

TEACHING

Biblical Revival Part One

(Psalm 85:6) "Will you not revive us again that your people may rejoice in you?"

Introduction:

1. A Biblical Revival is the Work of God.

A Biblical revival is God's work! We cannot bring about a revival by cleverly planned programs or by keynote speakers or by singing all kinds of emotionally moving choruses. Just whipping people up into some Euphoric, emotional spiritual state cannot produce a revival either!

(Psalm 127:1) "Unless the Lord builds the house its builders labour in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain."

As believers we have our part to play in a Revival. We cannot bring it about by our own efforts. Isaiah the prophet was a godly man and loved the Lord but he came to a place in his walk with God where he was confronted with his own need of a spiritual revival. When Isaiah really saw the Lord he saw himself and fell down on his face before the Lord.

(Isaiah 6:5) "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, for my eyes have seen the King the Lord Almighty"

After this experience the Lord purified his heart completely through the work of

the cross. After his experience of God's holiness he was ready for his life's work.

Isaiah not only saw the putrid condition of his own heart before the Lord but also saw the putrid condition of the hearts of God's people recognising their terribly backslidden state before Him. God's people had been comfortable under King Uzziah but when the King died their comfort zones were removed.

A revival firstly starts in the Church!

Seeing people being saved is not revival but the results of revival. A revival causes God's people to see the Lord Jesus Christ, as He really is, Holy, Blameless, pure, undefiled, set apart from sinners and upholding all things by His Powerful Word.

Such a sight causes God's people to abandon all of their reliance upon anyone or anything else and to cast themselves completely on Him for mercy, cleansing and pardon. A revival brings God's people back to the Biblical and Spiritual priorities He has for their lives.

2. Only the Holy Spirit can bring about a Revival.

The Holy Spirit of God is the only one who can bring about a revival in the Church. Without His enabling power we cannot serve the Lord Jesus Christ successfully or walk in God's will.

Today there are many churches, which have perfectly orthodox doctrine and are evangelical in their works but have no real affect on society as a whole because they will not yield unconditionally to the Holy Spirit and allow Him to direct their daily affairs. They acknowledge the Holy Spirit doctrinally but will not let Him into their churches.

Many are opting for Alpha courses and Purpose Driven strategies to grow their churches numerically but the Church still continues to decline spiritually. The Church in the West is in a terrible state of spiritual decay and heading for judgment unless there is true repentance and a return to the authority of the Bible.

Things right now are just like they were in the times of Jeremiah. Just before Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians God's people were enjoying a time of abundant prosperity and affluence. False prophets and teachers abounded telling them what they wanted to hear and they loved hearing them prophesy. Jeremiah was the odd one out as are all who see conditions in the Church as they really are and try to warn people before its too late!

The same conditions applied in Jerusalem before its destruction by the Romans in 70AD. Those who believed the words of Jesus warned others in the city of what was coming. The true believers got out of the city when they could before the final judgment fell. Ultimately Jesus will only come for those who love Him and obey His Word.

Only the Lord can bring about a Revival and although it is a sovereign work of the Holy Spirit His people still have their part in seeing that revival poured out.

3. For a Revival to happen the soil of our hearts must be receptive to the seed of God's Word.
(Hosea 10:12) *"Break up your unploughed*

ground; for it is time to seek the Lord until he comes and showers righteousness upon you."
We must be willing to work towards revival and to do what's necessary in God's sight for Him to make it happen. If a farmer wants a crop he needs to plough up his soil and sew the seed into the ground so that when the rain comes in its due season there will be a harvest. He doesn't just sit on his veranda without doing anything expecting the crop to spring up by itself. If he wants a harvest he knows that he must do his part. The rain will come but if he has not ploughed up his ground and sewed the seed there will be no crop.

Multitudes of our churches in the West today are having a party. Prophecies abound, prosperity teaching flows, worship services dazzle the senses and preachers captivate audiences with their visions and dreams yet society as a whole continues to plunge on the downward path to hell and destruction! Many sincere believers think that Revivals are a sovereign works of God and that He sends them arbitrarily without any kind of co-operation from His people. This simply isn't true! The Holy Spirit needs our co-operation! And there is only one way to give Him that co-operation.

Revivals have never begun by people laughing, rolling on the floor, making animal noises and generally jumping about. You'll never find this kind of thing in the Bible! Real revivals begin when believers and churches weep and wail before the altar over their backslidden state and mourn over sinners going into the lake of fire for eternity.

A revival usually doesn't happen in huge meetings amidst the razzle and dazzle of star-studded worship. Revival happens when small groups of people are on their faces before the Lord pleading with Him to have mercy on their own backslidden state and that of the Church. This was the cry of Isaiah.

When Nehemiah saw the walls of Jerusalem broken down and its gates burned with fire he sat down in despair and hopelessness at the situation and then began to weep. For some days he mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven. (*Nehemiah 1:3-4*) He wasn't laughing at all but recognized that God's people were in real trouble and in disgrace before the heathen world.

Nehemiah was grieving because God's backslidden people were dishonouring His name. The Lord Jesus Christ spoke about four kinds of people in the Gospels. All of us fall into one of these four categories. You can read about them in Mark 4:13-20.

First, there is the unproductive 'heart soil.' (Vs 15) We must obey God's Word when we hear it. James tells us that if we hear God's Word and do not do what it says we will end up being deceived as many are today including the faith prosperity and Kingdom now money preachers.

