

“Experiencing Continuous Revival” – Part 3 Sunday, December 22nd, 2019



These last couple of Sundays we’ve considered some of the biblical truths and principles that are required if we are going to experience continuous revival in our lives. Last Sunday we saw the critical and necessary element of brokenness.

In a few minutes we’re going to have an open mic time and invite anyone who wants, to share a testimony giving praise to God for something He’s done in your life over these past few weeks and months.

Throughout the Bible we’re encouraged to testify about God and His work in our lives. In fact, testifying about the Lord is both our privilege and our duty, even from the beginning of our walk with Christ.

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“If you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. One believes with the heart, resulting in righteousness, and one confesses with the mouth, resulting in salvation.”

Romans 10:9-10

How can you know if someone is truly saved? That's easy. Someone who is truly saved not only believes in their heart that Jesus died on the cross and rose again, but they proclaim that inner, heart belief with their mouth.

In other words, they testify to that belief in Jesus publicly. They don't hold it in. In fact, I believe a person who is truly saved CAN'T hold it in. It's impossible to experience the goodness of the Lord in your heart and life through salvation and remain silent. (Old Gospel Song by Don Francisco: "I Gotta Tell Somebody...")

How else will you know someone is a follower of Christ unless they talk about Christ to and with others? Our walk with Christ begins with a public declaration of our faith in the Lord. The primary way we make this public declaration is through baptism.

Baptism is a sign, a symbol and a signal. It's a sign of our union with Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior – buried into His death and raised into His resurrection.

It's a symbol that we have passed from spiritual death to life. And it's a signal that declares to everyone that we have placed our faith in Christ and we are now following Him.

Are you saved? Salvation is believing in your heart that Christ died on the cross and rose again, and it's professing with your mouth that belief publicly.

Have you been baptized? [BAPTISM NEXT SUNDAY – MEETING AT GRAND CENTRAL]

So our walk with Christ is initially defined by our willingness to publicly declare our faith in Christ, but that's only the beginning. Testifying about Christ is to be an ongoing lifestyle for us in 2 ways:

1. First to those who don't yet know Christ as their Savior. God wants us to give testimony to others who aren't yet saved of who God is and what He's done in our lives.

Our testimonies about Christ and His work in our lives to others is the catalyst God uses to draw others to Himself in salvation.

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"And you will be my witnesses..."

Acts 1:8b

"Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ..."

2 Corinthians 5:20a

I can guarantee you this morning that there's someone in your sphere of influence that is in need of you testifying to them through your words and actions the reality of heaven and hell and the truth that the gospel is the way to eternal life through Jesus.

That person might be a family member, co-workers, a neighbor, someone in your class at school, an acquaintance that God has providentially placed in your sphere, or just someone you see around town.

Being an ambassador and a witness for Christ to others is our calling as followers of Christ. Who needs you to share your testimony with them? We may not be eloquent or polished, but God will use any of us who are willing. The only person God can't use are those who are silent.

One way we can begin that process of testifying is by inviting them to a church service or event. [CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES]

2. The second way God wants us to continually give testimony of His ongoing work in our lives is to our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.

When we talk with others here in the family of God about what He's doing in our life, it does something to others that the Bible calls, edification. Edification means building up. We build up the faith on one another when we share what the Lord is doing in our lives.

Missionary Norman Grubb puts it this way...

“We know that the way salvation is spread by our telling the unsaved what the Lord has done for us; it does something in their hearts, quickening a desire for the same experience. So it is with testimony among God's people. The joy and praise leaps from one heart to another when we hear what the Lord has done for another. The more direct, open, and exact the testimony, the more we rejoice. It does yet more. It convicts. Our hearts are fashioned alike. The way the devil tempts you is almost certainly the way he tempts me. When I hear you tell of the Lord's dealings down where you really live in your home relationships, in your business, and so on, it surely reaches me on some spot where I need the same light and deliverance. That is exactly how great revivals break out and spread.”

Before we start our Open Mic time, I want to take you to 2 Corinthians chapter 4 for a final encouragement to all of us in experiencing a continuous state of revival in our walk with Christ.

READ 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

Here in this passage the Apostle Paul reveals the priorities that are necessary for continuous revival. To experience continuous revival, we have set and keep 3 priorities in our walk with Christ:

(Slide) 1. Prioritize spiritual strength above physical strength (4:16)

Here in verse 16 Paul for a second time in this chapter states his determination not to give up (Vs. 1). It can be easy to get discouraged in your walk with Christ. But God wants us to not give up even when we feel like giving up.

And Paul says here we shouldn't give up even though our "outer person is being destroyed". What does that mean? Paul is referring to our bodies. Our bodies are in a constant state of decay and they will all one day cease to function.

