

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, 5-26-13 AM NOTES
"PRAYING FOR REVIVAL"
ISAIAH 62-64
#2 in Series, "Revival Reminders"

"It may be observed that, from the fall of man to our day, the work of redemption in its effect has mainly been carried on by remarkable pourings out of the Spirit of God...at special seasons of mercy."

—Jonathan Edwards

"Suddenly the power of the Spirit comes upon them and they are brought into a new more profound awareness of the truths that they had previously held intellectually, and perhaps at a deeper level, too. They are humbled, they are convicted of sin; they are terrified at themselves. Many of them feel that they have never been Christians. And they come to see the great salvation of God in all its glory and to feel its power. Then, as a result of their quickening and enlivening, they begin to pray. New power comes into the preaching of the ministers, and the result of this is that large numbers that were previously outside the church are converted and brought in."

—Martyn Lloyd-Jones

Luke 18:1 (NKJV) "Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart."

1 Thessalonians 5:17 (NKJV) "pray without ceasing."

"Prayer is the slender nerve that moves the muscle of omnipotence."

—Charles Spurgeon

"When He is about to bestow some great blessing on His church, it is often His manner, in the first place, so to order things in His providence, as to show His church their need of it, and to bring them into stress for want of it, and so put them upon crying earnestly to Him for it."

—Jonathan Edwards

Zechariah 12:10a (HCSB) "Then I will pour out a spirit of grace and prayer on the house of David and the residents of Jerusalem..."

I. The Objective of Revival Praying (64:2-5)

If you examine the prayers of Scripture, you will find that the prevailing objective in prayer for revival is that God would be _____ by the answer to the prayer that is being offered. We ought to have a deep concern for God's _____ in the world among non-believers.

Our objective in our personal lives, our families and in our church is to make God _____.

Daniel 9:17-19 (NKJV) "17 Now therefore, our God, hear the prayer of Your servant, and his supplications, and **for the Lord's sake** cause Your face to shine on Your sanctuary, which is desolate. 18 O my God, incline Your ear and hear; open Your eyes and see our desolations, and the city which is called by **Your name**; for we do not present our supplications before You because of our righteous deeds, but because of Your great mercies. 19 O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and act! Do not delay **for Your own sake, my God**, for **Your city** and **Your people** are called by **Your name**."

Psalms 74:10 (NKJV) "O God, how long will the adversary reproach? Will the enemy blaspheme **Your name** forever?"

Exodus 32:11-14 (NKJV) "11 Then Moses pleaded with the Lord his God, and said: 'Lord, why does Your wrath burn hot against Your people whom You have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? 12 Why should the Egyptians speak, and say, 'He brought them out to harm them, to kill them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth'? Turn from Your fierce wrath, and relent from this harm to Your people. 13 Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants, to whom You swore by Your own self, and said to them, 'I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven; and all this land that I have spoken of I give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.' 14 So the Lord relented from the harm which He said He would do to His people."

Joel 2:17 (NKJV) “Let the priests, who minister to the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar; let them say, ‘Spare Your people, O Lord, and do not give Your heritage to reproach, that the nations should rule over them.’ Why should they say among the peoples, ‘Where is their God?’”

“I exceedingly longed that God would get to Himself a name among heathen...Indeed, I had no notion of joy for this world. I cared not where or how I lived, or what hardships I went through, so that I could but gain souls to Christ. I continued in this frame all evening and all the night.”
—David Brainerd

II. The Burden for Revival Praying (62:6; 63:15-16)

The watchmen in Isaiah 62:6 picture prayer _____ who constantly cry out to God day and night for His supernatural touch and healing of Jerusalem.

Isaiah 63:15b (AMP) “Where are Your zeal *and* Your jealousy and Your mighty acts [which you formerly did for Your people]? Your yearning pity and the [multitude of] compassions of Your heart are restrained *and* withheld from me.”

