

REVIVAL PREPARATION

DEVOTIONALS

COMPILED BY DEREK GENTLE

Feel free to modify to
show your upcoming re-
vival services on this page.

Revival Services

Sunday-Wednesday, February 25-28

Stuart McNarry, Preaching
Pastor, Orangeburg Avenue Baptist Church
Modesto, California

Music under the direction of Danny Williams
Minister of Music
Mount Gilead Baptist Church
Dothan, Alabama

Sunday: 10:00 AM and 6:30 PM

Monday-Wednesday 7:00 PM Each Night

Childcare Provided for Every Service

First Baptist Church



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WHAT IS REVIVAL?

Will You not revive us again so that Your people may rejoice in You? —Psalms 85:6

There is a difference between “revival services” and revival. The term “revival services” may be used to refer to an evangelistic emphasis with a guest preacher and musician. It may refer to a special effort to seek renewal in the church — an “in-house revival.” They can be scheduled and placed on the calendar. They can be organized and promoted. These types of services are good things. However, while God may occasionally send true revival while a church is holding such “revival services,” God sends revival at his sovereign pleasure. Most Christians have been in “revival services” when revival did not come.

Revival is when God awakens believers to their lukewarmness and sin, and powerfully calls them to repentance. In revival God presses upon His people the seriousness of sin and the urgency of repentance. Believers begin to think deeply about God and their relationship to Him. God has revealed Himself—His holiness, His sovereignty, His power. God’s people are driven to confess their sins and refocus their affections. Their indifference is shaken and they begin to have emotions about spiritual matters proportionate to those eternal realities. God reinvigorates His church in revival. There is new life and power in the church. Christians serve the Lord with great effectiveness and a fresh joy.

The word revival means to bring new life. One cannot give *new* life to that which has no life. One cannot “re-vive” what has not first been “vived.” Revival begins among those who have been made alive in Christ through the new birth.

While revival always begins in the household of God, it will powerfully impact those who are lost. As God restores His church to its proper level of holiness and power, the Lord’s people gain a concern for their lost family members and neighbors. Christians begin to pray earnest prayers for the conversion of the lost and God moves in powerful ways to bring people to Christ. In the 1857-58 Prayer Revival crews onboard ships are recorded as falling under mighty conviction of sin as their ship entered the harbor at New York City.

Revival impacts a community in positive ways. In the Welsh Revival, they had to take the work horses out of the mines and retrain them because the workers had stopped using the profanity they had used in the past to command them. One police station formed a singing group and sang at churches because so much of their time was freed up. Judges were given white gloves, the custom when there were no cases to be heard.

True revival cannot be scheduled. It cannot be worked up or promoted into existence. Churches have “revival services” because they wish to make themselves available to this dynamic work of God. We can pray that God will send revival, but it’s a brave prayer. If God is pleased to send revival, it will mean conviction of sin, the work of repentance, and moving outside our comfort zones.

Today’s Scripture Reading: Acts 2

Today’s Prayer Guidance: *Lord, I confess to keeping my Christianity comfortable and safe. I am afraid of what You would do if You were in total control. Plant in my heart a desire for true revival. Give me a glimpse of You that will bring the rest of my life into focus. Awaken desires for holiness within me. Give me the courage to seek You with my whole heart.*

WHEN IS REVIVAL NEEDED?

I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish that you were cold or hot. So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I am going to vomit you out of My mouth.

Revelation 3:15-16

When is revival needed? Here is a list. It should be taken as a whole, though individual items may speak to you more forcefully. When this group of symptoms are present, revival is needed.

- Revival is needed when spiritual matters are kept in the background and are a low priority.
- Revival is needed when God's people find themselves going through the motions, having only "a form of godliness but denying its power" (2nd Timothy 3:5).
- God's people need revival when they are wallowing in sin, perhaps regretting their sins, but unwilling to thoroughly repent of them.
- Revival is needed when the church languishes and is no longer advancing.
- Revival is needed when evangelism is no longer considered a matter of urgency.
- Revival is needed when Bible study becomes boring and prayer a drudgery.
- Revival is needed when Christian zeal fizzles out.
- Revival is needed when Christians grow worldly and lose their distinctiveness from others around them.
- When serious sin is tolerated among God's people, without effort to gently warn or restore, revival is needed.
- When disunity divides a congregation, revival is needed.
- Revival is needed when Christian parents fail to rear their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.
- When a church is over-confident, thinking their fellowship, their programs, their staff, their building program, etc. are enough, revival is needed.
- When God's people are contented, complacent, satisfied with things just the way they are, revival is needed.