But Paul says in spite of the decay of our physical bodies, it's the opposite with our spiritual life. He says our "inner person is being renewed day by day." Your inner person is the REAL you – your soul.

And your soul lives forever. Your soul is constantly refreshed and renewed by God's grace as we walk with the Lord every day. This is the process of spiritual growth as we live in brokenness with God and others as we talked about last Sunday.

It's the process that occurs when we make knowing and obeying His Word a habit in our life. It's the result of faithfully serving God and others and worshiping God WITH others, and walking faithfully in fellowship with God and others.

So it's like this... If our lives could be represented by a graph, our physical bodies slowly go down across the graph of time until our death. And if we're growing in our faith our spiritual lives are gradually trending up til we bodies die and we go to heaven to meet the Lord.

So here's the challenge this verse is making to us: Since our bodies are on the way to death, and our spiritual lives are on the way to eternal life, it's important that we prioritize spiritual strength above physical strength.

Should you do all you can to take care of your body? Yes. But far too many people are way out of balance in prioritizing taking care of their body – which decaying every day in spite of what we do...

And doing little to nothing to take care of our soul through spiritual nourishment and exercise – which is going to benefit us for all eternity!

So what are you going to do in 2020 to prioritize spiritual strength above physical strength? What commitments are you going to make as we turn the calendar into a new year, that will assist you in living in continuous spiritual revival?

- The Word
- Prayer
- Accountability
- Fellowship with others – Growth Groups
- A Commitment to a Body of Believers – Church Membership
- A place of regular service for the Lord
- Getting out of your comfort zone and serving and reaching out to others on a mission trip

Each time we participate in these spiritual activities they provide a boost of spiritual revival to our “inner person”, to our soul. (EXPLAIN)

(Slide) 2. Prioritize the future above the present (4:17) READ

Paul is talking here about suffering and persecution for the cause of Christ. He’s talking about the costs of following Jesus. He’s talking about paying the price to get the gospel to others. These things are all “momentary light afflictions.”

In other words, they’re the realities of being a Christ-follower in the present sinful world we live in, but the present is temporary. It will soon be over for all of us. We put up with these difficulties now, knowing that a better, eternal reality is coming.

The Bible says in James 4:14 that our lives are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. Ecclesiastes 12:5 says that when that happens in death, we will go to our eternal home.

The difficulties of following Jesus, and being faithful to Him in this sinful world, are only going to last for a brief time in relation to the permanency of eternity with the Lord.

In fact, Paul says, the eternal weight of being in the glory of God, with Him forever in heaven is so great and awesome that it doesn't even compare to our temporary difficulties we live with in this present reality.

So what are you and I going to do in 2020 to prioritize the future above the present? How will we align what is important to us, what we give our time to, our money to, our passions to, that will impact eternity and not just the here and now?

Maybe God is calling you in 2020 to stop living the American Dream, and start pursuing the kingdom of God in how you live. Or if perhaps you're already doing that, to crank it up a notch in this area.

Maybe He's calling you to step out in faith somehow and do something new or different in serving Him and you've been dragging your feet. What are you waiting for? Now's the time to prioritize the future above the present!

(Slide) 3. Prioritize what is eternal, above what is temporary (4:18) READ.

It's really easy to focus on what is seen – all the things going on our culture and our world – music, movies, sports, vacations, leisure activities, politics, hobbies, you name it. These things aren't bad, they're just temporary, and as such they're going away. Before you know it, they'll be gone forever.

God wants our focus to be on what is UNSEEN – eternal things. So, what are some things that are eternal? What's going to last forever? Simple: Remember this: What's going to last forever is God, and His Word, and people. These are the things that will last forever.

God wants us to prioritize Him and His Word, and people. Are we giving our time to God in walking with Him? In serving Him? And what are doing to help others who don't know Christ come to salvation?

Who's going to hear the gospel from you and from me, through our faithful witness, in 2020?

Who are we pouring ourselves into through being a mentor, a model, a discipler of others? Who are you discipling? Who will you disciple in 2020?

Who's going to be stronger, closer to God, and more mature in their walk with Christ a year from now because of your direct influence in their lives in 2020?

What are you going to do to prioritize what is eternal above what is temporary in 2020?

To experience continuous revival, we have set and keep 3 priorities in our walk with Christ...

1. Prioritize spiritual strength above physical strength
2. Prioritize the future above the present
3. Prioritize what is eternal above what is temporary

NOW, as we are soon to close out another year and begin a new year, NOW is a good time, to start afresh with the priorities God wants us to live by for continuous revival in the days and months ahead.

(STAND) PRAY