

SERMON: PREPARING FOR REVIVAL
9-11-22

OPENER:

Matthew 24:4-8 (NLT) Jesus told them, “Don’t let anyone mislead you, ⁵ for many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Messiah.’ They will deceive many. ⁶ And you will hear of wars and threats of wars, but don’t panic. Yes, these things must take place, but the end won’t follow immediately. ⁷ Nation will go to war against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in many parts of the world. ⁸ But all this is only the first of the birth pains, with more to come.

Weird things keep happening in waves, closer and closer, like contractions in childbirth. For years, people have predicted that times like these were coming. But, we are no longer looking ahead to end times. They are here, it is game day. True believers are officially a spiritual minority.

THE AMERICAN CHURCH IS IN THE BEGINNING OF GREAT REVIVAL AND GREAT PERSECUTION.

Matthew 16:2-3 (NIV) He replied, “When evening comes, you say, ‘It will be fair weather, for the sky is red,’ ³ and in the morning, ‘Today it will be stormy, for the sky is red and overcast.’ You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times.
(Explain scripture)

Middle ground is no longer an option; that time has passed, Some of us have squandered our time to draw close to the Lord in preparation of times to come. We need to wake up, wash our faces, and alert ourselves to getting our hearts right with God.

**WE NEED TO SEEK THE LORD LIKE NEVER BEFORE.
WE NEED A MOVE OF GOD AMONG US.**

WE NEED TO PREPARE FOR REVIVAL.

HOW CAN WE PREPARE FOR REVIVAL?

1. KNOW WHAT REVIVAL IS AND ISN'T

What do we mean by revival?

2 Chronicles 7:14 is a great passage with a general principle to help us define revival.....

2 Chronicles 7:14 (NLT) Then if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and restore their land.

There are some who object to the overuse of this verse as if it were being treated as a magical incantation for revival. And while I understand the point they're trying to make I'd also like to point out that the Bible never depicts God's people crying out in repentance and God not responding in a big way.

WHAT ARE THE EARMARKS OF TRUE REVIVAL?

- 1) HUMBLENESS**
- 2) REPENTANCE**
- 3) PRAYER**
- 4) AN EARNEST SEEKING OF GOD'S PRESENCE**

And.....

- 5) UNITY**

UNITY FOR THE SAKE OF UNITY WITHOUT SEPARATING OURSELVES FROM FALSEHOOD IS NOT REVIVAL.

2. REVIVAL STARTS WITH REPENTANCE

REVIVAL STARTS BY GETTING THE LOGS OUT OF OUR OWN EYES.

I am seeing a lot of people trying to solve the world's problems by pointing out what everyone else needs to do. Like raging against the "LGBT agenda, Arguing the absurdity of Women's rights over unborn children right now. And not that we shouldn't call out sin, and speak out for truth and justice, but.....

REVIVAL DOES NOT HAPPEN BY POINTING OUT THE WORLD'S SINS.

REVIVAL IS THE CULMINATION OF A GROUP COMING TOGETHER - COLLECTIVELY - AND REALIZING THEIR OWN SIN - INDIVIDUALLY.

JUDGEMENT STARTS WITH THE HOUSE OF GOD.

- > So let me ask you, how grieved are you over your own sin?**
- > Do you struggle with gossip?**
- > Judgementalism?**
- > Consumerism?**
- > Pride?**

- > Sex outside of marriage?
- > Or do you only want to talk about the “big sins” You know, the real sins - the one’s you don’t struggle with?

3. SIFTING IS PART OF THE PREPARATION

*Luke 22:31-32 (NLT) Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift each of you like wheat.
32 But I have pleaded in prayer for you, Simon, that your faith should not fail. So when you have repented and turned to me again, strengthen your brothers.”*

Satan wanted to “sift Peter as wheat,” which means that he wished to shake Peter’s faith so forcefully that he would fall, proving that God’s faithful servant was lacking.

To *Sift* could also be expressed as “shake someone apart” or “breaking a person down.”

ILLUSTRATION:

In biblical times, wheat was sifted through a sieve or large strainer. As it was shaken violently, the dirt and other impurities that clung to the grain during the threshing process would separate from the good, usable grain.

ILLUSTRATION:

Show flour being sifted through a sieve.

There is a shaking going on right now. God is revealing deep rooted things in His people’s hearts. Things are coming to the surface of our hearts as our lives are being shaken.