Today's Scripture Reading: Revelation 2-3

Today's Prayer Guidance: *Heavenly Father, I tend to perceive myself and my church as doing better than is the reality. Enable me to see where I really am in my walk with you. Enable us as a church to see where we are as a group. Give me the courage to face the truth.*

WHEN DOES GOD SEND REVIVAL?

*Sow righteousness for yourselves and reap faithful love; break up your untilled ground.
It is time to seek the LORD until He comes and sends righteousness on you like the rain.*

Hosea 10:12

When God sends revival He starts with a few people. When He sent revival to Nineveh He started with Jonah. In other revivals throughout church history there would be a group of people who were burdened for revival and would meet together to pray. God starts in a small inner circle and works His way out. The inner circle will always be people God has raised up and whom God has burdened for revival.

Prayer

Dr. A. T. Pierson once said, 'There has never been a spiritual awakening in any country or locality that did not begin in united prayer.'

Five young college students were spending a Sunday in London, so they went to hear the famed C.H. Spurgeon preach. While waiting for the doors to open, the students were greeted by a man who asked, "Gentlemen, let me show you around. Would you like to see the heating plant of this church?" They were not particularly interested, for it was a hot day in July. But they didn't want to offend the stranger, so they consented. The young men were taken down a stairway, a door was quietly opened, and their guide whispered, "This is our heating plant." Surprised, the students saw 700 people bowed in prayer, seeking a blessing on the service that was soon to begin in the auditorium above. Softly closing the door, the gentleman then introduced himself. It was none other than Charles Spurgeon.

Humility

Humility is the willingness to be corrected. It is removing the walls we have built for self-defense. We stop being defensive and start being open to the leading of the Holy Spirit, to correction from the Bible, and to advice of mature Christians who wish to help us grow.

A Soft Heart

The Bible tells us to break up the unplowed ground. When hardness enters our lives, we become closed to God. His grace, like rain, will roll off of us instead of sinking in. The problem is not with God, but with us; we are too hardened to receive what He has for us.

Today's Scripture Reading: 1st Peter 5:5-10

Today's Prayer Guidance: *O God give me a soft heart toward You. Give me a humble spirit toward fellow-believers. And give me a heart to spend time with You in prayer.*

REPENTANCE

“For they themselves report about us what kind of reception we had from you: how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God” — 1st Thessalonians 1:9

Sam Jones, one of the great revival preachers of years gone by used to conduct what he called, “Quittin’ Meeting” during his revivals. They were so called because he gave people the opportunity to confess their sins and repent. Many quit swearing, drinking, smoking, gossiping... etc.

He asked one woman what she planned to quit and she replied, “I ain’t been doing nothing and I am goin’ to quit that too.”

Repentance is turning to God and away from self and sin. But it is first a turning to God. It is turning our affections to God. It is turning over our time to God. It is rearranging our priorities around God. Repentance may involve, not the overt sin we committed, but the godly things we omitted. Repentance is starting to do again the things we have been leaving undone. Where we have neglected our devotional life, we start it again. Where we have neglected Christian service, we get to work. Where we have failed to love others, we love anew. Sometimes we fall, not into scandal, but into doing nothing. That is sin and we must repent of it.

Repentance is turning from self. And self is the problem... self-will, self-seeking, self-righteousness, self-centeredness, self-sufficiency, selfishness... these are sins as great as adultery or stealing. Repentance means turning to God and away from self.

Repentance is turning from sin. It is admitting that it is wrong, an offense against God—it’s not a fault or a little imperfection—it is sin. Repentance is stopping the sin and replacing it with something good. It is renouncing the sin in our own lives and taking our stand against it.

Repentance is turning to God from self and sin. Are you doing something you need to quit and replace? Are you doing nothing and need to repent of that?

Today’s Scripture Reading: First Thessalonians 1

Today’s Prayer Guidance: *Heavenly Father, thank You that our congregation has been given a unique place in your Kingdom. Help us to see our niche. Deliver us from trying to copy Your plan for someone else.*

REVIVAL IS WHEN THE HOLY SPIRIT COMES IN POWER

And the disciples were filled with joy and the Holy Spirit. — Acts 13:52

*"Revival is an extraordinary work of the Holy Spirit producing extraordinary results."
Richard Owen Roberts*

The Billy Graham of his day, D. L. Moody, told of an incident in connection with an early visit to London. He had gone there for a visit. He was unknown in London; hence he did not expect to preach; but a little while after arriving there he was invited to preach for a certain church, which he did. He said it was a very cold and uninteresting service to him, but he announced that he would preach again that night. Upon reaching the church, he noticed that the atmosphere had changed, he did not know just why. At the close of the meeting, he was led to give an invitation for those who wanted to be saved to stand. A great crowd of people stood. He left the next day for Dublin Ireland. Shortly after arriving there, he received a telegram from the church to return, stating that the whole community was in an upstir and clamor for a series of meetings. He went back, and found that a great revival was beginning and hundreds of people were being converted.

Not long after, he learned the secret. An invalid lady, who could not attend the church, was praying for a mighty outpouring of the Spirit upon the church. She prayed for months. Once she saw in the papers accounts of some of the Moody meetings in America, and although she had never heard of Mr. Moody before, she began to pray that God would send him to her church in London for a revival. One Sunday morning, her sister upon her return from the service informed her of Moody's presence and his preaching, whereupon she spent the whole afternoon in prayer that God would make that night a night of power. That explains the difference between morning and evening services!

The Bible tells us about the **baptism of the Spirit**. This baptism takes place when the Holy enters the heart of the new believer (Mark 1:8, John 1:33, Acts 1:5, Ephesians 4:1-3).

The Bible speaks of the **indwelling of the Spirit**. This means that the Holy Spirit dwells inside every believer (Romans 8:9).

The Bible speaks of the **filling of the Holy Spirit** (Acts 4:8, 31, 13:9). This is when we come under the control and power of the Spirit. A Christian will be baptized in the Spirit only once. The believer will be indwelt by the Spirit continuously. However, the Christian may be filled with the Spirit many times as he yields to God and God empowers him or her afresh for service.

Ephesians 5:18 says, "And don't get drunk with wine, which leads to reckless actions, but be filled with the Spirit." It is a two-part command: Don't get drunk and be filled with the Spirit. Hence, we can be very sure that failing to be filled with the Spirit is just as disobedient as it is to be drunk with wine. Are you filled with the Holy Spirit?

Today's Scripture Reading: Romans 8

Today's Prayer Guidance: Lord, please make me to know the fullness of the Holy Spirit's presence within me. May Your Spirit control my thoughts and desires, and empower me to serve You.

PERSONAL REVIVAL

After he had seen the vision, we immediately made efforts to set out for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to evangelize them. — Acts 16:10

Gypsy Smith was once asked how to start a revival. He answered, "Go home, lock yourself in your room and kneel down in the middle of your floor. Draw a chalk mark all around yourself and ask God to start the revival inside that chalk mark. When He has answered your prayer, the revival will be on."

God may or may not send revival to our nation or even our town, but you can experience personal revival.

As a young man Evan Roberts experienced the presence of God in powerful ways. One night he was awakened from his sleep and led into a deep communion with God that lasted for hours. This experience was to continue every evening for the next few months and did not stop until he went away to the school. Attending a conference while away at school, he prayed, "Bend me O Lord." He would go home from school to share with the youth group of his home church four steps to getting right with God:

1. **Confess all known sin**
2. **Deal with and get rid of anything 'doubtful' in your life**
3. **Be ready to obey the Holy Spirit instantly**
4. **Confess Christ publicly**

The message spread widely as thousands accepted this message and put it into practice during the Welsh Revival. This message is not limited to the early 1900's and the promise of revival is available to you.

