

STEPS TO REVIVAL

TEXT: II CHRONICLES 7:14

INTRODUCTION:

1. A preacher recently said, "When I was a little boy in the 1950's, things were different in America back then. I remember this country when Hollywood had censors, politicians had a conscience and America had a moral compass. Hemlines were lower and morals were higher and sin was called sin and not social disorders. Of course, we didn't have the technology that we have today. Back then if you said Microsoft they thought you were referring to your mattress. And we didn't have wi-fi. We had hi-fi. It was a time when only women wore earrings and only sailors had tattoos. I remember America when it still had a strong work ethic and business abounded in honesty and integrity and a man's word and handshake was as good as gold. And I remember in America when a parent did not have to worry about what their children saw on TV and marriage was between a man and a woman. There was such a thing as shame in society back then. I remember America when the Church still had authority and there was still a fear of God in the land. I remember a nation that stood on biblical principles and looked to God for guidance and to the Church for direction. It was ok to pray in public school back then and the Ten Commandments were publicly displayed. And if any atheist cried out against it, there were more than enough Christians to shout that person down because God had the majority in the nation back then. And I remember an America that was looked up to by other nations and we were a country that held on to the principles of our founding fathers and old glory was never stomped on and set fire to because we respected too much what it stood for. Back then there was such a thing as a weekly prayer meeting in the church and people actually came to pray" (E. A. Johnston, "America Revival Or Ruin").
2. There is no doubt about it. America is rapidly heading toward the judgment of God. Homosexuality is not only accepted, but promoted.
3. Perverts are having sex change operations, and a lot of it is being paid for with our tax money.
4. Since abortion was legalized in 1973, over 50 million babies have been killed here in America.
5. Today America is facing the judgment of God, and only a genuine heaven sent revival can save this nation from complete destruction.

6. The same preacher I quoted said this, "In the New Testament when the Church met the world there was a clash because the Church went in one direction and pagan society went in the other. Now they travel side by side and there is just a rub between them."
7. Another preacher said something interesting. In a message from Psalm 85:6, "Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?," Stephen Olford said, "It is evident from these words that God reveals righteous anger against those of His people who live in an unrevived state" (*Heart-Cry for Revival*).
8. Second Chronicles 7:14 says, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face..."
9. God's been trying to get our attention today but America is not listening.
10. We received a terrible wake up call on 9/11, but most everyone went back to sleep. Muslim terrorists are chopping off American heads, and our country's leaders seem helpless and powerless to stop them."
11. America has become laughable in the eyes of the world.
12. This is a critical time in the history of our nation, and if America does not turn back to God, then there will be nothing but judgment ahead.
13. The Bible has the answer. America needs revival. What is revival?
14. Revival has been defined as the powerful, spiritual manifestation of the presence of God, which leads believers to a restoration of the Spirit-filled life for holiness and service. Revival leads unbelievers to a conviction of sin, righteousness, and judgment for salvation (from "Preach the Word Ministries" web site).
15. Revival always starts with believers. First, believers need to get right with God, and then the unsaved take notice and are brought under conviction.
16. The unsaved come to Christ after Christians are revived. So we have to start with Christians first. If Christians get right with God, we will certainly see more souls saved. Notice – "If my people..." (II Chron. 7:14).
17. I would like to speak this morning on "Steps to Revival," focusing primarily on these three steps: humility, prayer, and repentance.

I. HUMILITY ("shall humble themselves")

1. The flesh is proud. We will never see a revival till Christians humble themselves.
2. Proverbs 16:18 says, "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall."

3. Proverbs 29:23 says, “A man’s pride shall bring him low.”
4. Both James 4:6 and I Peter 5:5 say, “God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.”
5. Charles Finney wrote, “It is almost always the case in a revival, that a part of the church will be too proud or too worldly to take any part in the work.”
7. Pride in a church or in a Christian home hinders revival, hinders our testimony, hinders souls from being saved, hinders the backslidden from being restored, hinders the blessings of God, and hinders God’s work from advancing.
8. I hope and I pray pride is not keeping some here today from getting right with God! Pride is sin.
9. The Psalmist prayed, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalm 139:23, 24).
10. James 4:10 says, "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up."
11. Second Chronicles 7:14 says, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves..."

