

Five Steps to Genuine Revival

By Dr. Ian R. K. Paisley

sermonaudio.com

Bible Text: Haggai 1:7-8

Preached on: Wednesday, March 31, 1976

Martyrs Memorial Free Presbyterian Church

356 Ravenhill Road
BT 5 Belfast, Ulster
Northern Ireland

Website: <http://www.ianpaisley.org/>

Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/martyrs

The first chapter of the book of the prophecy of Haggai verses seven and eight.

Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways. Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the LORD.¹

The burden of my message is to the people of God, to those that are saved by God's sovereign free grace. I want to call you, Christian brother, Christian sister, to a consideration of your ways.

You look with me at verse five. You will find that the old prophet he says, "Consider your ways."² Then in verse seven he repeats it, "Consider your ways."³

Fellow believers, we need to give an urgent consideration of our ways, top priority in our Christian life at the present time. We have a description here of the plight of the people of God in the days of the old prophet. Look at verse six. "Ye have sown much, and bring in little."⁴ Is that not true of the Christian witness of today? What activity there is. They remind me of what old Billy Sunday said, "The churches are like a canary in a cage, much activity, but no progress." And there are many churches like that.

God says, "Ye have sown much, and bring in little."⁵ And, my, we have churches today that are geared up in top gear with activity. My, the whole machinery of the church is working at full speed and force. But have they moved their town for God? Have they raised Lazaruses from the dead? That is, have the foremost sinners in their neighborhood been born again? Have they made a vital impact against the dens of iniquity and the hell holes of the devil in their community?

Alas, today many of our fundamentalist churches just merely decorate a site for the denomination. And as far as a vital impact for God upon their district, it doesn't exist.

¹ Haggai 1:7-8

² Haggai 1:5

³ Haggai 1:7

⁴ Haggai 1:6

⁵ Ibid.

The Church of Jesus Christ was called into being to pull down the strongholds of the devil. The church of Jesus Christ was called into perpetual warfare against the powers of darkness. The Church of Jesus Christ was called to the hottest part of the conflict with the world, the flesh and the devil.

But the militancy of the church is almost nil today. There is not many fighting fundamentalists left. We shun the battle. We are afraid to declare war on the enemy. Oh, we sow much, but we bring in little.

“Ye eat, but ye have not enough.”⁶ There is dissatisfaction in the church, isn’t there? My, the people of God are not satisfied with what is going on. To many Christians prayer is not a luxury, more like a purgatory to some Christians. Man, if you call a prayer meeting they hasten away. But if you are really living where God wants you to live prayer will be a luxury. Why, you love to pray. You love to be in the place where you can talk to your God and commune with the most high and feel your soul uplifted and blessed and strengthened and inspired by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Is that the way your prayer life is? Or when you kneel down to pray you are speechless, there is no communing with God. Deep does not call to deep at the voice of his water spout.⁷

“Ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes.”⁸ That is like some church finance, isn’t it? Oh, the tragedy of it all. And yet the amazing thing is that the people of God will not consider their ways. And they will go on.

There is an evangelical church not far from my own church in Belfast and their congregation started to grow very thin and the church was declining. So they called a special meeting to try and find ways to stop the decline. Instead of calling a prayer meeting and asking God to baptize them with power and warm up their hearts and set them on fire, they had a discussion meeting as if God needed their suggestions. The Lord has already given us the plan. They said, “You know, it would be helpful if we removed every second pew in the church because if we did that the crowd we have would look bigger.”

So they called in the joiners and they removed every second pew and they were doing well. It would make the church look better. And then they decided that they would shut off a certain section of the church and introduce this society and that society, this recreational facility and that recreational facility. And, you know, they thought they had done a wonderful job. They would now need to remove every third and fourth pew because the church has declined and will decline.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ See Psalm 47:2

⁸ Haggai 1:6

When I went preaching in the Ravenhill Road 30 years ago and commenced my ministry 60 people called me to be their preacher. When I had preached for six months I had 30 left. And I remember one day—I wouldn't advise any preacher to do this, but when I was a young preacher I was foolish. All young preachers are foolish. And I got so mad I remember going into the pulpit and I counted all the windows of the church and I asked the stewards to open them. And when they opened the windows and then I said, "Now, open all the doors." Now I said, "I started here with 60 people. We had a choir. The choir is gone. We had a superintendent of Sunday school. He is gone. We had a treasurer and he is gone." And I said, "If there is any other person here wants to go now, the doors are open. The windows are open and I will sing the doxology while you go."

