

VI. Revival in Biblical Perspective

Revive Us Again!

“Revival in Jerusalem”

Nehemiah 8, 9

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In this study we will be working our way through Nehemiah 8 but I'm just going to start by reading just the opening verses. This is God's Word. Nehemiah 8:1–8 says [1] *And all the people gathered as one man into the square before the Water Gate. And they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses that the LORD had commanded Israel.* [2] *So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could understand what they heard, on the first day of the seventh month.* [3] *And he read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand. And the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law.* [4] *And Ezra the scribe stood on a wooden platform that they had made for the purpose. And beside him stood Mattithiah, Shema, Ananiah, Uriah, Hilkiah, and Maaseiah on his right hand, and Pedaiah, Mishaël, Malchijah, Hashum, Hashbaddanah, Zechariah, and Meshullam on his left hand.* [5] *And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was above all the people, and as he opened it all the people stood.* [6] *And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God, and all the people answered, “Amen, Amen,” lifting up their hands. And they bowed their heads and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground.* [7] *Also Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, the Levites, helped the people to understand the Law, while the people remained in their places.* [8] *They read from the book, from the Law of God, clearly, and they gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading.*

The grass withers, the flower fades, God's Word abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

About 90 to 100 years ago there was a new discipline in law enforcement that was developed that was called forensic artist which were profile sketchers. These people were trained to sketch someone based on a witness' description of someone, when asked what the person look like. So based on descriptions given these forensic artists could come up physical facial profile with a working sketch of who they were looking for. I am not an artist nor a sketch artist but I think that is my best illustration of what I'm trying to do if God would be so gracious to allow me as a pastor with our theme of 'revive us again, O Lord.' In the first half of this year I'm trying to take us to the key text of Scripture to distill the salient points of a Biblical revival to sketch it out for us, to put it together step by step.

We start with Psalm 85:6 as a foundational verse. Psalm 85 is the sons of Korah recounting their sins and how God revived them and our theme verse is in this Psalm. Psalm 85:6 says [6] *Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you?* Korah had been the subject of God's judgment and had not only been brought back to life but were put in the temple to assist the Levites and ordained of God to write twelve Psalms in your Bible. Then I have gone to two other key verses but have been taken out for the past six weeks due to open heart surgery and now I'm having to pull this back all together as we move further into this year step by step to draw this out.

Here is what I'm trying to do. There are three key verses that give us an understanding of what a God-given revival is and that is necessary because you and I live in an age in which we live in an age that values man-manipulated revivals where a revival is scheduled or programmed or designated for a certain week as if we can plan it to happen. The first thing we found out is that we can't bring revival for only God can bring revival. Revival is not something worked up but something that is sent down. It is something that is brought down by God Himself.

So from Psalm 85:6 we established a basic, working definition of a Biblical revival. Revival is an extraordinary work of God's grace, whereby God uses ordinary people in ordinary places with ordinary means with extraordinary consequences for God's glory. Revival is needed but it's not deserved. Revival is bringing death back to life. The ordinary means God uses is preaching, prayer, fellowship, worship and the sacraments. He uses the means He has established to accomplish it. So that is what revival is.

Then we went to a second key passage that is God's prescription for revival. God has given four salient points that He has designed when He brings a revival. This is given in II Chronicles 7:14 which says *[14] if my people who are called by my name **humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.*** This is what God prescribes for a revival. In the Old Testament God's people were being collected together from the covenantal nation of Israel. Now God's people who call upon His Name for salvation are being gathered from all the nations into His church. He is speaking to His Church in this verse and God is telling His people that He prescribes four things to bring down revival. That doesn't merit, manipulate or produce revival. It is what God ordains through which He brings the revival and He's the one that gives you the ability and desire to do those four things. When you start doing those four things that tells you revival has already started because you wouldn't be doing them if He hadn't moved you to do them. This is an extraordinary work that He is doing.

