

Revival

- I. Those of you who were here a year ago have seen our church grow at a very rapid pace.
 - a. Other pastors in our association saying that our church is experiencing revival.
 - b. We have grown from an average attendance of 70 in January to over 100 now. Others see the 18 people baptized in the past year as “above average” for a church our size.
 - i. But folks, that is not revival. That is normal Christianity.
 - ii. Every church, if it is following Jesus Christ and loving, praying and caring for people should be experiencing that kind of growth.

- II. This morning’s subject is about the concept of revival.
 - a. Most of our experience concerning revival has been about a set of meetings, sometimes held in a tent or a church.
 - i. We commonly apply the term “revival” to mass evangelism meetings as if what we hope will happen will be the turning of many hearts to Christ.
 - ii. But revival’s effects are initially felt by believers, not by unbelievers.
 - b. Maybe you have seen a sign as you go driving down the road, “Revival – one week only” or “Revival at 6:00 pm Sunday.” or “Revival –Evangelist Jones speaking.”
 - i. Those who are conducting these meetings may believe that they are conducting a revival, but these are only meetings, they are not what historically can be called revival.
 - ii. I got news for you...if heaven sent, Holy Spirit filled revival touches a church, there won’t be any signs specifying when it will end, how long it will last, or who will be preaching.
 - iii. When God gets a hold of a group of people and awakens their hearts and their spirits to His presence, there is not going to be anyone left the same anywhere near there. And there better not be anyone in that church trying to take credit for what God is doing.

- III. **Revival is an extraordinary movement of the Holy Spirit producing supernatural results.**
 - a. It is not the ordinary result of ordinary work.
 - i. But what God does in revival is take ordinary people, and through their ordinary efforts produce extraordinary results.
 - ii. In the upper room at Pentecost, God took the apostles and those with them and empowered them in such a way that turned a world upside down in a very short period of time.
 - iii. A simple prayer meeting on Fulton Street in NYC in 1847 became a prayer wave that swept across the nation by which thousands of people were saved.
 1. It has been over 100 years since the last spiritual awakening occurred in the United States. They are so rare that we have so become dulled to their absence and think that positive church growth is revival.
 2. It is so extraordinary, it is like a fire ignited by lightning from the heavens: Without organization, advertising, and often without human leadership, the Spirit of God alters the hearts of men and women and changes the social attitudes of churches, neighborhoods, cities and entire nations.
 3. It begins with one or two or a handful of people who have an encounter with the Glory of God and fully surrender to Him. As a result, the movement becomes infectious, but with positive benefits.
 4. Revival is God Himself stepping into the stream of history and altering its course by confronting men’s hearts with His glory.

5. **The Welsh revival of 1904** was a mighty invasion of the Spirit; God's Kingdom radically manifested on earth.
 - a. "The earnings of workmen, instead of being squandered on drink and vice, were now bringing great joy to their families. Outstanding debts were being paid by thousands of young converts. Restitution was the order of the day. The gambling and alcohol business lost their trade and the theaters closed down from lack of patronage. Football during this time was forgotten by both players and fans, though nothing was mentioned from the pulpits about it. The people had new lives and new interests. Political meetings were canceled or abandoned. They seemed completely out of the question since nobody was interested. The political leaders from parliament in London abandoned themselves to the revival meetings. The man-made denominational barriers completely collapsed as believers and pastors worshipped their majestic Lord together." One of the outstanding features of the revival was the confession of sin, not but among the unsaved alone, but among the saved. All were broken down and melted before the cross of Christ.
 - b. Perhaps the most dramatic change that took place was that worked in the hearts of the miners. Coal mining is far from the romantic occupation it is often portrayed as. These men did back-breaking toil in cramped conditions with the constant threat of roof-collapse and explosive gases. Yet when the Holy Spirit touched them, He transformed their lives to such a degree that the pit-ponies could no longer understand instructions given to them, so accustomed had they become to receiving blows and being sworn at! The men worked with a renewed vigor that set production figures soaring. When work was done they would hurry home for a quick meal and a bath and then be off to the chapel until the early hours of the morning, singing hymns as they went! There was a new excitement about eternal things. Family devotions and public prayer meetings were started and continued regularly for years. The sales of Bibles increased to such a degree that the shops sold their entire stocks.

