

REVIVAL

“Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord and He will have mercy on him; and to our God for He will abundantly pardon.” Isaiah 55:6-7

What is Revival?

Revivals are a sovereign move of God initiated by the Holy Spirit working through consecrated men and women. A study of the Revivals in the Bible, and in history, reveal that all Revivals begin with a deeper appreciation for the Holiness of God and a realisation of how offensive our sins must be in the sight of our Holy God.

It has been well said, that “Revivals are not churches filled with people, but people filled with God.”

Revivals involve a deeper understanding and appreciation of the Holiness of God, of the wrath of God against sin, and of the utter depravity of man.

Transformation

In the book of Acts, it was said that these Christians who have turned the world upside down have come here also. In fact, Revivals turn things right side up: Restored relationships. Transformed communities. Drunkards made sober. Thieves returning stolen goods. Blasphemers sanctified. Marriages healed. Estranged children and parents reconciled. The selfish becoming sacrificial. Conversions. Miracles. Healings. Revived churches. Revitalised prayer meetings. Dynamic worship. Decisive action to seek first the Kingdom of God.

Spiritual Awakenings in the Bible

In the Bible we read that King Asa expelled all the perverts from the land and got rid of all the idols his fathers had made (1 Kings 15:12).

King Jehu demolished the idols, and tore down the temple of Baal, turning it into a rubbish dump (2 Kings 10:27).

Under King Jehoiada, all the people of the land tore down the temple of Baal, smashed its altars and idols (2 Kings 11:18).

King Josiah ordered all the idols and superstitious trappings of Baal and Asherah to be removed from the Temple of the Lord. He burned these idols in the Kidron Valley outside Jerusalem (2 Kings 23:4).

King Jehoshaphat rid the land of Asherah poles and set his heart on seeking God (2 Chronicles 19:3).

Under King Hezekiah, the Israelites smashed the idols of Baal and Asherah, destroyed the high places and altars, used for child sacrifice, throughout Judah and Benjamin, and in Ephraim and Manasseh (2 Chronicles 31:1).

King Manasseh removed idols and images from the Temple of the Lord (2 Chronicles 33:15).

Under the prophet Ezra, the people of God were challenged to reform their marriages and reject inter-marriage with the nations around them (Ezra 10:3).

Nehemiah restored the honouring of the Sabbath Day to Jerusalem by ordering the gates to be shut and not opened until the Sabbath was over. He stationed his men at the gates to ensure that the Sabbath was not desecrated (Nehemiah 13:19).

When the Lord Jesus entered the Temple area, he made a whip and drove out all the corrupt moneylenders who were turning the House of God into a den of thieves (Matthew 21:12; John 2:15).

What Hinders Revival?

When one reads of the bold Christianity of the Book of Acts, of the Great Evangelical Awakening, under Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield, and of the Revivals of the 19th century, the question arises: What is hindering Revival in our time?

Prayerlessness. Neglect of the Word of God. Worldliness. Selfishness. Pride. Gossip. Slander. Gluttony. Lust. Passivity. Neutrality. Inactivity. Sitting on the fence. Lukewarmness. Half-heartedness. Indecisiveness. Cowardice. Compromise. These and so many other evidences of the lack of the fear of God quench the Holy Spirit, grieve the Holy Spirit and resist the Holy Spirit. There are so many distractions, deviations and delusions which are ensnaring and enslaving the people of God.

God resists the proud but He gives grace to the humble.

What Can We Do to Work for Revival?

We must determine not to settle for less than God's best. Good can be the enemy of the best. We have to relinquish those second rate things that fill our head, hands and heart, so that we can receive God's best.

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they shall be filled." Matthew 5:6

You cannot expect maximum blessing from minimum commitment. Wholehearted surrender to God is essential. What you surrender to God He accepts, what He accepts He cleanses, what He cleanses He fills, and what He fills, He uses.

In one sense we cannot actually work for Revival. Revivals are a sovereign move of Almighty God. We cannot schedule Revivals, we cannot preach them up or pray them down. There is no way we can manipulate Almighty God to fit in with our plans.

The Holiness of God

However, a study of Revivals in the Bible, and in history, reveals that all Revivals begin with a deeper appreciation for the Holiness of God and a realisation of how offensive our sin must be in the sight of our Holy God.

The Wrath of God

When the Books of the Law were read to King Josiah of Judah, he tore his robes in anguish, and exclaimed: *"Great is the Lord's anger that burns against us ..."* 2 Kings 22:13. He called all the elders together to hear the Law of God and to repent together for the wickedness that they had allowed to flourish in the land.

The Law of God

"The King stood by the pillar and renewed the Covenant in the presence of the Lord – to follow the Lord and keep His commands, regulations and decrees with all his heart and with all his soul ... Then all the people pledged themselves to the Covenant." 2 Kings 23:3

This repentance was then followed by vigorous action to remove or destroy anything contrary to the Law of God - including the pornographic Asherah poles, the Baal altars where babies were sacrificed and the prostitutes and false prophets who had corrupted the people (2 Kings 23:4-10).

The Bible records that Josiah: ***"... turned to the Lord with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his strength, in accordance with all the Law of Moses."*** 2 Kings 23:25

God sent a prophet to declare to Josiah: ***"Because your heart was responsive and you humbled yourself before the Lord when you heard what I had spoken ... I have heard you declares the Lord."*** 2 Kings 22:19

Repentance and Restitution

Conviction of sin is the first step towards Biblical Reformation. This includes focusing on the Law of God, mourning over our sin, confessing that sin and undertaking whatever steps of restitution or obedience is necessary.

"If anyone sins and is unfaithful to the Lord by deceiving his neighbour about something entrusted to him or left in his care or stolen, or if he cheats him, or if he finds lost property and lies about it, or if he swears falsely, or if he commits any such sin ... he must make restitution in full, add a fifth of the value to it and give it all to the owner ..." Leviticus 6:2-5

Those who claim to want Revival, but are unwilling to thoroughly repent of every known sin and make full restitution, cannot be serious. ***"Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline, so be earnest and repent."*** Revelation 3:19

The Ten Commandments

Like Josiah, we need to take a careful look at the Law of God. The Ten Commandments reflect the unchanging character of God. It shows us our responsibilities to God, to our parents and to other people.

"... The Law was our tutor, to bring us to Christ, that we may be justified by Faith." Galatians 3:24

"The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul ..." Psalm 19:7

Back to the Bible for Reformation and Revival

Revival is the work of God, but Reformation is our responsibility. Frequently, in the Bible, we see that God responds to consecrated and dedicated believers' sincere attempts to work for Biblical Reformation by sending a Spiritual Revival.

Our duty is to go back to the Bible for Biblical Reformation and Revival.

Praying the Psalms

To revive our devotional lives we should start in the Psalms. The Psalms are the biggest Book of the Bible, the middle Book of the Bible, the prayer Book and hymnbook of the Bible. It is the most quoted part of the Bible. In the Gospels our Lord Jesus Christ quoted more from the Psalms than from any other section of the Old Testament.

If you want to revive your devotional life begin praying through the Psalms.

"Create in me a pure heart and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your

Salvation, uphold me by Your genuine Spirit, then I will teach transgressors Your ways and sinners will be converted to you.” Psalm 51:10-13

Hunger for Reality

Study the Book of Acts to see God’s pattern for the Church. It was when Reformers, such as Professor John Wycliffe, Jan Hus, Martin Luther and John Calvin began to study the Bible that God mightily used them to bring about the Great Reformation. We need to hunger for reality, rejecting the cheap grace and easy believeism of modern evanjellyfish. If we want to work for Biblical Reformation and pray for Spiritual Revival then we need to reject the sensational, superficial, emotionalism of all too many modern mega churches as fake. Do not settle for anything less than God’s very best.

“Restore us, O God of Hosts; cause Your face to shine, and we shall be saved!” Psalm 80:7

Decisive Action to Seek First God’s Kingdom

Wholehearted repentance and thorough restitution is foundational in working for Reformation and preparing for Spiritual Revival. Return any stolen items. Pay back what you owe. Restore broken relationships. Repair what you have damaged. Have the courage to confront sin and thoroughly deal with it. Carefully study the Word of God and seek the Lord earnestly in prayer for guidance as to the decisive action that you need to take to seek first God’s Kingdom.

Destroy idols

Are there any CDs or DVDs that you need to break or throw away? Are there publications that you need to tear up and burn? Are there subscriptions and channels that you need to cancel? Are there web sites that you need to block? Are there relationships that you need to end? Are there people that you need to make right with that are at odds with you? Take decisive action to revitalise your devotional life. Reform your family. Restore the prayer meeting. Reform your local church.

“If My people who are called by My Name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from Heaven and will forgive their sin, and heal their land.” 2 Chronicles 7:14

Can you not do something more for God?

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