bad ideas. His father-in-law "coaxed" him into pastoring (11); Cymbala had other interests and balked at the idea, noting his lack of experience, training, and desire to fill such a role. The call Cymbala answered, then, came from the guiling of one who then left this family in the lurch, to learn without discipleship or even occasional input. How did this self-described amateur survive such whimsy? He did so by coming to terms with his lack of training, by ceasing "to act ministerial" (20), and thus by developing a love for himself as an individual. As such, the book opens with what amounts to an argument against Cymbala's original pastorate.

Oddities permeate the book, such as the contrast of Bible against prayer. Cymbala rightly notes the essential role of prayer in ministry, and he speaks of preaching, but not of preaching God's Word (*contra 2 Tm 4:2*). He writes that prayer "cannot truly be taught by principles and seminars" (49), even though God teaches us much about prayer in the Bible. He writes of listening to God (e.g., 59) but not in terms of reading God's Word. He notes that Jesus demanded His Father's house to be a house of prayer... but contrasts that to "a house of preaching" or music or reading of the Word (71). He even incorrectly notes that "America has made the sermon the centerpiece of the church" (84), while sermons grow shorter and feature less Scripture than ever ("worship music" dominates most American services). His emphasis gives the wrong impression of God's will for Christians; while it is possible to become puffed up with knowledge (1 Cor 8:1), Jesus' prayer for His disciples is that God would sanctify them through Scripture (John 17:17).

The kind of prayer promoted in this book walks the line of name-it-and-claim-it, let-go-and-let God mysticism. His backburner approach to the preaching of Scripture reappoints prayer and love the main dishes of Christian living, and leads to other problems. He embraces heretics such as the nineteenth century revivalist Charles Finney, who taught a false gospel and reshaped the American Evangelical landscape for the worse. He gives his approval of false revivals such as Azuza Street in 1908. Now, to his credit, Cymbala counters some of Charismatic Movement's drift in his seventh chapter, "The Lure of Novelty," but he fails to provide a sound defense against excesses. The reason is that movement away from the Bible is a drift away from the Holy Spirit's discernment. Should sound doctrine hold a dearer place in Cymbala's convictions, it would have blocked much of the spiritual driftwood accumulated in this book.

Again, this book contains many excellences about the Christian faith and testimonies of God's grace. The overall premise of the book is accurate, leaving these baffling passages within otherwise edifying portions of this book. Based on this book alone, Cymbala seems to be Christian who simply had to quickly learn a lot and missed much as a result. As such, I can only recommend *Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire* as a study in what not to do and the need for discipling men before they enter the ministry.

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## **Hannah says**

unexpectedly, I loved this book. simple, but profound. my pencil marks are scribbled on many of its pages.  
@goodreadsfriends, please read so we can chat abt it

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