Nobody went. Thirty stayed. So I said, "Now, we have 350 seats and only 30 people. How do you fill them? Consider your ways." So every Friday night I went down to that church with five or six men and we started at 11 o'clock at night and we prayed upon every empty seat and said, "Lord, bring in sinners to fill these seats." And we didn't pray dry prayers. We prayed with tears in our eyes. We meant business. It was life or death. Either the church would grow or it was finished. And we prayed.

But, you know, you don't just fill seats by prayer. You have got to put legs on your prayers. And we put legs on our prayers and I went out every morning and I knocked upon the doors and I preached and I said to my men as we were praying, I said, "You know what we want. We want the worst sinner on this road converted. Who is the worst sinner?"

So they decided the worst sinner on the road was man over 70 years of age who was the worst drunkard in the area. You could see him every night going from the public house or the liquor shop after it closed crawling his way up the road holding on to the wall.

So we concentrated our prayers on that man. We made him a target of old fashioned Holy Ghost praying. And one night he came into the church and a lot of the respectable people who weren't praying they thought it was a miracle. One of my officers said to me, "That is a miracle."

Says I, "You know nothing. If you had prayed as long as I have prayed for him you wouldn't think it was much of a miracle." I thought God was mighty slow in answering the prayer.

He wasn't saved the first night he came, nor the second night, but glory to God one night God saved him and sobered him and made him a trophy of grace. Man it went round the district like wild fire.

"Do you know who Paisley has got converted?"

And his companions came to see what was happening. It was noised abroad that Jesus was in the house.⁹ And they got saved and the old publican got mad.

⁹ See Mark 2:1

He says, "If Paisley goes on I will be out of business." Thank God he is out of business today. He is closed.

And then we had an unholy den hole of iniquity opposite the church where young men were led astray and their lives were made unclean and their souls were destroyed. And I said to my young fellows, "We have got to close that place down." So we concentrated prayer on it, made it a target for old fashioned praying. Man, we meant business. And what happened?

The man that ran it went bankrupt and he came to me and he said, "You know I have close."

Says I, "Hallelujah for that."

He said, "What do you mean?"

Says I, "God is answering my prayers."

He said, "You know, you could use that place." He said, "I will lease it to you for a certain rent."

Says I, "I never asked God for a lease on your place. I asked him to close it. I am not re-opening it." Says I, "I wouldn't give you a penny piece for it." And it closed and closed forever. Hallelujah.

We considered our ways. We got down to the business. Would to God preachers would get down to the business.

You remember the early Church, "We shall give ourselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word."¹⁰ Show me a man's giving himself to prayer and the ministry of the Word and I will show you a man going [?] for God. I will show you a church that is going on fire. We need to consider our ways.

Man, when you read the history of the old gospel preachers of the past we are only like a lot of pygmies today. These men were giants. These men meant to do things for God. Man, they meant to be at their best for God.

Do you believe that God saves men through his Word? Then go and preach the Word as if you did believe it. Expect God to do something. Don't just carry on. I wonder how many people in this great congregation they are only playing at. They don't really mean to go places for God, half hearted, they have time for pleasure. Man, if you see some Christians going out in their recreation—and I have nothing against recreation, only I have no time to engage in it. But, man, they put their heart into it, don't they? Man, they are waiting at it to play tennis. They play tennis till they sweat. I never saw them sweat-

¹⁰ See Acts 6:4

ing in the prayer meeting. And, man, if there is some other thing they engage in they will put their heart and soul and mind into it. But, my when they come to church they sit like lumps of putty in the pew. Man, they wouldn't budge or squeak. And if some fellow with the glory of God in his soul says, "Amen," why they will look at him as if something had happened to him.

Mr. Nicholson, one of our great preachers said some churches if you brought a bucket of milk through the door it would be ice cream before you got it to the pulpit they are so cold. Yeah.

Is that the sort of Christian you are? You are only playing at it. I have found in my Christian experience that if I am going to do anything for God or be anything for God I have got to put myself body, soul and Spirit in to it, every bit of me, from the big toe to the top of my head. Every bit on the altar for God, no reservations, totally, absolutely unconditionally the lot for God.

Tell me, is that what you are doing? Would you start considering your ways? Wouldn't America need a real revival? Wouldn't this land of yours, wouldn't it need an old fashioned heaven sent, sky blue revival? Wouldn't the fundamentalist churches need a baptism of old time power?

I'm not speaking of any charismatic emotionalism now. I am talking about the real genuine thing that changes man permanently and eternally, that changes the face of a district, that changes a church from but an old drab, dry church as dead as the dust on Pharaoh's mummy—and you couldn't get anything dead than that—to a church that is alive with the power of God.

God, give us churches where sinners are scared. Yeah, dead scared of getting saved.

"Couldn't go to that church for if I went to it, I'd get saved."

Amen. That's the sort of churches we need today, converting shops where people are really and truly born again of the Holy Ghost. Oh, would we consider our ways. How much have we sown and there is very, very little for God? Consider our ways.

Oh, friend, I wouldn't go back to an old dead ministry. I wouldn't go back to old dead lifeless prayer meetings. I wouldn't want to preach in the church where there is no spiritual warmth or life.

Some people have just enough religion to endure. Thank God for the people that are enjoying it, enjoying every minute of God.

Are you enjoying it or enduring it? The look on some of your faces is a brave endurance test you are in at the moment. Consider your ways.

Where do you go to get the fire? You go up the mountain. That is where you go.

We sing an old hymn in our country, “Jesus, keep me near the cross.” And there is a verse in it that says, “Near the cross a trembling soul, love and mercy found me. There the bright and morning star shed its beams around me. Near the cross I’ll watch and wait.”

Do you know what we need this afternoon? We need to get back to the cross. Commence the climb.

Oh, there’s a lot of people are living in the low lands. Where are you living, brother? Are you getting up the mountain? Thank God for the climbers, the men that are looking for higher ground. My faith has no desire to stay where doubt’s around and fears dismay. Though some may dwell where these abound, my constant aim is higher ground.

Let’s go up the mountain today. Could I for a moment bring you to the place called Calvary? Could we stand this afternoon under the shadow of the old cross of shame? Could we gaze today afresh upon the bleeding, battered, broken body of God’s dear Son? Could we count the thorns in that crown of agony? Could we count the purple drops that fall from his hands, his feet and side? Could I get my soul ignited with the warm passion of that great offering for sin?

Oh, man and woman, today see from his head, his hands, his feet sorrow and blood flow mingled down. Did ever such love or sorrow meet or thorns compose so rich a crown?

And when I stand at that cross I hate sin because sin put him on that tree. How can I flirt with sin? How can I companion with sin? How can I take part in sin when I know that sin put him on the tree? As I stand there under that cross I hate the world. I hate the flesh. I hate the devil. For that broken, bleeding, battered body of Christ is the handiwork of all three.

For you my sins, my cruel sins, his chief tormenters were. Each of my crimes became a nail and unbelief the spear.

If we could get up that mountain today, my, the things of earth would grow strangely dim in the light of his glory and grace.

Come on, brother, leave the lowlands. You have stayed there long enough. Come on, sister, start the climb up Calvary’s hill today. Let’s say in our hearts we will go up the mountain. We will leave behind the world. We will leave behind those things that soil and stain our souls. And, oh God, I would more holy be. I would be God’s man or God’s woman to this generation. I want to be at my best for God. Oh, bring me up the hill. Melt my heart with Calvary love. Teach me the fulness of that blessed truth “That I might know him and the power of his resurrection.”¹¹ Do you want power? Then here is a power that breaks the coffin lid. Here is a power that rends the sepulcher’s rock. Here is a power that breathes life into the dead. It is the power of his resurrection.

¹¹ Philippians 3:10

Some churches are engaged in corpse washing. They wash the corpses. I am engaged in the resurrection business. That is what I am in. The church brings men to life.

Man, it is a great thing when people start living, to hear the cry of a new born babe. Man, what a thrill that is. The Lord help us to know the power of his resurrection. Listen to it. “and the fellowship of his suffering, the fellowship of his sufferings.”¹² Oh how sweet to know as I onward go that the way of the cross leads home. Don’t be afraid to suffer for Jesus.

Former Prime Minister of Ulster came on the television and he said, “Paisley is a demon doctor.” At the next election he was almost annihilated and my majority rose to 38,000. I want to tell you God will vindicate you if you serve him. Don’t you worry about what they say. I worry when they don’t say anything. That’s when I get worried.

There is one thing that will curse your church. It is the curse of indifference. When people are mad God is working. When people are indifferent, man, then you need to pray.

The fellowship of his sufferings. Listen, “being made conformable unto his death.”¹³ Oh, that we made conformable to the death of Christ. Oh, there is power in that cross. That cross is the great generator. It generates life and power and light and dynamic strength in the cross.

Oh, Paul says, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross.”¹⁴ “The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved [what is it?] it is the power of God,”¹⁵ omnipotence let loose.