Then in the last study I took you to the third key text that gives the vision for revival and that has been repeated in the Bible and throughout all of history. That vision is called the valley of dry bones found in Ezekiel 37. I can't tell you how many times I wanted to break into that wonderful spiritual 'Dem Bones' dem dry bones. I do encourage you to go listen to it though. What did God do here? He put bone upon bone and flesh upon flesh. With bone upon bone you just have a skeleton and with flesh upon flesh you just have a body but God's purpose was to raise up an army and says 'Then you will know that I'm the Lord.' That was the great purpose of the revival.

Then five essential lessons of a revival were articulated and I want to remind you what they were. This is what we learned from the valley of dry bones. One, is revival is God's work and only God can bring/send it. It's not the work of the church or the preacher or a program or another person but only God can send or bring a revival.

Two, when God brings/sends revival He first sends revival leaders. Ezekiel was picked up and put in the valley. God walked him around, led him around and talked to him. He gave him a tutorial and mentored him. He asked him questions and developed him. Then God commanded him as to what he was to do. He raised up Ezekiel as a revival leader.

Thirdly, God brings/sends revival through His Word and by His Spirit. The Word of God and the Spirit of God are inseparable. God's Word does not profit you without His Spirit and His Spirit always works with God's Word. God tells Ezekiel to prophesy and preach the Word to the dry bones. Then He told him to pray and call upon the Spirit of God who alone can bring

life in the bodies that are being raised up. So the Word and the Spirit are interdependent and inseparable in revival.

Fourthly, God brings/sends revival not for a revival experience but for revival purpose. The excitement of a revival is that it brings evangelism, people coming to Christ, worship and sometimes the extraordinary thing of people getting healed. It's amazing what God does with a revival but that's not the purpose of revival. The purpose of revival is not the experience or the revival itself. The revival is not the objective but the corrective. The purpose of revival is that we enjoy and employ the presence, and the power of God to do the purposes of God. So the purpose of revival is the overflowing presence and power of God to do the purpose of God. You will know that I'm the Lord and that I have raised you up as an army, the army of God to serve me and do My mission.

The fifth lesson is only God brings/sends revival because only God can bring life from death. I know that there are only two kinds of people ultimately in this world – those who know Jesus and those who don't know Him savingly yet. I want those of us who know Christ to be revived but those who don't yet know Him I long for you to be 'vived,' to come to life in Him and I would suggest if you are reading this today then God is already starting. Come to Him today. The reason revival is only God's work is only God can bring life from death. Everyone who is a Christ were once dead in their sin and God gave them life. When we were dead in our sin God caused us to be born again to a living Hope. Those of us who are Christians didn't do better, we were saved, delivered, rescued and redeemed by a God who can take you from the tomb of sin to the triumph of the Savior. So we have life and I want you to have life.

God not only 'vives' us but He can bring life from death when we're dead in our sins. He revives us because sometimes we go back even as individuals and churches we bury ourselves by getting distracted and before long we have already put ourselves in a tomb of self-preoccupation, self-reliance, self-promotion but God being rich in His mercy revives. When we are faithless He is faithful. That's why the sons of Korah said 'revive us again, and again, and again O Lord!' It is because we want to walk in the presence and power of God for His purposes and not try to use God for a magic genie for our purposes. How many times has the world said 'Christianity is dead'? Everyone that has said it is dead. Where's the church? There she is. God has a habit of raising His people and His churches from the dead because Jesus cleared the way from the tomb. God brings people from death unto life when He saves us and brings churches from death to life in revival and He starts with individuals.

I have been able to count 28 revivals and I'm sure I've missed a couple, just in your Bible. I will probably be exposing you to 9 to 10 of these revivals in our upcoming studies. So when we look at these I want you to keep in mind this sketch that includes the four prescriptions to a revival and the five divinely, designed elements God uses to send revival and we are given this in the valley of dry bones. So every time we look at revival I want you to ask yourself, 'does it match the sketch or profile of a revival.' Every time we go to one of these revivals we are going to see a God-identified evidence and distinctive of revival – when revival shows up, here's the track, the evidence it's here.