Today's Scripture Reading: Psalm 51

Today's Prayer Guidance: *Bend me Lord, bend me.*

CONFESSION OF SIN

“Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another” – James 5:16

The rule of thumb for confessing sins is this: The circle of confession should be as wide as the circle of offense.

That means if you have sinned only against God, you confess it to God. Sins in our thought life apply to this category, as well as sins of omission regarding worship.

If you have sinned against a Christian brother or sister, you should confess to that person and ask for forgiveness. Never use an un-confession such, “If I offended you in any way...” You know you offended them, don’t pretend the issue is in doubt. Confess the basic offense; don’t go into detail—they know what you did. Ask the person to forgive you. Offer to make financial restitution where appropriate. Jesus told us about the urgency of such confession in Matthew 5:23-24, “So if you are offering your gift on the altar, and there you remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift.”

If you have sinned against the entire church, then confess to the church. Again, confess the basic offense, never go into details. Some have stumbled because they learned too much from such confessions and revivals have been quenched by carnal confessions. There is no need to confess to the church if you haven’t sinned against the church.

Confession means to say the same thing—we call sin what God calls it. We do not deny it or cover it up. First John 1:9 promises, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” Once you have properly confessed your sin, forget it. Drop it. Bury it and never dig it up again. It is Satan’s strategy to preoccupy us with our sins and to torment us with them. Christ’s object was to secure the forgiveness of sins and clean consciences. God will never convict you again concerning sins that have been properly confessed and dealt with.

Today’s Scripture Reading: Psalm 32

Today’s Prayer Guidance: Heavenly Father, I claim Your promise of forgiveness and pledge to give that forgiveness to others. Help me to be ready to seek forgiveness of others when I fail.

RESTORING THE FALLEN

Brothers, if someone is caught in any wrongdoing, you who are spiritual should restore such a person with a gentle spirit, watching out for yourselves so you won't be tempted also.

Galatians 6:1

James 5:19-20 tells us "My brothers, if any among you strays from the truth, and someone turns him back, he should know that whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his life from death and cover a multitude of sins." This is a task we should be about. Our Christian faithfulness can be a fragile thing, easily broken. Few of us could live for the Lord unaided and alone. So here are some attitudes and steps to help those who have jumped the rails and gotten off track:

- Be gentle. You aren't there to give them a piece of your mind. You aren't better than they are.
- Explain to them what they are doing. Some people are blind to the seriousness of their sins.
- Reason with them. Help them to think the matter through for themselves.
- Show them a relevant Scripture passage that can speak to their hearts with power.
- Pray for them. Ask the Holy Spirit to work in their minds and their wills. Ask God to grant them repentance.
- Watch out for your own spiritual health. Don't put yourself into a vulnerable position so that you are tempted.

Think about it... who do you know who is away from the Lord? List them in the space below and ask God to show you ways and opportunities to help them get back on track.

Today's Scripture Reading: Matthew 18:11-17

Today's Prayer Guidance: *Heavenly Father, give me eyes to see the fallen on the spiritual battlefield around me. Give me the compassion to administer first aid. Give the courage to confront their hardness when necessary. Give me the gentleness to demonstrate a love for their person and a hatred for their sin.*

REVIVAL MEANS GOOD CHANGES

*"For I know the plans I have for you"—this is the LORD's declaration—
"plans for your welfare, not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope."*

Jeremiah 29:11

When John Wesley was traveling around and preaching the gospel, he came to one village, where he asked if he could preach in the service on Sunday. The minister of the church refused because he, along with many others of the day, believed Wesley to be a heretic. So Wesley went to the cemetery, and stood on one of the tombstones, and preached to the crowd that gathered to hear him - the largest congregation the town had ever seen.

He did this night after night, preaching also at several of the surrounding villages. Many people were saved, and lives were changed. Some of their angry neighbors seized an entire wagon-load of these new heretics and took them before a magistrate. When the magistrate asked what they had done, there was a deep silence, because no one had thought about that. Finally, someone said, "They pretended to be better than other people," while another said, "They prayed from morning to night." One man said, "They have converted my wife. Till she went among them she had such a tongue, and now she is quiet as a lamb!"

When the magistrate heard this, he proclaimed, "Take them back! Take them back, and let them convert the entire town!"

Why are we afraid of what God would do if He got hold of our lives? Why can we not see the goodness of the changes a spiritual awakening would bring to our families? Is it because we suspect the goodness of God? Have we confused Jesus with someone else? Jesus told us in John 10:10, "The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give life in all its fullness (NLT). God's plan is a good plan and we can trust Him because He loves us more than we love ourselves.

Today's Scripture Reading: 2nd Corinthians 5:16-21

Today's Prayer Guidance: *Father, help me not to fear Your work in my life. Grant me the courage to embrace the changes You will bring to my life as good things. Enable me to see all the good revival can mean to me.*

HOW TO PRAY FOR THE LOST

Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God concerning them is for their salvation!

Romans 9:1

Do you know someone you would, with all your heart, like to see become a Christian? Here are some things you can pray for them:

- **Pray they will fall under the conviction of sin** (John 16:8-11). Ask that they will realize the seriousness of sin and feel the weight of the offense it gives to God. No one gets saved until they know they are lost. People must feel and own up to their lostness. They must see the certainty of impending judgment. It's like running out of your house in the middle of a cold night in your pajamas. It wouldn't occur to you to do such a thing... unless you realized your house was on fire!
- **Pray that Christ will call them to Himself.** "The called" is a term used in the Bible to describe Christians. You can relate. You remember when God worked in your heart to bring you to Himself. He kept tugging at your heart. That was God calling you. (Romans 1:7, 8:30; 1st Corinthians 1:9, 24; 2nd Thessalonians 2:14)
- **Pray they will find themselves drawn to Christ.** There is no salvation without it. Jesus said so in John 6:44, "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him, and I will raise him up on the last day." This describes the attraction a person feels toward Christ as they see His goodness.

In the space below list people you know (family, friends, business associates, etc.) who need Jesus. Pray for them along the lines of the ideas above.

Today's Scripture Reading: 1st Thessalonians 1; 2nd Thessalonians 2:13-17

Today's Prayer Guidance: Lord, I pray for these people who do not know You. They are not seeking You. They do not believe they need You. They are not even interested in You. So, I pray that you will work in their hearts in such a powerful way, they cannot ignore You, they cannot deny You, they cannot play games with You, and they cannot resist You. Please engineer circumstances in their lives to bring them to Yourself.

IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW COLD YOU'VE GROWN, GOD CAN SEND REVIVAL

"Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you." – Ephesians 5:14, NIV

In one community the Christians had become so dead, so destitute of the power of the Holy Spirit, that even the minister himself was backslidden and they did not have a prayer meeting.

A lady came to the minister one day, and asked if they could have a prayer meeting.

"Do you think anybody wants a prayer meeting? Well, if you think anybody wants one, I will bring it up at the next church business meeting" (they had the business meetings once every three months, and the next one was six weeks away), "and we will have a committee appointed to report at the next meeting. It was the best she could do.

A few days later she came to the pastor a second time, and said, "Can not we have a prayer meeting?" The pastor replied, "Well, if you are so anxious, write an announcement and I will read it, and we will have one at your house." She brought the announcement, and the pastor read it very hastily, carelessly announcing a hymn with the same breath.

Yet, there was one who heard the announcement and paid attention, a lawyer's wife took note of it. Her husband was unconverted. The attorney's wife said to her husband on Tuesday night, "Will you stay with the children a little while? I want to go out." She went to the prayer meeting, read, prayed, talked—with nobody there but herself and the older Christian lady who called the prayer meeting. But they stood on the promise that, "If two of you on earth agree about any matter that you pray for, it will be done for you by My Father in heaven." They had been there a while when she looked at the clock. "Why!" she said, "I had no idea it was so late. My husband will be tired." She quickly went home.

