

ANTICIPATING REVIVAL

TEXT: PSALM 85

Introduction:

1. Lord willing, next Sunday morning we will begin our annual summer revival meetings.
2. Some people do not like to use that term "revival meetings" because they say only God can send genuine revival.
3. Yes, it is certainly true that only God can send a genuine revival, but I believe it is good and proper to pray earnestly for revival.
4. And I think it is good and proper to hold special meetings with the hope that God's people will get revived, and sinners will get saved.
5. I like that old song, "Pentecostal Power."
*Lord, send the old-time power, the Pentecostal power!
Thy floodgates of blessing, on us throw open wide!
Lord, send the old-time power, the Pentecostal power!
That sinners be converted and Thy Name glorified!*
6. We are living in perilous times. Many marriages and families are falling apart. Children are confused and rebellious. Television and Hollywood are spewing out horrible filth -- much of it is too vile for me to mention from the pulpit.
7. Just this past week we heard of a United States congressman from here in Brooklyn sending a lewd photograph of himself to a young lady. He refuses to admit he sent the picture. In fact, he has been making lewd jokes about it.
8. Recently I preached about immoral politicians. There are so many of them it is astonishing! Clinton, Edwards, Gore, Spitzer, Paterson, Giuliani, Cuomo, Bloomberg, Schwarzenegger, McGreevey, and hundreds of others just in the past few years.
9. Economic experts are saying America is facing depression and bankruptcy. The national debt is now over \$14 trillion dollars.
10. Peter Yastrow, a Wall Street market strategist, told CNBC, "What we've got right now is almost near panic... We're on the verge of a great, great depression. The Federal Reserve knows it."
11. I said all that to say this: I believe with all my heart that unless God sends revival to America, it will soon be all over for our great nation.
12. Here in Psalm 85, the Psalmist asks, "Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?" (85:6).
13. Notice the word "again." Spurgeon said, "Revivals are frequently needed: 'Wilt not thou revive us again'"

14. Spurgeon said, "Many blessings may come to the unconverted in consequence of a revival among Christians, but the revival itself has to do only with those who already possess spiritual life. There must be vitality in some degree before there can be a quickening of vitality, or, in other words, a revival."
15. Please note that revival must start with God's people, not with the unsaved. "Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?"
16. Spurgeon was right: God's people need revival. Once we get revived, the unsaved will start getting right with God.

I. WE SHOULD ASK GOD TO SEND REVIVAL

1. Some people do not believe in praying for revival. I received an email one time from a pastor who said that the Bible does not teach that we should pray for revival.
2. I wrote back and quoted II Chron. 7:14. "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray..."
3. He wrote back that this Scripture has nothing to do with revival.
4. I say it has everything to do with revival.
5. He said this Scripture is talking about repentance. But genuine Biblical repentance will accompany genuine Biblical revival!
6. Over one hundred years ago, a mighty revival broke out in Wales. Many of the miners got saved and stopped drinking. And they stopped their cursing. Their vocabulary changed so dramatically that their mules could no longer understand them.
7. There you have both repentance and revival. We see this all throughout the Bible (cf. Acts 19:11-20).
8. AW Tozer went to heaven nearly 50 years ago, and he is frequently quoted. I am glad because he was indeed a great preacher. One quote often referred to is this: "Have you noticed how much praying for revival has been going on of late—and how little revival has resulted? Considering the volume of prayer that is ascending these days, rivers of revival should be flowing in blessing throughout the land."
9. But Tozer was not saying Christians should not pray for revival. He was saying Christians should not expect to get their prayers answered if they are disobeying God.
10. Let me continue his quote. "Have you noticed how much praying for revival has been going on of late—and how little revival has

resulted? Considering the volume of prayer that is ascending these days, rivers of revival should be flowing in blessing throughout the land. That no such results are in evidence should not discourage us; rather it should stir us to find out why our prayers are not answered. Everything has its proper cause in the kingdom of God as well as in the natural world. The reason for God's obvious refusal to send revival may lie deep, but surely not too deep to discover. I believe our problem is that we have been trying to substitute praying for obeying; and it simply will not work."

11. Acts 5:32 says, "And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him."
12. David said, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (Psalm 66:18).
13. But then he goes on to say, "But verily God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer. Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me" (Ps. 66:19, 20).
14. Our Lord said in Luke 11:13, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"
15. The Psalmist says, "LORD, thou hast been favourable..." (Ps. 85:1). In other words, "LORD, thou hast been gracious" (cf. 85:12, 13). How do we know God is gracious?
16. He "hast forgiven the iniquity" of His people, and "hast covered all" our sin (85:2).
17. There can never be revival until we deal with this sin problem.
18. Second Chronicles 7:14 says, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."
19. Have you been to the cross and had your sins forgiven? Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?
20. Having removed man's sin, God's anger is removed also. His hot wrath has been turned away (85:2-6).
21. "Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him" (Romans 5:9).

II. REVIVAL ALWAYS STARTS WITH GOD'S PEOPLE

1. The Psalmist says, "Turn us, O God" (85:4). I believe with all my heart if the people here today get thoroughly right with God, we could see the whole NYC area stirred up.
2. Again I will quote Mr. Spurgeon: "When Christians are revived they live more consistently, they make their homes more holy and more happy, and this leads the ungodly to envy them, and to enquire after their secret. Sinners by God's grace long to be like such cheerful happy saints; their mouths water to feast with them upon their hidden manna, and this is another blessing, for it leads men to seek the Savior."
3. Some are probably thinking: "I'm only one person. What difference could I possibly make?" I like that song, "It only takes a spark to get a fire going..."
4. The Psalmist prayed, "Wilt Thou not revive us again" (85:6). Revival never starts with the unconverted. It always begins with God's people.
5. R.A. Torrey was a great evangelist who worked closely with D.L. Moody. Torrey gave this simple prescription for revival:

"First, let a few Christians get thoroughly right with God themselves. This is the prime essential. If this is not done, the rest I am going to say will come to nothing.

Second, let them bind themselves together in prayer groups to pray for revival until God opens the heavens and comes down.

Third, let them put themselves at the disposal of God, for Him to use them as He sees fit in the winning of others to Christ.

That is all. This is sure to bring revival to any church or any community. I have given this prescription around the world. It has been taken by many churches and many communities, and in no instance has it ever failed, and it cannot fail."

6. Beloved, if we do things God's way, He will open the windows of heaven and pour out His blessing (cf. 85:11).
7. But we must do things God's way.
8. "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land" (cf. II Chron. 7:14).
9. If God has given you some measure of light – and I believe He has or you would not be here today – then do not turn back. The Psalmist wrote: "but let them not turn again to folly" (85:8).
10. The Psalmist prayed, "Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause thine anger toward us to cease" (85:4).

11. And, "Surely His salvation is nigh them that fear Him" (85:9).
12. Revival will never come without the fear of God.
13. "The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes" (Ps. 36:1).
14. In Romans chapter 3, the apostle Paul describes the wicked condition of mankind, and he summarizes it in verse 18, "There is no fear of God before their eyes."
15. People used to say, "He's a God-fearing man." That was a compliment. But you do not hear that being said much nowadays.
16. Psalm 111:10 says, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom." But there is little fear of God today.
17. Back in 1949, Duncan Campbell went to the Isle of Lewis, off the coast of Scotland, to preach a two-week meeting. God sent revival and he wound up staying three years. When he first arrived on the Isle of Lewis, he was met by some of the men from the church. They asked him if he was right with God. Duncan Campbell replied, "I fear God."
18. God used him and revival broke out. Revival will not come if there is no fear of God.
19. Duncan Campbell said, "In revival the fear of God lays hold upon the community, moving men and women, who until then had no concern for spiritual things, to seek after God."
20. R. B. Jones wrote about this about the Welsh revival: "A sense of the Lord's presence was everywhere. It pervaded, nay, it created the spiritual atmosphere. It mattered not where one went – the consciousness of the reality and nearness of God followed. Felt, of course, in the Revival gatherings, it was by no means confined to them; it was also felt in the homes, on the streets, in the mines and factories, in the schools, yea, and even in the theatres and drinking saloons. The strange result was that wherever people gathered became a place of awe, and places of amusement and carousal were practically emptied. Many were the instances of men entering public-houses, ordering drinks, and then turning on their heels leaving them on the counters untouched. The sense of the Lord's presence was such as practically to paralyze the arm that would raise the cup to the lips."

III. WHEN REVIVAL COMES, WE WILL REJOICE IN GOD (85:6).

1. Acts 13:52 says, "And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost."
2. I referred earlier to the great Welsh revival. The people in Wales were rejoicing in God (85:6). The churches were packed and the jails and

- courthouses were empty. The pubs closed down. The police had nothing to do.
3. But it did not last long. Today Wales is in bad shape. Today the churches are empty and the pubs are full. It is like that all over Europe.
 4. Today people refer to Europe and Australia and Canada as "post-Christian."
 5. How long before America becomes "post-Christian"? The dry rot is already evident -- in our churches, schools, government, etc.
 6. Beloved, we need revival in America (85:9).
 7. Will you join me in praying for revival?

CONCLUSION:

1. Billy Sunday used to tell of a man that was a notorious atheist. One night the old church building caught on fire and people watched in amazement as the atheist ran to the fire with a big bucket of water. He then ran back and filled his bucket again, and again, etc.
2. As he was running by, one of his neighbors stopped to ask him why, he, an atheist, was so suddenly concerned about the church.
3. He replied, "Because I've never seen a church on fire before!"
4. I wonder how many hardened sinners will take notice if we get on fire for the Lord.
5. If you are not reading your Bible every day, **YOU NEED REVIVAL (85:6).**
6. If you are not praying regularly, **YOU NEED REVIVAL.**
7. If you are not in church every time the doors are open, **YOU NEED REVIVAL.**
8. If you have not led someone to Christ in a long time (or maybe you never have), **YOU NEED REVIVAL.**
9. If you are not passing out Gospel tracts and witnessing to your co-workers and friends, **YOU NEED REVIVAL.**
10. If you are not tithing, **YOU NEED REVIVAL.**
11. If you are not burdened for our church, our community, our country, and the whole wide world, **YOU NEED REVIVAL.**