

# The Burden and Blessing of Revival

by Alan Cairns

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of revival in the Free Presbyterian Church, highlighting the burden of revival, the characteristics of a genuine revival, and the obstacles to revival.*

**Duration:** 1:04:58

**Scripture:** 2 Chronicles 6:12

**Topics:** "Revival"

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## Description

In this sermon, Dr. Paisley recounts the story of John Douglas, his first convert as the minister of a church in Ravenhill Road. Despite being a slow speaker, John felt compelled to address a meeting and spoke with great power, leading to applause from the congregation. This sparked a revival in the church, with more people being saved in subsequent meetings. Dr. Paisley then discusses the burden and blessing of revival, referencing passages from Second Chronicles and emphasizing the importance of revival to the Free Presbyterian Church.

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## Transcript

As I've announced in recent weeks, the Free Presbyterian Church is reaching its 50th anniversary. A little later, just in the middle of March, God willing I'll be in Northern Ireland for the special celebration service in a new complex just built, a city complex just built in Belfast. And I'll be preaching, God willing, in one of our churches, a little church in one of the most difficult areas in the whole country, to maintain a witness for Christ.

And then also doing some special Let the Bible Speak rallies as we launch the video documentary called These 50 Years, dealing with God's kindness and grace to us as a denomination in this past half century. And then finally, the Sabbath evening after the special anniversary service, I'll be preaching at a rally in John Greer's church in Ballymena, and then leaving Belfast the next day. So it's going to be quite a trip and very, very busy.

But in connection with this anniversary celebration, I announced a couple of weeks back that I would take three or four Sabbath evenings and deal with some of the issues that were very important to this denomination and its founding, and which remain central to all that it is about and all that it seeks to do. It is not my intention to seek to go through the Westminster Confession of Faith or the Articles of Faith of the Free Presbyterian Church in these meetings. It is not my intention to seek to speak on every distinctive and defend every stand and standard.

It is rather my intention, with a broad brush, to speak of some of the great issues that were before the founding fathers of the church and remain important to us. I've already dealt with the fundamental question as to why it should ever have occurred at all. And I will not retrace those steps for this evening.

But tonight the subject will be very simple. And yet, to anybody who has been in the free church from the beginning or near to the beginning, it will immediately go to the heartbeat of the entire denomination. And that is, I want to speak on the subject of the burden and the blessing of revival.

2 Chronicles 6, we're going to commence our reading in verse 12. We'll read through verse 31, take up the reading at verse 40 to 42, and then just three verses in chapter 7. 2 Chronicles 6, verse 12, let's read the Word of God together. And He, that is Solomon, stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the congregation of Israel and spread forth his hands.

For Solomon had made a brazen scaffold of five cubits long and five cubits broad and three cubits high, and had set it in the midst of the court. And upon it he stood and kneeled down upon his knees before all the congregation of Israel and spread forth his hands toward heaven and said, O Lord God of Israel, there is no God like Thee in the heaven nor in the earth, which keepeth covenant and showeth mercy unto Thy servants that walk before Thee with all their hearts. Thou which hast kept with Thy servant David, my Father, that which Thou hast promised him, and speakest with Thine mouth and hast fulfilled it with Thine hand as it is this day.

Now therefore, O Lord God of Israel, keep with Thy servant David, my Father, that which Thou hast promised him, saying, There shall not fail Thee a man in my sight to sit upon the throne of Israel, yet so that Thy children take heed to their way to walk in my law as Thou hast walked before me. Now then, O Lord God of Israel, let Thy word be verified which Thou hast spoken unto Thy servant David. But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heavens of heavens cannot contain Thee, how much less this house which I have built.

Have respect therefore to the prayer of Thy servant and to his supplication, O Lord my God, to hearken unto the cry and the prayer which Thy servant prayeth before Thee, that Thine eyes may be open upon this house day and night, upon the place whereof Thou hast said that Thou wouldst put Thy name there, to hearken unto the prayer which Thy servant prayeth toward this place. Hearken therefore unto the supplications of Thy servant and of Thy people Israel, which they shall make toward this place. Hear Thou from Thy dwelling place, even from heaven, and when Thou hearest, forgive.

If a man sin against his neighbor, and an oath be laid upon him to make him swear, and the oath come before Thine altar in this house, then hear Thou from heaven, and do, and judge Thy servants by requiting the wicked, by recompensing his way upon his own head, and by justifying the righteous by giving him according to his righteousness. And if Thy people Israel be put to the worst before the enemy, because they have sinned against Thee, and shall return and confess Thy name and pray and make supplication before Thee in this house, then hear Thou from the heavens, and forgive the sin of Thy people Israel, and bring them again unto the land which Thou gavest to them and to their fathers. When the heaven is shut up, and there is no rain, because they have sinned against Thee, yet if they pray toward this place and confess Thy name, and turn from their sin when Thou dost afflict them, then hear Thou from heaven, and forgive the sin of Thy servants and of Thy people Israel, when Thou hast taught them the good way wherein they should walk, and send rain upon Thy land which Thou hast given unto Thy people for an inheritance.

If there be dearth in the land, if there be pestilence, if there be blasting or mildew, locusts or caterpillars, if their enemies besiege them in the cities of their land, whatsoever sore or whatsoever sickness there be, then what prayer or what supplication soever shall be made of any man or of all Thy people Israel, when everyone shall know his own sore and his own grief, and shall spread forth his hands in this house, then hear Thou from heaven Thy dwelling place, and forgive and render unto every man according to all his ways, whose heart Thou knowest, for Thou only knowest the hearts of the children of men, that they may fear Thee to walk in Thy ways, so long as they live in the land which Thou gavest unto our fathers. Verse 40, Now, my God, let I beseech Thee Thine eyes be open, and let Thine ears be attempt unto the prayer that is made in this place. Now, therefore, arise, O Lord God, into Thy resting place, Thou and the ark of Thy strength.

Let Thy priests, O Lord God, be clothed with salvation, and let Thy saints rejoice in goodness. O Lord God, turn not away the face of Thine Anointed. Remember the mercies of David Thy servant.

Chapter 7, verse 12, And the Lord appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him, I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to myself for an house of sacrifice. If I shut up heaven, that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence upon my people, 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. Amen.

The Lord will add His own blessing to the reading of His precious word, for His name's sake. When the 24-year-old Ian Paisley launched a new magazine in Ulster in the year 1950, he gave it the very significant title of *The Revivalist*, and the title said it all. Revival was the great burden of the new editor.

Revival was the constant theme of his ministry. As I made clear in a message a couple of weeks back, detailing some of the momentous movings of the Spirit of God through his early ministry, he was already living, to a large extent, in the experience of genuine biblical revival. The very first leading article in that first *Revivalist* was wanted another reformation.

When the Free Presbyterian Church was born in 1951, remember Dr. Paisley's ministry had commenced in Belfast in 1946, and the Free Church was not even thought of as a possibility, never mind a plan. It came out spontaneously of a gracious move of God in the teeth of bitter modernistic opposition and rationalistic hatred of the gospel in the little village of Crossgar. And Ian Paisley and his church had the decision to make as to whether or not they would align themselves with the people, the Presbyterians of Crossgar, who decided that they could never go back into a system of apostasy that could ban the preaching of the gospel from their church hall, even when all the elders of the church demanded that it should take place.

A very interesting thing, by the way, when that decision was being made at Dr. Paisley's church, he had felt first that he would say goodbye to these people in Crossgar, but he felt more and more that he couldn't do it. So he came to his own congregation, they had a congregational meeting on a Sabbath morning, and he told them what was happening and what his own heart was. Something strange began to develop.

One leading member of the church after another got up in that meeting and spoke very movingly against such an alliance with these new separating Presbyterians, these new free Presbyterians in Crossgar. Their argument was simple, we thank God for these people, we trust that He will bless them and that He will use them, but this church has been ministering here for thirty years, we have not needed to go that way, and we don't see any need to go that way now. The whole thing was drifting, so that even though the

eloquence of the greatest preacher in Britain of the time was used to its fullest effect, the people were being led by very prominent members.

We are not going down that road. Sitting in the congregation was a 15 or 16 year old member of the church, 16 years old. His name was John Douglas.

He's now our clerk of Presbytery and has been for many years. Dr. Paisley's first convert as the minister of that church on the Ravenhill Road. The 16 year old sat there realizing that some momentous mistake was going to be made.

Those of us who know John Douglas best that know even today he is very slow of speech. John will... I keep him going, he's the only man I ever knew who when he took a drink of water, chewed the water before he drank, he got it down. He chews his words.

He finds if he chews them first, it's not so often he has to eat them later. And so, even then, he was slow of speech, only much more so. But as he sat there, he felt someone must speak.

And so a 16 year old got up to address a meeting he had not thought of addressing. And God helped him. I don't know what he said, but I know that he spoke with mighty power and when he sat down, that congregation spontaneously burst into applause.