“Whatever happened to anguish in the house of God? Whatever happened to anguish in the ministry? It’s a word you don’t hear in this pampered age. Anguish means ‘extreme pain and distress; the emotions so stirred that it becomes painful; acute, deeply felt inner pain because of conditions about you, or around you.’ Anguish—the deep sorrow and agony of God’s heart. We’ve held on to our religious rhetoric and our revival talk. But we’ve become so passive. All true passion for Christ comes out of a baptism of anguish. Search the Scriptures, and you’ll find that when God determined to recover a ruined situation, He would share His own anguish for what God saw happening to His people. He would find a praying man and literally baptize him in anguish.”
—David Wilkerson

“When prayers and strong pleas for revival are made to God both day and night, when the children of God find that they can no longer tolerate the absence of revival blessing, when extraordinary seeking of an extraordinary outpouring becomes extraordinarily earnest, and when the burden of prayer for revival becomes almost unbearable, then let praying hearts take courage, for the Spirit of God who is the Spirit of revival has brought His people to this place for a purpose.”
—Richard Owen Roberts

III. The Resolve Required for Revival Praying (62:6-7)

Prayer is never an attempt to force God’s hand, but it is a humble acknowledgement that we are _____ and in desperate need of Him and His _____. God-honoring prayer is a persistent reminder that we are not in _____; God is.

IV. The Effect of Revival Praying (64:1-2)

Psalms 139:7 (NKJV) “Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?”

God’s _____ presence speaks of the fact that there is nowhere that God is not. God’s _____ presence is when God makes us acutely aware of His presence and we are transformed.

“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; parents rejoicing over their children as new born, and husbands over their wives, and wives over their husbands...Our public assemblies were then beautiful...The assembly in general was, from time to time, in tears while the Word was preached, some weeping with sorrow and distress, others with joy and love, others with pity and concern for the souls of their neighbors.”
—Jonathan Edwards

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Jonathan Edwards, one of the main human instruments in the First Great Awakening that swept across the American colonies in the mid 1770’s said, “It may be observed that, from the fall of man to our day, the work of redemption in its effect has mainly been carried on by remarkable pourings out of the Spirit of God ... at special seasons of mercy” [Richard Owen Roberts, “Revival Commentary” Vol. 2 No. 1, article by Erroll Hulse, Page 2]. Dr. R. A. Torrey said basically the same thing, “The history of the church has largely been the history of revivals”. Hopefully, if you were here during our Life Action Revival Summit, you have gained a biblical picture of what we mean when we talk about revival. Revival is not a series of meetings with a guest speaker that is designed to get lost people saved (though such an evangelistic crusade is certainly appropriate). Revival is when the Spirit of God does an extraordinary work among those in the church. You cannot re-vive something that doesn’t already have life. As the church becomes lethargic and is being increasingly conformed to the world, there is a desperate need for the church to experience an extraordinary work of the Spirit of God. Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones describes what happens in the church when revival comes: “Suddenly the power of the Spirit comes upon them and they are brought into a new more profound awareness of the truths that they had previously held intellectually, and perhaps at a deeper level too. They are humbled, they are convicted of sin; they are terrified at themselves. Many of them feel that they have never been Christians. And they come to see the great salvation of God in all its glory and to feel its power. Then, as a result of their quickening and enlivening, they begin to pray. New power comes into the preaching of the ministers, and the result of this is that large numbers that were previously outside the church are converted and brought in” [Quoted in Erroll Hulse, “Give Him No Rest”, Page 10]. That is what my heart is hungry for. Today, as we continue with “Revival Reminders”, we are going to look at how prayer is associated with that kind of revival. Someone said, “There have been revivals without organization, but there has never been revival without prayer.” Here is one of the questions we are going to examine: “Is prayer instrumental in bringing about revival or does revival bring about powerful praying?” We will see that the answer is “yes”. The Scriptures are clear in the command to pray. **Luke 18:1 (NKJV)** “Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart”. We see another command in **1 Thessalonians 5:17 (NKJV)** “pray without ceasing”. The Puritans used to say that prayer is the primary means of grace – that is, prayer is the primary way that God’s enabling grace is applied to our lives and circumstances. Spurgeon described prayer as “the slender nerve that moves the muscle of omnipotence.” I have come to the conclusion that we cannot work up this kind of prayer that calls down revival. Again, to quote Jonathan Edwards, “When He is about to bestow some great blessing on His church, it is often His manner, in the first place, so to order things in His providence, as to show His church their need of it, and to bring them into stress for want of it, and so put them upon crying earnestly to Him for it.” [Quoted in Erroll Hulse, *Give Him No Rest*, Page 109]. I am convinced that the ability to pray with deep passion and unshakable faith for an extraordinary work of God in His church is given by the Holy Spirit to those who seek it from Him. **Zechariah 12:10a (HCSB)** “Then I will pour out a spirit of grace and prayer on the house of David and the residents of Jerusalem...” Here is my point; perhaps we need to pray for a heart that is burdened and filled with passion to seek God for revival rather than try to work up a heart that burns for this extraordinary work of God.

