

Revival

Revival is a subject that continues to capture the attention of Christians everywhere.

Matthew 5:14-16 [NIV] *“You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”*

God makes it very clear that He has a great purpose for His people.

God wants to make His Church a glorious, radiant Church so that as darkness increases in this world, His light will shine even more brightly.

God wants this light to be so bright that unbelievers will be drawn to it and receive from us the Good News that Jesus Christ can save them from the result of their sins, eternal death.

We need to ask the question, ‘how bright is our light, individually and as a church?’

Has our light grown dim?

Does the flame of that light need reviving.

Do we need revival?

Mathew 16:18 [NIV] *“And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.”*

This is what Christ is doing, building His Church.

What part do we have in this building of the church?

Matthew 3:1-3 [NIV] *“In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the Desert of Judea and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.” This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah: “A voice of one calling in the desert, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.’”*

This message that John brought to the people, to prepare the way for Christ first coming.

This message is just the same today as we are to prepare a people for Christ’s second coming.

This preparation must first start in our hearts – then in our homes, and in our churches.

Only then will God’s glory be revealed to the nations.

Scripture and revival church history, both tell us that God’s manifest presence does **not** come automatically or easily.

Revelation 3:19-22 [NIV] *“Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent. 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. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”*

This is what the Holy Spirit is saying right now to the churches, and some are already responding and revival is happening.

Revelation 3:14-18 [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. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so that you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so that you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so that you can see.**”*

This was said to a church that had become “lukewarm” when it came to doing God’s work here on earth.

A church that was blinded to its own poor spiritual condition.

Does this describe us and our church life today?

There are conditions to meet and preparations to be made before God can come in revival power among us.

For our light to burn brightly in this darkened world.

2 Chronicles 7:14 [NIV] *“if my people, who are called by my name, will **humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.**”*

This is a key verse that tells us what these conditions are and how we “prepare the way” for Christ’s return.

Though spoken to King Solomon at the opening of the Temple in Jerusalem, this verse gives a universal principle that can apply to God’s people in any generations, especially ours today.

What is Revival?

“Revival is God bending down to the dying embers of a fire that is just about to go out and breathing into it until it bursts into flame.” C. Evans

“Revival is an inrush of divine life into a body threatening to become a corpse.” D. Panton

Some people think revival is powerful evangelism with many unbelievers coming to Christ and filling our churches.

This may be the **result** of revival but **not** where revival starts.

The word “revival” means “to bring back to life again”.

Revival – has to do with reviving those who already have a spiritual life, **believers**.

Evangelism – has to do with bringing life to those who have **no** spiritual life at all, **unbelievers**.

Acts 3:19 [NIV] *“Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of **refreshing** may come from the Lord,”*

These words define revival.

Revival is simply New Testament Christianity, Christians getting back to what should be normal.

What a sick and sleeping church needs is **not** better programmes, **not** greater effort, **not** more teaching **but** a powerful visitation and revelation of God.

Revival is God breaking into our lives and our church in a powerful way to reveal Himself to us in awesome holiness and great power.

A wake up call that shakes us out of our complacency and stirs us to action.

Revival reveals those things in our lives that are preventing us from enlarging God's Kingdom.

Revival is painful but absolutely essential before God can manifest His presence.

A quote from James Burns in 1909 that describes the Welsh revival of 1904.

*“To the church, a revival means **humiliation**, a bitter knowledge of **unworthiness** and an open **confession of sin** on the part of her **ministers and people**. It is not the easy and glorious thing many think it to be, who imagine it fills the pews and reinstates the church in power and authority. It comes to scorch before it heals. It comes to condemn ministers and people for their **unfaithful** witness, for their **selfish** living, for their **neglect** of the cross, and to call them to daily renunciation, to an evangelical poverty and to a deep and daily consecration. That is why a revival has never been popular with large numbers within the church. Because it says nothing to them of power such as they have learned to love, or of ease, or of success. **Revival accuses us of sin, it tells us that we are dead, it calls us to awake from a sleep, to renounce the world and to follow Christ.**”*

Malachi 3:1-2 [Living Bible] *“Listen, I will send my messenger before me to **prepare the way**, and then the One you are looking for will come suddenly to His Temple. The Messenger of God's Promises, to bring you great joy. Yes He is surely coming, says the Lord of Hosts.”*

Two messengers are mentioned in these verses.