II. PRAYER (“and pray”)

1. Everywhere I go I hear the same thing – the midweek prayer meeting has the smallest attendance of all the church services.
2. Acts 12:12 says, “where many were gathered together praying.” “Many” – not a few, not just the faithful, dedicated church members, but “many.” The apostolic church was a revived church. "Many" gathered together to pray.
3. Acts 4:31 says, “And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness. And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul.”
4. A. T. Pierson once said, “There has never been a spiritual awakening in any country or locality that did not begin in united prayer.”
5. Leonard Ravenhill said, “If weak in prayer, we are weak everywhere,” and “A sinning man stops praying, a praying man stops sinning.”

6. Our Lord said to His disciples, “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Matt. 26:41).
7. Our Lord said in Luke 18:1, “Men ought always to pray, and not to faint.”
8. Our Lord said in Luke 22:40, “Pray that ye enter not into temptation.”
12. Romans 12:12 says, "continuing instant in prayer."
13. First Thessalonians 5:17 says, “Pray without ceasing.”
14. James 5:16 says, “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”
15. "And seek my face" (II Chron. 7:14). Seeking God's face means seeking God's presence.
16. David prayed, "When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek. Hide not thy face far from me" (Psalm 27:8, 9).
17. First Timothy 2:1 and 2 says, "First of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty."
18. Our leaders are pushing our nation further and further from God. We need to pray for them, and pray for our country.

III. REPENTANCE (“and turn from their wicked ways”)

1. There will not be revival without repentance. And we will not see more souls saved till we first see Christians get right with God.
2. First Peter 4:17 and 18 says, “For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?”
3. We can preach against the sins of Hollywood but many Christians watch the filthiest garbage Hollywood puts out. Some of it is so dirty it makes the devil blush.
4. A preacher friend said he preached against Hollywood movies in a big independent Baptist church and was told not to do that anymore. That church needs revival.
5. We can preach against the wicked and vile rock and hip-hop music, but many Christians listen to it. And sadly, many churches have brought it right inside their church services.

6. It is easy to preach against the politicians and the drunkards and the homosexuals and the adulterers, and so on, but what about all the wicked things going on in the life of Christians?
7. Most churches today are in a backslidden condition -- they are worldly; souls are not being saved; there is no emphasis on prayer or on missions, etc.
8. Churches today are like the church in Laodicea. Our Lord said to them, "Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth" (Rev. 3:16).
9. In the seven letter to the seven churches of Asia Minor, we see the word "repent" seven times! It's not just wicked sinners, but Christians that need to repent.
10. Many Christians are weak because they are discouraged. Read your Bible! Over and over again you will read these words -- "Be of good courage" (II Samuel 10:12).
11. Discouragement is a sin because when we are discouraged we are not trusting the Lord.
7. Jonah was discouraged. He told the LORD, "It is better for me to die than to live" (Jonah 4:8). Jonah was wrong. He needed to repent. He preached repentance to the people of Nineveh, and they repented. But Jonah himself needed to repent.
8. Elijah was discouraged. God gave Elijah a great victory up on Mount Carmel, but then Elijah ran away from Jezebel.
9. Elijah ran off into wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and the Bible says, "he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers" (I Kings 19:4).
10. But Elijah was wrong. He needed revival. And God did revive him. If great prophets like Jonah and Elijah could get discouraged, you and I can get discouraged.
11. The devil often uses discouragement to get things off track, but I am convinced his favorite method for ruining a church and misleading a Christian is worldliness.
12. When Christians are worldly-minded, and mind the things of this world, and have become engrossed with worldly things – they need revival.
13. Romans 12:2 says Christians are not to be conformed to this world, but unfortunately many Christians are conformed to this world, and they stubbornly refuse to do anything about it.

CONCLUSION:

1. The Bible says that when God's people seek His face, and turn from their wicked ways; then He will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.
2. Recently a federal judge struck down as unconstitutional Utah's law against polygamy.
3. A Christian attorney named Matt Barber said this about the decision, "A society that rejects the sanctity of marriage and family is a society not long for the world" ("Judge Issues Final Order," *Christian News Network*, Aug. 29, 2014).
4. Mr. Barber is right, and I might add: A country that rejects the sanctity of marriage and family is a country that will soon face the fierce wrath of God.