

The Pastor and Revival

by Al Henson

The Holy Spirit is the key to revival, and the pastor must be sensitive to His leading and obey His will to bring true repentance and faith.

Duration: 43:17

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 7:14, Matthew 3:11, Luke 7:18-23, Luke 11:13, John 14:16-17, Acts 1:8

Topics: "Revival"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher shares his experience of preaching for several hours to a group of teenagers. Initially, the young people were bored and disengaged, walking up and down the hallways. However, as the preaching continued, some of the teenagers started to have a change of heart. One girl shared how she had initially rebelled against the message but later repented and gave her life to God. Another man realized that he was the problem in his marriage and decided to reconcile with his wife. As the days went on, more young people caught the burden and began praying together, leading to a deeper spiritual awakening among the group.

Transcript

Well, the subject this morning is the Pastor and Revival, the Pastor and Revival. If you have your Bible there, turn to the book of Luke. And I really want to share just four thoughts as I was meditating this last evening and some meditations concerning the Pastor and Revival, the Pastor and Personal Revival, and the Pastor and Revival in his church.

You know, there's so much that could be said on this subject, the volumes and thousands of volumes of books have been written about the Pastor and Revival, so there's much that could be shared here. But just in the way of introduction, again, I think one of the most important things in our life is that we must realize that and understand the work of the Holy Spirit in revival. And I don't want to deal with that.

I just want to refresh your mind there this morning. The work of the Holy Spirit, perhaps a three-fold work of the Holy Spirit in revival, he initiates it, he empowers it, and he orchestrates it. He initiates it, he empowers it, and he orchestrates it.

And Acts 1 there, you're familiar with the story, Jesus told one of the disciples to so understand this principle that revival is the total work of the Holy Spirit, the total work of the Holy Spirit. And you need to understand that revival is his work, all of it is his work. He initiates it in the sense that even the recognition

of the need of revival only comes through the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit.

The ability to repent, and this is a difficulty, even in meetings like this. You men need to understand that truly as you're being ministered to and the word is being preached to you and you see your own need that you really, you can't even repent since you need to repent. And I've been there and I've been around others who are there, they see their need to repent but it's just like, I can't repent.

And we can't without the Holy Spirit. These are graces of God, faith, he's initiator, faith can only be initiated, the faith that can cause you to be willing to open up and openly express your heart and life and be honest and open as our dear brother preached yesterday. That kind of faith that has, that love casteth out all fears and he that feareth is not made perfect in love, that kind of faith is initiated in your heart by the Holy Spirit in conjunction with the word of God and the teachings of the scripture and the word.

Faith cometh by hearing, but you see faith, faith cometh by hearing. Hearing comes by the word of God, but the word of God coupled only with the Holy Spirit is really hearing and understanding, other than that it's knowledge. And so this work of the Holy Spirit, he initiates it, he empowers it, he orchestrates it in Christ, so it taught this principle to the disciples, he says to them, don't you dare go out and preach, don't you dare go out and witness, don't you go do anything, but you wait.

You wait and tarry here in Jerusalem, and then you shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost has come upon you, and then you shall be witnesses unto me, first in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the earth. And so they waited, they waited, and I wonder maybe if we ought to not go back, and I'm going to be sharing some of this principle through one of the things the Lord has laid on my heart this morning, but maybe some of us need to go back and just simply get before the church and say, hey, there's no need of me preaching. Really, to preach would be in disobedience to the Scriptures, I don't need to preach.

But we need to recognize our need of revival, and we need to tarry before the Lord in prayer until we sense that God is hearing and answering our prayers, and has sent unto us the Holy Spirit, that we might have genuine repentance and genuine faith, and a genuine work of God. One of the greatest services, and I want to share principles or thoughts, and I want to share illustrations, and I never like to do a whole lot of this, because sometimes I feel like when I share illustrations, I elevate a ministry, and I don't want to do that. But some of our better services, I remember once I, just an example of a service in which we had, once I went in and I had no peace from the Lord to preach, based on the very thought that I had that I just shared with you.

So I sat there on the front pew, or the front chairs, as the singers were singing, and courses were being done, and the Lord just was burdening me with this very thought again. So I went to the podium, and I simply shared with the people, I said, God has not given me anything to preach, and I'm not sure why, I'm young and all of this, I'm not sure why. And so I said, I want our song leader to come lead some courses, and I'm going to go over and pray, and maybe a couple of you would pray, and maybe the Lord would give me something.

I don't have anything to say. And so they were singing some courses, and I went over, and I was praying they'd sing some more, and they finally stopped, and so I went back to the podium, and the only thought I'd had while I was there on my knees, the only thought that I could honestly say that I felt like was initiated by God in my own heart and the Holy Spirit, was the thought of why is the Holy Spirit quenched in our church? Because it was obvious that there was a quenching, it seemed, of the Spirit that evening, and the

normal freshness of the Spirit, and the joy of the Spirit wasn't there. And I'd sensed that in the morning service, and I'll tell you, when I sensed that, normally every service, the Spirit is there and working and moving, every service, and when I sensed that, I'd get quite concerned, and I don't want it to go two or three weeks that way, I get concerned quickly, and I'd sensed that in the morning service, and all afternoon I'd been praying, Lord, about this, and I came in the evening service, it was the same way, and so I simply came before the people after that time of singing choruses, and I shared with them my thoughts, and I said, bow your heads if you would, and I said, I think the Lord wants me to ask the question, if you're here tonight, and you sense that there's something in you that's quenching the Spirit, would you please lift your hand? Well, your heads bowed and eyes closed, and to my amazement, I do not know that there was anybody there who did not lift their hand.

I had them raise their heads back up, and I said to them, do you know that almost every one of you raised your hands? I didn't see any hand that wasn't raised, but there may have been a few, because there's a big crowd there, and I said, I feel led that God wants to give this kind of invitation, instead of an invitation where you go to a prayer room, an invitation where you come to the altar, I want those who are truly burdened, that our church have the Spirit and power of God upon it, you're burdened about that, I want you to stand just where you are, and I want you to confess in your heart why you are a hindrance to the Spirit, and then once you've confessed that, then go to the altar. Well, five hours later, people were still standing. Two men surrendered to the ministry that night.

They said that was that God, they were a hindrance to the Spirit, because God had been dealing with them about the ministry, and they had not yet yielded at that point to the Holy Spirit. And it was amazing, such a cleansing of the whole church, and God just did a wonderful work in that church service. But the power of the Holy Spirit, just this Sunday morning, in the middle of the service, a man had been visiting us for a couple of weeks, I had just talked with him, our marriage counselor had been counseling with him, and I had just talked with him just briefly, him and his wife were separated, and he had been visiting for a couple of weeks, in the middle of the service, he gets up, and he was under such duress of the Holy Spirit, right in the middle of everything.

He began to walk down the aisle, and he began to waver. I thought he was going to fall. He was so under distress of the Holy Spirit of God, that he simply could not, he couldn't even walk down to the aisle.

And a bunch of my associate pastors called him and helped him, and another man had to help him, and they carried him on back into the prayer room, and later he comes after the service is over with and shares the testimony of how that he, and I remember in the moments I talked with him about how he had shared with me that he wished his wife would really meet God and get right with the Lord, so that their marriage could come back together. Well, when he came up this time, he said, I have never seen myself in such a state, in such a destitute position, and he was so captured by the Holy Spirit that he had no awareness of anything else was there other than he needed to get to God. And Randy Smith, the associate pastor, shared there in the podium how that for 25 minutes this man poured out, and then he shared testimony, he said, I thought my wife was the problem, but he said, I see that it's I. And he asked the congregation to pray, he said, I'm going to go back to my wife this afternoon and tell her what God has done in my heart.

Pray that God will use that in her heart, in her life. And so we prayed, and he went that afternoon, and you know what? She showed up with him in church on Sunday night. Now, she didn't come to the altar, but that was the first time they'd been together in a year.