And one by one then, the speakers got up to say we must take our stand. So, the church in Ravenhill joined the church in Crossgar and the Free Church was born 17th of March, 1951. When that happened, both the Revivalist magazine and the burden expressed in its title and in its articles became part of the very fabric of the denomination.

Our persistent longing, the theme of the preaching and of the praying and of the personal conversation may have sounded monotonous to an outsider, but it was very deeply felt and it was the theme of a real revival. Not some manufactured, man-made look-alike of revival, but a genuine. Dr. Paisley used to have his own particular way of describing it as a genuine sky blue, holy ghost revival.

A revival that would lead to another reformation. We were not interested in what has been called a mere reformation of manners, merely changing the surface of society. We were interested in a true work of the Holy Ghost that would first raise high the testimony of Christ and His Gospel.

Remember, this was against the backdrop of virulent apostasy, of rampant modernism and rationalism, of the blatant denial of every fundamental of the Christian faith in the major churches in Northern Ireland and particularly in the Irish Presbyterian Church. And if I could just try to interpret that for you, we are now in Baptist country. You'll all become free Presbyterians when you get to heaven, but here in your fallen state you are used to being Baptists.

Well, if you just transplant the idea into Northern Ireland, Baptists are a tiny minority. The history of the country is the history of God's dealings with the Presbyterian Church. The history of revival is the history of God's doings through the Presbyterian Church.

And generation upon generation has been blessed through the ministry of the greatest single denomination God has ever raised on the island of Ireland. The Irish Presbyterian Church given over now to modernism. Its seminary a seedbed of the most vicious apostasy.

And then also, part of the newly formed World Council of Churches, the ecumenical movement with the view of uniting all churches under the headship of the Roman Pontiff. Against that backdrop of denial of the Gospel, we were looking for a revival that would reform the nation and raise high the testimony of Christ and His Gospel. We adopted the slogan of our Scottish forebears when we constantly cried to God to work and to establish the crown rights of King Jesus and the crown jewels of His Gospel.

We wanted a revival that would realize or re-emphasize the old Protestant emphasis on a free justification by grace alone, through faith alone in the merits of Christ alone. Everywhere the Gospel was being whittled down, even among Bible believers. It was becoming more and more Arminianized, if I could coin a verb.

It was more and more being diluted to be that God has done all He can, and now it's up to man to do His part. And as there was this democratization of the Gospel, making salvation dependent merely on the vote of man for the agenda of God, there was a great spiritual weakness. We felt that there needed to be a return to the doctrine of a full, free justification by grace through faith in the merits of Christ.

We were looking for a revival that demonstrated the power of God. Not something that man could do and dress it up to look like the power of God, but a genuine, blessed movement of the Holy Spirit that was undeniable in its fullness and in its force. We were looking for a movement of the Spirit demonstrating His power that would sweep souls by the hundred and by the thousand into the Kingdom of God, and that would thereby confound the enemies of God and do it all to the glory of the Lord.

That was the burden with which this denomination was founded. That continued to be the burden throughout the years that followed. As I said a couple of weeks back, immediately the fathers of this church took their stand.

Opposition began to mount. They were scorned. They were derided.

Men of great learning used their learning to despise them and to seek to bring to naught all that they were standing for. People used their pen, their tongue. Newspaper editors used their position.

Everything that they could do to deride and to bring to naught what this group of people were seeking to do. The price to be paid was immediately apparent. Where before Dr. Paisley had been welcomed, now he was hated.

Doors that were opened were now closed. Where hundreds used to listen, a few dozen, maybe 50 or 100, would arrive. Our churches at the beginning, for the most part, were small.

Prayer for revival seemed a mockery. It seemed that we had given up hope of revival. The work was so much greater before the stand that was taken in Kroskar.

It just goes to show you that there are many evangelical people who are quite happy to see God move and stand with you in an evangelistic crusade in the excitement of many people coming to Christ. But when it comes to the hard job of taking their stand for the glory of the name of Jesus Christ, they are like the famous C.T. Studd's chocolate soldiers. They melt under heat.

That's exactly what we found. But throughout those small churches, and I was there in the early days, even though, as you'll gather, I had to be very, very young. But I was there.

I learned to pray in the prayer meetings in the free church in Mount Marion. And throughout those churches, the constant cry was for a mighty visitation of the Lord. And in due time, God heard that cry.

Throughout the 1950s, our ministers, especially our moderator, Dr. Paisley, continued with evangelism. But with unspectacular results, there were certainly people saved, many people saved, but not with the spectacular results of earlier days. Then, in the early 1960s, there was a discernible change in spiritual climate.

Dr. Paisley, for example, went to a little country place called Donathlony. You could visit Northern Ireland a million times and not know that Donathlony existed. It's not a big place, not an important place, apparently.

He pitched a tent way out in a field in the open countryside. And God began to draw the people in. I remember being at those meetings.

The sense of the presence of God was deep and real and powerful. And God started a move that was sweeping men and women into the kingdom. There was a going in the tops of the mulberry trees.

I remember in 1964, as a very young minister, being asked by that same John Douglas, who was then minister of our church in Porto Boogie, if I would preach the harvest services there. Over there we have harvest Thanksgiving services. You have Thanksgiving, we have harvest Thanksgiving.

They bring the sheaves and all into the church. They decorate the church. Just to say, we're dependent upon our God for all of this.

And we give thanks to the Lord. It's a time when people who will never go to church will come to church. You'll get sinners in to hear the gospel who would never otherwise come.

John asked me, he said, we have a mission going on with Brian Green from London. He is preaching for two weeks. But this is the middle Sunday and he must be back in his own church.

Could you come and do the harvest services? I said, I'll be glad to go. Brian preached from Sunday to Friday. We later found out that some people in the quietness of their own homes had sought the Lord.

But we didn't know anything about it. At that time it appeared that there were good meetings but no move among the people. I preached the Sabbath morning service and there was a good sense of God's presence among His people.

And then in the evening meeting the Lord came down and blessed and four precious souls were gloriously saved. Now remember this is a little country church, a seaside church and one of the hardest places in Northern Ireland for the free church to get going. Brian came back, preached the second week and more people were saved.

With the result that John said to me, he said, look, you know the situation in Porto Vogue? The church was fighting a rear guard action. They had less than two dozen people in attendance. It was a very, very hard and difficult area.

Now they had seen some people saved. He said, would you come back and do some more meetings? Take up where Brian had left off. I said, I'll do it.

For the next four weeks I had a children's mission every night at 6.30 to 7.30 and then 8 o'clock to whenever I finished with the adults. And God blessed. Souls were saved.

In that little area almost 40 people came to know Christ and that was the beginning of the building up of what is a good strong congregation and has gone from strength to strength from that day. There were discernible changes in the spiritual climate. The Lord was beginning to move amongst us.

Then of course in 1966 as I have otherwise described, three of our ministers were imprisoned on lying unjust charges. The real reason for those charges was given by the Prime Minister of the country when he determined that Paisleyism as he called it was dead and he was going to be the one to bury it. But far from dead, God worked overnight to give us the ear of the people and the power to win many for Christ.

The prayer meetings continued. I remember our church prayer meetings of those days. I remember our presbytery prayer meetings.

The presbytery would call special days of prayer. I remember one of them in particular in Balomina when we prayed together we came together as a body of people as a body of ministers to pray for the removal of that Prime Minister who was doing so much in our country for the destruction of truth and righteousness. To anybody else we were a bunch of lunatics.

Politically he was as safe as houses. He was untouchable. And who were these people? We had the ear of God.

As we left that prayer meeting in Balomina that day I remember saying Terence O'Neill's days are numbered and in no time he was hardly a memory. God answered prayer. I remember a prayer meeting in our Dungannon church.

It was my job to preach at that prayer meeting. And I well remember the portion of Scripture I preached upon. The allegory of Hagar and Sarah in Galatians chapter 4. And I have to say that I felt preaching before the ministers and seeking to lead that presbytery day of prayer I felt I had failed the Lord.

I felt that I had not preached very well. It was with a very heavy heart that I came to the end of it. And yet God was doing His own work.

I know of ministers who came afterwards and who have come years and years afterwards remembering that message as the time when God came and dealt with their hearts. And the prayer meeting itself was a time when as a bunch of men we knew what it was to pray and to get through to God. I remember other times of prayer.

We started the minister's week of prayer. The very first place it met was in my church in Cabra outside Balimony. We met for a week.

It was unheard of in Northern Ireland that ministers would give up their work and everything else and come and turn away from families and all the rest of it and get alone with God and spend the hours of every day in prayer and fasting and seeking after God. I will remember that first week of prayer when we cried as we cried in every prayer meeting, Lord send us revival. That was the constant cry continued with increasing zeal rising up to heaven for a sustained demonstration of soul-saving power.

And God began to answer. In the years that followed, 1966, we had 11 or 12 churches in that year. Within a year we had doubled.

Then tripled. Then quadrupled. God was moving.

And wherever the gospel was going, souls were coming to Jesus Christ. I remember a time in our little church in Cameron. You've got to remember, we're stuck away out in the country.

I mean, you'd wonder why anybody would ever build a church where we had that church. Well, there was a very simple reason. It was the only place we could get.

We were the barn rats. That's what the Presbyterians called us. We were just barn rats.

I'd rather be a barn rat with the blessing of God than a fat cat going to hell. I'd rather have God's blessing. These barn rats.

The church was constituted in a tent. The people had to sit with their umbrellas up. There were so many pinholes in the tent.

And as I told you this morning, the weather in Ulster tends to be a little on the rainy side. And then they met in a loft in a barn. The farmer who owned the field was one of our elders.

He said, well, I'll clear out this upper loft. So I went years later up into that loft. And I had to remark, you know how God laughs at the apostates.

They have to have their cathedrals and their stained glass windows. And they think that gives the presence and blessing of God. Now listen, I have not a thing in the world against a beautiful stained glass window.

If you can afford it, buy me one as well. I'll be very, very happy to have it. As long as there are no holy pictures of God or of Christ.

Let the Pope have all the apostasy and all the idol worship. But let me say this. Those things do not bring the presence of God.

It's not beautiful surroundings that bring the presence of God. When I made my way up the rickety steps to that now reused barn loft, realized here was the place where people prayed. Here was the place where God's blessing came down.

Here was the place where poor sinners wept their way to the cross. What a laugh God can have at the apostates who think they must have all the trappings of religion to have any blessing at all. In that little place in Cabra, we built this church, as I say, there because that was the only place we could get.

But I remember in that place, so many people wanting in. We had to put loudspeakers out into the car park. 250 to 300 people.

Now remember, this is in a church that was built to hold 130 people. When we got 150 people in it, we were bursting at the seams. I had people sitting on the pulpit steps.

Dr. Paisley's dad came to visit one night and he had to come up into the pulpit. He wanted to sit down, but he had to come up in. People everywhere in the little prayer room.

Best of all, night by night. I remember one period of nine months. Week after week after week after week after week after week, souls coming to Christ.

There was only one week. And I'm glad to say it's not because of this, but I'm glad to say I wasn't there that week. There was only one week in all that period without souls being saved.

We saw a whole generation of young people saved. In my last year in Northern Ireland, we started a young people's camp. Not a camp, but a retreat really over a weekend at a place called Castlewellen Castle.

And we decided to have a testimony meeting in the afternoon, Sunday afternoon. Just let the young people stand up and say when and where they were saved. It was a very humbling, but my, a very blessed time when over two dozen of our young people from Cadbury, now Ballymoney, could stand up and tell me the day and the time when through my ministry in that place they came to Christ.

Some of them I didn't even remember to my shame. God was moving. But Satan's counter-attack was to launch the province upon a course of terrorism and anarchy.

Many Protestants and many Christians in Ulster began to be so consumed with the dire security and political situation that they put more effort into political action than into prayer action for revival. And the results have been disastrous. And today, from the greatest, and this is, I hope not just jingoism, from the greatest country in Europe, greatest in the sense of more Christians per capita than any place in Europe, greatest in the sense of being the most crime-free society in all of Europe, greatest in the sense of providing more missionaries and more missionary support per capita than anywhere else in Europe, that little nation has descended to the depths till tonight it is a godless, wicked, vicious, immoral, sensual society.

And yet the cry for revival has never ceased. God has continued to give us tastes of His power. And as we reach our jubilee year, we are back to the place of crying for God's reviving grace.

The need is as great as ever, greater than ever in many ways. I was thinking that in the early years, no promise was more prayed over and more preached about than the word we have read tonight in 2 Chronicles 7, verse 14, where the Lord said to Solomon, 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. The Lord promises to revive His penitent praying people.

That's the promise. That's the promise on which, in the early days of this denomination, we took our stand. That's the promise that carried us through the momentous 1960's and the expansive 1970's.

That is the promise that we bring to every free Presbyterian denominational church or congregation. That is the promise that whether we're in Canada or America or Australia or England or Scotland or Wales or Spain or Germany or wherever our men are preaching Christ, that is the promise that we bring. It's God's Word.

And I would say to this congregation, it is still the promise of God and it is still the truth upon which we must take our stand in the place of prayer. God promises. He has put His name to it.

He has signed the check, as it were. He has put it in our hand. And He said, cash it at the bank of faith.

He promises to give His penitent praying people a genuine revival. That's the promise. When you look at this promise, you must be struck first and foremost by the absence of revival.

This is the need for it. Because it is currently absent. We have read in chapter 6, when you read there in verse 24, at Solomon's prayer, if thy people Israel are put to the worst before the enemy.

Verse 26, when the heavens shut up and there's no rain. Verse 28, if there be death or pestilence, blasting, mildew, locusts or caterpillars, or the enemy besieging their land, sickness or sore. These are the situations that he's dealing with.

There's no revival here. There's no great blessing. What marks the absence of revival? The heavens are shut up.

What does that mean? It means that it appears at least, that prayer is not getting through to God. We're praying without being heard. Now, let's be honest.

There's an awful lot of praying that has no effect on God, man or devil. It's an awful lot of praying that may be couched in the language of great oratory, but it never goes further than bouncing off the ceiling tiles. The heavens are shut up.

It means also that the mighty blessings of heaven are not coming down. There is not that open intercourse between heaven and earth. There are no showers.

That's a mark of powerless religion, powerless gospel preaching, impotent orthodoxy. Do we not have to confess that that's where we stand? I remember those early days in the free church when we lamented this before God. Lord, we believe the gospel, but where's the power of the gospel? We believe that God blesses preaching, but we're not seeing that blessing.

The enemy has come in like a flood, and the Lord is not raising up the standard against him. The enemy is rampant. Modernism, liberalism, ecumenism, worldliness of every kind sweeping over the land and the church powerless to do anything about it.

That's the absence of revival. Now, let me tell you, my friend, there is absolutely nothing can take the place of a mighty moving of the Holy Ghost. I've made this statement before and I'll make it again.

And I know that it sometimes doesn't go down well in every quarter, but be that as it may, it's God's truth. When you see the church producing tremendous thinkers and treatises on what is called apologetics, you normally are seeing a church that is devoid of the power of God. When you have a church reduced to having to bring out nitty-gritty little arguments to try to prove the Bible is the Word of God, to prove that God is the Creator, that God is the upholder of all things, how on earth can you prove anything to a dead man? Now, don't misunderstand me.

I have read my share of apologetics. I have my own particular, well, it's not particular to me, but I have my own beliefs in apologetics. I am called a Vantillian in apologetics, a presuppositionalist.

I believe all that. But I also believe that God never, never in the history of the church has never done anything great through the pursuit of apologetics. How do I know that? I'll tell you very simply how I know it.

Jesus stood before the Pharisees of his day and he asked them a few simple questions. They were blaming him for breaking the Sabbath. Do you remember his famous line of argument? If your ox or your ass falls into a ditch on the Sabbath day, do you pull it out? And yet you're blaming me for making a sick man whole on the Sabbath day? They were absolutely dumbstruck.

Couldn't say a word. But if you were to go today to the rabbi of this synagogue behind us and put the same argument to him, he would chew the head off you. He's not only got an answer, he's waiting for the question.

And all through the centuries the rabbis have had the answer. What was the difference? The difference was that when Jesus Christ in person was there, when he was putting the question, it was not some little apologetic argument. It was something that was spoken in the power of the Holy Ghost.

Let me tell you, there's no answer to revival. There's none whatsoever. Not a thing in the world the devil can do about it.

When God starts moving with great power, you see big sinners who hate the Gospel, people who come to a meeting to break it up, people who have gone to the meeting to attack the preacher and they end up falling down under conviction and getting saved. There's no answer to that, you know. All the apologetics in the world don't make up for it.

Now, don't think that I am such a philistine that I'm totally against education of Christian ministries. I'm a Presbyterian. I believe in an educated Christian ministry.

But let us make sure that education is put where it ought to be, at the foot of the cross. Let us make sure that we do not get puffed up, that we think because we know a wee bit of Greek or know a wee bit of Hebrew or learn a wee bit of systematic theology or we have learned this neat little logical argument or another that suddenly we're of use to God. All that there may be useful to God or it may be totally useless to God.

The difference is the power of the Holy Ghost. As a free Presbyterian minister, I make my vows at ordination and installation. And one of the answers I give is that I believe that it is only by the power of the infilling of the Holy Ghost that I can make full proof of my ministry.

Day by day and week by week and month by month and year by year, the prayer of my heart and the prayer of every one of our ministers has to be, O God, fill me with Thy Spirit. Visit this church with a demonstration of the power of the Holy Ghost. The absence of revival is seen when the heavens are shut up, the showers are not there, religion is powerless, the enemy is rampant.

The text speaks about the hindrance to revival. What hinders revival? Bill Clinton. No, sir.

You can blame Mr. Clinton on a whole lot, but don't blame him for hindering revival. The PCUSA with the apostates in control, deciding whether they're going to ordain homosexuals or not. No, sir.

They're not the hindrance to revival. Oh, they're a curse on the country. But they're not what hinders revival.

The hindrance to revival is the sin of God's people. That's what hinders revival. Especially the sin of pride.

Do you notice what it says? If my people which are called by my name shall humble themselves. We get so puffed up about many things. We're so full of ourselves for no reason at all.

You learn a little. As I say, knowledge puffeth up. And you're so big headed, proud of the little you know, proud of what you've done, proud of where you've been, proud of what you are.

I love the Free Presbyterian Church under God. I owe everything after my salvation to the work that God did for me and in me through the ministry of this denomination. God didn't call me to preach and then I looked around for a place in which to preach.

God called me specifically, absolutely clearly to the ministry of this church. I am here by 100% conviction. But let me tell you, the greatest curse we can have is to be proud of what we are.

I have told you what God did in early days. Not to make anything of the church. For remember, we were the most despised, the most hated people on earth.

And I have to say, I could understand why people couldn't take it in that God would bless us. I often wonder it myself. We didn't have the greatest talent.

We didn't have the greatest learning. We didn't have the greatest gifts. We didn't have the greatest anything.

Except in God's gift to us in Dr. Paisley, we had the greatest evangelist in Europe. I think the greatest evangelist in the world. But other than that, we were just a very ordinary bunch of people whom God saved from the jaws of hell and said, go out and preach.

We have nothing to be proud of. Not a thing to be proud of. But yet, so proud do we become that God says, unless you learn to humble yourself, you are never going to be blessed.

Sin in the camp. Sin in the pulpit. Sin in the session.

Sin in the deacons. Sin in the Sabbath school teachers. Sin in the members.

These are the things that hold back the blessing of God. Now, we're never going to have a perfect church. Understand that.

But we can be a sincere and seeking people. As long as we are half-hearted about the things of God, we're never going to get anywhere. It's only when we have burned every bridge behind us and say honestly before God, no matter what it costs me, no matter where it leads me, no matter what people think about me, from this day I am going to be 100% on the altar for God.

Unless we're willing to get there. You can talk about blessing and revival all you like. It's just a farce and a charade.

What about the experience of revival? With this I'm through. I would like to take time to preach in this. It's a big text.

Notice the company addressed. If my people. God's people the key to revival.

That's it. We are the key. God is speaking to you.

He's speaking to me. He's speaking to this congregation. If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray.

This is the company addressed. Do not let us shirk the responsibility. Do not let us seek to pass the buck to somebody else.

God is dealing with his own people. And if we are in the place we ought to be with God, we will be of optimum use to the Lord. And that is revival.

The heavens open to free intercourse of our prayers and God's answers. That is revival. Notice the condition stated.

If they will humble themselves. If they will pray. If they will seek my faith.

If they will turn from their wicked ways. Now in many ways all those things are different ways of saying the same thing. But the condition stated is, look, if my people will take this seriously and stop playing church.

If my people will get serious with God. If my people are genuinely interested in being right with God. If my people will put everything on the altar for God.

If my people will do this, I will bless them. That's the condition that God states. And the covenant established is glorious.

For he says, then, then. Do you see the force of that? Without all this, I will not hear from heaven. That's a serious thing.

When I get before God I must confess, and I've said this so often, but it always comes to mind. For example, when I read in the 28th Psalm where the psalmist is crying, Lord, be not silent to me, lest I become like them that go down into the pit. That's a text that haunts me constantly.

If there's one thing I fear above all other things on God's earth, it is the silence of God. I live my life and conduct my ministry. I seek God's face.

I read His Word constantly with a dread of the silence of God. What marks the difference between a Christian and an ungodly one? God is silent to the ungodly, but He is not silent to His people. Be not silent to me.

But He's saying, listen, if my people, and they are my people, and they're called by my name, but if they are proud, and wayward, and willful, no matter what they say in their prayers, they're not praying, and I will not hear from heaven. God help us when our prayer meetings are a farce. God help us when we meet to pray, and God says, I will not hear you.

He says, if you, my people, will humble yourselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from your wicked ways, then, then, my what a transforming word that is, then will I hear from heaven. Let me tell you, give me the ear of God. I don't care what the devil roars.

I don't care what the devil does. I don't care what an army he raises up. I don't care what all the world may think or say or do.

Give us but the ear of God, and the victory is ours. I will hear from heaven. I will forgive their sins.

My what a sweet experience when the whole church is walking in the joy of sins forgiven. When God's people are one with God, and one with each other, and their sins are gone, and they're enjoying all that has been purchased with the precious blood of God's dear lamb. I'll forgive their sin, and I will heal their land.

I have to confess that when we prayed that prayer, I took it that that was a promise that God would heal Ulster. And I know many of you pray that prayer and think it's a promise that God will heal America. I don't think that's the promise at all.

Now God can heal Ulster, and God can heal America, and I pray that he will do both. But that is not the promise. When you think of China, are there Christians there? Yes, there are.

We're told by the Chinese communists maybe 60 million Christians there. Is God promising through them that he will turn China from being the communist monster it is? He may do that, but that's not the promise. You see, the New Testament fulfillment of the Old Testament type of the nation of Israel is the church.

Not America, not Ulster, not England, or anywhere else. The land typifies the church. God is saying, I'll give you a revived covenant people.

I will give you a revival of my church. I will do this. Now such a church will have an impact on the land round about.

Can it be otherwise? God will do great things through such a church. But you see, what I'm trying to save us from, and what this Scripture is saving us from, is the folly that unless we see America changed in its political, in its social, and its judicial experiments, and changed in a way of godliness, that we can't see revival. That is not true.

We pray for a revival that will produce a reformation. That will accomplish those things. But the initial revival is a spiritual moving among the people of God.

And God says, if you're willing, so am I. He's more willing to give than we are to receive. I trust tonight that you will feel something of the burden for revival. God save us from cold hearted Christianity.

God save us from all the counterfeits of revival, of which there are so many examples round about us. God give us a genuine, heart breaking burden for revival. That in our private prayer times, this will be our cry.

In our public prayer meetings, this will be our cry. Lord, send us revival. Let it begin now in me, gladly dethroning each rival.

Yield I my heart unto thee. If we get the burden, God will give the blessing. For God has promised to give revival to a penitent praying people.

Let's bow our heads in prayer. Let's all pray. Our time is gone.

In fact, it has more than gone. But this is the Lord's day. So, let's not be in a hurry to get away from the Lord's house.

This is the Lord's day. God has spoken to your heart tonight, and I hope He has. I trust you'll ask Him where you sit, Lord, burden me greatly for a move of God.

Help me never to be satisfied with the humdrum and the ordinary, the powerless. Lord, give me a mighty burden for a moving of the Holy Ghost. Fill me personally with your Spirit.

Let me live in the fullness of power. Fill our preachers with the Holy Ghost, and use them greatly. Make every church a soul-saving center within a yard of hell.

Save all our young people. Save all our families. Use us to reach the community.

And let us see a blessed, glorious, reviving. We are thy people. We are called by thy name.

We humble ourselves and pray and seek thy face and turn from our wicked ways. Lord, hear from heaven thy dwelling place. When thou hearest, forgive and heal our land.

Father in heaven, bless thy word to our hearts. Through Ezekiel, thou hast pointed Israel to a day when there shall be showers of blessing. Lord, point us similarly to the opening of the windows of heaven.

Pour us out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it. O God, our God, visit us soon with revival. We're stricken with coldness and death.

Where is our hope of survival? Save in thy life-giving breath. Lord, send us revival. Let it begin now in me.

Gladly dethroning each rival, yield I my heart unto thee. We make this our prayer, individually as Christians, collectively as a body of God's people. Let us not live on the memories of past blessing, but let us make those past blessings a springboard for faith and for prayer that God will do a greater thing in our day than he has ever done before.

Lord, bless the free church in this its jubilee year. Bless in Ulster amidst the chaos and the anarchy and the lawlessness and the viciousness and the worldliness and the compromise and the hatred of God's eternal truth. God, bless the church there and grant that thou wilt make the second fifty years better than the first.

Visit us with revival. Do it here in the United States. Bless the little churches being established.

Bless the men who in faithfulness to God are seeking to take their stand. O God, we pray, open the windows of heaven upon us, we pray. We look to thee.

Answer us abundantly. Bless those who travel now and grant journeying mercies. Bless those who remain to sing thy praise and have fellowship then around the refreshments.

Come, Lord, and sanctify our gathering to the glory of thy name. Grant that thy grace, thy mercy and thy peace will be the portion of all thy people called by thy name and may revival be their burden and their blessing. We pray in Jesus' name.

Amen.

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