The first one we'll look at in this study is this one in Nehemiah. I long for the Lord to bring an awakening to this nation and to have an awakening we have to have a revival because it's the church that God uses to bring a Gospel awakening. We have had two awakenings in our nation. One was from 1735 to 1765 and 1790 to 1880 and we need another Gospel awakening which means we need a revived church to bring that awakening but Jerusalem's very first awakening was in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah where God brought a revival that led to an

awakening. It is described for us in Nehemiah 8. There are three things I want to show you in Nehemiah 8 and that is there is a great assembly, a great day and a great discovery.

The opening verses I read in Nehemiah 8:1–8 shows us the great assembly where all the people come together as one man. This is so rich! God took His people away into Babylonian captivity and He ministered to them with men like Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Daniel and all of them. God even told them in 70 years He would bring them back. When they came back they languished. They had some leaders like Zerubbabel who was the governor, Joshua the High Priest and Ezra the teacher/preacher but the people languished. Then there was a man who was high up in the government under a king named Artaxerxes. This man's name was Nehemiah. When Nehemiah heard what was happening in Jerusalem his heart broke. Nehemiah 1 tells us that he wept and prayed and he prayed and wept. Then God gave him a plan and that was to build a wall. Please do not hear that as a political statement. He was going to build a wall in order to build a people.

The first seven chapters of Nehemiah are building the wall and starting at Nehemiah 8 it is building the people. Chapter 8 gives us the revival. The first seven chapters cover 52 days where Nehemiah builds the wall through the people. Then all of a sudden there is a great assembly on a great day that 52nd day and they all come together at the Water Gate. That was a key place because everyone went there to get the water. The wall had been built and God was doing something in the lives of the people. He brought a revival. As they gathered in that place they were as one man. There was diversity but there was notable unity. They didn't go hide in the corner for they were right out front in the square at the Water Gate. They were led.

The leaders were then listed. The leaders could all be seen because there was this big podium from which the preaching was going to take place. Ezra was on that big podium. They instructed Ezra to bring the Book. When he brought the Book as they did every Sunday they copied them where they stood for the reading of the Book. It is not a book but The Book. People say 'I love the Good Book' but the Bible is not a Good Book for Moby Dick is a good book but this is The Book – the Word of God. God is speaking to His people therefore they stand and they hear God speak. Then it is preached. Just in case people have questions Ezra has some assistants roaming out in the congregation where there is a little bit of small group discipleship taking place when people didn't understand something that was being read. The people are being shepherded as the service is taking place and the service goes on for six hours. It says the Word was read clearly and explained so that everybody understood. So here we see that the preaching of the Word was taking place.

When that happened something else happened. Nehemiah 8:9–12 says [9] *And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, "This day is holy to the LORD your God; do not mourn or weep." For all the people wept as they heard the words of the Law. [10] Then he said to them, "Go your way. Eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions to anyone who has nothing ready, for this day is holy to our Lord. And do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength." [11] So the Levites calmed all the people, saying, "Be quiet, for this day is holy; do not be grieved." [12] And all the people went their way to eat and drink and to send portions and to make great rejoicing, because **they had understood the words that were declared to them.***

That is the goal of preaching. Preachers are not called to make God's Word palatable to you but understandable to you. Preachers are not to skip parts of Scripture thinking the congregation won't understand it. No, preachers are to preach the whole counsel of God but the preacher's job, by the Spirit of God, is to make it understandable and then the people are

attentive because they want to understand. They are engaged in it. He says that such a day is holy and sacred for this is a special time to accomplish this. Then there is not only a great day with a great assembly but they make a great discovery. The service is over and this is what happens the next day. The people want more!

Nehemiah 8:13–18 says [13] *On the second day the heads of fathers' houses of all the people, with the priests and the Levites, came together to Ezra the scribe in order to study the words of the Law. [14] And they found it written in the Law that the LORD had commanded by Moses that the people of Israel should dwell in booths during the feast of the seventh month, [15] and that they should proclaim it and publish it in all their towns and in Jerusalem, "Go out to the hills and bring branches of olive, wild olive, myrtle, palm, and other leafy trees to make booths, as it is written."* [16] *So the people went out and brought them and made booths for themselves, each on his roof, and in their courts and in the courts of the house of God, and in the square at the Water Gate and in the square at the Gate of Ephraim. [17] And all the assembly of those who had returned from the captivity made booths and lived in the booths, for from the days of Jeshua the son of Nun to that day the people of Israel had not done so. And there was very great rejoicing. [18] And day by day, from the first day to the last day, he read from the Book of the Law of God. They kept the feast seven days, and on the eighth day there was a solemn assembly, according to the rule.*

After the service is over the people want it to continue by having some study time in the Word. All of sudden they realize it is the Feast of Booths. They find out that there is something called communion and the church has not practiced it for 800 years. There are three great feasts in the Old Testament. One of them they had not practiced for literally hundreds of years, since Joshua had brought them into the land and they rediscovered it. They said 'if God said it then let's start doing it.' This was a seven day feast and in it they left their house to commemorate the days in the wilderness with God taking care of them and they built for themselves arbors up on top of their house. They camped out there while this feast became the prototype for what was called communion season in the Scottish church and camp meeting in the American church. So they would build arbors, gather together for weeks and have preaching which is what they were doing here. They went back to celebrating the Feast of Booths.

I can just hear the children getting all excited because they weren't going to be sleeping in their usual place but they were going to get to 'camp out' so to speak, up on top of the house. It kind of reminds me of the Andy Griffith show. I confess I love the Andy Griffith show. I love the one when visitors come to Andy's house and Andy says 'Now, why don't ya'll just stay awhile?' Then his son Opie says 'Oh yes please stay.' The guests say 'But we'll have to stay in your bedroom.' Opie says 'Yeah please stay because then I get to do some adventure sleeping.' Adventure sleeping as a kid was getting to sleep in places other than your own bed which was exciting and for Opie, he would get to sleep on an ironing board which was his mat on the floor. So here at the Feast of Booths the kids get to do some adventure sleep by getting to sleep on the roof and they are all excited.

Now eight days later revival breaks out again but this time when the people assemble something very special happens. Nehemiah 9:1–2 says [1] *Now on the twenty-fourth day of this month the people of Israel were assembled with fasting and in sackcloth, and with earth on their heads. [2] And the Israelites separated themselves from all foreigners and stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers.* I'm not going to read the confession of sin that is right here in Nehemiah 9 and by the way these confessions are found three different times in the

Bible – Daniel 9, Ezra 9, and Nehemiah 9. They are the confessions of their sins. They confess their sins and rejoice in God's grace who forgives all of their sins.

So what would this teach us about revival? This is from the first revival in Jerusalem and another revival that happens in Jerusalem is called Pentecost which we will look at in our next study. This one takes place hundreds of years later from this one in Nehemiah. Here is what we learn from this Ezra/Nehemiah revival. First, it matches up to everything that God has prescribed. They have humbled themselves, prayed, sought the Lord and have turned from their wicked ways which we saw in II Chronicles 7:14. God brings a revival. God raises up leaders in place. Everything we've studied in our sketch of revivals is true about this revival.

Now there is something that happens in this revival that gives us point evidence number one. The foundational evidence of a God-sent revival is God-centered worship and it has some clear distinctives to it. When God brings a revival it shows up in passionate, God-centered, God-pleasing worship. There are other evidences in a God-sent revival and we will enumerate them as we go through ten revivals but THE foundational evidence of a God-sent revival is God-centered worship. It is always there whenever God brings revival.

I'm not a forensic artist but I can do some theology sketching for us as we sketch out these revivals. We will be referring back to II Chronicles 7:14, Psalm 85:6, Ezekiel 37 but the danger is what I call the Christian that is like a clear December morning. This may be true of us more than any other branch of Christ's church. We want to be right Biblically. We believe God's Word is inerrant, sufficient, true and we want to be confessionally accurate. We don't want to go away into man-manipulated revivals but we want to understand what a God-sent revival is and that's good. The reason we're like a clear, December morning is we are clear but we're cold.

Some will say here that they don't want to be like those who are clear and cold so they won't worry about theological accuracy. No, that's not the answer. The answer is to get hot about what's clear. So we want to be clear but not cold. We want to be precise but we want passion. It's not enough for us to be confessionally accurate but we also want to be operationally aflame. So the first distinctive is that it is God-centered but it is passionate. Notice the words used in this text – attentive, gathering, engaged, asking. Worship is not a noun describing an event I choose to go to but it's a verb describing the activity of God's people when they assemble. They are engaged from the heart. Now I'd like to enumerate the distinctives.

The first distinctive is unity – they were gathered as one man. A problem we have today is we have a culture that is fascinated with diversity and rightly so but we keep going after diversity to get to unity but diversity doesn't lead to unity for it's unity that opens the arms of diversity. We will see this in Jerusalem a hundred years later in our next study. They gathered with one heart, one voice, one mind, one soul to praise the Lord. There is unity as they assemble to worship the Lord. They are unified in the praise of God. They didn't show up asking for the contemporary service or the traditional service because it wasn't their service. It was God's. It is the Divine service of worship. What unites us is that we want to worship God and not that you happen to love my preferences in musical genre. What unites us is one heart, one soul, one mind, one heart, one Lord, one faith and one baptism and when that happens it's amazing what God draws in. Here are a people who are not a people but they become the people of God. Where do they melt together? It is in gathered worship.

They also didn't unite off in a corner. I don't want to press this too far but they're in the square and there is preaching. Preaching is the washing of the water of the Word, right? They are at the Water Gate which is the square where everybody goes and they don't live without

water. They go to the place where everybody needs the water physically and gathered to worship the Lord in a place of prominence to the praise of God as one man united.

The second distinctive is the prominence of leaders. They didn't have to go looking for the leaders for they were upfront and prominent. A podium was made for Ezra to stand and preach. The preachers were not only there but there are 13 leaders with seven on one side and six on the other side. There is a sermon there but I can't find it. If you find it let me know. I wanted there to be 12 but I just can't find the sermon. I do know that there were leaders and no one had to hunt for them, because God raised them up.

I remember the time I was at Second Presbyterian Church in Memphis in a wonderful worship service. I was standing behind a column behind the pulpit and Sandy Wilson, the pastor told me to come over to him. I told him I was fine where I was for I was having this great time enjoying the praise of God with the confessions, the singing and everything that was going on. Again, Sandy told me to come over to him a little more adamantly this time. I wanted to stay where I was at but he said 'I'm paying you to be here so come out here and stand for I want the people of this church to see and learn how to worship. I want leaders to lead in worship.' I learned a great lesson that day. The leaders in this Nehemiah revival were not only up at the podium but they were also among the people leading them, responding to them, talking to them and shepherding them as they were asking their questions in the context of praise to God.

The third distinctive is the primacy of God's Word and the prevalence of prayer. Bring out the Book. Here's the Word. They even built a podium high above the people to hold the Book and to hold the preaching of that Book. Then there was the prevalence of prayer as God was being called upon to come down. They were going to raise the Book up and then God comes down to them.

The fourth distinctive is anointed preaching and hearing of God's Word. By the way, Ezra has been preaching for 13 years before this revival came but this day God anointed it. One of the ways God anointed it was through the hearing of it for the people gave attention to understand. They were engaged in hearing. Alistair Begg used this example. You know when you're on an airplane you may hear them say 'sit back and relax. Please put your chairs up. As we start turn off your electronic devices. We just want you to sit back, rest and close your eyes. Enjoy yourself and at 10,000 feet you can turn on your electronic devices and then we'll have a wonderful flight together.' I think that is the way a lot of us come to worship where we just sit back and enjoy ourselves. At 10,000 feet if I haven't gotten hooked into this then we'll turn to our electronic devices like some have been doing while reading this. I know some maybe taking notes on their devices and I understand that.

By the way, the problem is not electronic devices because before this we'd color in the zeroes on the bulletin. The point is simply, I'm here and you either entertain me or I'm not engaged because I'm here to enjoy myself, not to rejoice in the Lord. So here we are and we've prayed God's Word, sung God's Word, read God's Word, confessed God's Word, we have brought out the Book. Then we pray for the preacher with all of his inadequacies to be owned by God to speak to my heart. Then God own me that I can hear Your Word.

One of my favorite church buildings is Independent Presbyterian in Savannah, Georgia. They have this wonderful pulpit that is twelve feet high and underneath it are some chairs. I love to preach there because when you mount the pulpit you are twelve feet above contradiction so who can say you are wrong when you're up that high? My experience wasn't actually preaching up high but the chairs underneath it because I actually experienced something similar when I went to Jamaica to preach at Riverside Presbyterian back in the 1980s. This man of African

descent who was an elder in the church had his white gloves on and took me up when it was time for me to preach. He opened the door, we walked up the steps to the 12 foot high pulpit, he opened the Book to the text to be read and then handed it to me, turned around and shut the door behind him and I think I even heard the door lock if I'm not mistaken.

I preached, closed in prayer and then he comes to usher me down. I get down and see that the whole time I was preaching there were six seats underneath me which is where the elders were sitting and they were prominent in front of the people watching them. When I sat down one of the elders went out and rehearsed the sermon, meaning he didn't ask for hands but he began to call on people to give the points of the sermon they just heard and their application. That was not exactly seeker-centered worship that day. It was amazing what happened but do you see how this kind of wraps things up? We see the prominence of leaders, the prevalence of prayer, the primacy of God's Word and the anointed preaching and hearing for that marks out God-centered worship.

The fifth distinctive is the marriage of reverence and rejoicing. There isn't someone up there trying to manipulate everyone in the name of rejoicing and becomes a comedian where reverence and decorum are lost. There ought to be something different about God's gathered worship because it's not a glorified concert or a glorified entertainment moment. It is a time we come together to praise God. It ought to be reverent but it's not morbidity and morbidity is not reverence. They were commanded to rejoice and there was rejoicing in giving praise to God.

The sixth distinctive is there was preparation and participation. Where did that podium come from? Somebody built it. Where did Ezra's sermon come from? He prepared it. Where did those leaders come from so they could teach and answer questions? Diligence and dependence are not contradictory. You can be diligent in the preparation for worship and you can be dependent upon the Holy Spirit. Al Martin said A.W. Tozer said to him after asking him 'Dr. Tozer when I'm preaching and I have my notes and the Holy Spirit shows me something what do?' "Al, if the Holy Spirit shows you something while you are preaching follow the Holy Spirit for your notes will be there next week and you can use them then." But there was nothing wrong with his preparation of his notes. There is intentionality and dependence and diligence and dependence that work together and we see this in participation for the leaders were prepared in participating. The congregation was prepared and participated. Something that would heighten your engagement in the Lord's Day worship is Saturday evening preparation. It is amazing what that would do if our hunger and joy was to praise the Lord.

