

## REVIVE US, O LORD

*If My people, who are called by My name, will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and will heal their land” (2 Chronicles 7:14).*

- I. **TWO RECENT REVIVALS – Asbury 1970; Asbury 2023**
  - A. Whenever God moves, He always starts with His people.
  - B. Every revival has resulted from the renewed authority of the Holy Spirit in the church.
  - C. For God’s people to go forward, we must often go backward.
  - D. The people of God shape a nation.
- II. **THE REALITY OF REVIVAL**
  - A We humbly regain the fear of our Father in heaven.
  - B. We honestly recognize the seriousness of sin in our hearts.
  - C. We wholeheartedly allow God to repair the highway of holiness.
- III. **THE RESULTS OF REVIVAL**
  - A. An overpowering awareness of the presence and reality of Almighty God and of Jesus.
  - B. An enhanced sense of the power of God.
  - C. A thirsting cry for the purity of God.
  - D. An uncommon awareness of the peace of God.
  - E. A humbled sense of increased productivity through the Spirit’s gifts.

## REVIVE US, O LORD

*If My people, who are called by My name, will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and will heal their land” (2 Chronicles 7:14).*

### I. TWO RECENT REVIVALS

I want to bring some “good news” this morning on what God is doing among His people. Let me begin with some reminiscing: In 1970, while a senior at Asbury College, I was involved in a Holy Spirit- anointed revival which swept over the campus. For 8 days classes were suspended, and we spent our time seeking, praising, and worshipping God! Several of us also went out to other campuses and churches, and the revival spread. And my life was changed forever. That movement of God was 53 years ago.

Then on February 8, 2023, God again came onto the same campus with a two-week visitation that moved across many states and schools. More than 50,000 people descended upon Wilmore, KY, and it is estimated that there were between 400-500 new conversions, as well as thousands who rededicated their lives to God. Visitors came from more than 280 colleges and universities representing 39 states. There were both domestic and international travelers desperate and eager to get to Hughes Auditorium. Asburians overnight coordinated other host sites to simulcast throughout Wilmore. There were radical acts of humility, confession, repentance, compassion, and consecration. And though the revival ended on the campus at Wilmore, it is continuing across the globe! Considering this, I want to start with **4 Observations about Revival:**

**A. Whenever God moves, He always starts with His people.**

This has been His course of action throughout Scripture and church history. As go God's people, so goes the redemption of the world. To "*revive*" means "*to return the life to,*" and revival is what God does for His people when they are content to live without any evidence of His presence and power in their lives! So, we must get in line with God and His will as revealed in His Word by the Holy Spirit. Which leads to #2:

**B. Every Revival Has Resulted from a Renewed Authority of the Holy Spirit in the church.** Sadly, we've become a culture of Christians trying to do God's work apart from the power of God's Holy Spirit. Revival is the work of the Holy Spirit.

**C. For God's people to go forward, it often requires that we go backward to rediscover and reclaim our spiritual roots.** Every revival brought people back to the place where they left God. This is where God always begins.

**D. The people of God shape a nation.** As go His people, so goes the redemption of the world. Beloved, we're closer to either revival or judgment than we have ever been. We either return to God with all our hearts, or He will judge America, and there is no alternative to these two. The only hope for America is revival.

## **II. THE REALITY OF REVIVAL:**

Beloved, we can't dictate to, schedule for, or control the Holy Spirit! But when He shows up in revival, certain things happen!

**A. We Humbly Regain the Fear of Our Father in Heaven**

Much like Isaiah, chapter 6, where the prophet "*saw*" the Lord high and exalted, when the Holy Spirit brings revival there is an overwhelming sense of God's presence, and of the realization that He is "*Holy, holy, holy,*" and we are not! What is this fear of our Father that is the "beginning of wisdom? Dr. A. W. Tozer states that when we come into close relationship with God, we begin to worship Him, we experience astonished reverence, breathless adoration, awesome fascination, lofty admiration of His attributes, and... breathless silence!

These elements add up to *“the fear of God.”* Sadly, today we’ve lost this holy fear of God. We’ve changed Him into our image; we’ve reinterpreted His commandments to fit our own interpretation; and we’ve assumed that if God doesn’t judge us, things are fine. Beloved, we need a deep reorientation back to God. And it begins with a return to God’s Word. Note the experience of King Josiah in **2 Kings 22, 23**.

Josiah became king at age 8, and at 18 began a renewal of the neglected Temple. As the priests were cleaning it, they found the Scriptures and read the sacred text to Josiah. The Bible says, *“...when the king heard the words of the Book of the Law...he tore his clothes”* (2 Kings 22:11). As the covenant in Deuteronomy 28 and Leviticus 23 was read, Josiah realized for the very first time, what God’s standard had been all along. The first part was very positive as to what God would do if the people followed and practiced what He said. But beginning with Deuteronomy 28:15, God said that if they didn’t obey what He told them, He would reverse their blessings as His covenant people.

Josiah’s heart was pierced! He wept, tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes, and called the people together to repent. He knew they were standing on the edge of destruction: for all the time the Scriptures were being ignored, judgment was progressing! It didn’t matter what they thought was acceptable to God; it was what God said that counted. So, Josiah called the spiritual leaders to bring the people together and corporately repent (2 Kings 22:11-23:3).

