



Part 1: “God’s Pattern for Revival and Spiritual Awakening”
10/20/19

Exactly 6 weeks ago we kicked off a new ministry year and I shared with you that day our theme for this year: Revive Us Lord.

Our theme verse from Psalm 85:6 tells us a lot about revival. It tells us that...

- Revival comes from God (“Will YOU...”) – it’s not man-made. Only God can revive our hearts and lives.
- Revival is cyclical (“...revive us AGAIN...”) – in other words God brings revival in our hearts but because we all have a tendency to wander into dependence on ourselves instead of God, we regularly need Him to revive our walk with Him.
- Revival is for God’s people (“...so that YOUR people...”) – revival isn’t for unsaved people, it’s for people who have a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. It’s for people who have been saved. Saved people are God’s people.

- The last line of the verse says... (may rejoice in You.”) Revival is for the purpose of God’s people doing what God wants us to do which is rejoice in Him. That is, He wants us to find our joy in walking in close relationship with them.

I want to show you this morning God’s Pattern for Revival and Spiritual Awakening. If we can understand what God is doing in regards to revival and spiritual awakening then we can join Him in what He wants to do in our lives, in our church, in our community and beyond.

Fellowship, I believe God is up to something. I believe God is wanting us to position ourselves spiritually – all of us as individuals and collectively as a church body – to be responsive to a great kingdom work that He wants to do through us.

And that is exactly what I want us to talk to God about before we go any further this morning. Let’s go to the Lord together and let’s ask Him to help us understand His work of revival and spiritual awakening and ask Him to help us to join Him in what He wants to do in each of us, in our church, and in our world through us.

PRAY

Let me begin with a working definition of revival. Apart from its biblical meaning, the word means...

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Revival = to live again; to be brought back to life or vitality; a return to vigorous life

e.g. Revival is what I did last week when I left my driver's side door and headlights on too long one evening when I was working outside. I got back in my truck to park it and it wouldn't start. The batter was almost dead.

It still had life because my dashboard lights were on but there wasn't enough juice in my battery to turn the engine over. So what did I do? I pulled my wife's car in front of my truck, hooked up the jumper cables, waited a little bit, and bingo, she started right up.

My battery had some life, but it was drained. It needed to be brought back to vitality and vigorous life again, didn't it? And that is a very good illustration of spiritual revival as well.

When we come to faith in Christ at salvation, God infuses His life into us. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says we are new creations in Christ, the old has gone and the new has come. We were dead in our sin with absolutely NO spiritual life in us whatsoever.

It's like hooking up a completely dead batter to your car. Have you ever tried to do that? What happens when you do that? Absolutely nothing. The dash lights aren't on, the dome lights don't come on and it's impossible to get your car started because it's totally dead. That's us before salvation.

But when we're saved, we're given a new battery from God and He infuses us with His life. And there will always be spiritual life in our batter because it comes from the Holy Spirit, not from us.

But sometimes our spiritual battery can be worn down due to sin and spiritual neglect. And when that happens, while we still have life, but we're drained.

We need a jump-start from the Lord to bring revival to our walk with Christ again. We need renewed life so we can rev up our engines and get back to serving Jesus again and reaching people for Christ again.

Are you drained spiritually this morning? Is what I just described a good description of your walk with Christ? Do you need a spiritual jump-start? How does a person know for sure whether they need a revival in their walk or not?

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We Need Revival . . .

- when we do not love Him as we once did.
- when earthly interests and occupations are more important to us than eternal ones
- when we would rather watch TV and read secular books and magazines than read the Bible and pray.
- when we have little or no desire for prayer.
- when we would rather make money than give money.
- when our Christianity is joyless and passionless.
- when we know truth in our heads that we are not practicing in our lives.
- when we make little effort to witness to the lost.
- when we have time for sports, recreation, and entertainment, but not for church attendance, Bible study and prayer.

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We Need Revival . . .

- when we seldom think thoughts of eternity
- when God's people are more concerned about their jobs and their careers than about the Kingdom of Christ and the salvation of the lost.
- when God's people get together with other believers and the conversation is primarily about the news, weather, and sports, rather than the Lord.
- when believers can be at odds with each other and not feel compelled to pursue reconciliation.
- when Christian husbands and wives are not praying together.
- when our children are growing up to adopt worldly values, secular philosophies, and ungodly lifestyles.
- when we are more concerned about our children's education and their athletic activities than about the condition of their souls.
- when known sin is not dealt with through the biblical process of discipline and restoration.
- when we tolerate "little" sins of gossip, a critical spirit, and lack of love.

