

Song of Solomon 2: 11-13; “Evidences of Revival”, Sermon # 28 in the series – “I am my Beloved’s”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on September 26th, 2010, in the Afternoon Worship Service.

As we begin this sermon this afternoon we should note that there are real differences between the Arminian and the Calvinistic concepts of revival in our day. I suppose this difference finds its source, practically; going back some hundreds of years to the difference between the ministries of George Whitfield and John Wesley in the eighteenth century; the difference between Asahel Nettleton and Charles Finney in the nineteenth century; and the difference between Martin Lloyd-Jones and Billy Graham in the twentieth century. They were all men who were going about to serve and to please the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us not always be trying to disqualify the ministry of those preachers who have not come to embrace the doctrines of God’s sovereign and free grace as we have. It is not as though that the one man was godly and the other not so, among the men that I just mentioned. But let us not embrace their errors of the Arminian either. Rather let us be willing to teach and instruct. Arminianism is an error in relation to the way that the gospel is preached and in the way that the Christian life is lived. The difference between Calvinism and Arminianism is found in their emphasis upon God’s work or man’s in relation to the receiving and believing of the gospel and the Word of God. The differences are very practical ones. The Arminian is a Christian who is placing the emphasis upon man’s will and decision in relation to his preaching to see people converted, and living the Christian life. The primary thrust in their preaching is to convince the unsaved person to “accept” Jesus Christ. The message is directed to the willingness of his hearers to receive the good news that Christ has died for all men, and he believes that his hearers have the ability and strength to accept or reject Christ as they think about conversion. Then after conversion, this same principle or view continues and the person thinks that because of their “free will” that they have the supposed freedom to live their Christian life according to their own plans and conceptions of it, rather than God’s coming to them through preaching to convince them of a better way to live and glorify Him through obedience to His Word. Christ has set them free, but they do not know what true freedom is. Many have taken Jesus as their Savior, but they struggle with Him being their Lord. They do not recognize, as much as they should, that true freedom is the ability to do the will of God because of Christ’s life and power in our lives, to live in accordance with the commandments of God’s Word. And so many live to themselves when they should be living to God. Such is the confusion of things, doctrinally, in our day; confusion which the error of Arminianism brings to the hearts and minds of many of God’s professed people.

The Calvinist, on the other hand, is placing his faith in what God will do sovereignly in relation to the preaching of His Word. He preaches the gospel and calls for faith in Christ, and then He looks to God for whatever results will occur. He

knows that God is the only One who can give the real and true results. God is the only One who can give the preacher's hearers the grace and enablement, both to be saved and to live a life of obedience to God's holy Word. And so, the Calvinist preaches in that kind of dependence upon God, knowing that to use other methods than the ones that God has given will lead to confusion and error and to people actually thinking that they are saved when they actually may still be lost. Whether you want to call yourself a Calvinist or not, you need to acknowledge this Biblical truth; that a God-sent revival brings tangible results to preaching, and it ought to be prayed for by all of God's people for the following reasons. 1st of all – It brings an end to coldness and dreariness in our religion. (Verses 11 and 12a) 2^{ndly} – It brings joy to our worship and our to our singing. (Verse 12) And 3^{rdly} –It will bring us to the place where we will bear fruit unto God. (Verse 13)

1st of All – Let us pray for revival because it will bring an end to coldness and dreariness in our religion. (Verses 11)

“For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone.” Revival is that great spiritual experience that comes to the Church of Jesus Christ when God's presence and power are granted to be seen and felt and known in a much greater sense, in regard to the preaching of the gospel and in following Christ, than they normally have been seen, in any given generation that we might be considering. When revival comes, the winter is over spiritually and springtime has come. You see; men may put forth great efforts in terms of preaching and evangelism and yet not see the blessed results that they desire. Let us acknowledge with all of our heart that this is a very good labor and work; to attempt to bring men to Christ by preaching, whether it is in the fields or on the streets; whether it is in the church or in the home. The fields are white for harvest and people will perish if we do not somehow go to them and preach the gospel to them. “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations,” Jesus says, “baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” You know that the Church of Jesus Christ is in the spiritual season of winter when there are few professions of faith and when there are few baptisms taking place; when people really see it as unnecessary to be baptized or to keep God's commandments. But Christ is commanding both, here in these verses. But when Christ comes to the believer's heart, they want to be baptized, and they want to join the church, and they want to keep His commandments, and do everything which He has commanded. “Lo, I am with you always,” He says, but sometimes it is winter in the Church and religion seems cold and dreary. Then we as believers should remember that we ought to “pray for more of the Holy Spirit”; that we ought to pray that the Father would give good gifts to His children; pray that Christ would come and make Himself known to us. The winter of coldness and dreariness in our religion is over when Christ comes to us personally, and when He comes to us, here as a church, in a more tangible sense. His presence and His power are felt and known and experienced. The believer knows in their experience that