As she hurried in at the door her husband was reading the Bible; but he was embarrassed by it and put it behind him as soon as he could; and she said, "I am sorry I stayed so late." "Where have you been?" "I have been to prayer meeting," "Prayer meeting! I did not know you had any in town; where was it?" "Down at mother ___'s." "What did you pray for?" "We prayed for you, my dear." (as she burst into tears.)

"Well, my dear wife," he says, "That accounts for it. I never had such feelings on the subject of religion, as I have had in the last hour. I took down this Bible, and read it. I did not know why I did it, hardly."

Salvation came to that house, and revival swept clear through the area. Stories like this occur throughout the history of God's Church. Sometimes it gets down very low, but the Holy Spirit is somewhere, in the heart of some old father or mother, or some young man or woman, praying for revival.

Today's Scripture Reading: Luke 24:13-22

Today's Prayer Guidance: *Heavenly Father, give me the heart I need. I don't want to be in a rut. I don't want to wallow in self-centered living. Raise my spiritual temperature to red hot.*

BLOOM WHERE YOU'RE PLANTED

Who knows, perhaps you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this. — Esther 4:14

When Dwight became president of Yale, the new class that entered in the autumn of 1796 included only one freshman who was a "professing Christian," while the sophomore class contained none. The college church had itself dwindled to two members. A reversal of the situation seemed hopeless.

Dwight encouraged the students to debate openly the validity of the Christian faith, allowing each student to state his case without fear of reprisal, and then the president entered the list of speakers himself. For the next six months President Dwight preached steadily on the central subject of Christian Faith. Though his eyesight became so bad that only with the greatest difficulty could he write or read a single sentence, he still preached twice every Sunday, taught his class, and administered the college. He added to his official duties a special set of lectures on the Evidence of Divine Revelation.

Finally, in the spring of 1802, revival came. One third of Yale's two hundred and thirty students professed faith in Christ. Over thirty of these would enter the ministry, while the others, in various ways throughout their lives, spread the influence of the Christian message.

Perhaps you work in a place where few are Christians. Maybe you wished you could work alongside fellow believers.

Perhaps your Sunday School class is not doing as well as it should be doing. Maybe people aren't as interested in the Scriptures as they ought to be or aren't interested in spiritual growth. Maybe they aren't stepping up to accept opportunities for Christian service. Just maybe you would like to turn them in for another class.

If God moves you that is one thing, but until He does, stay where you are. Listen to the Holy Spirit's promptings. As He leads, speak to people. Reason with them. Use your influence. Watch God make a difference.

Today's Scripture Reading: Daniel 6

Today's Prayer Guidance: *Father, give me the courage not to retreat. Give me the heart to love and reach out. Give me the words I do not have. Give the patience to wait on You. Reach people through me.*

WAIT ON GOD FOR REVIVAL

While He was together with them, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for the Father's promise. "This," He said, "is what you heard from Me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." — Acts 1:4-5

Robert Moffat was born in Scotland in 1795. When he was seventeen, the London Missionary Society accepted him as a missionary and he sailed to South Africa. Two years later, he met and married Mary Smith in Cape Town and together they began to minister to the Bechuana tribe in Africa's interior. They were faithful in translating the Bible into the native language and preaching the Gospel, but not one person came to Christ.

In 1827, they received a letter from England. A friend wanted to mail them a gift and asked what they would like. Trusting that the Lord was ready to bless their work, Mary replied, "Send us a communion set; I am sure it will soon be needed."

In 1829, after ten years, the Moffats still hadn't seen a single person come to Christ. Then in May of that year, six people came to the Lord. By July, there were over one hundred and twenty believers. The small church prepared to gather on the first Sunday in July for their first celebration of the Lord's Supper. Two days before the observance, a package arrived. It was the communion set. It had been delayed two years in the mail, but it arrived right on time.

We can promote revival services. We can invite our friends to attend the services with us. We can advertise the services in the paper. In fact, we ought to do all of those things. However, only the Holy Spirit can renew minds and change lives. It is possible to run ahead of the Spirit, but we cannot produce the fruit of the Spirit. We can, however, be faithful. We can keep on keeping on when it seems nothing is "clicking." We can purify our own lives and prepare our own hearts before God. We can continue to pray for revival. We can wait on God. ...Until it comes.