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We Need Revival . . .

- when we will watch things on television and movies that are not holy.
- when our singing is half-hearted and our worship lifeless.
- when our prayers lack fervency.
- when our hearts are cold and our eyes are dry.
- when we aren't seeing regular evidence of the supernatural power of God.
- when we have ceased to weep and mourn and grieve over our own sin and the sin of others.
- when we are bored with worship.
- when our music and dress become patterned after the world.
- when we don't long for the company and fellowship of God's people.

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We Need Revival . . .

- when people have to be begged to give and to serve in the church.
- when our giving is measured and calculated, rather than extravagant and sacrificial
- when we aren't exercising faith and believing God for the impossible.
- when we are more concerned about what others think about us than what God thinks about us.
- when we are unmoved by the thought of neighbors, business associates, and acquaintances who are lost and without Christ.
- when we are making little or no difference in the secular world around us.
- when the fire has gone out in our hearts, our marriages, and the church.
- when we are blind to the extent of our need and don't think we need revival.

So let me show you a biblical definition of both revival and spiritual awakening then we'll see how it's displayed in the Scriptures.

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Revival is a divinely initiated work in which God's people pray, repent of their sin, and return to a holy, Spirit-filled, obedient love relationship with God.

Spiritual awakening is the birthing of new believers into the body of Christ who by the power of His Spirit uses a revived church as His instrument of declaring the praises of God.

As you can see from the definitions, revival is the work God does in the hearts of His people – that is, for people who have trusted Christ as Savior – and spiritual awakening is what God does in the hearts of those who need to place their faith in Christ for salvation.

Throughout Scripture a distinct pattern is revealed showing how God is at work through revival for the purpose of spiritual awakening. You're going to see this pattern in your daily devotional guide this week and in your growth groups study, and it's one that we'll refer to throughout this emphasis.

There are 7 phases of biblical revival...

(Slide) Phase 1: God is on mission to redeem a lost world.

We talked about this back on September 8th when we kicked off our revival theme for the year. God is constantly on the move drawing spiritually lost people around the world to Himself so they can experience forgiveness of their sins and eternal life in heaven and bring Him glory through their lives.

JOHN 3:16

When a person comes to faith in Christ for salvation and experiences that forgiveness and new life in Christ, God's desire is that we join Him in His mission of redeeming a lost world. He wants to involve each of us in this great global work – His mission.

God's primary call on our lives through salvation is not to religious activity – though that will be a bi-product of His call. God's call is to a relationship with Him. Being a Christian is not a set of duties to perform or activities to be completed.

It's a relationship with God through Jesus that we walk in by faith. Faith begins that relationship and it defines that relationship until we get to heaven and we no longer will have to walk by faith, but we will see Jesus and be with Him forever.

(Slide) Phase 2: God's people tend to depart from Him, turning to substitutes for His presence, His purposes, and His ways.

Once we become God's child through salvation, Satan switches His tactics in our life from trying to keep us from coming to salvation, to trying to keep us from staying close to God in fellowship and thus losing the joy of being used by God in redeeming a lost world.

So Satan uses enticements to lure us into getting our eyes off the Lord and putting them on the things of the world, onto others, or onto ourselves. And when we do the tragedy is that we jettison our walk with God for whatever captures our momentary interest.

(Slide) Phase 3. God disciplines His people because of His love.

God love compels Him to actively work in our lives to make the result of sin unappealing and unfulfilling in order to lead us back to Himself. God will do whatever is necessary to draw us back to Himself.

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“You have forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons: My son, do not take the Lord’s discipline lightly; or faint when you are reprovved by Him; for the Lord disciplines the one He loves, and punishes every son whom He receives.” Hebrews 12:5-6

(Slide) Phase 4. God’s people cry out to Him for help.

God will continue to discipline us because of His love for us. He knows how much our sin negatively impacts our lives. But He is patient with us and will wait for us to move back to Him. The story Jesus told about the prodigal son reminds us of this truth.

