

REVIVAL

What to expect and how to prepare

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- **I'd like you to imagine with me for a moment**, if you will, what our community and our world could be like if we all truly allowed God to be in charge, if our Lord's Prayer were answered and His will was really being done on earth as it is in heaven. What would it look like? The Lord gave Habakkuk a vision:

“For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.”

Imagine...

- **What about us?** For the past few years we've been earnestly engaged in Strategic Planning, praying and seeking God's face to give our ministry a window into the future – not just our future but a clear sense of His heart for our community. The long-term vision our planning group received goes like this:

“We look forward to a time when our community is brimming with God's love, where everyone feels a sense of belonging, safety, and well-being.”

- That's quite a view, isn't it? It's above and beyond what John Lennon imagined, a goal that human hands clearly can't make happen apart from a genuine, God-breathed revival.

Meanwhile back home...

- *“God's quickening visitation of his people, touching their hearts and deepening his work of grace in their lives”*
– J. I. Packer
- *“The return of the Church from her backslidings, and the conversion of sinners”*
– Charles Finney
- *“The awakening or quickening of God's people to their true nature and purpose”*
– Robert Coleman
- *“The sovereign act of God, in which He restores His own backsliding people to repentance, faith and obedience”*
– Stephen Olford

What is revival?

Is there a distinction between renewal and revival?

- **RENEWAL:** When God touches and moves on the heart of a single individual
- **REVIVAL:** When God moves beyond individuals and revitalizes an entire community of faith (sometimes used in a more limited way to refer to a series of church meetings)
- **AWAKENING:** When the wider society is improved visibly by a move of God (often the term “revival” still is used when its influence spreads beyond the faith community to include the broader impact of an awakening)

Distinctions



Washington's Navy 1775

- The inspirational phrase **“An Appeal to Heaven”** was emblazoned on George Washington’s Revolutionary War flag to remind those over whom it flew that after all other alternatives of seeking justice have been exhausted, only an "appeal to heaven" remains. Colonists who saw it were reminded to be wholly reliant upon heaven and the God Who reigns supreme. Their focus was Jesus Christ, and their concern was living by conviction without fear of a worldly cost.
- In our times when truth and morality lie dying in the streets, this same phrase is being used by many as a rallying cry for revival.

“An Appeal to Heaven”

- **In the history or religion, no phenomenon is more apparent than the recurrence of revivals.** At certain intervals there sweeps over certain districts a passion of repentance. Large numbers of persons who have been dead or indifferent to spiritual realities then become intensely awakened to them. They are arrested in the midst of their worldly occupations; they are suddenly seized by a terror of wrong-doing, and fear as of an impending doom haunts their minds. Flinging all else aside they earnestly seek a way of escape, and cry out for salvation.

– Rev. James Burns *“Revivals, Their Laws and Leaders”* 1909

Recurrence of Revivals

- **These movements, when once begun, are found to spread with amazing rapidity**, they pervade the atmosphere like a contagion, and burst out in unexpected places as if carried by unseen hands. They often produce phenomena of the strangest character, and awaken forces at other times quiescent, or too faint to be recognized.
- Frequently these movements are local and limited in their area, but **sometimes they sweep over whole peoples**, and produce the most momentous results.

– Rev. James Burns

The Spread of Revival

Revivals of faith, from Old Testament times to the present, **historically come in cycles.**

- 1. First disunity and social and moral decay set in** leading to a growing sense of emptiness, hunger and yearning for better times.
- 2. This is followed by a renewed sensitivity to spiritual matters** and rediscovery of the power of the Word of God, leading into a rising time of inspired revitalization of human ideals and values.
- 3. The result is a groundswell of conviction and repentance** that produces a host of positive, godly moral and social endeavors, after which the community drifts into an ebbing time, becomes less cohesive, and settles back into more conventional social patterns.
- 4. Finally disunity and social and moral decay set in again** and reach a point where the cycle starts over, each time building on advances that have been made in the past.

Revival Cycles

- **Sadly but auspiciously, right now our society is pretty deep in the “social and moral decay” phase** and heading around the corner into the “growing hunger and yearning for better times” stage. This is especially visible in the parts of our community that we’ve been called to serve where intergenerational poverty, crime, physical and mental illness, loss of moral values, and discouragement have taken hold so tenaciously.
- Meanwhile our national scene is troubled by divided and discordant political visions and hopes, a wildly drifting moral compass, rapidly waning commitment to its traditional **“In God We Trust”** credo, and surprisingly lukewarm, fragmented, and unfocused spiritual discernment.

Where are we now?

- **Unbridled choice is being confused with freedom,** license with liberty, rationalizations with righteousness, alternative facts with truth, expediency with wisdom, and religion with genuine faith in the living God.
- As a nation, as a community, and as individuals we've lost sight of what it means to "Trust in the Lord with all our hearts, lean not to our own understanding, and acknowledge Him as Lord in all of our ways."

Choice *vs* Freedom

- **Everywhere we look are countless fatherless children**, rich and poor - sheep without a shepherd wandering into their own paths, lost in sin and confusion, and unable to get back to a home they never really had.
- In the midst of this, our Father God has sent his only begotten Son to seek his prodigal sons and daughters and bring them back Home with Him: “I will be their Father, and they can be My Children, if only they will hear my Son’s voice, come, and let my Holy Spirit bring about the adoption in them that they so earnestly desire...”

Fatherless children

- **In the meantime, where has God's church been?**

All too often we've allowed ourselves to become marginalized, fragmented into thousands of denominations and isolated congregations each gathered into its own silo seeking its own religious path, existing in the community but not serving our neighbors in a unified witness.

*“If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me,”
Jesus proclaimed.*

- **Is this the time?** Can we turn “if” into “when” and then say “What about now, Lord?”

Where is God's church?

- **We live in a nation that has been wonderfully blessed**, rich in so many ways but deeply separated into the proud haves and the unhappy have nots.

Into this gap we cry “Come, Lord Jesus! Pour out your Holy Spirit! Redeem us and our community! Reveal our real Father to us and adopt us into your family!”

- **Will we be ready when He responds to our cry?** His call will come to the poor in spirit, to those who are most aware of the grief, pain, guilt, shame, and anger that wrongdoing and injustice produce. He will come, not to the well but to the sick – not to the righteous but to sinners, and His call will bring us soul searching to our knees as we seek to help our neighbors.

Will we be ready?

- **To the church, a revival means humiliation**, a bitter knowledge of unworthiness and an open humiliating 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 ever been unpopular 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; it accuses them of sin; it tells them they are dead; it calls them to awake, to renounce the world and to follow Christ.

– Rev. James Burns

Revival and the Church

Relationship Between Revival and Evangelism

1. Revival and evangelism are different in nature.
2. Revival and evangelism issue from the same source and flow together.
3. Revival always produces evangelism.
4. Evangelism, when combined with discipling, sustains revival.

Revival or Evangelism?

Praying for revival and feeling troubled personally?

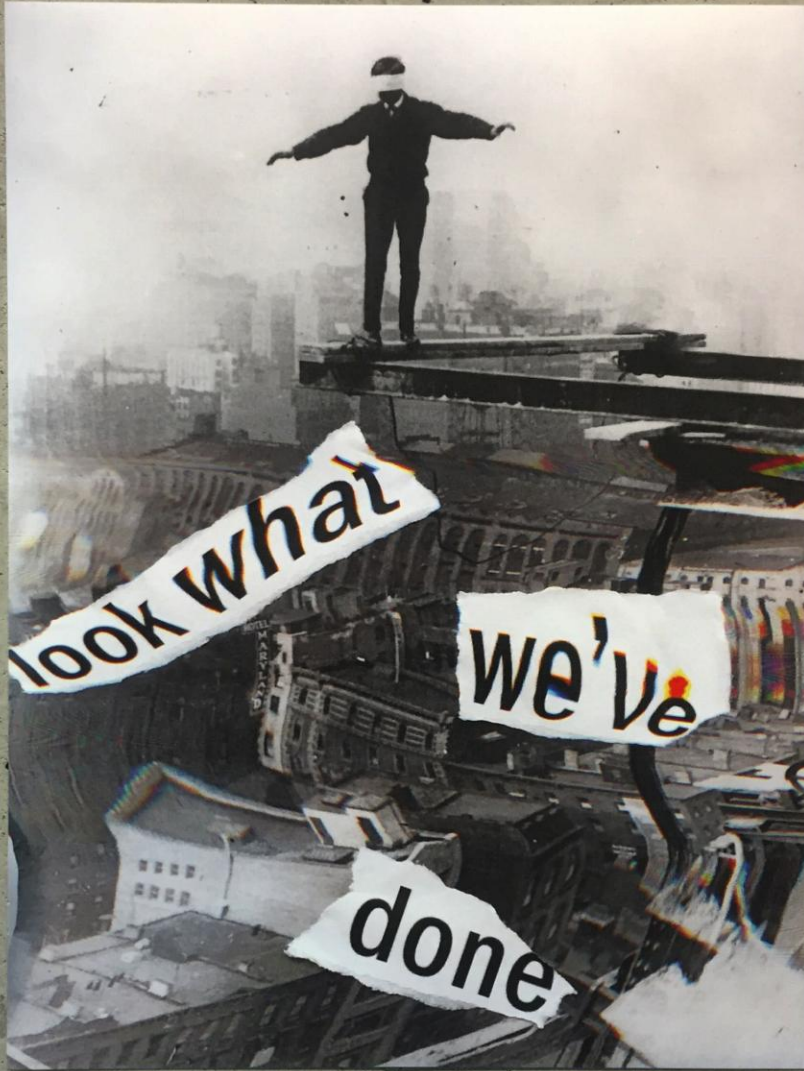
- Perhaps if you're feeling broken, it's because you are.
- Or maybe you feel like you're burning out because you're overheating from too much internal friction.
- Practicing the presence of God and seeking His mercy, forgiveness, and cleansing (sanctification) is the solution, not a change in location, job, pay scale, EMR, or marriage partner...