IV. Revival is the result of an overpowering encounter with the Glory of God.

- a. Some of you may remember the sermon series I did on the Glory of God a few months back.
 - i. It is important that we revisit some of those principles that we learned then to understand how the Glory of God is related to revival.
 - ii. We define the Glory of God as "**the visible majesty of the divine presence.**"
 - iii. This is where God's majesty becomes something that people encounter and they know that they know that they know that they are in His Unmistakable Presence.
 1. Around Christmas, you will hear the Christmas story read and you will hear the story of the shepherds who were in the fields tending to their flocks when an angel appeared.
 2. Luke 2:8-10 "*In the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened.*"
 - a. Most casual readers see the word "Angel" and assume that is why the shepherds were afraid.
 - b. But it says that the "*glory of the Lord shone around them.*"

- c. It was the visible majesty of the divine presence that shook the shepherds to the core of their being.
 - d. I guarantee that those shepherds were never the same after that encounter, both with the message of the angels, the glory of God they witnessed and experienced, and their subsequent visit to the baby Jesus.
 - 3. An encounter with the Glory of God never leaves you quite the same.
 - iv. You might want to know that Jesus came to reveal the Father's glory.
 - 1. In John 11:40 Jesus said, "*Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the Glory of God?*"
 - a. I urge you, as you read your bibles, watch for how often the word "glory" appears.
 - b. Habakkuk 2:14 says, "*for the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.*"
 - c. It is God's nature to reveal His glory.
 - d. It is God's plan to display His glory.
 - e. And it is God's will that His Church display that glory..."*the visible majesty of the divine presence.*"
- b. Why is this foundational to our subject of revival...or for that matter, to your life?
 - i. If you live your life on the assumption that you are the center of the universe and that "it" is all about "me" then you will be sorely disappointed both in this life and the one to come.
 - ii. But if you recognize that God is God...He is at the center of all creation and that He is the reason for our existence, then you are on the beginning of a journey of delight and satisfaction.
 - 1. God Himself is the answer to your need and mine.
 - 2. You and I were made to worship God and to LONG to see His Glory.
 - iii. When God's glory and presence is your priority you will experience God in a way that cannot be described in any other way than life changing and amazing.
 - 1. Every day becomes an adventure in experiencing God and watching for His hand to move in your life.
 - 2. Worship becomes real and tangible and not rote and routine.
 - a. If you read in your bibles some of the accounts of folks who encountered God's Glory, you find out that they could do only one thing!
 - i. They worshipped Him.
 - ii. They could do nothing else!
 - b. If you wonder why you aren't worshipping, why your experience is dry and empty on Sunday mornings it might be because you are not encountering the glory of God.
 - i. He is here.
 - ii. He hasn't gone anywhere.
 - iii. But we come physically to church with our hearts somewhere else.
 - iv. We show up...but God wants more. He wants to encounter you!
 - iv. Are you beginning to see the connection between the glory of God and revival?
 - 1. Revival is about the Glory of God! It is not about us!

V. How will/won't revival come?

- a. Revival will not come as a result of someone preaching about the evils of sin.
 - i. Preachers have been doing that for years, telling people who don't know God about how bad they are.

- ii. Folks, if a person doesn't have Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, why do we expect them to act as if they do?
 - 1. Do we forget that the Christian life is a new birth, a birth in which our nature and core identity is changed
 - 2. How can we ever expect a non-Christian to act like a Christian?
 - 3. We have Christians acting like non-Christians for heaven's sake.
- iii. The culture war of our country cannot be won by calling non-Christians immoral.
- iv. The culture war in our country can only be won if it is waged by Christians living like Christians.
 - 1. 2 Chronicles 7:14 doesn't say, "if the people of a nation will turn from their wicked ways then I will heal their land."
 - 2. It says, "*When 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, will forgive their sin and will heal their land*"
 - a. It is addressing those to those who belong to God.
 - b. But we like to point out to God everyone else that needs revival, but we really don't want too much of it for ourselves.
- b. Let me explain real briefly, that passage of 2 Chronicles 7:14 and several points it makes. Many people mistakenly believe that if they will pray hard and long enough, that God will send revival. That is not exactly what this passage says.
 - i. Let me illustrate: In the Welsh Revival of 1904, a handful of Deacons had gathered 3 nights a week to pray for revival. They prayed for months and were becoming discouraged that God had not answered their plea. Then one stood up and said, "why should we expect God to send revival to our nation if we ourselves aren't right with God?"
 - ii. The first imperative in that passage is about "humbling" oneself. That term is dealing with brokenness. It is dealing with surrender.
 - 1. Prayer is the result of that awareness of dependence and brokenness.
 - 2. Seeking God's face or His glory is the flipside of living for ourselves.
 - 3. When we repent, we turn away from something and toward something.
 - 4. In this passage, God is calling us to turn away from our self-directed lives and turn toward seeking His face.

VI. Brokenness is the result of our encounter with God's Glory

- a. Psalm 51:17 "*The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.*"
- b. We want a painless revival.
 - i. We don't want brokenness.
 - ii. Yet revival...the result of an encounter with the Living, Holy, Glorious God will result in brokenness.
 - iii. **Brokenness is not an emotion, it is a choice.**
 - 1. It is not a long face or a series of trials (although a series of trials might produce brokenness).
 - 2. Brokenness is humbling, it is surrender. It is the recognition of my poverty and dependence upon God, like we spoke about last week (blessed are the poor/destitute in spirit).
 - 3. Brokenness is an act of the will. It is not just a one time experience or crisis experience.
 - 4. Brokenness is a LIFESTYLE. A lifestyle of agreeing with God about the nature of my life and my need.

- a. Brokenness is a lifestyle of surrender of my will to God, like a horse's will surrendered to its rider.
 - b. It is the shattering of my self-will so that the life of Jesus can be released through me.
 - iv.
- c. There is a quote by AW Tozer, a well known author who said, *"Self is the opaque veil that hides the face of God from us."*
 - i. Self is what keeps us from viewing the glory of God!
 - ii. Self is what prevents us from experiencing revival.
 - iii. A self-run, self-led, self-filled life will not see the glory of God nor will it experience the joy God intends for His creation.
 - 1. Self must be broken.
- d. **When God reveals His glory, He does so in order to transform us and our relationship with Him.**
 - i. Every person who encountered the glory of God was changed by that encounter.
 - ii. From Moses on the mountain, to David in the temple, to Ezekiel's vision of God's glory entering the temple, to Isaiah's encounter in chapter 6 of Isaiah. Even the disciples at the mount of Transfiguration were changed by what they saw. Stephen, the first martyr of the church saw the glory of God while being stoned and was strengthened...and one who witnessed the stoning was touched without realizing what he had seen (Paul).
 - 1. If you desire to see revival in your life and in our church, begin praying for a deeper encounter with God.
 - 2. Pray for brokenness in your life.
 - 3. Pray that God will have His way with you.
 - 4. Ask God to show you what is holding Him back from displaying His glory in you.
- e. **Revival always produces brokenness.**
 - i. If most folks who cry out for revival heard this they would stop crying out for it.
 - 1. That is because revival begins in me.
 - ii. **Brokenness is a state of being that sees yourself as you are and God the way He is.**
 - 1. Its definition is the same as humility.
 - 2. Brokenness is the result of glimpsing God's glory.
 - 3. Tonya's encounter with God in the hospital room. God's glory. The visible majesty of the divine presence. That encounter led her to a life-changing experience...to receive Jesus Christ and to be made into a brand new creation.
 - 4. Such an encounter with God will cause conviction of sin – in other words, we will become acutely aware of how our minimizing and rationalizing our sin has been nothing more than a cover up so we won't have to change.
- f. Let me just address for a moment, the issue of how we look at our sin.
 - i. How do you view your sin? As a little habit?
 - 1. As something you will someday deal with?
 - 2. As something that isn't as bad as "so and so?"
 - ii. As long as you excuse it, minimize it, rationalize it, you are giving it control and you are keeping yourself from God.
 - iii. You must call sin sin.
 - 1. When you see it you must call it such.
 - 2. "Against you alone have I sinned." (ps 51:4).
 - 3. All sin is against God.
 - a. It isn't just against your own body or against your friend or your employer.
 - b. It is primarily against God.

4. How far out of bounds does a football or basketball player have to be to have broken the rule?
 - a. Actually, just ON THE LINE is enough.
 - b. Some may be 10 feet out, and you may be 1” out, but you both are out of bounds.
 - c. You both will get the SAME penalty!
5. It is the same with sin.
 - a. Its penalty is death: eternal separation from God.
 - b. You need a savior to take the penalty.
 - c. And if you have trusted Jesus as savior, you need to admit your sin to Him and not excuse it.

- iv. When Brokenness comes and revival begins, it will lead us to agonize over our sin.
 - a. There have been at least 3 folks in our church who have come recently to a place where they were broken of a significant sin in their life. This brokenness came with agony. It came with a desperate hating their sin, hating their compromise, hating their excuses and saying ENOUGH!
 - b. It is as if they said, “O God, save me from my self and sin., from my wickedness and depravity, or kill me...but do not let me live another day in this awful condition.”
 - c. Sin that has been covered up for years comes to light.
- v. That has been happening here in this church.
 1. It is happening in your lives and it has happened in my life.
 2. God wants you to be free.
 3. He wants you to experience His very best.
 4. And He is stepping into our stream of history and revealing His holiness and glory.
 5. He wants you to see your darkness and to turn from it toward His marvelous light and glory!

- VII. Toronto Blessing – more accurately called a time of refreshing in 1994-1995, hundreds of thousands of people flocked to a church in Toronto where the Holy Spirit was doing a unique work. The news media made a big deal of the fact that people were falling under the Spirit’s influence and laughing uncontrollably.
- a. I read up on what the results were of this “refreshing” that occurred 10 years ago, and found a few things:
 - i. Those who were there learned that experience for experience's sake is just another form of idolatry and is a destructive self-indulgence.
 - ii. The purpose of refreshing is for service, so the test of true refreshing from God is whether our service has increased!
 - iii. The laughter that made the headlines gave way to sorrow for sin.
 - iv. The outward signs that everyone talked about were not the important thing...it is the changed lives that are now spread all over the world.
 - v. By their fruits you shall know them...and at Toronto, the hype gave way to changed lives.

VIII. I have a few diagnostic questions for you concerning your awareness of our poverty before God. We have called that awareness and dependency “brokenness.” Think about these for yourself and not for someone else or a spouse. For a change, this is about you.

Unbroken	Broken
Focuses on the failures and faults of others	Overwhelmed by a sense of their own spiritual need.
Independent, self sufficient spirit	Recognize their need for others
Have to prove they are right	Are willing to yield their need to be right.
Self-protective of their time, rights, and reputation	Are self-denying
Desire to be a success	Motivated to be faithful and make others a success
Have a drive for recognition and appreciation	Are thrilled to have God use them even if others don't notice
Are wounded when others are promoted and they are overlooked.	Are eager for others to get the credit and rejoice when others are recognized.
Keep others at arm's length	Take risks to get closer to others
Unapproachable or defensive when criticized	Receive criticism with a humble, open spirit
Concerned with their image and reputation	Care more about what God thinks than what others do.
Find it difficult to share spiritual needs with others	Open and transparent about their needs
Wants to be sure no one finds out they have sinned, first instinct is to cover it up.	Once broken, don't care who knows or who finds out, are willing to be exposed b/c they have nothing to lose.
Have a hard time admitting fault.	Quick to admit failure and seek forgiveness.
Deal with generalities when confessing sin.	Able to acknowledge specifics when confessing sin.
Are more concerned about consequences of their sin.	Are grieved over the cause and root of their sin.
Compare themselves with others	Compare themselves only with the holiness of God
Don't think they have anything to repent of	Realize they must continually repent.
Don't think they need revival but are sure everyone else does	Continually aware of their need for a fresh encounter with God and a fresh filling of His Holy Spirit.

IX. **For us to meet God in Revival, we must meet Him first in brokenness.**

- a. In other words, it is possible for God to be doing a work and you miss it...because you are resisting the brokenness from which comes life.
 - i. You can't see Him because self is in the way.
 - ii. Self is an opaque window, you cannot see the glory of God with it in the way.
- b. Self- the unbroken, unsundered part of us stands like an opaque window. But like a pane of glass, it can be broken. Then the glory of God will shine in and through our lives.
 - i. In prep for this sermon, I asked God to show me my unbroken self. I will share with you a few things. I hope you will see me as a fellow-struggler in this journey with Jesus. I don't have it all together.
 1. I struggle to pray because I spend too much time watching tv and then am too tired to pray effectively.
 2. I guard my time jealously and resist God's call to use it for His purposes.
 3. I keep folks at arms length because it is less painful and vulnerable, but in so doing I rob you and myself of God's best.
 - ii. It is in these things and more that I have resisted God's grace and His efforts to us me. I confessed them to God but I admit them to you, because this is the first step toward breaking and freedom. The next step is the hard one. That is changing, turning from these behaviors and letting God have me.

- c. Maybe today you too are struggling. That list exposed some things. Self is that opaque glass. Confession is the first step to breaking it. Won't you do that today? Won't you begin the journey toward a revived spirit and a heart that longs for God's glory?

Lets Pray.