In Matthew 24 Jesus warns the Church at least three times about spiritual deception. Many hear the word but do not allow it to go beyond some superficial level in their lives consequently Satan snatches it away because the heart soil is shallow. In truth they really want superficial emotional self-gratifying emotional spiritual experiences but do not want to submit to the authority of God's Word. They only want teaching that tickles their ears. (*Jeremiah 5:31*)
(*2 Timothy 4:3-4*)

Others like hearing the Word but have no intention of putting it into practice in their daily lives. (*Ezekiel 33:30-32*) When God's people are like this He cannot send a revival even though he wants to with all of His heart!

Second, there is the superficial 'heart soil.' (Vs 16-17) Some have a kind of emotion-

al spiritual experience that does not go very deep into the soil of their hearts. Their spiritual roots do not go deep enough into the soil of their hearts. They may even rejoice in the truth and respond to the Word emotionally but go no further into the deeper things of God. When persecution comes because of the Word's sake they quickly become discouraged and fall away.

Even after a revival has come there will always be some who come to know the Lord but never go on with Him because their experience is not deep enough. Usually they have not really understood the need for deep repentance. They may feel sorry for what they have done in the past but in their deep minds have no intention of forsaking their sin. There is no decision of the will only a decision of the emotions that is all. Satan will attack the word in all of us because He knows that with it we can defeat him.
(*Ephesians 6:17*)

Third, there is Worldly 'heart soil.' (Vs 18-19) Some allow the Word to penetrate their hearts and begin to live by every word that proceeds out of God's mouth but other things also enter in and begin to cause the Word to become ineffective in their lives. There is the worry and care about the things in this life. They may not be sinful activities in themselves but if they stop you from hearing and responding to God's Word then they eventually become sin. It may be the worry about finances that drive people to work long hours and neglect the things of God. It may be the desires to get rich and to have it good in this world. Being rich isn't the problem but it becomes a problem when the desire to become rich is stronger in than the desire to hear and obey the Word of God. (*1 Timothy 6:6-10*)

It may be the desires for other things crowding in that choke the seed of God's Word from full productiveness. It may be

watching TV following sport and other leisure activities become more important than reading and studying God's Word. For multitudes of Australians, including many Christians, football is their God! There is nothing wrong with football in itself but when it becomes the priority over the things of God it becomes an idol.

Four, there is responsive 'heart soil.' (Vs 20) These are the ones who hear the Word, respond to it honestly and seek to obey it. They make the quality decision not to live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds out of the Mouth of God. (Matthew 4:4) They decide to build a foundation of the rock of God's Word and dig deeply around that foundation to make sure that their lives stay on course for God. They take the time to dig deeply into the Word of God to make sure that the foundation of their life is stable. These are the ones who really plough up the soil of their hearts to receive the seed of God's Word resulting in an abundant harvest of souls.

God is always willing to send a revival. If we are not experiencing one in our lives and the life of our church then its not God's fault but ours. We are not serious about digging up the hard packed soil of our hearts to receive the seed of the Word. We continue with our programs for church growth but will not yield completely to the Holy Spirit. He doesn't just want our emotional response but the surrender of our wills to Him. In fact He wants to control our whole body because once He gets that He gets the contents as well. (Romans 12:1-2)

We need to ask ourselves whether we really hunger and thirst after righteousness before anything else? (Matthew 6:33) Many Christians hunger and thirst after spiritual gifts or for prosperity and healing but how many hunger and thirst after righteousness? How many will not give up

until they are filled to overflowing with the fruits of righteousness?

The Lord Jesus Christ desperately wants to reach the unsaved through us but are we really prepared and ready for Him to do this? Before the Lord can really transform a community or city or even a nation he must transform us. The Holy Spirit must deal with us first and then through us reach the unsaved.

Conclusion

God always wants to send a revival because He is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance and to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ but He needs us through whom He can do this work.

Unless we yield our wills unconditionally and without reservation to the Holy Spirit we can never accomplish all that God wants to achieve through us especially in reaching the lost. We may express strong emotions and make a lot of noise in worshipping and serving the Lord and even be involved in church growth programs but if our wills are not laid down then the results we are looking for will only be superficial and will not last.

Whatever we do personally or in the Church must be built on the solid foundation of God's Word. (Matthew 7:21-27) A revival is the work of God and can only be produced by the Holy Spirit but they both need our co-operation as believers to bring it about.

You may be involved in Christian service, be a church leader or minister or be involved and active in the church but have you completely yielded yourself unconditionally to the Holy Spirit's control or are you still trying to do things your way?

If you have never consciously yielded yourself, your gifts, your time and your talents to the Holy Spirit will you do it now? If you are not willing to do this are you willing to be made willing? Don't delay any longer! Go to the one who loves you and has purchased you with His own blood.

If you are conscious of sin then fly to that fountain opened for uncleanness and sin. Confess your sin and receive cleansing through that fountain of Jesus blood. Cry out to Him to fill you with His Holy Spirit and to use you according to His good acceptable and perfect will. (1 John 1:7-9) (Romans 12:1-2) God's will is for you to be constantly filled with His Spirit. (Ephesians 5:18)

If we are willing to obey His commandments (His Word) and to do those things that please Him then we can receive anything we ask from Him that is in line

with His will for us to have. (1 John 3:22 5:14-15) When we ask we must ask in faith. (Hebrews 6:11) If we are willing to be faithful in every area of our lives then God will send a revival but it will be on His terms and in His time. Our responsibility is to continue to be faithful in what we already know is right and continue in it until He comes and rains righteousness upon us.

When we speak of a revival in secular terms we are talking about reviving something that has been lost in the past. A Biblical revival sees God's people returning back to the authority of the Bible and to the spiritual priorities He has for their lives and thoroughly repenting and yielding completely to the Holy Spirit's control. Only when this happens and the fire of the Holy Spirit really falls from heaven will this generation repent and call upon the name of the Lord to be saved!

BLOW THE TRUMPET IN ZION

" For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ "

