

A Question of Revival

Psalm 85:6

Introduction:

1. In the early 1900's, in Wales, church attendance was poor and sin was rampant. Revival was needed. Evan Roberts began holding services, and soon spiritual life was flourishing. There were no hymnals, no choirs, no advertising and no offerings. Services were conducted from 10AM till midnight seven days a week. Theaters closed for lack of business. Mules in mines didn't understand their masters because they weren't swearing any more. Twenty thousand people were converted in five weeks.
2. In 1835 Titus Coan landed on the shores of Hawaii to preach the gospel. The people thirsted for God's Word to such an extent that Coan often preached three times before breakfast. For two years a continual camp meeting was held with 2000 to 6000 present at all times, day or night. Once church recorded 5244 new members in one year and 1075 baptisms on one Sunday. In those two years Coan baptized 11,960 converts.
3. In Psalm 85 we find our question expressed in prayer.
6 Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?
4. There are seven reasons why I believe God is withholding His blessings from our church and from our country

I. Uncommitted Lives – Prov 3:5-6

5 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. 6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

A. Many are Playing at Christianity

1. We have to pay the price of thirst
2. We have to pay the price of faith
3. We have to pay the price of concern
4. We have to pay the price of surrender
 - a) *We need to surrender our wills to God's*
 - b) *We need to surrender our pleasures to God's*

B. Moody

1. Henry Varley told Moody, "The world has yet to see what God can do with one person totally committed to Jesus Christ."
2. Moody determined by God's grace to be that person
3. He became the most famous evangelist of the 19th century
 - a) *Moody traveled more than 1 million miles in his life*
 - b) *He spoke to more than 100 million people*

C. Spurgeon

1. At the age of 22 huge crowds were attending his church
2. He told the people, "I have concentrated all my prayers into one, that I may die to self and live wholly for Him."
3. Spurgeon preached for more than 35 years in that same church and he is acknowledged today as the "prince of preachers".
4. Though he died over a century ago, his ministry is still kindling revival fires.

II. Unbent Knees – 2Chron 7:14

14 If my people, which are called by my name, shall 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.

A. There is a Lack of Prayer Today

1. We pray when we feel like it
2. We pray when it is convenient
3. We don't plead in prayer

B. The 1904 Welsh Revival

1. A man traveled to Wales to discover the secret of the revival
2. He stood up in the meeting and told of his purpose
3. Evan Roberts instantly replied to the man, "It is not a secret! Ask and you will receive."

III. Unread Bibles – 2Pet 1:19

A. The Bible is the Unread "Best-seller"

1. Many are sold – few are read
2. Many people mark their Bible, few are marked by their Bible

B. Grenfel and Hunt Exhibition to Egypt

1. In the 1800's they went to Egypt to look for treasure
2. They began digging at Tebtunis looking for primitive art
3. They discovered an ancient cemetery, but the bodies were those of crocodiles which the Egyptians regarded as sacred. The reptiles were stuffed with nothing more than waste paper. This proved valuable since the paper was papyrus that dated back to Bible times. On the papyrus were many examples of biblical words used in their contemporary setting. This has been invaluable for understanding many words that would be unclear in meaning.
4. Many of us treat our Bibles like embalmed crocodiles. They have nothing more than the hide on the outside and ancient paper inside. In fact, they are valuable since they contain treasure.
5. If we don't see our Bibles as precious, we never will have revival

IV. Unconfessed Sin – Prov 28:13

13 He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh *them* shall have mercy.

A. Unconfessed Sin Hinders Prayer

1. Ps 66:18 If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:
2. Isa 59:2 But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.

B. We Need to Confess Sin for What It Is

1. A woman admitted to her pastor that she had a problem with exaggeration. “Let’s ask the Lord to forgive you of the sin of lying.” he suggested.
“Oh, no!” she replied, “I’m not a liar, I only exaggerate.” Her pastor informed her that she’d never be right with God until she confessed her sin for what it really was.
2. We are often like this woman, we admit some mistakes, but we attribute them to general weakness rather than for sinful willfulness

C. The 1949 Revival in New Hebrides

1. A small group of fervent Christians made a covenant with God that they would wait on Him in prayer till revival broke out
2. Months passed and nothing happened. One night at a prayer meeting a young man rose and read Ps 24:3-5
3 Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place? **4** He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. **5** He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.
“We are wasting our time month after month, night after night if we ourselves are not pure.
3. The people were challenged and fell to their knees in confession and commitment.
4. Revival began that night. The entire community was visited by the power of the Holy Spirit, and within a few weeks the revival swept across the entire island gathering thousands into God’s family.

V. Unforgiving Spirits – Eph 4:32

A. Unforgiveness Hinders Revival – Matt 6:14

1. Forgiving others does not buy our salvation
2. If we confess our sins and still have not forgiven someone, then we still have unconfessed sin and God will not hear us
3. We are hypocrites to ask God to forgive us and then we don’t forgive others

B. Example of Forgiveness

1. "Most of us can forgive and forget; we just don't want the other person to forget that we forgave." —Ivern Ball
2. A pastor's young son and his mom had been to a shopping mall and the boy had acted badly. He wanted this and that and he ran off a couple of times. As they were driving home the boy could sense the displeasure of his mother.
He said, "When we ask God forgive us when we are bad, He does doesn't He?"
His mother replied, "Yes, He does."
The boy continued, "And when He forgives us, He buries our sins in the deepest sea, doesn't He?"
The mom replied, "Yes, that is what the Bible says."
The boy was silent for awhile and then said, "I've asked God to forgive me, but I bet when we get home you're going to go fishing for those sins, aren't you?" Too often we go fishing for other people's sins that God has already buried.

VI. Unpaid Tithes – Mal 3:10

1. "Annually, Americans spend more on dog food than on church contributions."
2. We might want to review some priorities!
3. W.A. Criswell, the great expository teacher for many years at First Baptist in Dallas tells the story about the pastor who asked, "How many church members do you have?" The answer was, "One hundred fifty." The pastor was further asked, "How many of them are tithers?" The pastor replied, "One hundred fifty." In astonishment the inquirer exclaimed, "What! All one hundred fifty, the entire church, are tithers?" "Yes indeed," said the pastor. "About fifty of them bring the tithe to the storehouse, and God collects it from the rest." In the end "We do not cheat God," concludes Dr. Criswell. "I can either give it to Him in a deeply spiritual act of worship or He can collect it. In either case, God gets his own."

VII. Unbroken Hearts

A. We Need the Compassion of Paul – Rom 9:2-3

1. He had sorrow and heaviness for his lost Jewish brethren
2. Do we care about the lost?
3. Do we really believe that the lost go to hell?

B. We Need the Compassion of Moses

1. He stood in the gap and God spared the Israelites
2. We need to intercede for others

You Forgot

You lived next door to me for years,
We shared our dreams, our joys, our tears.
A friend to me you were indeed,
A friend who helped me in my need.

My faith in you was strong and sure;
We had such trust as should endure.
No spats between us ever arose,
Our friends were like, and so our foes.

What sadness, then, my friend to find
That after all you weren't so kind.
The day my life on earth did end
I found you weren't a faithful friend.

For all those years we spent on earth,
You never talked of the second birth.
You never spoke of my lost soul
And of the Christ who'd make me whole.

I plead today from hell's cruel fire
And tell you now my last desire.
You cannot do a thing for me,
No words today my bonds to free,

But do not err, my friend, again,
Do all you can for the soul's of men.
Plead with them now quite earnestly,
Lest they be cast in hell with me!

We need revival when church dinners are better attended than prayer meetings.
We need revival when we do not love the Lord as much as we once did.
We need revival when we would rather watch TV than read the Bible and pray.
We need revival when we make little effort to witness to the lost sinner.
We need revival when our Christianity is joyless and dry.
We need revival when our hearts are cold and our eyes are dry.
We need revival when we are bored with worship.
We need revival when our singing is half-hearted and our worship is lifeless.

19 We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:

32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: 15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

2 That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. 3 For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: