

III. Revival in Biblical Perspective

Revive Us Again!

“The Need for Revival”

Proverbs 14:34

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Let's look at God's Word. It's the truth, inspired, inerrant, and infallible. Proverbs 14:34 says *[34] Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.* The grass withers, the flower fades, God's Word abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

In our last study we began a journey into the ministry theme, selected by our elders, for this year of Revive Us Again. Our theme verse is Psalm 85:6 which says *[6] Will you not revive us again, that Your people may rejoice in You?* Why did we choose this ministry theme? There are multiple reasons for this but one salient. In this entire series, I confess, my heart will be laid before you and particularly in this study. One very real, pressing reason for revival is this evangelical church in America, I believe, resides in a nation that is not on the precipice of God's judgment but it is presently under God's judgment. If this is true, then there is only one hope and that is a Gospel awakening in this nation.

We are grateful for any and other changes that happen in the political world, entertainment world and all of those things but what we need is a ground up Gospel awakening. One that we have enjoyed in this nation in God's kind providence in years past for we had one in 1735 to 1765 and one in 1785 all the way to 1880. Those great awakenings were amazing but I still haven't answered why we chose our theme, revive us again. Revive us, the church, again. Yes we need a Gospel awakening and we will confess that with you. I will also confirm to you why I think we are under God's judgment in this study.

So why is this such a conviction with me, pastorally and personally? Why revival, because Gospel awakenings that sweep hundreds, thousands and millions into the Kingdom with the Gospel of the Kingdom throughout a nation, always comes by, in and through His church. His church in this nation is spiritually impotent for we have no power, Biblically illiterate, sinfully apathetic, insistently self-reliant and we're pretty much disconnected from all that God puts upon us as His church in this nation. We desperately need revival but I don't think we think so. We wouldn't mind having it.

We need clarity on what revival is. It is not something we can schedule this week or next. Revival is not evangelism. Evangelism is a product of revival. Revival is God coming back to the lives of His people to bring His life back to them that He has already given life. Revived assumes you have been 'vived' for you were dead in your trespasses and sins. God says in His Word in Ephesians 2:4-5, *[4] But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, [5] even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—* I Peter 1:3 says *[3] Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.*

Sadly, we get disconnected and revival is a reminder that God is always faithful and we always have a pension to our fickleness and unfaithfulness. We go in other directions to rely on anything and everything other than God's presence and power. Therefore we need revival. We

need to know we need revival. Even though I know you can't schedule revival, neither can you stop it if God schedules it. I pray and ask God that He might do that in a powerful way in the lives of His people again. Revive us again O Lord, that we might rejoice in You!

God, I confess we are apathetic, illiterate and spiritually impotent. I'm not in a flight of fantasy on this. Just go look at the number of conversions in the evangelical church today. They are plummeting. Look at the membership because it's plummeting. Look at discipleship for its absence. Look at influence in the culture for its non-existence. I'm talking about spiritual influence whereby the culture is impacted by redeeming grace in God's common grace. The culture we live in is in a death spiral because of our apathy. The culture is doing what they always do unless the church of Jesus Christ with salt and light is in its midst and the salt has to be salty and the light has to shine.

I believe with all my heart we need revival and we need to know what revival is. We need clarity in it and we need God to bring it. We love parachurch organizations that are engaged but the Gospel awakening in this country is not going to come from a parachurch ministry, it's going to come through the church that comes alive with the power and presence of God and that is desperate for the power and presence of God and won't take any substitution for it. Therefore we are on that trajectory.

I want to take you through some of the key passages from the Bible that define revival. There are 21 revivals in the Bible and we'll look closer at five of them with some intentionality. What do they look like? From these revivals came Gospel awakenings that swept communities and nations. We will look at I Peter to see what the revived church looks like when it lives in a culture that is hostile to it and even though they are outsiders they refuse to live as outsiders for they go inside that culture with the Gospel. Peter lays out what this looks like under the inspiration of the Spirit.

So now I'd like to give you the definition of revival based upon Psalm 85. The definition is an extraordinary work of God's grace through ordinary people in ordinary places by ordinary means with extraordinary consequences for God's glory. Revival is not the objective but the corrective. Revival is what brings us to what revival is and revival is the presence and power of God for extraordinary consequences with hundreds, thousands and millions being brought into the Kingdom. It is people being disciplined. Families are changed. Lives change. Nations change. Cities change.

