



sermon study summary

Reclaiming Prayer

INTRODUCTION

Where does spiritual revival begin? In the Psalms we find a desperate plea for revival (Psalm 85:4-7). The psalmist asks for restoration between God and His people, that they would find their highest joy in Him, and be saturated with His presence.

In contemporary Christian circles, some equate revival with evangelistic meetings resulting in ecstatic, emotional experiences, whipping up spiritual frenzy, altar calls, etc. These are misconceptions. True revival is when we can look back and see the movement of God's Spirit and the ensuing fruit. In the Bible 'to revive' occurs several times, and in Hebrew it means, 'to bring back to life, breathing life into something that is dead or dying'. Revival is a work of God within the Church, primarily among believers.

When we accept Christ as our Savior, we receive spiritual life. However, it's easy to become spiritually lukewarm and conform to worldly patterns. Throughout the Bible we see God's people repeatedly losing their spiritual zeal, worshiping idols, tolerating sin, and wandering far from God. Only God's Holy Spirit can restore, renew, awaken and bring us back to life in God.

There are two dimensions to revival: personal and corporate. Personally, revival happens when the work of the Holy Spirit is intensified and ushers in a season of spiritual breakthroughs. Corporately, the church comes alive as a ripple effect of personal revival and results in an explosion of evangelism. Revival is only through God, but our role is to prepare for His Holy Spirit to work through us.

In the coming weeks, we will explore are four responses that we must reclaim in order to experience revival. This weekend we deal with: Reclaiming Prayer. As God's people seek Him, He will respond to our fervent prayers. Through Christ, we are in a covenant relationship with God, part of His family, and we should be motivated and be responsible in reclaiming prayer in the Church through a four-fold response based on 2 Chronicles 7:11-16.

Humble ourselves: Kneeling is a posture of dependence, a visible mark of our total reliance on God. Evan Roberts, a young Bible college student was led by The Holy Spirit to pray, 'Oh Lord, bend me.' This became the theme of the Welsh revival in 1904, and in a few months, 100,000 people were added to the Church.

Pray: Personal and corporate prayer are critical for a Church congregation, and as God's people we are called to pray faithfully.

Seek God's Face: God is our only hope of salvation and we cry out desperately for Him. Seeking God is an ongoing experience and matures us spiritually.

Turn from our wicked ways: Repent and refrain from anything displeasing to God. Repentance begins in the house of God and then spreads to the world around us.

When we are humble before God, pray, seek His face and turn from our wicked ways, the kingdom of God is experienced in our midst, and we have a conscious awareness of God's presence, power and love. We can't make it happen but our God is wholly able to do so. He is the same yesterday, today and forever. We need to reclaim prayer in order to bring about revival. All praise and thanks to God!



sermon study guide

IN - PURSUE RELATIONSHIP

1. What activity gives you a sense of being revived or refreshed?
2. What are your personal experiences with spiritual revival?

UP - PURSUE GOD

Read 2 Chronicles 7:11-16

3. What is the relationship between prayer and humbling one's self? How does our physical posture play into this?
4. From this passage what does God require of his people? What does it look like for God's people to fulfill those requirements?

OUT - PURSUE MISSION

5. What habits (or activities) take your focus and time away from prayer? What steps do you need to take to re-prioritize your life?
6. According to Ashwin, God gives us a four-fold response to the increasing chaos of sin in our communities and nation: Humble Ourselves, Pray, Seek God's face, and Turn from our wicked ways. Where are you at in this process? What changes do you need to make to allow God's Spirit to revive you/us?

THE WORD (NIV)

2 Chronicles 7:11-16

11 When Solomon had finished the temple of the Lord and the royal palace, and had succeeded in carrying out all he had in mind to do in the temple of the Lord and in his own palace, 12 the Lord appeared to him at night and said:

"I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for myself as a temple for sacrifices.

13 "When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command locusts to devour the land or send a plague among my people, 14 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 I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land. 15 Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayers offered in this place. 16 I have chosen and consecrated this temple so that my Name may be there forever. My eyes and my heart will always be there.

For Personal Reflection/Prayer:

As God's people we are called to humble ourselves, pray, seek God's face, and turn from our wicked ways daily. Take some time this week to do just that. Get down on your knees (if you're physically able), pray for a stoking of the flames in your life, seek out God's face, and then seek out any wicked ways in your life so that you may repent of them.