“The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight. I’m no longer worthy to be called your son.’ But the father told his slaves, ‘Quick! Bring out the best robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Then bring the fatted calf and slaughter it, and let’s celebrate with a feast, because this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate.”

Luke 15:21-23

(Slide) Phase 5. God calls His people to repent and return to Him or perish.

Many preachers today refuse to preach repentance for fear of offending people. Repentance is what people need to hear today because repentance is one of the most positive words in the Bible.

Repentance means there is hope in the midst of our sin! We have a God who wants us to repent and He is ready and willing to forgive us and welcome us back to Him again. What a God we have!

Refusing to repent of our sin invites God's judgment on our lives. While we can't lose our salvation and our eternal life in heaven, God's judgment can eventually lead to serious consequences, even physical death, if we obstinately choose to continue living in our sin.

But when we repent and return to the Lord, He forgives and restores us and will use us to be His instrument to redeem a lost world.

(Slide) Phase 6. God revives His repentant people by restoring them to a right relationship with Him.

And that's what revival is all about. Revival is God's people returning to Him, their source of life. Repentance returns us not to a system of do's and don'ts, but to a person – God Himself.

Revival renews our fellowship with the Lord! And when our fellowship is renewed out of that fellowship flows the power of God to be His witness to others. And that's phase 7...

(Slide) Phase 7. God exalts His Son, Jesus, among His people and draws unbelievers to saving faith in Him.

The salvation of our lost family members, friends, acquaintances, neighbors, our community and world – that is, Spiritual Awakening - becomes a natural by-product of God's work of revival in us.

And when that happens God receives glory when we, His people, live obediently, and walk closely with Him. Non-believers take notice of our lives being impacted by Almighty God, and they are drawn to God and HE is glorified.

So let me give you 2 reasons for revival...

(Slide) 1. God takes delight in our love, and He receives glory from our worship and obedience to Him. If we have strayed away from Him, revival brings us back to walk closely with Him so that our lives are pleasing to Him once more.

(Slide) 2. God chooses to accomplish His redemptive purposes through consecrated people. To be useful to Him, we must walk closely with Him. Revival is God's instrument to help us do that.

Fellowship, God's heart is to redeem a lost world. His heart is so committed to this that when His people the Israelites, whom He had chosen for the purpose of reaching our world, rejected His Son Jesus, and crucified Him on a cross...

He called a new people to join Him in sharing His love for the world – the church. God established the church of Jesus Christ for the express purpose of being the instrument He would use to tell the world of His Son, of His love for them and of the gospel message through which they may be saved.

WE ARE THAT GROUP OF PEOPLE. God wants to use us to continue what He started with Abraham and the Israelites. He's not done with Israel, they will be used prominently again by God in the end times...

But until then, in this age of grace, it's us - the church of Jesus Christ – we are carrying the baton of the gospel until Christ raptures us out of this world and takes us home to be with Him forever in heaven.

What makes us – the church – unique, called, qualified, and equipped to be used by God? What makes you as a follower of Christ unique, called, qualified, and equipped to be used by God to redeem a lost world? Look what God says in 1 Peter 2:9-10 (READ).

In these verses Peter uses Old Testament concepts that described Israel as His chosen people to reach a lost world, to describe US, the church, as His chosen people to be used by Him to redeem a lost world.

These are not just descriptions of the church, if you know Christ as your Savior, they're descriptions of you. That's why Peter says at the beginning of verse 9, "You are...". We need to personalize these descriptions of us.

According to these verses, God says...

(Slide) 1. I am a chosen race (from Deuteronomy 7:6-8)

At salvation we are each chosen by God to be trophies of His grace, pointing others to His amazing grace. We are set apart from the slavemarket of sin we once were in before salvation, and from the world, not because WE are worthy, but because HE is worthy to be proclaimed.

It is our privilege to be part of God's family. And since we are chosen by Him, it is our privilege to live in obedience to Him in accomplishing His mission of redeeming a lost world.

e.g. When my boys were in gradeschool I would go on Fridays and have lunch with them. And sometimes I would play football with them during recess following lunch.

And those boys did the same thing we used to do when I was a kid. Two captains were chosen and they would each take turns picking players from among the group.

It's like the NFL draft only gradeschool style. So, each round, a player was chosen by each captain and eventually you'd get down to the last couple of players. And of course, nobody wanted to be in the last round.