There is a great sifting taking place in the church. Our faith has been greatly shaken in these times. But, the shaking or sifting is necessary to reveal the fears and the impurities of our faith. It is only through sifting that impurities are revealed. It is only through shaking that hidden things are uncovered. A great sifting is taking place in our ranks. Destructive ideologies, falsehood and sin have infiltrated the church. God is shaking us to refine us. God is sifting us to prepare us for revival.

SIFTING REVEALS OUR SIN SO THAT WE CAN REPENT.

Amos 9:9 gives us a similar image of God shaking Israel..... “For I will give the command and will shake Israel along with the other nations as grain is shaken in a sieve, yet not one true kernel will be lost”

- Are you a true Christian?
- Are you the planting of the Lord?
- Are you the pure fruit of God?

**YOU CAN LOOK LIKE A CHRISTIAN AND NOT BE A CHRISTIAN.
YOU CAN SAY YOU ARE A CHRISTIAN AND NOT BE A TRUE FOLLOWER OF
CHRIST.**

YOU CAN ATTEND CHURCH BUT NOT BE SOLD OUT TO GOD.

Matthew 13:24-30 (NLT) ²⁴ Here is another story Jesus told: “The Kingdom of Heaven is like a farmer who planted good seed in his field. ²⁵ But that night as the workers slept, his enemy came and planted weeds among the wheat, then slipped away. ²⁶ When the crop began to grow and produce grain, the weeds also grew.

²⁷ “The farmer’s workers went to him and said, ‘Sir, the field where you planted that good seed is full of weeds! Where did they come from?’

²⁸ “ ‘An enemy has done this!’ the farmer exclaimed.

“ ‘Should we pull out the weeds?’ they asked.

²⁹ “ ‘No,’ he replied, ‘you’ll uproot the wheat if you do. ³⁰ Let both grow together until the harvest. Then I will tell the harvesters to sort out the weeds, tie them into bundles, and burn them, and to put the wheat in the barn.’ ”

We must have purity of heart to withstand the coming storms. Any impurity will cause you to stumble with the storms and persecution that is coming. Just like sifting flour through a sieve, anything that is not submitted to Christ will cause you to fall and be left behind.

IS THERE A SIFTING TAKING PLACE IN YOUR LIFE?

Has your faith been shaken?

How did you respond to the shaking?

What was revealed in your heart during the shaking?

Doubt, fear, resentment, anger.

**REVIVAL STARTS WITH REPENTANCE.
REMOVE THE IMPURITIES FROM YOUR HEART.**

Lay down offense

Lay down unforgiveness

Lay down every sin

Correct every disobedience

Lay down fear

Lay down past hurt

“.....I have pleaded in prayer for you, Simon, that your faith should not fail. So when you have repented and turned to me again, strengthen your brothers.”

**PETER’S FAILURE (THE EXPOSURE OF HIS WEAKNESS) LAID
THE PATH FOR HIS VICTORY.**

**REPENTANCE IS MAKING JESUS AS LORD.
THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST IS RETURNING TO THE CHURCH**

The Lord is reestablishing Himself as Lord among His people.
We must allow him to sit on the throne of our hearts.

Put God first in EVERY AREA of your life.....

- > Finances
- > Time
- > Skills and Gifts
- > Work and Business
- > Family
- > Relationships

As you make Him Lord over every area of your life, surrender to His instruction of preparation in every area of your life. He will instruct us in practical measures too.

Take shelter in Jesus. Surrender to Him as fully Lord. Do not withhold anything from Him. Take shelter in His guidance, safety and protection. Listen to His instruction. Do not grieve the Spirit.

CLOSING:

*Joel 2:12-13 (NLT) That is why the Lord says,
“Turn to me now, while there is time.*

Give me your hearts.

Come with fasting, weeping, and mourning.

*¹³ Don’t tear your clothing in your grief,
but tear your hearts instead.”*

*Return to the Lord your God,
for he is merciful and compassionate,
slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love.
He is eager to relent and not punish.*

*Joel 2:28-32 (NLT) Then, after doing all those things,
I will pour out my Spirit upon all people.*

Your sons and daughters will prophesy.

*Your old men will dream dreams,
and your young men will see visions.*

*²⁹ In those days I will pour out my Spirit
even on servants—men and women alike.*

*And I will cause wonders in the heavens and on the earth—
blood and fire and columns of smoke.*

*³¹ The sun will become dark,
and the moon will turn blood red
before that great and terrible day of the Lord arrives.*

³² But everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.