But the Holy Spirit is the initiator and the empowerment and orchestrates. And even in these meetings in these days, you know, we can have preachers here who know the Word of God, who can preach and teach the Word of God, but without the element of the Holy Spirit and the working of the Holy Spirit, it is all fruitless. This is the reason why we need to, in one accord with supplication, beseech the Lord.

One of the thoughts there, before we move here in Luke, in chapter 7, is that as you are seeking the Lord, for him to move his Holy Spirit upon your own life or upon your church, set things in order. That's the other thing they were doing in the book of Acts in chapter 1. They were so sensitive to setting things in order there, that as they began to read the Old Testament, they understood that someone was to take the place of Judas Iscariot. And I think in the back of their minds, they felt like, well, knowing that he is the Holy Spirit, that's the adjective, he is the Spirit of God and he is holy, that he is so holy, he may not move upon us until we fulfill even this one office.

So they're setting things in order. And as you're seeking the Lord as a pastor and for your own local church, that God would move and do a work there, constantly be setting things in order. Oh, I think Brother Bill McCloud, I think he was sharing somewhat of this principle last night when he spoke about that the Holy Spirit needed to be sought and obeyed.

Sought and obeyed. It was in Brother Harold Salmon's church just a couple of weeks ago. Brother Salmon, lift your hand there.

Dear brother in Christ. Brother Harold Salmon. And I was there for a week of meetings and I'd sent a dear brother that I've met that I know I think is sort of like an able carry.

He's nothing, he's just a man of prayer and he just prays. That's what he feels like God is calling him to do. He's 31 years old and he just prays.

And it was a blessing. I've got to know him and I asked him would he go up a few days in advance, four or five days in advance and lead this church in orchestration of prayer. And I'd wake up every morning, I slept with him in a room, I'd wake up every morning to him pray.

And just all during the course of the day, him praying. And I'd try to get, he wouldn't want me to listen in. He said, I don't particularly like to pray with people.

And I said, well, would you promise me that we'll spend one every day praying together. I'd like to pray with you and I'll try to leave you alone. But he'd be praying and I'd try to slip over to hear what he was praying.

I wanted to learn from this man of prayer. But he went up and he began to lead the church by faith to pray and to seek the Lord. And when I, by the time I got there on Monday evening, the church was, the spirit of God was there.

God had heard their prayers and the spirit of God was there. I didn't feel I had to give an invitation on Monday evening because I was just laying out some principles of revival and of Christ and that Christ is all. And he's the one you need to meet when you go to the prayer rooms.

And on Tuesday night, the spirit of God had so mounted in the church on Tuesday night that the choir was singing this song and tears were flowing down the cheeks as they were singing. And I knew this was unusual. You could tell the people were looking around.

They were so, they had been, they had not expected that much of the energy and presence of the spirit of the Lord. And so I preached what I felt like was the message of God that night and the root sin of pride and the essence of self, which is an anti-God state of mind or a God complex. And the people didn't obey the Holy Spirit.

There were some, a few, eight or nine or 10 out of the 60 or 70 that were there, went to the prayer room. But all the time the invitation was given, it was like the Lord was rising up in me and saying, I'm God, I'm the Lord. I will not be treated this way.

Don't they understand? They've asked me, they've sought me, they've said that they have faith in me and they have trusted me to come and based on their faith that I have come and I have moved upon their hearts, but now they're not setting an order. All the next day the Lord gave me the message of, and I knew what the church was going to be like the next night. The message that my spirit will not always strive with man.

The next night we walked in and it was so cold and so dead. It was so, if nothing else, proved to me the reality of God. It was Tuesday night versus Wednesday night.

Tuesday night the spirit of God was there such that just in the presence there was a weeping. But on Wednesday night it was such a coldness that you didn't even feel comfortable reaching out and shaking someone's hand. That place was as dead as it could be, like a funeral home.

And so I taught this principle of not only we must seek the Holy Spirit, but we must obey him and that he is Lord, he is God and he'll not be treated this way. And who God is? Well, the Lord blessed us and I just encourage the people to go before the Lord and get on their face and say, God, we're sorry, forgive us at this point. And Lord, if you'll send back the Holy Spirit tomorrow night, we will obey.

Well, we came in on Thursday night and the spirit was back. It was such a testimony of this truth. The spirit was back and working.

The pastor was sharing with me and through letters and all that, how God now has continued, initiated a revival in his church. Just a core group of people really meeting with God and now it's spreading and he's been able to make restitution with his church and went before the church and made restitution before the church and how God blessed that and what a precious service it was. Well, the first thing that I just wanted to share with you about the pastor and revival is this importance of the Holy Spirit.

He is God with us and he is our God helper. I come alongside one. And oh, don't be afraid of the Holy Spirit.

Don't be afraid of him. Secondly, here in Luke 7, I like to call this the ninth beatitude. The ninth beatitude.

Here in Luke 7, and I want just to read, follow me through 18 through 23. And I've got two or three pages of things to share and I thought I'd just start and when my time is up, I'm going to quit. And I've got about seven things here I'd like to share, but we've got through one of them.

Luke 7, 18, and the disciples of John showed him all these things. And John calling unto him, two of his disciples sent them to Jesus saying, Art thou he that should come? Or look we for another? When the men were coming to him, they said, John the Baptist has sent us unto thee. This is John the Baptist's disciples now are going to Jesus saying, Art thou he that should come? Or look we for another? And in that same

hour, he cured many of their infirmities.

It's obvious Christ didn't even say anything to them. When they come and ask him this question, he goes out and he heals many of their infirmities and of plagues and he casts out evil spirits and unto many that were blind, he gave sight. And then after he had performed all of these miracles, he went to the disciples of John the Baptist.

And he said to them, in verse 22, And Jesus answered and said unto them, Go your way and tell John what things ye have seen and heard, how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised to preach the poor and to the poor the gospel is preached. And then he makes a statement here. And blessed is he whosoever is not offended in me.

I think the message of this that I just want to get across when I think of the pastor and revival, I think John the Baptist here, I think there's no question that John the Baptist understood the kingdom of God. I don't think he has any doubt he understood that this kingdom was to be a spiritual kingdom and to be ushered in. He understood it at greater depths than probably you and I ever will understand the kingdom of God.

And there is no doubt that John the Baptist was one who was walking, bearing his cross, one totally and completely committed to God. But he sends his disciples to ask again, Is this the one that is to come? And Christ responds, Blessed is he whosoever is not offended in me. And I don't want to read anything into Scripture, but I do want to try to understand this statement.

I think if Jesus makes a statement like this to John the Baptist, it is important to understand. And I think that the picture is that John the Baptist had went out and he had preached, Repent for the kingdom of God is at hand, and he ate locusts and honey and was clothed in camel skin. And I think John the Baptist in his own mind had summed up that when Jesus came, he would do it the same way.

But Jesus didn't. Jesus didn't eat locusts and honey, but he ate good food and just enjoyed food. And he didn't wear a camel's cloth, but he wore some of the most valuable and precious robing of that day.

And I think in the back of John the Baptist's mind, he had begun to doubt or question if Jesus was really the one that was to come because he was doing it a little bit different and a little bit offended at the way Christ was doing it. And so Jesus says to his disciples when they come, he does all of these miracles. He says, now you go back and tell John the Baptist what you've seen and heard, that I'm raising the dead, that I'm healing the sick, that I'm casting out demons, and that I am preaching the gospel to the poor.

But you tell John the Baptist one other thing, blessed is he who is not offended in me. And the point is this, dear brothers. Jesus is not going to do it the way you think he is.

The Holy Spirit's not going to do it the way you think he's going to do it. And we read about the revival that took place in Canada. He'll never do it that way again.

We can't box that up, figure out how it happened and what caused it to happen. Oh, there are some similar principles, the principles of humility and the principles of prayer and the principles of God's people humbling themselves in prayer and seeking the face of the Lord. But not only will the Holy Spirit initiate it, he will orchestrate it too.

And I share with you, I believe when he does it, you'll look and it'll not be any way the way you thought it would happen or through who you thought it would happen or the way. Blessed is he when Christ does

come and does his work, you're not offended. And I think often that the Holy Spirit is hindered because we are looking for it in a certain way and he is moving at other points.

And we're not seeing what he is doing. This dear brother was sharing yesterday about in his own church how that the Holy Spirit sometimes comes in and takes over and he don't want two songs, a message and an illustration and an invitation. He wants something else.

He, by the way, Jesus is the Lord of the church and he is the one who carries out that lordship. How about us giving him control of the services? And you don't be offended what he does. My prayer often is in my own life as I go into the services and I tell my pianist and my organist and my song leaders and everyone, I must.

Sometimes they get a little bit distraught with that. But I praise God for them. Their hearts are right and they don't, they understand.

And I tell them that you tell anyone who is set up to sing a special or anyone who has done anything that the Holy Spirit is the controller of this service and that I am praying desperately every moment that I'm in that service. Oh, Holy Spirit is what are you doing? What do you want to do? Is there something you want to change? Is there something that you want to do different? Because I want you to have control of the service. You may do something totally different than I think you want to do this morning.

So I just encourage you another thought concerning the pastor and revival is that he will not do it the way you're thinking he's going to do it in your church. It will not happen the way you think it's going to happen. Point, another point.

Turn to John, if you would, in chapter 5, verses 19 and 20, just practical insights into the pastor and revival, just thoughts. John 19, excuse me, John 5, 19. John 5, 19.

Let's pick up in verse 70. But Jesus answered and said, My father worketh hitherto and I work. As the principle, as part of the principle I want to share with you in John 5 and verse 17.

The father worketh hitherto and I work. Down in verse 19. Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, the son can do nothing of himself.

But what I see the father do, there it is again. What I see the father do, for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the son. And because the father loves me, says in verse 20, he shows me the things that he is doing.

Now, the principle is this. The principle that seemed with Christ in his ministry that he was just tearing before the Lord in a constant meditation of prayer and sensitivity to God. With the confidence that whatever God was doing, God would show him.

And when God showed him what he was doing, the father showed him what he was doing. He would just jump in and get in the middle of it. And I know as a pastor, as a leader in your church, that your thoughts are, you know, what do I do? What do I get involved in? Well, I've learned the principle of sort of learning to meditate and be sensitive to God and in the course of my day, listen and watch and believe the father to show me what he is doing and then jump in and get right in the middle of it.

Because God may be trying to orchestrate something that if you go and everything's planned out and everything's organized and everything's ritual, you'll just miss the whole thing. Remember Dr. John R. Rice, secretary who'd been his secretary for 40 something years, had the opportunity to chat with her a moment. And I said, could you help me a little bit in this thought of how did Dr. Rice making decisions and what was he like? And she shared two illustrations.

She said, well, the people who when he's out preaching and revival is the people who was with him in the height of his ministry said he would go and he would preach and God would move. So he'd go back to the hotel room and he'd walk the floor. After God had moved in and somebody was the gentleman who shared with her this illustration and said, and I never seen anything like it.

Did God move? He'd go back and walk the floor and he'd say, pray for me. He said, I am in such a destitute need of God and I so need the Lord and we've got to have God involved in this thing and God's got to be the one who's doing it. And he'd walk the floor and play, pray and then get on his face and say, God, please have mercy on us and move.

This is the reason why God used this man. Dear brothers and in Christ, we must get it out of our mind, into our hearts and our lives. Yesterday in your times of prayer and your attitudes before God, do they give indication of an absolute dependency upon the Lord? Are we even coming here in these days believing the Lord to move among us? But yet we are not begging him and beseeching him as if God was just going to be here because we've come.

Oh, he is Lord. And then she said another illustration, relationship to this principle. She said it was amazing.