Israel and the church are distinct in the Scripture, but I want us to look at some principles about deep passionate prayer and its application to revival from the book of Isaiah, chapters 62-64.

I. The Objective of Revival Praying (Isaiah 64:2-5)

What is the ultimate objective of praying for a revival – an extraordinary move of God in our lives, our church, and our nation? It is easy to slip into a self-centered motive and objective in our praying. Let me give you an example of what I am referring to. “Lord, we have strayed from Your word and now our

nation has gone crazy. Our children and Grandchildren are being raised in an evil world where drugs are destroying lives; violence is so prevalent that we aren't safe even in the school classroom or the church sanctuary. Revive us that our country will become more moral and safe for our families. Change this nation so we don't have to live in fear and don't lose our children to Satan's devices." What could possibly be wrong with that prayer? It misses the primary objective for all of our praying. That is certainly an acceptable secondary objective, but our greatest burden ought to be that God is not receiving the glory that is due Him; His reputation is being drug through the mud by the behavior of those who claim his name. His name is being slandered around the world because of the lives of those who claim His name. If you examine the prayers of Scripture, you will find that the prevailing objective in prayer for revival is that God would be glorified by the answer to the prayer that is being offered. We ought to have a deep concern for God's reputation in the world among non-believers. In Life Action we learned that our objective in our personal lives, our families and in our church is to make God look good. In Isaiah 64:2-4, look for how many times you see evidence that the objective of Isaiah's prayer is that God look good (read Isaiah 64:2-5 and the references "You", "Your will"). Listen to this example in a prayer offered by Daniel in **Daniel 9:17-19 (NKJV)** "¹⁷ Now therefore, our God, hear the prayer of Your servant, and his supplications, and **for the Lord's sake** cause Your face to shine on Your sanctuary, which is desolate. ¹⁸ O my God, incline Your ear and hear; open Your eyes and see our desolations, and the city which is **called by Your name**; for we do not present our supplications before You because of our righteous deeds, but because of Your great mercies. ¹⁹ O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and act! Do not delay **for Your own sake, my God, for Your city and Your people are called by Your name.**" Daniel was saying, "Lord, answer for Your glory, for Your Name's sake among the nations." **Psalms 74:10 (NKJV)** "O God, how long will the adversary reproach? Will the enemy blaspheme **Your name** forever?" In Exodus 32 after the episode in the wilderness with the golden calf, God tests Moses. He tells Moses that He is going to wipe out the whole nation and start over with Moses. Moses begins to intercede for the people. What was the motive of Moses' prayer? Was it that he could not bear to lose his loved ones and friends? No, listen for his motive in **Exodus 32:11-14 (NKJV)** "¹¹ Then Moses pleaded with the Lord his God, and said: 'Lord, why does Your wrath burn hot against Your people whom You have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? ¹² Why should the Egyptians speak, and say, 'He brought them out to harm them, to kill them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth'? Turn from Your fierce wrath, and relent from this harm to Your people. ¹³ Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants, to whom You swore by Your own self, and said to them, 'I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven; and all this land that I have spoken of I give to your descendants, and they shall inherit *it* forever.' ¹⁴ So the Lord relented from the harm which He said He would do to His people." What was the basis of Moses' prayer? It was the glory of God and for his Name's sake. His reputation would be harmed among the people of the world. When we are consumed with the glory of God, His glory becomes the motive behind everything we ask in prayer. We live in a day where God is not feared because of the wretched condition of the church that has made God look bad to an unbelieving world. The morals of those in the church are no different from those who do not even profess to know Him. The divorce rate among Christians is virtually the same as it is among non-believers. Certainly it is not wrong to want revival so there will better living conditions for our children and our Grandchildren, but my point is that the primary motive, the driving force is God's glory. **Joel 2:17 (NKJV)** "Let the priests, who minister to the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar; let them say, 'Spare Your people, O Lord, And do not give Your heritage to reproach, That the nations should rule over them. Why should they say among the peoples, 'Where *is* their God?'" The primary thing that ought to break our heart is how our nation and even our churches are treating God. One man said it well though what he said deeply hurt, "While the people of America reject God as their sovereign, they still claim Him as their servant." We act as though He owes us a pain free, sorrow free life. He is seen as our servant, like a heavenly genie who waits until we rub the magic prayer lamp so He can grant our wish to have a sorrow free, pain free, disappointment free life. Our prayers become powerful when we begin to pray with the right Biblical objective and especially as we pray for revival with the ultimate objective of making God

