

Guaranteed Revival!

By Paul Benson

There are few words in our English vocabulary which stir the hearts and imaginations of Christian believers the way the word 'revival' does. What young minister or missionary has not dreamed of preaching under the power and anointing of the Spirit of God and witnessing results like those seen by great men of God such as Charles Finney or John G. Lake? Revival! Oh, how we long for and hope for and pray for revival. What would you say if I told you I could guarantee a true revival? If you think I'm kidding, I am not. Read on!

Defining Revival

Frequently in Christian circles we hear people refer to events such as the 'Welsh Revival' or the 'Azusa Street Revival'. While the word 'revival'

is quite often used to describe an *outpouring of God's Spirit*, this usage is somewhat askew from the dictionary (and biblical) meaning of the word. An intense manifestation of God's presence may take place where there has been no former work of His grace which now needs to be freshly awakened. You would not refer to the birth of a child as a *revival* would you? Many times an outpouring is just that: a time of birthing.

But historically (and practically) speaking, a true outpouring of God's Spirit has only manifested in this land approximately every fifty years or so, and has usually lasted a brief span of a few years at the most. Considering all this, the odds of a Christian being in the right time-frame, and geographical location, to land themselves in the midst of one of these 'outpourings' is frighteningly slim. But today we have believers by the multitudes traveling to and fro looking for any indication there might be, in this location or that, some kind of spiritual activity taking place where they can receive a 'touch' from God. And therein lies the burden of

my heart concerning the matter of true ‘revival’.

Today we have a generation of believers who have been raised up on an unbalanced gospel that (at the very least) severely hinders a fruitful relationship with God. A generation in which many are so alienated from fellowship with God that they are wandering about like lost sheep looking for some ‘manifestation’ to convince them of their connectivity with the Father. Therefore many are unwittingly embracing deception and falling by the wayside. I believe a deeper understanding of the true meaning of the word ‘revival’ may be to some a help in seeking the same. Instead of hoping, praying, and waiting for a sovereign move of God to bring us corporately to a place of being ‘revived’, maybe there are things we could tend to in our own walk to facilitate a *personal revival*.

We all know the word ‘revival’ has traditionally been used to refer to a ‘move’ of God’s Spirit, or a group of meetings where fervent Gospel preaching is presented; but according to Webster the words

‘revival’ or to be ‘revived’ indicate *a former state of life or consciousness (which was for one reason or another lost) now being restored*: thus the unconscious or dead has been ‘revived’, and can be said to have experienced ‘revival’.

Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: 1 Corinthians 15:34

A spiritual renewal and a return to God consciousness is the correct biblical meaning of the word revival. A person need not accumulate a suitcase full of frequent flier miles, or wear the tires off their vehicle, to hear what God is saying to this generation or to feel the embrace of the Holy Ghost. Lively services or seminars might jack you up for a brief period. But true personal revival can only be found in repentance and mending our relationships with God, and each other, through a commitment to following the principles of faith as found in the teachings of the Bible. When we fail to adhere to the instruction manual the finished product will not perform as

promised by the Manufacturer.

An Empty Wineskin

Many years ago we were holding some house meetings in which, though the attendance was somewhat small, the presence of God could not be denied. A (supposedly) Spirit-filled minister, seeing that something was stirring, came to visit me. During his visit he made a statement I found quite remarkable. He said that although he could recognize the moving of the Spirit, and an evident atmosphere of prayer, he had to admit he could not sense the presence of God in his life. And that he had traveled many miles to various locations seeking the 'touch' of God, but never found it.

This man was putting on an outward show of spirituality, but inwardly was dry as unbuttered toast. His condition left me at a loss for words. I think he was expecting me to tell him how he could have some of what he was seeing in our little group, but all I had in my mind at the time was the verse where Jude referred to some folks as 'clouds

without water'. Sorry, no help here buddy. These ignorant little fish had no idea how they had gotten in the river; we were just enjoying the swim! But his confession did unsettle me, and gave me a desire to seek God for a greater understanding of His ways.

Although I have to sadly admit I had no help for the poor man on that day, I would not be caught in the same loss for words if the situation were repeated today. Testimonies such as his (coupled with previous failures of my own at maintaining a consistent fellowship with God) have provoked me over the years to critically examine what is being preached, and commonly accepted, as the Gospel of Jesus Christ in our nation today. What is being presented by most preachers is far removed from the Christianity of the Bible. The need for personal revival can only be truly answered by a return to the pattern and principles of New Testament Christianity as presented in the Scriptures.

There Is A River

If God once poured out His Spirit upon you but now the flow of the River of Water of Life is no longer evident, it's pretty safe to assume the error is not to be found in God's side of the equation. He didn't suffer a drought and have to curtail the flow; and He didn't get stingy and shut the valve. His supply is endless; as is His desire to bless and commune with His children. I firmly believe that the life-flow of God's Spirit and an unhindered faith, often lacking in the life of a believer, may be recaptured without us ever having to leave our hometown.

The Danger Of Sin

From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Mat 4:17

I don't think it chance the first word the Scriptures record Jesus as saying when he began to minister was Repent. This lays the foundation for all true Gospel ministry. The Cross of Christ paid the penalty for sin, and faith alone appropriates that

work to us. But a defiled conscience and faith don't get along very well. Sin is a faith destroyer. Without a desire and willingness to turn away from sin all subsequent efforts at religion are in vain.

Sin is a breach; a hole in the wineskin if you will. So many people pleasing preachers have thrown repentance preaching out the window, but without true repentance we are merely an old leaky wineskin that cannot retain any wine no matter how many times you try to fill it. This might sound a bit offensive but it is true; not only for new believers but likewise for those who have let them selves slide. A defiled conscience will build a callous upon a person's heart; a wall between you and God.

But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. Hebrews 3:13

The Journey to Revival

I give you my word on it: I can save you a ton on

gasoline and airfare! What many have looked for in traveling to Toronto, Pensacola, or Kansas City could have been found a lot closer to home. A much shorter journey would do the trick. A trip to the prayer closet. A daily visit to Knee-ville. Finding personal revival is not rocket science. Get rid of that wall between you and God and there won't be one! It's that simple.

A consistent and earnest prayer life tied to a commitment to always repent of, **and turn away from** anything displeasing to the Lord; and following (at any cost) the true teachings of God's Word. This will bring revival and renewal where all other efforts have failed. I absolutely guarantee it!