She said, when I was in his office, I didn't know when he was praying to God or talking to me. She said, I never knew when Dr. Rice was talking to me or talking to God, said he would just flow from one to the other. She said, I'd be sitting there and we'd be trying to make that we'd be making decisions.

I'd be taking dictation. He'd be talking to me. The next thing I knew, he is talking to God about something he was saying or something that we were trying to make a decision on.

He'd be talking to God about, Lord, what do you want to do? What are you? What's your heart in this? What's your mind in this? And then he'd flow back into talking to me and to God. I was in a staff meeting. I was going to be gone for a week.

Side two. When I'm in those kind of meetings, she buzzed me back and she said, Brother Al, I'm sorry to bother you, but I just for some reason I sense that there's a phone call here that you need to take. So I took it reluctantly.

I must be honest. I took it reluctantly and not with the right heart and have the right heart about it at all. I said, you don't understand.

You know, I'm going to be late for my flight now if I don't hurry up and get out of here and blah, blah, blah. Well, it was a nurse who was head of the emergency room at the nearby hospital there, and she had called. And a young couple, the baby had died of crib death, and they were there, and she wondered would I come over.

And I want to back up from that point and show you how God orchestrates and how we are not sensitive to the spirit, how we can miss something big that God's doing. On Saturday, I was playing with my son. And this was on Monday.

On Saturday, I was playing with my son. You know how sometimes you take your children and swing them around and they want to be swung. I was swinging them around and I pulled his arm out of socket.

So I had to carry him to that emergency room. While I was in the emergency room, a serious car accident had happened. And kids, teenagers, a teenage car accident had happened.

And none of them were in death and life situation, but there was a serious car accident. I'll show you how God was orchestrating things. Well, they were back with the kids, and this nurse that had called me was there.

And parents were coming in, and they didn't have the time to come out and talk with parents, and they were running around yelling and screaming, I want to know how my child is. You can understand that. Please, somebody tell us.

And so I went up to the nurse and just simply introduced myself. And I said, if you don't mind, I'll get the attention of these parents for you, and I'll tell them that I'll go back and check on their young people and come out, and maybe they will listen and quiet down. She said, well, I appreciate it.

I got all the parents, and I said, the nurse is going to let me go back, and I'll go to each of the young people, and I'll come out. So I went back. The young people had broken bones and cuts, but there was no one serious.

And I came back out, and I said, there's some broken bones and there's some cuts, but everybody's going to be all right. Just be patient. They're trying to get doctors and all in here.

Well, God had allowed my son to pull his arm out of the socket so I could meet that nurse. And after all of this, I prayed with parents and everything like that, and she said, you never know how much I appreciate that. Well, she had called me on Monday.

I went over just quickly. I canceled out my flight after talking on the phone. I remember I was talking on the phone, and I said, Lord, are you doing something? And I went over, and I began to sense God was doing something.

And so I just canceled the whole trip that week. Just canceled out the trip. And I began to minister to that young couple.

It was the next day that I found out, and I've got to go through all the counseling and all that. I found out that a man that I had visited two years ago was her father, and he had rejected Jesus Christ when I'd witnessed to him. Well, I went into the funeral home, and I had a real assurance that God was in this whole thing.

And I went in the funeral home the night prior to the funeral service, and I just stood up, and I shared with those people out of Corinthians what I thought God was doing, that this was going to rebound or redound to the glory of God. And for not to them to say, why, God? Why? God was doing something. And I talked to them of eternal things versus temporal things.

Thought maybe I'd be rejected. I wasn't. That young couple that I'd already witnessed to a couple of times, they followed me out, and the father looked at me, and he said, Do you mean that God loved us enough that he took our son to get our attention, that we might be saved, and that through our salvation, then we'll end up in heaven, and we'll be with our son? And do you mean that God may have, looking down to the future, knew that if he hadn't have taken our son, we would have went to hell, our children would have went to hell and all? I said, Yes, that's quite possible.

And he said, Well, my wife and I'd like to get saved. We believe what you said is true. And they got saved.

Well, the next day at the funeral, the next day at the funeral, after the funeral service, the granddad that I had witnessed to came up, and he said, Could I talk to you? I want to get saved. Well, he got saved. He is now heading up one of our flocks in our church.

Within the next week, 23, I had personally led to the Lord, 23 of those family members, and all of them are faithful in the church now. God was orchestrating. And so the principle is this.

Listen and watch for the father moving, and when you see him moving, him, he is working, then you just work with him. Work with him. Even in this area of revival, sometimes pastors run back to the church and they begin to preach and thunder and get right with God, instead of just praying and waiting and sensing God to move, and then moving with the father, moving with the father.

Then one last, I want to just share one more, and then I want to close. Turn to Joel 2 quickly. Joel chapter 2. Joel chapter 2, the Old Testament prophet of Joel.

My southern accent and language, we may not pronounce it. I don't know how you all pronounce it. Joel.

Joel. But Joel in chapter 2. There's much to be shared around this, but I just want to share three things. Brother Al, if I wanted to see a revival in my church, in my own life, what I do, I think the Bible gives a formula for the practical things.

Now, 2 Chronicles 7.14 talks about the spiritual things you need to be doing, humbling yourself and pray and seeking the faith. These are the practical things you need to do here. In Joel chapter 2, after it deals with the spiritual heart and the rending of heart, in verses 13, that humbling of oneself in verse 13.

Verse 15, I think, gives us three things we need to do. First of all, you need to blow the trumpet. Sound the trumpet.

Somebody has to stand up in the midst of your church. Somebody has to blow the trumpet. Somebody has to say, we're in desperate need.

God's not involved in what we're doing. God is not. Somebody has to blow the trumpet.

And then it says, sanctify or set apart a fast. And the word sanctify here means set apart a fast for a specific purpose. And I don't know the length of time that this might need to be in your own work.

Generally, the harder the work is and the further the people are away from God, the longer the fast needs to be set apart. Days of fasting and praying and seeking the Lord. And then in this order, and then call a solemn assembly.

I like the adjective. See, I wish I had longer time to speak. I'm a solemn assembly.

After there's been a recognition of the need, you've blown the trumpet. And the indication that there are at least some in the church that recognize the need is that they are willing to sanctify a fast. And serious enough about this that they're willing to fast and to pray and seek the Lord.

And then once you've done that, call a solemn assembly. Why? Why call a solemn assembly now that God might meet with us and deal with our hearts? How solemn of an assembly should it be? Verse 16, gather the people, sanctify the congregation. That means gather, and I think this word sanctify is set apart for a certain work.

We're believing God for a work of revival. Assemble the elders, gather the children and those that suck the breast. Let the bridegroom go forth of his chambers and let the bride out of her closet.

I believe that simply means this. That simply means that you ought to be so serious about this if a bridegroom is waiting to get married, let him call their marriage off. They can get married some days later.

Revival is more important than them getting married right now. When God's people take it that seriously, that they're willing to fast and pray and call such a solemn assembly, that they're willing even to call their marriages off and meet with God and then they can get married after they've met with God, then God will do something. Just an illustration.

Just an illustration. This fall, I've taught this for years, and I was meditating, and the Lord, in a time of prayer, said, Why don't you try this with your teenage high school? You know how Christian schools are. Some of the sometimes the coldest of places is that Christian school.

So I went to the principal. I opened up Joel 2. I shared with him out of my heart. I said, What do you think? He said, Well, it's always worked before.

Every time we've tried it. Every time that we've sensed we've needed the Lord. And we were willing to begin to fast and pray and call a solemn assembly.

God is honored that it met with us. So we counseled the classes out in our Christian school for a whole week in the high school and junior high. Brought the high school and junior high kids in, and we simply told them we were going to start preaching and we were just going to follow the leadership of the Lord.

Well, we preached on Monday, and I had a couple of teenagers in the high school that I had set up conferences with in the afternoon so I could talk with them. And after Monday, we preached like for four hours on Monday. You can imagine teenagers sitting there listening, preaching for four hours.

And so I asked this young man, I said, Well, what are the kids saying there? And he said, Well, they're walking up and down the hallway. I said, What in the world? I can't believe this. They're making us go through four hours of this boring preaching.

And we were preaching the messages of revival. I was teaching on the cross and the blood and the Holy Spirit, teaching these young people the cross. Well, Tuesday came, and we preached again another three or four hours, a couple of us teaming up and preaching.

And I talked to the young man. I said, Well, what's going on in the hallways? He said, Well, today there wasn't quite as much antagonism and rebellion against, but he said there was still a few comments as to what's going on, what are they trying to do. Well, Wednesday morning, by Wednesday morning, a couple

of the kids had caught the burden.

Wednesday morning, the kids, some of the kids, a group of kids met 30 minutes in advance in an early, early in the conference room and got permission. And about 14 young people were praying in a conference room on Wednesday morning. God had touched a few hearts.

And there was only two of us when we started. Just the staff was in. They didn't even want to be a part of it.

But we were agreeing and fasting together. We'd call a solemn assembly. And now there was a few who had a little of the spirit of the Lord.

They begin to catch hold of what God was trying to do. So we preach another three or four hours on Wednesday. And I asked the young man, I said, What are the kids saying today? He said, I didn't hear a word.

Not a word. We hadn't given an invitation yet. Just preaching.

Let them go and pray fast. On Thursday, we preached again for a couple of hours, gave an invitation. Over half the kids responded at the invitation.

They were responding. The invitation was simple to them. Come to the altar and die.

Just die. Die to all you are and all you'll ever be. Just die.

The best you know how. At the age that you are, give all that you know about yourself, all that you know about God, and die. Die.

Well, Friday morning, by Thursday morning, there were like 30 kids meeting to pray. Friday morning, it was up to in the 40s, meeting to pray. Friday morning, we shared just a few moments.

Just like 15 to 20 minutes, and we opened up the microphone. It was at 9 o'clock that morning, 9 a.m. that morning, we opened up the microphone. Well, at 12.30, the kids were still sharing.

I called down the cafeteria and said, Could we fix it so we could have caramel at lunch at one time, feed them, and get them right back up? They said, We can do that. We fed them at 12.30 and got them right back up at about 1 to 1.15, started again, opened up the mic, and they continued to share. 2 o'clock, they were still sharing.

Some of them were sharing how one young girl came and said, I went home last night, and I was rebellious against all that was being said. She said, I was so rebellious, I finally decided what I needed to do was to go out and call friends that I hadn't been with in years. I went out and called some of my rebellious, sinful friends, and I went out on the town.

She said, After about an hour of being with them, I just couldn't do it. I said, Carry me home. I went home, and I went up to my bedroom.

She said, I got on my face before God last night, and I gave my life to God and asked Him to cleanse me and forgive me. Well, 2.30 came, and then 3, and they were still sharing, and school was supposed to be over at 3.30, and they were still sharing. I finally said, Your parents are outside wanting you to go home.

One teenager stood up and said, Well, if I can convince my parents to come in, will you let them come in? I said, Okay, go get your parents' permission. If they want you to go home, you go home. But everybody who'd like to stay, stay, and about 65% of the kids stayed.

They were sharing to 4 and 4.30, and about 35 or 40 of the parents had come in. By 4.30, one parent stood up and said, I need to be saved. Would somebody tell me how to get saved? By 5 o'clock, six mom and dads had been converted and born again and saved.

Now, this has been a year. We have not had one incident of rebellion in our Christian school this year. All the kids have their difficulties, and there's still some coldness creeping back in their hearts, but there's no longer a rebellion, a rebellion.

Why? Because someone blew the trumpet, fasted and prayed, and called a solemn assembly. I could share that happening in three places in our ministry, just in the year, just in the example of Joel in chapter 2, when we sense God is withdrawing Himself. Joel in chapter 2. Father, we praise You now for what You're doing among us.

We trust You to do Your work. In Jesus' name, amen. For more information, visit www.fema.org

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