John the Baptist who came before Jesus Christ.

The Messenger of God bringing the Good News of the New Covenant, Jesus Christ.

Malachi 3:3 [Living Bible] *“But who can live when He appears? Who can endure His coming? For He is like a blazing fire refining precious metal and He can bleach the dirtiest garments! Like a refiner of silver He will sit and closely watch as the dross is burnt away. He will purify the Levites, the ministers of God, refining them like gold and silver, so that they will do the work of God with pure hearts.”*

The next verses refer to John the Baptist's message of preparation before Christ's first coming but also others who will come like John the Baptist in *“the spirit of Elijah”*.

Luke 1:17 [NIV] *“And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”*

Before the second coming of Christ.

Malachi 3:6 [Living Bible] *“For I am the Lord, I do not change. That is why you are not already utterly destroyed, for my mercy endures for ever.”*

God send Elijah and many other prophets in the same *“spirit”*, the Holy Spirit, to prepare His intervention in human history.

John the Baptist came filled with the same Holy Spirit to prepare for the Son of God to enter human history the first time.

The Holy Spirit is now filling many “John the Baptists” to bring the same message to God’s people worldwide to prepare them for Christ’s second coming.

Revival is first of all God coming to refine and purify His people so that we might burn for Him again with a pure and Holy fire.

This prepares us for the heart of revival, which is God restoring us to Fellowship and intimacy with Himself because He loves us.

Then reaching out through us to people who are lost, broken and alienated from Him.

If this is what revival means, do we really want such a painful journey?

Can we answer Jesus Christ as Peter did as recorded in John?

John 6:60, 66-69 [NIV] *“On hearing it, many of his disciples said, “This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?” ... “From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him. “You do not want to leave too, do you?” Jesus asked the Twelve. Simon Peter answered him, “**Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.**”*

However painful a journey we have to endure only Jesus Christ has the words, the promises, of eternal life.

There are other scriptures that tell of people who were longing for revival.

We can use these to “*pray back to God*” for revival in our time.

Psalm 85:4-9 [NIV] *“Restore us again, O God our Saviour, and put away your displeasure towards us. Will you be angry with us for ever? Will you prolong your anger through all generations? **Will you not revive us again**, that your people may rejoice in you? Show us your unfailing love, O LORD, and grant us your salvation. I will listen to what God the LORD will say; he promises peace to his people, his saints, but let them not return to folly. Surely his salvation is near those who fear him, that his glory may dwell in our land.”*

Isaiah 64:1-9 [NIV] *“Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains would tremble before you! As when fire sets twigs ablaze and causes water to boil, come down to make your name known to your enemies and cause the nations to quake before you! For when you did awesome things that we did not expect, you came down, and the mountains trembled before you. Since ancient times no-one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who acts on behalf of those who wait for him. You come to the help of those who gladly do right, who remember your ways. But when we continued to sin against them, you were angry. How then can we be saved? All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away. No-one calls on your name or strives to lay hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us and made us waste away because of our sins. Yet, O LORD, you are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand. Do not be angry beyond measure, O LORD; do not remember our sins for ever. Oh, look upon us we pray, for we are all your people.”*

Habakkuk 3:2 [NIV] *“LORD, I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, O LORD. Renew them in our day, in our time make them known; in wrath remember mercy.”*

We need to read one or two verses at a time then express the same thoughts back to God using our own words.

Such persistent prayers will be answered by God because they are according to His Will.

1 Timothy 2:1-4 [NIV] *“I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone, for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. **This is good, and pleases God our Saviour, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.**”*

This is the overall will and plan of God and we are called to be a part of bringing it to fruition.