look good. One of the greatest men of prayer in America was the 18th century missionary to the American Indians, David Brainerd. In 1739, he wrestled all night in prayer for the Indians. Listen to this account from his journal and listen to his objective: “I exceedingly longed that God would get to Himself a name among heathen...Indeed, I had no notion of joy for this world. I cared not where or how I lived, or what hardships I went through, so that I could but gain souls to Christ. I continued in this frame all evening and all the night.” The following day saw a great harvest among the Indians. His objective was “that God would get to Himself a name among the heathen.”

The objective in praying for revival is **Isaiah 64:2b (NKJV)** “...To make Your name known to Your adversaries, *that* the nations may tremble at Your presence!”

II. The Burden for Revival Praying (Isaiah 62:6; 63:15-16)

The picture in these verses is a supernatural call to prayer and a supernatural burden for prayer. The watchmen in Isaiah 62:6 picture prayer intercessors who constantly cry out to God day and night for His supernatural touch and healing of Jerusalem. The passage in Isaiah 63:15-16 pictures a burdened heart that cannot see God at work. The cry seems to be “Lord, we miss You; come down in your manifest presence”. Because of their sin, God’s face is turned away and there is a deep burden for Him to look upon His people once again. In the last part of verse 15 Isaiah asks a question. Listen to the Amplified translation: **Isaiah 63:15b (AMP)** “...Where are Your zeal *and* Your jealousy and Your mighty acts [which you formerly did for Your people]? Your yearning pity and the [multitude of] compassions of Your heart are restrained *and* withheld from me.” What we have described for us here is an extremely burdened heart for God to do a mighty work. In other words as Isaiah says God calls out watchmen and places a supernatural burden on their heart to pray for revival. That is what I am asking the Father to do through this message. Oh that out of this message God would begin to burden the hearts of people in this church to pray that He would be glorified and bring honor to His name by doing an extraordinary work in his church that revives his church and the result being hundreds or even thousands coming to Christ.

A bumper sticker said this: “There’s too much apathy in this country, but who cares?” There is too much apathy in the church about our condition and need for revival and we can’t work up a burden – God, as stated earlier in the message must give it, but I believe he is willing to give it to any believer that comes to Him open like soft clay in the Potter’s hand. What does this burden look like? I think that we catch a glimpse of what it would look like in the sermon we heard an excerpt from during Life Action. It was a sermon on anguish by the late David Wilkerson. Rather than listen again, let me just read you a part of that sermon: “Whatever happened to anguish in the house of God? Whatever happened to anguish in the ministry? It’s a word you don’t hear in this pampered age. Anguish means ‘extreme pain and distress; the emotions so stirred that it becomes painful; acute, deeply felt inner pain because of conditions about you, or around you.’ Anguish – the deep sorrow and agony of God’s heart. We’ve held on to our religious rhetoric and our revival talk. But we’ve become so passive. All true passion for Christ comes out of a baptism of anguish. Search the Scriptures, and you’ll find that when God determined to recover a ruined situation, He would share His own anguish for what God saw happening to His people. He would find a praying man and literally baptize him in anguish.” [Quoted in *Hearcry! A Journal on Revival and Spiritual Awakening*, Pages 9-10]. What do you think would happen if hundreds of people listening to this message said “God, I love You and Your glory and I am available to be one of your watchmen on the wall. Place a supernatural burden, anguish like the anguish of Your heart on my heart to see You revive Your church”? Perhaps the greatest living scholar on revival is Dr. Richard Owen Roberts. He describes this burden from God that I am describing in his book entitled *Revival!* He says “When prayers and strong pleas for revival are made to God both day and night, when the children of God find that they can no longer tolerate the absence of revival blessing, when extraordinary seeking of an extraordinary outpouring becomes extraordinarily earnest, and when the burden of prayer for revival becomes almost unbearable, then let praying hearts take courage, for the Spirit of God who is the Spirit of revival has brought His people to this place for a purpose.” [Richard Owen Roberts, “Revival!”, Page 68-69]. When God’s people are genuinely and deeply burdened and continually pray, God will do a work in His timing.