Today's Scripture Reading: Galatians 5

Today's Prayer Guidance: *Lord, we can't produce the holy fire; it must be sent down. Deliver me from the temptation to rush it or to fake it. I will depend on You.*

REVIVAL IS A SOVEREIGN WORK OF GOD

Our God is in heaven and does whatever He pleases—Psalm 115:3

"Revival is that sovereign work of God in which He visits His own people, restoring and releasing them into the fullness of His blessing." - Robert Coleman

R. C. Sproul has been quoted as saying that true revival cannot be secured by human means. "A reformation is nothing we can generate on our own. We cannot manipulate it. We do not have the power at our disposal or in ourselves to bring the life-transforming change that reformation yields."

God is not our errand boy. He sends revival at His pleasure, by His power, and for His own glory. People have prayed for revival for years before it came. And when it came, it often came at surprising times and appeared in surprising ways. God may use people we would not think of. God may display His power in supernatural ways we have never before seen. Not only can God send revival when it pleases Him to do so, but God will send it in such a manner that pleases Him.

A sovereign, supernatural work of God is what we need. Charles Spurgeon described that need this way:

We need a work of the Holy Spirit of a supernatural kind, putting power into the preaching of the Word, inspiring all believers with heavenly energy, and solemnly affecting the hearts of the careless, so that they turn to God and live. We would not be drunk with the wine of carnal excitement, but we would be filled with the Spirit. We would behold the fire descending from heaven in answer to the effectual fervent prayers of righteous men. Can we not entreat the Lord our God to make bare His holy arm in the eyes of all the people in this day of declension and vanity?

Do we admit we need such a sovereign, supernatural work of God? Are we willing to admit our helplessness? Our sinfulness? Are we willing for God to interfere with our lives?

We cannot produce revival, but we can pray for it. Only God can send revival, but we can prepare our hearts and begin the process of realigning our lives with His Word.. When it comes, we cannot control revival, but we can submit to God as He controls us, purifying our lives.

Today's Scripture Reading: Ephesians 5

Today's Prayer Guidance: *O Lord, we can't produce revival, but we certainly need it.— and I don't want to miss it. Send power from on high. Work in Your church. Work in Your people. Work among those of us who are away from You. Work in me.*

RECEIVE THE WORD

Also, this is why we constantly thank God, because when you received the message about God that you heard from us, you welcomed it not as a human message, but as it truly is, the message of God, which also works effectively in you believers.

1st Thessalonians 2:13

How will you respond—or react—to hearing the Word of God preached during these services? There are several approaches we all take depending on the message and on our spiritual condition at the time. Here are some examples:

Preach to ‘em brother! This is when we assume the message is for someone else. And sometimes—for example, when we a Christian hears an evangelistic message—this could be the case. However, instead of observing the process with relief, we could listen to learn how we might be more effective in communicating those truths to others ourselves. Or we may know of someone who needs this word from God. We can humbly pray that God will bless their hearing of it. Generally however, this is not the case. There is something in most messages that we could all use. We should listen for it.

Fear and Resentment. This took place in the book of Acts when Stephen was martyred. As he died, he exclaimed how that he saw Jesus. “Then they screamed at the top of their voices, stopped their ears, and rushed together against him. (Acts 7:57). Stephen had warned them earlier, “You stiff-necked people with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are always resisting the Holy Spirit” (Acts 7:51). This is a most extreme example. However, there are milder, more typical forms of this.

Sometimes, when the Bible is preached, some stop attending the services rather than face the message. Sometimes we take issue with parts of the message while approving of other parts. (This is not to say discernment is not needed, and that one thing a preacher says may be true while another statement is false, but we speak here of attitudes in the face of sermons faithful to the Word of God.) Sometimes, we divert attention from the message by critiquing the style of the messenger. All of these forms, however, keep us out from under the Word and slyly puts us over the Word. And we do this, because we fear the Word and the adjustments it might bring into our lives if we submit to its authority.

