

A Hunger For God's Presence

We have looked at the first step towards revival, humbling ourselves.

We will now move on to the second step as outlined in **2 Chronicles 7:14**.

Prayer, that is acknowledging our total dependency on God.

Without seeking God's presence through prayer, nothing will ever happen that will lead to revival.

The centre of revival is a rediscovery of the wonderful sense of the presence of God, and our hunger for that presence.

Duncan Campbell, who was part of the revival in Scotland in 1949, describes revival simply as *“a community saturated with God.”*

Four kinds of hunger

1 Some Christians believe that what they now know of God's presence is all there is, this is really not a spiritual hunger at all.

Revelation 3:14-17 [NIV] *“To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation. I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, I am about to spit you out of my mouth. You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realise that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.”*

Such Christians may even reject revival as extreme, unnecessary or unbiblical.

2 Some Christians who have never personally experienced revival but only heard about it, yearn for it and long for a closer walk with their Creator, but take no action.

Revelation 3:1-3 [NIV] *“To the angel of the church in Sardis write: These are the words of him who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your deeds complete in the sight of my God. Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; obey it, and repent. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you.”*

3 For some Christians they had this hunger in the past but have now lost it.

Revelation 2:2-5 [NIV] *“I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked men, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary. Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love. Remember the height from*

which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.”

The church of Ephesus had this problem.

4 Some Christians have real passion for God and His work of salvation.

Revelation 3:7-8, 10-11 [NIV] *“To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens no-one can shut, and what he shuts no-one can open. **I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no-one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.** I will make those who are of the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews though they are not, but are liars — I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you. Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth. I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no-one will take your crown.”*

Here is real hunger for God’s presence.

Four dimensions of God’s presence

1 General presence of God within His physical creation including His created children.

Psalms 139:7-12 [NIV] *“Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. If I say, “Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,” even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.”*

God’s presence fills the whole universe.

Hebrews 1:3 [NIV] *“The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, **sustaining all things by his powerful word.** After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.”*

Our very existence is totally dependent on God’s sustaining power in the universe.

Acts 17:28 [NIV] *“**‘For in him we live and move and have our being.’** As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.’”*

Without this general presence we would not exist.

2 The personal dwelling presence of God

John 3:5-8 [NIV] *“Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth, **no-one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.** Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.”*

This is a deeper presence of God in our lives that we experience at the time of our spiritual birth onwards, when our minds are opened to God's Word before we believed and received Jesus Christ into our lives we were spiritually dead.

3 The indwelling presence of God

John 14:17-18 [NIV] *“the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.”*

Here is a still deeper presence of God when the Holy Spirit not only guides us by what we hear from God's Word but He dwells in us and begins to direct our lives to accomplish God's Will for our existence.

Some Christians get this far but do not realise that there is yet another even greater presence of God in our lives.

4 God's manifest presence

John 14:21 [NIV] *“Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and **show myself to him.**”*

This is **not** just the presence of Jesus dwelling in us but the presence of Jesus being revealed among us.

This is God visiting His temple [both individually and corporately]. This is a presence we can equally feel.

At such times people know without a doubt that God is in their midst.

Acts 2:1-6 [NIV] *“When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. **They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.** All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language.”*

A presence that was experienced by both believers and unbelievers.

Revival is a time when God is in the midst of His people in a manifest presence.

God may be in His individual temple [in individual lives] but still not in His corporate temple [the assembled body of believers].

Revelation 3:20 [NIV] *“Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. **If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.**”*

The words were **not** spoken to individuals but to an assembled church.

While the believers at Laodicea were on the inside having their worship service, Jesus was on the outside knocking on the door wanting to come into that fellowship.

Jesus' manifest presence was not with them!

Why?

Because they had neglected their love relationship with Christ through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Theirs was a religion, involving rituals and law keeping but **not** an intimate relationship with God.

Such Christians had to repent of their lukewarmness and pride and open the door of their hearts to Jesus Christ. Let Christ [in the person of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ] come in to rule their lives.

A passion for more of God's presence.

Revival is to restore the manifest presence of Jesus and the Holy Spirit, for people to have a passion for God's presence.

Exodus 33:12-16 [NIV] *"Moses said to the LORD, 'You have been telling me, 'Lead these people,' but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. You have said, 'I know you by name and you have found favour with me.' If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favour with you. Remember that this nation is your people.'" The LORD replied, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." Then Moses said to him, "If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?"*

Moses had a deep desire for God to manifest His presence among his people so others would recognise them as God's people.

Psalms 84:1-2 [NIV] *"How lovely is your dwelling-place, O LORD Almighty! My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God."*

The psalmist cried out for God to manifest Himself, longed to be where God's presence and glory were.

Philippians 3:7-12 [NIV] *"But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me."*

Here Paul expresses his passion for Christ's presence.

Many Christians seek God's hand [His blessings] rather than seeking His face [His presence].

Many Christians have lost or never had a passion for God Himself.

A driving desire to know God more intimately to worship Him with all our body, mind and spirit, and to love Him and His presence with a burning passion.

Such a desire will bring God's manifest presence and revival.

Use the following scriptures in our prayers to God to reflect our hunger for His manifest presence.

Psalms 42:1-3 [NIV] *“As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God? My tears have been my food day and night, while men say to me all day long, “Where is your God?”*”

Psalms 63:1-2, 5-8 [NIV] *“O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water. I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory.” ... “My soul will be satisfied as with the richest of foods; with singing lips my mouth will praise you. On my bed I remember you; I think of you through the watches of the night. Because you are my help, I sing in the shadow of your wings. My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me.”*

Philippians 3:7-12 [NIV] *“But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. **I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.**”*

Jesus Christ is knocking at the door of this Christian fellowship.

Are we going to let Him in?

Are we going to share a meal with Him at His table [the communion table and the taking of bread and wine]?

Or are we going to reject this call and continue to worship in the way we think we should?

Not worshipping in spirit [the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ] and in truth [God’s Word as inspired by the Holy Spirit in the letters sent to the churches through the apostles of Jesus Christ]?

The choice is ours!!!