

REVIVE US AGAIN

TEXT: PSALM 85

Introduction:

1. I would like to speak on the important subject of revival.
2. Andrew Murray said, “In speaking of and praying for revival, it is important that we understand what we really desire and ask for. To most Christians the word conveys the meaning of a large increase in the number of conversions. When that happens, they say, ‘There has been quite a revival in that church (or town).’”
3. “The true meaning of the word is far deeper. The word means making alive again those who have been alive but have fallen into what is called a cold, or dead, state. They are Christians and have life, but they need reviving to bring them back to their first love and the healthy growth of the spiritual life to which conversion was meant to be the entrance. When the church as a whole, its ministers and members, is not living in full wholehearted devotion to Christ and His service, is not walking in the joy of the Lord and separation from the world, we need to pray, more than for the conversion of the unconverted, that God’s people may truly be revived and have the life of God in power restored to them.”
4. “It may be said: Is not adding new converts the best way of reviving the church? Does not that awaken interest, and gladness, and the Christians to new activity? This may be true, and yet not meet the real need for two reasons: First, such a revival is generally very temporary, and soon leaves the church settling down to its ordinary level. Second, these converts, when brought into a church that is not living in the warmth of the true spiritual life—in all holiness and fruitfulness—are not helped as they need, and do not rise above the lukewarmness around them. What we need to pray and labor for, first of all, is that the church of true believers may be revived. What the world needs above everything is not more men and women of the ordinary type of Christians but better people. We need Christians who are

stronger in faith and holier in life, intensely devoted to Christ and His service and ready to sacrifice all for the salvation of souls. When God's Spirit is poured out upon the church, and men and women, who are now struggling on in feebleness, are clothed with the garments of praise and the power of the Spirit, the world will soon share the blessing. These revived believers will be ready to give themselves to God's work at home or abroad; their word and witness will be in power. Nominal Christians will be judged by the power of the revived ones' example, and will confess that God is with them. And the world will, in the increased numbers and the burning fervor of the messengers of a quickened church, share in the blessing. A revival among believers is the great need of our day. A revived church is the only hope of a dying world."

5. My text this morning is Psalm 85, and I want to give particular attention to verse 6: "Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?"
6. Let me point out that "revive us again" (Ps. 85:6) means that there has been revivals before. Some Christians talk about a "second blessing." I am in agreement with them, as long as we understand that sometimes there needs to be a third blessing or a fourth, etc.
7. We certainly see this in the Bible. Consider the prophet Elijah. He experienced a wonderful blessing up on Mount Carmel (I Kings 18).
8. But after he came down from the mountain top, he heard that wicked Queen Jezebel threatened to kill him, and he ran for his life.
9. He sat down under a juniper tree, and he said, "O LORD, take away my life" (I Kings 19:4).
10. Elijah needed revival. And if a great prophet like Elijah needed revival, you and I certainly need revival.

I. GOD'S FAVOR (85:1)

1. The Psalmist said, "Lord, thou hast been favourable unto thy land" (85:1). Notice, Israel is called God's land.

2. “Thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob” (85:1b). Psalm 85 was written right after the Jews returned from the Babylonian captivity.
3. Through the prophet Jeremiah, the LORD told them, “And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years” (Jer. 25:11).
4. Daniel the prophet lived in Babylon through the entire 70-year captivity. We read in Daniel 9:2, “In the first year of his reign (Darius) I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.”
5. Then we see a remarkable example of importunate prayer – “And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes” (Dan. 9:3).
6. The LORD answered Daniel’s prayers. The LORD was gracious, and He touched the heart of the heathen Persian kings and they allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem and rebuild their broken-down city and temple.
7. The city was revived. The temple was revived. But the feeble people of God needed revival (Psalm 85:6).

II. GOD’S FORGIVENESS (85:2-5)

1. Spurgeon said we often see in the Bible that God frequently would pause to pardon, “even when His sword was bared to punish.”
2. One of the great blessings of being a child of God is knowing your sins are forgiven.
3. The apostle Paul went into the synagogue in Antioch in Pisidia, and preached, “Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins.”
4. Colossians 1:14 says, “In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.”

5. God has “covered” all our sin (Psalm 85:2). Psalm 32:1 says, “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.”
6. When God forgives us, and covers our sin, He takes away His wrath and fierce anger (Psalm 85:3, 4).
7. This world is divided into two groups of people – those whose sins are covered and will not face the wrath and fierce anger of God, and those whose sins are not forgiven, and who will have to face the wrath and fierce anger of God.
8. John 3:36 says, “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”
9. Psalm 85:4 helps us to understand the doctrine of repentance. If we ask God to turn us, He certainly will. The problem with too many people is they really do not want to be turned.
10. In a Sunday School class, the teacher asked the students to explain repentance. A little boy raised his hand and said, “It is being sorry for your sins.” A little girl then raised her hand and said, “It is being sorry enough to quit.”
11. Are you sorry enough to quit?
12. Faith and repentance are vitally joined together. AC Dixon said, “In repentance you think of the sin you hate; in faith you think of the Christ you love.”\

III. GOD’S REVIVING SPIRIT (85:6)

1. Revival is necessary because Christians often side back into a sloppy, substandard abnormal form of Christianity.
2. When we look around and see all of the deadness, coldness, compromise, worldliness, etc. so prevalent in most churches, we cry out with the

Psalmist – “Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?” Psalm 85:6.

3. When Christians adopt the spirit of this world, they lose the power to conquer sin or to live a holy life. They lose interest in winning souls and missions.
4. They even lose interest in living for God. They have no influence on their unsaved friends and neighbors.
5. This, of course, grieves and quenches the Holy Spirit, and hinders the work of God. It is out of this state that a revival is needed to lift the church into its true life, according to the divine pattern laid out for us in the Word of God.
6. Andrew Murray said, “A true revival means nothing less than a revolution, casting out the spirit of worldliness and selfishness and making God and His love triumph in the heart and life.”
7. America has not seen genuine revival in nearly a century. This is largely because the churches in America are to a great extent very worldly and pleasure-loving.
8. All too often they are not willing to pay the price that a revival costs. One preacher put it this way, “At times we hate our deadness, our lack of spiritual beauty, but we hate still more to be bothered. That may sound a bit pessimistic and unkind, I know, but I am confident that the facts in the case bear witness to its truth. There are many, doubtless, who would like to have a revival, provided it could be had without any serious trouble. But such is not the case. A revival is costly. It always has been. It always will be” (Clovis Chappell).
9. Hosea 10:12 says, “Break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you.”
10. Some Christians desire to have the LORD rain righteousness upon them, but they do not want to be bothered “breaking up the fallow (hard and uncultivated) ground.”

11. The prophet Jeremiah said the same thing. “Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns” (Jer. 4:3). Then he goes on to say, “Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, and take away the foreskins of your heart” (4:4).
12. That could be painful. Do we really want revival? The Psalmist did (Ps. 85:6-13).
13. “Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?” (Psalm 85:6). A genuine revival brings joy.
14. “This joy is something far greater than a mere tide of emotion. It is a joy that is the natural outcome of abounding spiritual life. It is a joy that means the changing of our want into wealth, our timidity into courage, our weakness into strength, our pathetic pessimism into glowing hope. It means the rekindling of our burnt-out enthusiasms and the rebirth of a fiery earnestness. It means a new passion for the saving of men and for the spreading of the kingdom of God to the uttermost parts of the earth” (Clovis Chappell).

CONCLUSION:

1. Psalm 85 is a prayer (cf. vss. 4—6).
2. RA Torrey said, “Every true revival from that day (Day of Pentecost) to this has had its earthly origin in prayer.”