There are some things we are starting that I hope from God's Word you will sense that are true. Revival is not our work but God's work. It is a Trinitarian work. The Father sends it. The Son of God secures it. The Spirit of God brings it. It is a work of grace. It comes down. It is not worked up. It comes down through revival leaders, revival preachers, revival praying but the reason it comes through these means is because He has already started the revival and that's why we are praying, preaching and leading. He Himself had done it and has come down in this powerful movement of His grace and mercy through His church. America doesn't need a revival. It needs a Gospel awakening. The church through which that Gospel awakening comes are the ones who need revival. We need revival that penetrates within our very soul.

That is why we started with Psalm 85:6. This Psalm is a very testimony of revival. This Psalm is written by the sons of Korah. Who? We hear about them in Numbers 16 where 250 of them get swallowed up by God's judgment because they were traitors, nothing more than Judases, turning against God, Moses, Aaron and everything else but the same God who brought judgment on them then reached the coming generations of Korah. At the remnant He brought

them back to life and they become the assistants and ministers in the temple. Then God even lets them author twelve Psalms. He uses them to bring the Word of God to us.

Beyond that they write Psalm 85 in which the first third of it recounts God's blessings of revival to His covenant people. The next third of the Psalm is requesting God and right now who has been passed want Him to bring it again which is their present request for revival. Then it ends with the future expectation of the blessings of revival. Right in it is Psalm 85:6 which says [6] *Will you not revive us again, that Your people may rejoice in You?* We don't revive ourselves. Who revives us? The Lord revives us and we confess that we are fickle and we're back because there is nowhere else to go. We need Your presence, power and You to come to us. That is the objective of revival – God is in the midst of His people. You know it when God's people experience His felt presence and power because they are rejoicing.

So what is that evidence? We uncovered that initial evidence of revival with this statement; in revival, the people of God who have known the fullness of God are restored by God to being filled with God to overflowing, yet they cannot get their fill of God. Now we have wandered, are distracted and have depended on everything but Him. So now we are in need of revival. We were saved and by God's blessing and salvation He filled us with His Spirit, His joy, His salvation and then in the course of life we get distracted and go in the other direction as the church of Jesus Christ. Then we say 'God, revive us again' and He comes back in His marvelous mercy to do the extraordinary work of taking bones and putting them back together. He then puts a body together that is an army for the Lord to go forth and He fills them with His Spirit that they might serve Him and know Him.

When revival comes we are filled to overflowing but we still can't get enough. We become like the deer at the brook panting for the water, panting for the felt presence of God, the power of God upon us, in us and through us. We rejoice in You! The objective is God and the corrective is revival.

I know people probably think I'm the type of person that would carry a sign up and down 280 saying 'Judgment is coming' but I want to assure you I'm not a fanatic. I've had no direct revelation or dream from God telling me that America is now under judgment. I have made what I believe is a Spirit-led deduction that America is under judgment for a number of reasons. In this study I will give you three of them.

First I want to look at Proverbs 14:34 which says [34] *Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.* God exalts nations of righteousness and He brings a reproach upon nations that have embraced a culture of sin. When dealing with America I'm not talking about America as a covenant nation of God for there has only been one covenanted relation with God and that's Israel. The biggest mistake they ever made was when then said they didn't want God as a King but that they wanted kings like the other nations but God used that mistake as well. He amazingly causes all things to work together for good. This is also why God says 'You only O Israel among the nations have I known' (Amos 3:2). So there is only one theocracy that has ever existed and there will never be another one in this present heavens and earth.

What about God and the other nations? Does that mean He is divorced from them? The Bible is very clear that in the non-covenantal nations God is sovereign over them and they are accountable to Him, including this nation (America). God is sovereign over this nation no matter what this nation says. You see this when you see God bring a revival upon Jonah and a great awakening to Nineveh and 80 years later they are back into the pit of depravity and immorality. God sends another prophet Nahum who tells them God is the King who holds them

accountable, you have squandered His blessings and this is what He is about to do to you. They don't repent and God brings judgment upon them and the Babylonians sweep them away.

Then we see in Daniel 4 the dream that King Nebuchadnezzar has that puzzles him so he asks Daniel for information about his dream. I'm paraphrasing here but Daniel tells him that in his dream Nebuchadnezzar thinks he has made himself king and that the splendor, majesty and power of this kingdom is because of him and that he ought to be worshipped but God is about to bring him low. God will put him in a field so he will act like an animal for seven years until he comes to his senses. God is going to teach him and I'm going to quote this because this is exactly what I thought when I saw the inauguration on January 20, 2017. Daniel 4:17b says '*...the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will and sets over it the lowliest of men.*' He is the majestic King over all the kingdoms. Anyone in power or authority He set, even the lowliest there.

All this happens to Nebuchadnezzar and then Daniel 4 ends this way. Nebuchadnezzar says in Daniel 4:34-37, *[34] At the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High, and praised and honored him who lives forever, for his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom endures from generation to generation; [35] all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, "What have you done?"*

[36] At the same time my reason returned to me, and for the glory of my kingdom, my majesty and splendor returned to me. My counselors and my lords sought me, and I was established in my kingdom, and still more greatness was added to me. [37] Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, for all his works are right and his ways are just; and those who walk in pride he is able to humble.

Look at the Great Commission in Matthew 28. How does it start? Jesus says, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me..." He is King over all the kingdoms. That is why we send people out to all the nations, closed or unclosed, because our King said 'go' and they are ambassadors of the King to the kingdoms of this world. In Colossians and Ephesians it says that it is Jesus who is preeminent who rules and reigns over all principalities and powers. He is sovereign over all the nations. He is King of kings and Lord of lords and all nations are accountable to Him.

This God in this proverbial statement of Divine wisdom and law says in Proverbs 14:34, *[34] Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.* He is saying that the status of a non-covenanted nation before God is directly related to the public piety of its citizenship. The status of this country is not the strength of the dollar, not the GNP, not the import/export ratio, not the military, not the technology, not the geography or the landmass but the status of this nation before God is directly related to the public of its citizenship. Where does that come from?

Public piety comes from two sources. That is the revived church sending the stream of redeeming grace, evangelizing and discipling the population of that nation and the revived church sending the stream of common grace to restrain sin and promote virtue in that nation. When the church is salt and light then there becomes a reflection in the culture of that nation in that what is good, beautiful and true begins to rise to ascendancy. It doesn't save the nation but it does place the nation before God and God says that righteousness of that public piety is their status before Him.

When they descend into the culture of sin which is what happens when the church is illiterate, impotent or apathetic and not engaged or self-reliant and not dependent upon the Lord then you begin to see the downward spiral of that culture. They call that which is good, evil and that which is evil, good. They call that which is beautiful, ugly and that which is ugly, beautiful. They say what is right is wrong and what is wrong is right. They call the darkness, light and the light, darkness then how great is that darkness! That brings the Divine reproach upon a nation and history is littered with them where God has scattered them and brought them to an end.

If sin is a reproach the Bible reveals that there are three sins. The book of Genesis reveals three sins in a nation and from people that go up to heaven and bring God down with a Divine reproach in judgment. We'll start by looking at Genesis 4:8-11 which says [8] *Cain spoke to Abel his brother. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him.* [9] *Then the Lord said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" He said, "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?"* [10] *And the Lord said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground.* [11] *And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. And God drives Cain out from the land as God comes down when the cry of innocent blood goes up. The cry of innocent blood is a voice that comes up to the throne of God and when it pierces the heavens then God comes down to bring justice and judgment upon Cain.*

Secondly, we're going to look at Genesis 11. Here after the flood and the covenant with Noah we have this event recorded. Genesis 11:1-9 says [1] *Now the whole earth had one language and the same words.* [2] *And as people migrated from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there.* [3] *And they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly."* *And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar.* [4] *Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth."* [5] *And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of man had built.* [6] *And the Lord said, "Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them.* [7] *Come, let us (I think the 'us' is referring to God and His angels) go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another's speech."* [8] *So the Lord dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city.* [9] *Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth. And from there the Lord dispersed them over the face of all the earth.*

So there has been a covenant with Adam that was to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. Then there was the flood and the covenant with Noah that said for him to fruitful, fill the earth and scatter throughout all the earth. Now we come to this generation that abandons the covenant with Noah. Instead of acknowledging God, obeying God, depending upon God and glorifying God they say 'not His name but we'll have a name. We're not going to scatter but build a city' and here the cry of secular (meaning apart from God) arrogance comes up to God and God comes down. The city/state nation of Babel says they will not be fruitful, multiply and disperse.

They don't need God so they will build a tower, this migdal, a Mesopotamia ziggurat. It has steps going up and colored blue at the top. The name Babel in Babylon meant 'the gate of heaven' but in Hebrew it means 'confusion.' We get the word 'babble' from it. This is what the self-reliant city/state/nation does. They don't need God and rely on ourselves. We are not under Him for we are god. In their secular arrogance they now declare they are their own salvation,

they have a name and with self-reliance, self-exaltation, self-absorption, self-promotion, self-centeredness they then engage and that cry of secular arrogance before God goes up and He comes down and the people that would not scatter are scattered by the judgment of God and driven out.