Troubled Idealist?

- **We are made in the image of God.** And wasn't God's heart made to be broken too? Wounds can be openings to the beauty in us. And our weaknesses can be a container for God's glory...
- **God does great things through the greatly wounded.** So take heart: God sees the broken as the best and He sees the best in the broken and He calls the wounded to be the world changers...

– Ann Voskamp

Made to be broken



Devin Halladay
Look What We've Done
Interdisciplinary Sculpture
& Graphic Design
Freshman

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- **For the word of God is living and active**, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

– Hebrews 4.12



A two-edged sword

- **Search me, O God, and know my heart!**

Try me and know my thoughts!
And see if there be any grievous way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting

– Psalm 139:23-24)

- Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD:
though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as
white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they
shall become like wool.

– Isaiah 1:18

Fearless Moral Inventory 23

AND PRAY
 CALLED BY MY NAME SEEK MY FACE TURN FROM
 HUMBLE THEMSELVES THEIR WICKED WAYS
 SEEK MY FACE I WILL FORGIVE THEIR SIN I WILL HEAR
 IF MY PEOPLE WHO ARE CALLED THEN I WILL HEAR FROM HEAVEN AND FORGIVE THEIR SIN FROM HEAVEN
 THEN I WILL HEAR FROM HEAVEN HEAL THEIR LAND WHO ARE CALLED BY MY NAME HUMBLE THEMSELVES

CALLED
 THEIR SIN
 HUMBLE
 THEMSELVES AND PRAY
 HEAL THEIR LAND
PRAY
 I WILL
 HEAR
 SEEK MY FACE
 AND TURN FROM THEIR WICKED

IF MY PEOPLE

FROM HEAVEN I WILL FORGIVE THEIR SIN AND SEEK MY FACE
 WHO ARE CALLED BY MY NAME TURN FROM THEIR WICKED WAYS **THEIR LAND**
 PRAY AND SEEK HUMBLE THEMSELVES AND PRAY
 HEAR FROM HEAVEN **HEAL** AND SEEK MY FACE
 CALLED BY MY NAME
 TURN FROM
 FORGIVE
 HUMBLE
 HEAVEN

WHO ARE
 CALLED
 BY
 MY
 NAME

2 Chronicles 7:14

- **I firmly believe that we're on the verge of another wave of His Holy Spirit**, a profound God-given time of humble brokenness, seeking God's mercy and cleansing, and genuine revival that is so earnestly needed in our troubled times.
- **Together, we can make a difference** if we will obey the call to pull up our parochial anchors, raise and unfurl the sails of the amazing faith that's been entrusted to us, and learn to navigate the wind of the Holy Spirit as it rises in our midst.
- **Will you join us?** Will you pray and learn with us? Will you "Praise the Lord and pass the ammunition" with us as we seek to establish our Lord's hopes and plans for our communities?

On the verge

United we will stand.



God bless you all!

Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord.

See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door. As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast.

– James 5.7-10

Final Instructions

- **The Holy Bible** – God (with various co-authors), eternity
 - **Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God** – Jonathan Edwards, 1741
 - **What a Revival of Religion Is** – Charles G. Finney, 1834
 - **Revivals, Their Laws and Leaders** – James Burns, 1909
 - **The Broken Way** – Ann Voskamp, 2016
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*I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and **fire**.*

Selected Readings



fires of
revival

Psalm 99:9

*Exalt the Lord our God, and worship at his holy hill;
for the Lord our God is holy.*

Burn in us, Lord!