And in response, God listened to Josiah’s heart: *“‘Because your heart was tender, and you humbled yourself before the LORD... I also have heard you,’ says the LORD. ‘Surely, therefore, I will gather you to your fathers and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace...’”* (**2 Kings 22:19-20**).

Beloved, when we don’t fear God, we will not fear sin, for there’s a direct relationship between our view of God and our view of sin. We must come back to God’s Word and re-learn His standard. And this leads us to our second point: When revival comes,

## B. We Honestly Recognize the Seriousness of Sin in Our Hearts

2 Chronicles 7:14 reminds us that America's redemption waits on the repentance of God's people. To examine this area, we will note the example of King David:

(1) There is no stronger passage on man's view of sin than **Psalm 51**. God, through Nathan the prophet, made David face the horrible nature of his sin. David knew that he rightly deserved death from God for knowingly violating His clear command. David recognized that every time we violate what God has said, it reflects on His name, His holiness, and His righteousness. Fortunately, David's spirit was shattered when he saw the seriousness of his sin, and he prayed, *"Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin... Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners shall be converted to You"* (**51:13**). When my life is right with God, it becomes a channel over which God can move on others! And if that is man's view of sin, what about...

(2) God's view of sin? This is found in **2 Samuel 12**, where Nathan told King David the story of the poor man with one lamb, and a rich man with many sheep who took the poor man's lamb. David response was, *That man deserves to die*. *"... Nathan said to David, 'You are the man!'"* (**2 Samuel 12:7**). Then God put David's sin in the context of His grace toward David: 1) when David sinned, he did it knowing all God had done for him; 2) when he sinned he despised God and His word; and 3) when he sinned he gave occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme His name. Now we may say, *That's not how I look at it*. But what matters is that that's how God sees it! That's the seriousness of sin as seen in the OT. And a NT Christian's sin is far more grievous to God than David's was. Note **Hebrews 10:28, 29**: *"Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much severely do you think someone deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified them, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?"*

How does God see the sins of NT believers? He says that when we sin: 1) We trample Christ underfoot; 2) we treat as unholy the blood of His covenant; and 3) we insult the Holy Spirit.” That’s how serious sin is in the believer! Beloved, we must humble ourselves, pray, seek His face, and turn from our wicked ways. Then God will hear us from heaven and will forgive our sin. And the great healing of America can begin. A third thing happens in true revival:

### C. We Wholeheartedly Allow God to Repair the Highway of Holiness

*A highway will be there...called the Highway of Holiness... the redeemed will walk there, and those the Lord has rescued will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.” (Isa. 35:8-10)*

God wants to establish a highway of holiness and He has not changed His agenda. He wants us to be His holy people through whom He can move to work on those who don’t know Him. When we stand in the presence of a holy God, we must be holy. **Psalms 24:3-5** must be applied when we are praying for revival:

*Who may ascend the mountain of the LORD? Who may stand in His holy place? The one who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not trust in an idol or swear by a false God. They will receive blessing from the LORD and vindication from God their Savior...*

If we meet the conditions of holiness in our lives, God will bless us. But it is an offense to come into the presence of a holy God and ask Him to do so when our hearts are not clean before Him! Thankfully, all over our nation people are finding their hearts returning to God.

Beloved, it is crucial that we hold ourselves accountable to a life of holiness – so that we will be a *highway* over which God shall come. We must let the full measure of the nature of God become the pattern for our characters. We must let Him take every part of our minds and our hearts and keep them holy unto Himself.

## II. THE RESULTS OF TRUE REVIVAL:

Blaise Pascal was a 17<sup>th</sup> century French scientist, a genius in mathematics, a philosopher, and a writer. But best of all, he experienced a personal, overwhelming encounter with God one night that changed his life. Pascal wrote on a piece of paper a brief account of his experience, folded the paper, and kept it in a pocket close to his heart, apparently as a reminder of what he had felt. Those who attended him at this death found the worn, creased paper. In Pascal's own hand it read: ***"From about half-past ten at night to about half-after midnight – fire! O God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob – not the God of the philosophers and the wise. The God of Jesus Christ who can be known only in the ways of the Gospel. Security – feeling – peace – joy – tears of joy. Amen."***

Pascal's mind was one of the greatest, but the living God had broken through and beyond all that was human, intellectual, and philosophical. The astonished Pascal could only describe in one word the visitation in his spirit: ***"Fire!"*** This was not a statement in sentences for others to read. It was the ecstatic utterance of a yielded man during 2 awesome hours in the presence of his God. There was no human engineering or manipulation there. There was only wonder, and awe, and adoration wrought by the presence of the Holy Spirit of God as Pascal worshiped. And what we need today is a genuine visitation of the Holy Spirit among God's people. For where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is...

1. **Christ's Presence**, the manifest presence of God!
2. **Christ's Power** – a sense of His strength and adequacy.
3. **Christ's Purity** and whole-heartedness.
4. **Christ's Peace** – a sense of safety and security.



**5. Christ's Productivity** – the gifts of the Spirit making us productive and useful His service.

So, here we are. Revival waits on the response of His people. And, beloved, we carry a sense of urgency for two reasons: 1) we are closer to judgment than we have ever been before; and 2) we may be the generation that is still living when the Lord Jesus returns. God may now be calling the last generation of those who will go with Him on mission to the ends of the earth.

He is waiting to hear from heaven... to forgive our sins... and to heal our land! Our role is to humble ourselves and pray and seek His face and turn from our sinful ways!