We can receive the Word. We can welcome the Word into our hearts like a guest into our homes. The truth is our friend. God will not hurt us with the truth; He will help us. All of God’s plans for us are good plans. We can be like the people in the town of Berea. When Paul and Silas brought the Gospel to that town, the Bible tells us, “The people here were more open-minded than those in Thessalonica, since they welcomed the message with eagerness and examined the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.”

Today’s Scripture Reading: 1st Thessalonians 1

Today’s Prayer Guidance: *May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to You, LORD, my rock and my Redeemer (Psalms 19:14). Give me ears so that I can hear what You will say to me. Work in my heart so that I will have the will to obey.*

Today's Scripture Reading: Daniel 9:1-19

Today's Prayer Guidance: *Father, You desire truth in our innermost parts. Help me to hear You honestly. Enable me to obey promptly. Speak clearly in my mind so that I do not deceive myself and miss Your good plan for my life.*

My "To Do List" from Tonight's Sermon (things I heard that I should apply):

Today's Scripture Reading: John 15

Today's Prayer Guidance: *Lord of Life, let Your life flow through me and through our church. Keep me from busying my spiritual life to death. Enable me to stay plugged into You, as the source of life.*

My "To Do List" from Tonight's Sermon (things I heard that I should apply):

Today's Scripture Reading: Romans 12:1-11

Today's Prayer Guidance: *Lord Jesus, whatever you lead me to do, I will obey you. I may not like the final decision. It may cost me time or money, but as you gave Your all for me, my all is on the altar for You.*

My "To Do List" from Tonight's Sermon (things I heard that I should apply):

HAS REVIVAL COME?

Harvest has passed, summer has ended, but we have not been saved. — Jeremiah 8:20

As he and his wife stood outside a framing shop, waiting in the bitter Canadian cold, Richard Blackaby said he came to understand a picture of why Christians can get frustrated in their walk with God.

They'd arrived at the store only ten minutes before it opened, and Blackaby's wife paced back and forth, occasionally catching the eye of the store manager, who would smile and return to her work. Frustrated at having to wait outside while the manager was warm inside, Blackaby said he thought to ask the question, "Well, you tried the door, didn't you?"

After a long silence, the two of them went to the door, finding it had been unlocked the entire time.

"I think this is a wonderful picture of revival," Blackaby said. "Christians suddenly realize they've been standing outside the door. Revival comes when they realize they can go in at any time. Revival comes when they finally say, 'Why am I standing out here in the cold when you've promised everything I'll need is inside?'"

Has revival come? Has revival come and you missed it? Has revival come and we missed it? Are we standing out in the cold, missing the blessings God has for us? It's not too late. Draw a circle, get in it, ask God to send revival to everyone inside the circle. It's nice and warm on the inside.

Has revival come indeed? If so... Rejoice in the blessing of God and give Him full credit. The glory is His. Get some rest and pace yourself; don't run on adrenaline from the excitement. Be careful not to try and keep this going with human effort. Continue to depend on the Lord. Don't get the impression you are stronger than you really are; avoid spiritual dangers. Dwell deep: maintain your devotional life, spending time alone with God. Rest fully: be careful not to develop a dependency on the rush you may feel spiritually. We walk with God by faith — and faith is not a feeling. Go to work and do your job well. Be faithful to the services. Stay low; don't draw attention to yourself. Reach out: share the Gospel. Talk about Jesus, not the revival. Remember, when God sends revival, it is a beginning, not an end in itself. Journal to record what God has done; these moments are rare.

Today's Scripture Reading: Acts 11:19-26

Today's Prayer Guidance if Revival Has Fallen from on High: Praise the Lord! To You alone, Lord, belongs all the glory. Thank You for coming in power! I praise You for Your mercy; You didn't have to come. Now Lord, enable me to process what You have taught me. Enable me to know You more fully. And Lord, enable me to walk faithfully and consistently with You, even when there is no excitement.

Today's Prayer Guidance if Revival Has Not Come: Lord, You are sovereign. It is Your right to give or to withhold revival according to Your good plan. We saw some glimpses of Your grace and, for them, we are thankful. However, we desire and ask that You would come fully and with power. Lord, please send revival.