

The Hand of God Revives Us: Confronting Idols and Rebuilding Altars

In a world filled with distractions and competing loyalties, many believers find themselves spiritually dry, going through the motions of faith without the fire. The story of Elijah on Mount Carmel and Ezekiel's vision of dry bones reveals powerful truths about how God brings revival - not just to nations, but to individual hearts that have grown cold.

What Does Revival Really Mean?

Revival isn't just about large gatherings or emotional experiences. True revival is when God breathes life back into what has become spiritually dead. It's when the Holy Spirit moves powerfully to restore passion, purpose, and power to believers who have lost their spiritual vitality.

However, we must avoid two common mistakes when it comes to revival. First, we can despise the very thing God is doing because it becomes inconvenient or expensive. Second, we can use waiting for revival as an excuse to neglect our daily spiritual disciplines.

Active Waiting vs. Passive Waiting

The Bible teaches us to wait on the Lord, but this waiting is active, not passive. Like a soldier who trains while waiting for battle, or an athlete who prepares while waiting for race day, we must continue in prayer, worship, witnessing, and sharing the gospel while we wait for God to move.

How Does Revival Confront What's in the Way?

In 1 Kings 18, Elijah confronted the prophets of Baal in a dramatic showdown on Mount Carmel. This wasn't just about proving God's power - it was about confronting the idols that had captured Israel's heart.

Modern Day Idols We Must Confront

Today's idols may not be made of wood and stone, but they're just as real:

- Individualism and self-worship - the "it's all about me" mentality
- Consumerism and materialism - the endless pursuit of bigger, better, more
- Comfort and convenience - a life focused solely on safety and pleasure

The issue isn't having nice things or money - it's when these things have us. When they become the driving force behind our decisions rather than God's calling on our lives.

No Room for Compromise

Elijah didn't seek a compromise between Baal and God. He forced a decision: "How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him. But if Baal is God, follow him."

Revival starts when we stop wavering and start surrendering. We must choose to serve God wholeheartedly rather than trying to serve both God and our idols.

Why Must the Altar Be Rebuilt?

Before God sent fire from heaven, Elijah rebuilt the altar of the Lord that was in ruins. He took twelve stones representing the tribes of Israel and restored what had been broken down.

God will not send His fire until we do the hard work of rebuilding what has been broken down in our lives and communities. This includes:

- Restoring godly values
- Rebuilding moral foundations
- Repairing relationships
- Returning to biblical principles

What Can Dry Bones Teach Us About Revival?

Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones (Ezekiel 37) provides a powerful picture of how God brings life to what appears completely dead.

The Process of Revival

God asked Ezekiel, "Can these bones live?" The prophet wisely responded, "Sovereign Lord, you alone know." Sometimes God asks us questions that can only be answered by putting the situation back in His hands.

The revival happened in stages:

1. The word was spoken - God commanded Ezekiel to prophesy
2. Structure was restored - bones came together, tendons and flesh appeared
3. Life was breathed in - the breath of God brought true life

Structure Without Spirit Is Still Dead

A church can have all the right programs, good doctrine, excellent leadership, and wonderful people - all the "bones" in place. But without the Spirit of God breathing life into it, it remains spiritually dead.

Revival is not just about activity or organization. It's about the presence and power of God breathing life into dead places again.

What Is God's Purpose in Revival?

God doesn't revive us just to make us feel better about ourselves. He revives us to stand us up and send us out. The dry bones became "a vast army" - God transformed scattered, lifeless bones into a united, powerful force.

This is God's vision for the church: to take individual believers and connect them into a mighty army that advances His kingdom on earth.

How Does Jesus Bring Revival?

Jesus is greater than both Elijah and Ezekiel. Like Elijah, He came to confront sin and idolatry - not with fire from heaven, but with the fire of holiness, mercy, and grace that He brought to us on the cross.

Jesus became the sacrifice on the altar, consumed on our behalf. He speaks to the spiritually dead: "The hour is coming and is now here when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live" (John 5).

The Role of the Holy Spirit

Revival must be a Holy Spirit work. At Pentecost, fire and wind appeared as signs of New Covenant revival. Jesus revives us by His Spirit, and this supernatural work cannot be manufactured by human effort alone.

Life Application

This week, examine your heart for modern-day idols that may be competing with God for your devotion. Are you wavering between serving God and serving comfort, materialism, or self? Choose to surrender these areas completely to Christ.

Begin praying specifically for revival - in your own heart, in your family, in your church, and in your nation. Remember that this is active waiting: continue in your spiritual disciplines while trusting God to breathe new life into dry areas.

Consider these questions:

- What "altars" in your life need to be rebuilt or restored?
- Are there areas where you feel spiritually dry and need God's breath of life?
- Who in your life needs you to pray persistently for their salvation, just as someone may have prayed for you?
- How can you prepare your heart to be part of God's "vast army" when He brings revival?

The hand of God is ready to revive us, but we must be willing to confront what stands in the way and rebuild what has been broken down. Are you ready for God to breathe new life into the dry places of your heart?