We have seen the objective of revival praying and the burden of revival praying.

III. The Resolve Required for Revival Praying (Isaiah 62:6-7)

Prayer is never an attempt to force God's hand, but it is a humble acknowledgement that we are helpless and in desperate need of Him and his touch. God honoring prayer is a persistent reminder that we are not in control; God is. As we study great revivals of history, we see that it is persistent prayer from resolved disciples that precedes and accompanies revival. This resolved prayer involves people who like the watchmen on the wall around Jerusalem "never hold their peace day or night". They are determined to "give the Lord no rest" until he answers. Before Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came, it was preceded by those 120 in the upper room praying and giving the Lord no rest. Before the great revival in 1859 in Ulster, Ireland, James McQuilken and three others began to meet in a school house every week for prayer and Bible study. They kept themselves warm with armfuls of peat they gathered on the way to the schoolhouse every Friday evening. By the end of 1858, there were 50 participating in the prayer meeting. They began to pray with burdened hearts for revival and in 1859 God answered and 100,000 came to Christ in Ulster alone. Evan Roberts prayed for 13 years without the burden ever lifting before revival swept over Wales in 1904. Why does God wait to send revival until His people pray with that kind of persistence? Our persistence shows how much we prize God's presence and his glory. If we are content to pray a little prayer every now and then and settle for periodic spiritual spasms and then stop praying, we give solid evidence that we do not highly prize His presence, His working, and His glory. When we come to the place that we feel we cannot go on without His presence and seeing him receive the glory that is due His name, then we may be getting close to revival.

IV. The Effect of Revival Praying (64:1-2)

The prayer for revival is summed up in those words in **Isaiah 64:1a (NKJV)** "Oh, that You would rend the heavens! That You would come down!" Someone defined revival as being when God shows up. But isn't God omnipresent? Yes, but there is a distinction between God's essential presence and His manifest presence. His essential presence speaks of the fact that there is nowhere that God is not. The question is asked in **Psalms 139:7 (NKJV)** "Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?" The answer is "nowhere!" But God's manifest presence is different. This is when God makes us acutely aware of His presence and we are transformed. When Isaiah asks the Lord to "come down", he was speaking of His manifest presence that had a great effect. Notice how it is pictured. The mountains shake (Verse 1). Mountains often symbolize obstacles. When God shows up in revival, every obstacle is moved. Next, he says that the fire of God's presence burns the brushwood. Brushwood is all tangled up and this pictures how the fire of God's presence deals with tangled lives that are bringing dishonor to Him. The presence of God like fire also makes the water boil. That is a life filled with coldness and apathy that He sets on fire when He shows up. This is the effect we desire when God comes down in revival. When God shows up, He can do more in a minute with his power than we can do in a lifetime with all our strategies.

CONCLUSION

Listen to Jonathan Edwards' description of his own town when the longed for revival came. He wrote these words in 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; parents rejoicing over their children as new born, and husbands over their wives, and wives over their husbands ... Our public assemblies were then beautiful ... The assembly in general was, from time to time, in tears while the Word was preached, some weeping with sorrow and distress, others with joy and love, others with pity and concern for the souls of their neighbors." [Ray Ortlund Jr., *Preaching the Word Commentary – Isaiah*, Page 432-433]. This is the effect I long to see.