Christ loves them, and that is why He is calling them away for greater fellowship and communion with Himself. He wants them to make more than one decision about their relationship to the world. “Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.” Come away from thinking that the world has something more to offer than I do, says Christ. I will warm your heart to a greater devotion of Me, says Christ. I will make it spring time, spiritually, in your experience.

You will know when Christ is reviving His Church when there is a greater warmth of devotion to follow Christ; when there is a greater interest and consideration in submitting your will to His will in relation to all the truth that He has given you in His Word. You will be caught up with looking into it; into all of its precious doctrines and all of its precious promises. In times of personal and corporate revival you will see people caught up with the Word of God. They love to recite these words to themselves: “The law of the Lord (that is; His precious Word) is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.” “More to be desired are they than gold, yea than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.” Ah, we know that these things are true. But have we tasted of them experientially? In times of revival, this all becomes wonderfully clear, and this is why it ought to be prayed for. When you are being personally revived, you will long and look forward to coming to church to hear the word preached. You will want to stay for all the services of the day because you cannot get enough. You will consider the judgments of the Lord’s mouth; that is, those things which He has placed there in the Word which declare to you what is true and false, and right and wrong, and those truths which will give you good and right discernment in relation to all things and situations in this life; these are more desirable than gold; yea even than much fine gold. But sometimes Christians forget this, or they do not know it experientially.

People nowadays are trying to find something to invest in which is of real value, and now they are turning to gold since the standard of our currency has gone down in value. But the Word of God is more precious than fine gold. If you are being revived by Christ you will be laying up treasure in heaven. You will buy of His gold, that you might be truly rich toward God and in the sight of God. In Revelation 3: 19, Christ says to the church at Laodicea – “I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich.” Those is the church of Laodicea thought that because they were rich materially that they were rich spiritually. But Christ says to them, “Because you say, ‘I am rich and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—I counsel you to buy from Me. Let me ask you, have you bought from Christ these good things of His grace and truth to teach you and lead you and guide you so that you will not be lukewarm? It will be spring-time in your soul if you will do this. To

invest your time to read it and to abide in the Word of God is the best of investments, both for now, and for all eternity. In revival this becomes very evident.

And when you being revived by Christ, the Word of God not only makes you rich spiritually; but it is as sweet as honey to your taste. Sometimes people around you, even people in authority over you, will try to make you think that you are not doing the right thing when you are tasting of the Word of God while you go about your duties and responsibilities of the day. But remember Jonathan, in 1 Samuel Chapter 14? Jonathan had gone out to battle and had won a great victory that day against the Philistines. But his father had foolishly placed the people under an oath not to eat food until evening because he wanted to be revenged upon his enemies. Jonathan had not been there when he made that oath, and when all the people came into the woods, it says in verse 26, "there was honey, dripping; but no one put his hand to his mouth, for the people feared the oath." "But Jonathan had not heard his father charge the people with the oath; therefore he stretched out the end of the rod that was in his hand and dipped it in a honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth; and his countenance brightened." Then one of the people said, "Your father strictly charged the people with an oath saying, 'Cursed is the man who eats food this day.'" "And the people were faint." "But Jonathan said, 'My father has troubled the land.'" "Look now, how my countenance has brightened because I tasted a little of this honey." This is how it is in revival. The Lord's Word becomes sweet to your taste and even though you do not want to be rebellious against authority, it is always good to taste of the Word of God when you are faint. It will, by the power of the Spirit, give us new life and our countenance will be brightened. When Christ comes to revive His Church every word of His becomes sweet. The winter is over and gone, and springtime has come to your soul.

Now 2ndly – You ought to pray for revival because when Christ's presence comes, He brings joy to our worship and our to our singing.

(Verse 12)

"The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land." This is a very interesting word picture which is given to us here. Let us take notice of it. When Christ's presence is known and felt among us; there is life springing up from the ground of our hearts. There are flowers; there are praises springing up in our hearts and they come out upon our lips. And there is not only singing and making melody in our hearts that is taking place, but we have the desire to sing out loud as well. Psalm 149, verse 1 says, "Praise the Lord!" "Sing to the Lord a new song, and His praise in the assembly of saints." "Let Israel rejoice in their Maker; let the children of Zion be joyful in their King." And verse 5 says, "Let the saints be joyful in glory; let them sing aloud on their beds." Let us all pray to be a more cheerful and joyful people. A good example of this is King David in Psalm 21. Listen to how he words it here. "The king shall have joy in Your strength, O Lord; and in Your salvation how greatly shall he rejoice! "You have given him his heart's desire, and have not withheld the request of his lips." "For You meet

him with the blessings of goodness; You set a crown of pure gold upon his head.” “He asked life from You, and You gave it to him—length of days forever and ever.” “His glory is great in Your salvation; honor and majesty You have placed upon him.” “For You have made him most blessed forever; You have made him exceedingly glad with Your presence.” Is this not true also of every New Testament believer who has been made a king and priest unto their God? And furthermore there is a greater desire to preach and to share the gospel which is aroused within us. And this greater desire which is brought about by the Spirit of Christ translates itself into the actions which I have just described to you. These are evidences of revival, when this is taking place.

Here in place the Church, and an individual believer, are spoken of as a turtle-dove. This is confirmed in Psalm 74, verse 19. It is a psalm of Asaph, and it is a psalm where the condition of the church is being bemoaned because she has been delivered by God over to the hand of her enemies. God’s presence is not with them. To encourage and strengthen himself and others in his God, Asaph reminds himself of the works of the Lord. In verse 16 he says, “The day is Yours, the night also is Yours; You have prepared the light and the sun.” “You have set all the borders of the earth; You have made summer and winter.” “Remember this, that the enemy has reproached, O Lord, and that a foolish people has blasphemed Your name.” “Oh, do not deliver the life of Your turtledove to the wild beast!” You see; they desperately needed God’s presence with them again. They needed to be revived. This is what we too, should pray for. When we do pray and when we are revived, we will gain new confidence; and the voice of the turtle will again be heard in the land. I know that this is referring to the bird, the turtle-dove, but I cannot keep from thinking of what happened at my folks-in-law’s house this past spring. They live in Iowa City in a condo connected to 2 other condos. They have a pond next to their house; a very large one. Well, one day this past spring this huge turtle came up to Mom and Dad’s door, and it was trying to knock on the door with its beak to get in. Mom couldn’t believe her eyes when she came and saw what was happening. How rare a thing was that! But it is just as great a thing when the voice of those who long for the salvation of others will knock on the doors in their neighborhood so that people will hear the gospel and be saved. It is an evidence of revival.

Then 3rdly – You ought to pray for revival because when Christ’s presence comes He will bring you to the place where you will bear fruit unto God. (Verse 13)

“The fig tree puts forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grapes give a good smell.” “Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.” The fig-tree, here, represents the Church, and individual believers in it, and it is a figure which is used in the New Testament by our Lord Jesus in several places as well. In John Chapter 15, verse 5 Jesus tells His disciples, “I am the vine, you are the branches.” “He who abides in Me and I in Him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.” In verse 7 He says, “If you abide in Me and my words abide in you, you will ask what

you desire, and it shall be done for you .” “By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.” In Matthew 7: 15, He says, “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.” “You will know them by their fruits.” “Do men gather grapes from thorn bushes or figs from thistles?” “Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.” You see if Christ is in you, and with you; if you are a true Christian; then you will bear good fruit. The tree of your Christian life will put forth and bring forth fruit. The tender grapes of the Christian’s repenting of his sins and beginning to engage in good works give the first evidences of grace. And these give forth a good smell to Christ your Beloved, and to other Christians as well. Do you see how important it is, then, that you rise up and come away from wordly thinking and worldly reasoning, which people who live and for this world will try to persuade you to live by? They do not understand or have a relationship with Christ, and thus they live for the world. But you are called to higher things. This is why you pray to be revived, and why you pray that Christ’s Church would be revived. You want to bear fruit in every good word and work, and pursue the glory of Christ your Husband-King. We will speak more of this in coming sermons.