The seventh and final distinctive is confession of sin and the confidence in God's grace that is greater than our sin. That is a no spin zone. For most of us confession is a spin zone. Have you ever noticed how celebrities and politicians confess? Let's not be that way. If I offended you would you forgive me? That is not a confession. In other words, if you are so inadequate and so weak that what I said caused you a problem then I'll be big enough to ask you to forgive me – No! Confession isn't if I offended you. We don't go to God and say 'If I offended You God will You forgive me?' Our confession to God and others is simple. It is 'I sinned' no spin zone. I own it. I'm responsible for it. I see the consequence of it. I weep over it. Here is the sackcloth, the ashes, and whether you have to do it physically or not that is between you and the Lord but before You I own my sin, God, the responsibility of sin, the sinfulness of sin and the consequences of sin. God I rejoice that Your grace is greater than all of my sin. There is where my confidence is.

I remember after I was converted I knew God had forgiven me of all of my sins but there were ten people from East Carolina University that I knew where I had led them in my sinfulness

and for years I prayed to God to allow me some time for me to share with them what God had done in my life and to be able to ask them to forgive me. Then God began to tick them off. I moved to Miami, Florida to pastor my first church and I took a man out to eat that had visited the church to share the Gospel with him. I found out he was from Key West and I asked him if he knew a guy who I went to college with. He told me this guy was a good friend of his and he knew where he lived. I asked him to take me to his house and he did. God moved me all the way to Miami to take a church in order to get me to the tenth guy. I was able to ask him to forgive me and share with him what Christ had done. That was a wonderful time. It's a no spin zone and that's where confession is. It's no accident we have that time in worship. Let's confess our sins before God.

So here is this glorious worship with all of its distinctives. When that kind of revival comes a Gospel awakening sweeps over. Years ago the Gospel awakening that gave birth to this country took place from 1735 to 1765 and there was a man who wasn't a believer but was very intrigued by what was going on. His name was Benjamin Franklin and his comment when he saw this Gospel awakening take place was, 'It looked like the whole world was going to church.' So Mr. Franklin if I could have talked to you I would have said to you, 'The reason it looked like the whole world was going to church is because the whole church has started going to the world with the Gospel and the reason the whole church started going to the world and the world started going to the church because God had come to the church first. When God comes here we go there and they start coming to Him.' Come again Lord, to us, to me and bring out the Book. God comes with His Book. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the moments we could be together. Thank You for the Lord Jesus our Redeemer, our Savior, our King. Would You please speak to our hearts? If you would like to pray with someone about that commitment to Christ from death unto life or about the Lord working in your life, like my life, where we have covered ourselves up in our own graves of distraction to bring us out into the fullness of life, please call us here at Briarwood at (205) 776-5200 for we'd love to talk and pray with you. God, right now we come to You thanking You for bringing us from death unto life, now bring that life flowing in our veins and may people see it foundationally with God-centered passionate worship where our God is enthroned upon the praises of His people and our God inhabits the praises of His people. To God be the glory, Amen.

Power Point

Revival

Revival is an extraordinary work of God's grace through ordinary people in ordinary places by ordinary means with extraordinary consequences for God's glory.

God's Design for Revival

1. Humble Themselves
2. Pray
3. Seek My Face
4. Turn from their wicked ways

Revival Lessons from the Valley

1. Revival is God's work and only God can bring/send it.
2. When God brings/sends Revival, He first sends Revival leaders.
3. God brings/sends Revivals through His Word and by His Spirit.
4. God brings/sends Revival not for a Revival experience, but for Revival purpose.
5. Only God brings/sends Revival because only God can bring life from death.

The Ezra/Nehemiah Revival in Jerusalem

1. A Great Assembly
2. A Great Day
3. A Great Discovery

Life Takeaway

The foundational evidence of a God-sent revival is God-centered worship with clear distinctives...

1. Unity
2. Prominence of leaders
3. Primacy of God's Word and prevalence of prayer
4. Anointed preaching and hearing of God's Word
5. Marriage of reverence and rejoicing
6. Preparation and participation
7. Confession of sin and the confidence of grace