

REVIVAL

Some thoughts and an exhortation to pray earnestly for revival.

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The psalmist prayed: “Revive us and we will call upon Your Name” (Ps 80.18) and he begged for God to revive His people again so that they would rejoice in Him (Ps 85.6). This essay compiles a number of thoughts regarding revival with an exhortation for God’s people to pray earnestly for it.

1. The Need for Revival

Revival comes when brokenness is felt. When God’s people feel the evil of sin and the overwhelming weight of iniquity that prevails, they will sense the need for revival. Revival means that God gives life to His people — a kind of supernatural life, a life that only He can impart. Revival does not refer to a temporary occasion or an emotional meeting or a short-lived endeavor. Rather, true revival comes from God and brings lasting change to the sick and dying, to the broken and helpless, and to wicked men desperate for God. The current day demonstrates the need for revival. With the tens of millions of babies murdered, to the widespread acceptance and promoting of so-called ‘same-sex marriage’, to the plethora of false teachers who speak a false gospel and lead many astray, revival must come or judgment will quickly and severely fall. The glorification of sin, the hatred of godliness, the love of evil, the intoxication of immorality, the slavery to alcoholism and other substances, the enjoyment of violence, the hostility toward Christians, and the apathy toward God all contributes to this nation’s desperate need for a God-given, Spirit-empowered, sovereignly-bestowed revivification of spiritual life. The need could not be greater. The urgency could not be emphasized too much!

2. Our Plea for Revival

Revival comes when God’s people want it. Perhaps revival tarries long because God’s people live content without it. Many people who fill American churches today really do not *want* revival. They prove this to be the case because of how infrequently (if ever) they’ve beseeched the Lord for it. As long as God’s people happily live without revival, revival will tarry. But when God’s people come together and take hold of God, He acts because He hears. And He hears and is stirred up by the prayers of His people. God’s people must have a holy disgust with the evils that surround them and they must earnestly, intensely, regularly, and desperately plead with God for revival. Revival only comes when God’s people pray. No human effort can contrive revival. No meeting can accomplish divine ends. No planned event or evangelistic program can emotionally create a lasting revival. Revival comes like the sun that rises: all at the sovereign command of God. The people of God must take hold of God and beg that God would rend the heavens and come down. Like the persistent widow, they must come to God time and time again and *continuously* ‘bother’ him — indeed, wear Him out! — in desperate cries for revival.

3. God’s Mercy in Revival

Revival comes because of the sheer mercy of God. No one deserves revival. No people group deserves it. Revival results from the mercy of God in response to the prayers of His people who earnestly call on His Name seeking the exaltation of Jesus Christ. Any gospel effect that produces *new life* or the revivification of life stems from the gracious benevolence of God. For God to spark a revival, it comes in response to the people of God who pray fervently. It responds to the constant prayers of His people who seek the glory of God rather than their comforts on earth. Revival does not come because people merit it or do enough to achieve it. Ultimately, revival comes from God not because of, but in spite of, sinful people. Nothing in man in and of himself can bring the favor of God. It is only the sovereign will and the supernatural workings of the Spirit that can bring such a move of the Spirit of God. God's mercy is when he does not give what sinners deserve. Sinners, people groups, nations, yes, the world, deserves judgment. But in revival, the mercy of God invades and does not give what sinners deserve. He does this in response to the zealous and fervent prayers of His people and by His Fatherlike disposition towards His own and His overflowing compassion and pity toward the lost.

4. The Source of Revival

Revival comes when God moves. Revival is an outflow of the Spirit of God's working in and amongst His people. Revival always and only comes at the initiative of God and because of the power of God. The Spirit of God is the main source of revival since He is the one who quickens dead souls to new life and draws them to the Father. And He is the one who convicts the world of sin, judgment, and righteousness. He is the one who indwells believers and goes forth with the proclamation of His Word to save sinners and sanctify saints. The producer of revival is God. The one who enacts and carries the entire wave of revival is none other than the Spirit of God — and Him alone. All the revivals in church history have come because of a mighty working of God. God must blow the wind to convict, convert, and change sinners. None can come near to God but those whom the Spirit of God quickens and regenerates. A great awakening can only be attributed to a mighty working of the Spirit of God as He attends the proclamation of the preached Word and the earnest prayers of His people.

5. The Effects of Revival

Revival comes and, when it does, it always produces real, lasting, tangible, visible, supernatural change. No revival has taken place when the people of God remain the same as they did before the revival meeting occurred. No revival has taken place when the people of God experience a temporary spiritual high and then, after a season, return to their spiritual lethargy. A true revival always effects lasting change. Change in the heart, change in the church, change in believers, change in the community, and change amongst the heathens. A working of God produces new life where deadness dominated before. It produces real conversion with a full cleansing with an entirely new nature which will manifest and prove itself through the zealous pursuit of good works. A revival wrought by the Spirit of God brings change in the congregation since it shows that the people of God willingly come together to pray for God to move and diligently commit themselves to disciple new converts. The surrounding community and the heathens are affected since true conversion cannot be contained. God's elect who have come home must tell others about their new-found salvation! They cannot contain it. The effects of true revival are marked by prayer, by preaching, by persecution, by a noticeable and supernatural outpouring of the Spirit of God and by the persistent pursuit of purity and holiness in thought, in word, and in conduct.