Man, we need omnipotence to be let loose in the pulpit today, don’t we? Yes. May the Lord disturb the sleep of death. Get us up the mountain. Come on, let’s start climbing. Let’s leave the old ruts. There is no difference between a rut and a grave, only one is a little deeper than the other. A lot of Christians in the grave and in the rut today and they do this same thing. Ever go to their church? Say the same prayers.

Man, I was at a prayer meeting one night and I stood at the door and I said to the people, “Tonight, what did you pray for?” They couldn’t tell me. Imagine going to a prayer meeting and not knowing what you prayed for. So I said to them, “I will tell you what I will do. I will put all your prayers on a tape where you say the same thing every week. And I will play them over for you and you can sit at home, no need for you to come.”

Isn’t there many prayer meetings like that? But I tell you once people start going up the mountain to God they will pray different prayers. They will start meaning business. They will not be worried whether their sentences every end. They will not be worrying whether

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Galatians 6:14

¹⁵ 1 Corinthians 1:18

grammatically they prayed correctly. Man, they will be worried about the answers. That is all I am worrying about.

“Lord, give me the answer. Lead me to learn to pray. God, teach me how to pray with prayer that binds the fold, with prayer that loosens captive souls for whom thy Son’s blood did flow. Lord, teach me how to pray with prayer to scale the heights, with prayer to burst the gates of heaven and claim my blood bought rights.” That’s the way we need to pray.

“The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.”¹⁶

Go up the mountain. It says, “Bring wood.”¹⁷ Have you been out in the forest of lost souls, have you? My in that forest of lost souls there are giant timbers that I have got to fell for Jesus. I have gone round that forest. I have seen these great timbers reaching almost to the sky. They baffled me. And I said, “Lord, will these timbers ever be laid low? Will I ever succeed in gathering the commodity for the building of the church?”

And then I was reminded of the story of Elisha going with the men to build an enlarged house. And do you remember the man started to cut down a tree and, my, the timber flew here and there and he was doing well. He was getting, cutting into that great king of the forest. And then something happened. The ax head flew off and he was standing with the handle of the ax, but no head. He didn’t go on trying to chop down the tree.¹⁸

Man, there’s a lot of churches trying that today. They have just got the ax handle and, man, they are slugging away as hard as they can go and the sweat is running down their face, but they are not making any progress. They have lost the power.

Christian, have you lost the power? Have you?

Do you know what the old prophet said? “Where fell it?”¹⁹

Do you know where you will get the power back? Where you lost it. You have to get back to the very place that you lost it. No easy way, no quick cuts with God. “And the iron did swim.”²⁰

Old Elisha didn’t get down on his knees and fit on the ax head. He made the man do it himself. The preacher...there are some things preachers shouldn’t do. I have learned that. There are some things you have got to do for yourself.

And he got the ax head on again. And, man, when he started to cut down the tree he made progress. Will we ever cut down these great timbers of the forest? We need divine power.

¹⁶ Matthew 11:12

¹⁷ Haggai 1:8

¹⁸ See 2 Kings 6

¹⁹ 2 Kings 6:6

²⁰ Ibid.

You know what he said? “Alas, master! for it was borrowed.”²¹ It’s borrowed power that organizes the church. It is not in ourselves. None of us set off to preach gospel sermons that would fail. If I set off with my puny little ability and talents to face the world, the flesh and the devil, the great juggernaut of hell would go over me and I would be obliterated over night. But thank God there is a power that is divine. Oh, there is an anointing that comes from heaven. Oh the blessed spirit of God is sent to fill us, to fill us and fill us with his power.

“Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.”²²

The Christian’s alternative for getting drunk, what is it? To be filled with the Holy Ghost. That is what the Bible says. Yes. Don’t look so skeptical this afternoon. That is what the Bible says. “Be filled with the Holy Ghost.”²³ Can God fill you with the Holy Ghost? Hallelujah he can. He wants to do it.

Man, if he filled you this afternoon you will be a different Christian. Man, people will say, “What’s happened to him? Something has happened.”

The devil will know. I want to disturb the devil. I want to be the enemy of everything that God is the enemy of. I want to hate the things God hates and love the things God loves. I want to go up the mountain afresh and get my soul refreshed at Calvary.

I wonder how many Christians here and there is a longing in your soul today as a preacher and you have said, “Brother, I would like to go up the hill of God. I would like to climb the mountain. I would like to cut down those great trees of the forest for God. I don’t want my life to be useless. I am sick of this old dead way of living without power and grace. Oh, preacher, today I have considered my ways. I am letting go. I am letting God.”

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice.”²⁴

²¹ 2 Kings 6:5

²² Ephesians 5:18

²³ Acts 9:17

²⁴ Romans 12:1