Thirdly, is the appearance of Christ with two angels to Abraham and it is here the Lord gives Abraham the promise of Isaac. As He is leaving Abraham He is on a mission which we see in Genesis 18. Genesis 18:16-21 says *[16] Then the men set out from there, and they looked down toward Sodom. And Abraham went with them to set them on their way. [17] The LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, [18] seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? [19] For I have chosen him, that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring to Abraham what he has promised him." [20] Then the LORD said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave, [21] I will go down to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me. And if not, I will know."*

We see here that God has come down because of the cry of sexual anarchy, sexual promiscuity and sexual perversion that had come up to heaven from the city/state nation of Sodom. When the Lord sends the angels into that city they find that not only is this cry true but that this is a culture that celebrates and coerces sexual anarchy, sexual promiscuity and sexual perversion. In fact the angels are accosted to participate in it. This culture is described in Romans 1 and is under the judgment of God as it is given over to promiscuity and perversion. Is it all together as it was? Yes it is for sexual anarchy is being celebrated and propagated and those in the city must become a supporter, participator and celebrator of it. If you're not a participant then you are accosted as the culture gathers against the angels. When God comes down this time, they are not driven away or scattered but consumed with fire from heaven.

Here are three sins that have a voice that cries all the way to heaven that bring God down in judgment. There is the cry of innocent blood, the cry of secular arrogance and the cry of sexual anarchy in a culture that's in a death spiral of sexual promiscuity and perversion. So with that said, what I am I saying to you? I am a Christian, a member of this church and a citizen of this nation. Therefore I am in solidarity with this nation. The nation that I am a citizen of is morally, socially, legally, culturally and politically embracing all three of these sins.

If God comes down because innocent blood cries up to do that of one man then what is the judgment of God upon a people responsible for 1.6 million deaths of innocent blood? In these last presidential debates I saw a candidate bold declare that you will accept it, fund it and won't hide behind freedom of religion when we kill the baby in the womb, coming out of the womb and if its inconvenient when it comes out of the womb we'll kill that one too. Were you not chilled to the bone when you heard that declaration? The deception to women in crisis pregnancy is one more devastating consequence.

Not only that, is our secular arrogance. If Mr. Trump were to call me I would say to him "Mr. Trump please know I'm not nitpicking but I am really not interested in making America great. I want America to know how great is our God for there will be her greatness." Our status is not in the rebuilding of our military. I understand the wisdom on the appropriate world and life view on trade and dollars but that is not where our status is. Our status is when a nation says 'we are not God, we are under God and what God says is true we will say is true.' That is what I long for, ask for and praying for you for. I'm not interested in another Babylonian exercise like

‘make Babel great’ for they wanted a name but I’m interested in city/state/nation that says God is great.

There in and only there in I want presidents like a Washington who constantly committed himself to the hand of God’s presence, constantly calling the nation to thanksgiving, humiliation, prayer and fasting and worship. I want a Lincoln who in the midst of a fratricidal war would say to the nation ‘pray and humble yourself and confess your sins before the living God and fast before Him’ or a Roosevelt who when faced with a worldwide conflict that would say ‘so help me God’ and then tomorrow is a day of prayer throughout our nation. As much as I want that in leadership that is not where it’s going to come from for it’s going to come from the church.

The reason we have innocent blood shed is not simply because the world is in the death spiral of murder which it always goes to but it’s because we’re not in the world as salt and light and we are silent and disengaged in the shedding of innocent blood. We are disengaged when the woman is being deceived by the siren call of the abortuary of Planned Parenthood. We can’t be silent. We must speak and minister with truth and love and mercy.

The reason we have a nation that has secular arrogance is because we have ecclesiastical arrogance. We are pretty well convinced when can get more numbers in our church if we can just get the right celebrity pastors in our church so forget celebrated preaching we just need a celebrity pastor or there is a program out there we can plug and unplug in here and boom we’re okay. No, we must say ‘no’ to ecclesiastical arrogance. We must say to this living God who has called us into this Great Commission with a great commandment “God, we are ready to go but we can’t go unless You are with us for without You we can do nothing but I can do all thing through Christ who strengthens me. God we desperately need You!

Seems like it was just yesterday that a dear friend of mine collapsed during a Sunday service and was documented dead four times and I saw the love of this congregation as doctors, nurses and people came to surround him and work on him. The thing that was so printed on my mind in that time when he had flat lined was seeing a wife with her arms up to the heavens praying “Oh God, save him.” Two of our staff men who were there had their hands lifted up praying “Oh God, save him.” In the windows behind me I saw members of our church reaching up to God praying for God to come down to minister to him and bring him back. I thank God that five hours later I’m talking to him and he is giving praise to God that God answered those prayers.