It was like mercy-picking. The captain only picked you in the last round because there was no one else left to pick. And if that was you, well, you kind of felt unwanted. It was a statement about your playing skills, or lack thereof.

Well, when it comes to God's family, if you know Christ as your Savior, it's just the opposite. Jesus, your captain, has chosen you! And in God's kingdom there's no rounds of choices. You've been chosen in the first round.

God chose you out of love. He values you. In fact, He hand-picked you to be on His team to be part of His game-plan of redeeming our lost world! You're not last with God. You're first. So, in the vernacular, of this illustration, play like it!

Live your Christian life like the first-round pick that you are. God is counting on You. Be dependable. Make the most of your life, living it not for personal gain or selfish ambition, but for the glory of your captain, the Lord Jesus Christ.

(Slide) 2. I am a royal priesthood (from Exodus 19:6; 1 Corinthians 6:1-4; Revelation 5:10; 20:6)

God hasn't established a kingdom with a small class of people who are priests who minister to the many by relaying to them the secrets of God. In God's kingdom, everyone in God's kingdom is part of the priesthood.

We're all priests, called by God to minister to each other, to those outside His kingdom who need Jesus, and to God. And notice the description used here for us as priests. It says we are "royal" priests.

Royal means that every believer has direct access to the King; every believer belongs to God's royal family and shares as heirs of all His eternal riches in heaven. Every priest serves the King and one day each of us will rule in His eternal kingdom.

(Slide) 3. I am a holy nation (from Exodus 19:6; Leviticus 19:2; 20:26; Deuteronomy 7:6; Isaiah 62:12)

When you came to Christ at salvation you became part of His nation. And it's not just any ordinary nation, it's a HOLY nation. Holy means we are set apart FROM sin – from the values and ways of the world and TO God in living holy lives just as He is holy, reflecting God to the world.

Holiness, like every other aspect of Christian living, is a process that God does in you over time as you walk faithfully with Him. It's part of the process of what the Bible calls sanctification as you become like Jesus through God's power working in you.

(Slide) 4. I am His possession called to proclaim His praises (Exodus 19:5; Isaiah 43:21; Malachi 3:17)

READ verse 9d-10

God has especially chosen you and you belong to him. And for what purpose? Verse 10 says that wants us to declare His praises to a lost world. God called you out of darkness into the light of His kingdom, His family, His nation.

At salvation God poured out His mercy on you, on you, an unworthy sinner, and on me, an unworthy sinner. We are all nobodies before Christ saves us. But at salvation we become God's people. Recipients of His mercy, and now dispensers of that mercy to others as we tell them about our great God.

Fellowship, to all of you who know Christ as Savior, God has chosen you, set you apart as royal priests, as a holy nation, and embraced you as His special possession, so that you will proclaim salvation through Jesus Christ to a world that doesn't know how great our God is.

They don't know that they too can be part of God's chosen people. They too can be a royal priest serving Almighty God. They too can be part of the holy nation. They too can be His special possession. They too can be a first-round pick of God, chosen for His eternal plans and purposes.

It's our job to join God's mission and tell them these truths. We're the people of God. Proclaiming God's praises to our family, our friends, our co-workers, our community, our neighborhood, to people everywhere who need Jesus.

That's why we're here. It's what we should be doing as part of a lifestyle of commitment to Christ our King and God our Savior. This is who we are. This is what we are to do. This is how we are to live.

God is on mission to redeem a lost world. He could do this in any way that He wants to, but He has chosen to work through redeemed people who are set apart for His eternal plans and are usable for His purposes. Are you usable by God right now in the way you're living?

HEADS BOWED/EYES CLOSED

Fellowship, remember this, revival always begins with me!!! We are tempted to look around and say, "Yep, that person's not as spiritual as I am. They need revival." Or, "That person over there isn't living the way they should, they need God to revive them."

But God wants us to stop look around and start looking within. That's where revival starts. The questions we need to ask ourselves are, am I usable for God? What kind of priest am I? Am I a faithful priest?

Am I holy in my lifestyle? Am I living like a first-round pick? Perhaps your spiritual battery needs charged by the reviving power of God this morning. If that's you, then repent of lukewarm Christian living, and ask God to recharge you so you are usable for His purposes of redeeming a lost world.