I don’t know what God will do in the answer of prayers but I do know that we’re not praying for revival because when pray for revival you are praying desperate prayers and we’re not praying desperate prayers. We are saying ‘God, we’d really like revival because it’s a great experience’ but revival is when we are desperate – God, we need You!! We need Your presence, we need Your power, we need You to be here that Your people may rejoice in You!

Our culture shamelessly embraces sexual anarchy and the church is strangely silent, embarrassed to speak for the truth of God that Biblical sexuality is a gift in marriage between a man and a woman. It initiates the marriage, recreates the marriage and procreates the marriage. That’s the truth and anyone with confusion we are here to minister to you but we minister with the truth. Will the church, again, reclaim the high ground of Biblical sexuality, marital fidelity and familial consistency? Will we burnish those sanctities before a watching world?

Here are your takeaways from this study. One, all sin brings judgment of the Triune God. Two, all sin is not equal. All sin brings the eternal, ultimate judgment of God which is death. The soul that sins shall die. The wicked shall not go unpunished. All sin is not equal for a sin in thought is one thing but a sin in word is another and in deed is another. I think murder

and I'm guilty but if I do murder it is more heinous because I just took someone's dad, mom, spouse, child etc. Some sins are more heinous than others.

Thirdly, some sins cry out from the earth to the heavens to bring God down for immediate and temporal judgment. In this study I have just given you three of them – shedding of innocent blood, secular arrogance and sexual anarchy. Four, God's immediate and temporal judgment (somewhat of a blessing because they) are a warning of an ultimate and eternal judgment and a call to repentance.

Five, there is another cry from the earth to the heavens which bring God down. There is a cry of our sin where we have squandered God's blessings in this nation. We have embraced the culture of a death spiral of sexual immorality, secular arrogance and the shedding of innocent blood. We have done that and that cry has gone up and God has come down in temporal judgments to scatter such people but there is another cry of confession and desperation. Oh God rend the heavens and come down to bless us. There is some other innocent blood and that's the blood of Jesus. It cries out 'Save My people' and it is that cry that we need to send up.

I make no apology for people say 'Harry, don't you have a heart for all the nations of the world?' Absolutely! I have a heart for the guy on the street and if I get the opportunity to share with him I will but I don't go out there until I share with my own children and my own family first. I want to go out to all the nations but if I'm going to go out there I need to go here first. I am no different than the Apostle Paul who was called to all the nations as the apostle to the Gentiles yet he cried out to God, 'God, I'm willing to be accursed if You will just save my people.' There is nothing wrong for having a heart for the nation that God has placed you in and the church He has placed that nation in and that's a statement of affirmation and integrity of our heart for the world and the Reformers were like that.

Yes, Calvin sent a missionary team to Brazil, but he also sent 1,300 missionaries to his own country of France and went back there at the risk of his own life to his homeland. Latimer and Ridley when they were being burned to death they said these last word, 'O God let us light a candle for England that shall never be put out.' John Knox in his country said 'Give me Scotland or I die!' Do you hear that desperation?

So I have no problem crying out to God for a Gospel awakening in this nation by bringing a revival to His church for I believe that is the heart that God has called us for. So with our sins crying out to bring God down in judgment I pray that God would raise us up to cry out to heaven and say "God, open the heavens and come down" and when God comes down then praise will go up. Then the Gospel will go out and then the sins will go down. Come down O God and revive us again, how great is our God! Let's pray.

Prayer:

God, thank You so much for the privilege to be with my brothers and sisters and I pray You would speak to our hearts now. Holy Spirit speak. If you'd like to pray with someone please call us here at Briarwood at (205) 776-5200. O blow wind blow and as the hymn says, *Showers of blessing we need; Mercy-drops round us are falling, But for the showers we plead.* Revive us O God, in Jesus' Name, Amen.

Power Point

INTRODUCTION/REVIEW

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

In revival, the People of God who have known the fullness of God are restored by God to being filled with God to overflowing, yet they cannot get their fill of God.

A BIBLICAL PROVERB

Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach on a people.

WHEN GOD CAME DOWN IN JUDGEMENT

- I. The cry of the innocent blood came up
- II. The cry of secular arrogance came up
- III. The cry of sexual anarchy came up

LIFE TAKEAWAYS

- I. All sin brings the judgment of the Triune God.
- II. All sin is not equal.
- III. Some sins cry out from the earth to the heavens to bring God down for immediate and temporal judgment.
- IV. God's immediate and temporal judgment are a warning of an ultimate and eternal judgment and a call to repentance.
- V. There is another cry from the earth to the heavens which brings God down.