

How to Pray for Revival

by Bill McLeod

To pray for revival, we must first make up our minds that it is important and then mobilize our church's resources to pray with boldness and confidence.

Duration: 1:01:02

Scripture: Isaiah 40:3, Isaiah 62:10, Romans 13:12-14, Hebrews 5:12 - 6:2

Topics: "Revival Praying"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a powerful story of a young boy who unexpectedly takes over the pulpit and preaches with tears. His passionate message touches the hearts of both sinners and Christians, leading many to tears. The speaker emphasizes the importance of recognizing the immense resources within the church, even if it may seem cold and dead. He encourages pastors to pray for revival and then mobilize their resources for evangelism. The speaker also uses a football analogy to illustrate the role of pastors in leading the church against the opposing forces of the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Transcript

For additional copies of this message, or for other messages available, please contact the Canadian Revival Fellowship, Box 584, Regina, Saskatchewan, S4P 3A3. From Ezekiel, chapter 37, verse 1. The Prophet says to us, The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the Spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones, and caused me to pass by them round about. And behold, there were very many in the open valley, and lo, they were very dry.

And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord God, you know. Again he said unto me, Prophecy upon these bones, and say unto them, O you dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones, Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live.

And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the Lord. So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I prophesied, there was a noise.

And behold, a shaking. And the bones came together, bone to his bone. And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above, but there was no breath in them.

Then he said unto me, Prophecy unto the wind. The marginal reading says, unto the breath. Prophecy unto the wind.

Prophecy, Son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord God, Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. So I prophesied as he commanded me. And the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceeding great army.

The topic assigned me is how to pray for revival. And I don't consider myself an expert in this area, but I'll try to share some insights, things that God has taught me regarding prayer for revival. I think, first of all, that as Christians, and perhaps especially as Christian workers, we have to make up our mind about this whole area of revival.

In 1 Kings, you recall that Elijah said to the nation of Israel, How long do you halt between two opinions? If the Lord be God, then follow him. But if Baal, then follow him. But what he was saying was, make up your mind.

And I think we need to do the same thing. Is revival that important? Or can we do without it? Business as usual, or the unusual business of revival? Which do we want? Many of us think, well, it's not all that bad. We can probably get by the way we are.

And revival is not all that important. Are we going to wait, as they did in Joel chapter 2, until the alien army was in their land, seemingly with flamethrowers or whatever, because the country was like the Garden of Eden before them and like a desolate wilderness after them. And then they appointed days of fasting and prayer and called on God for revival.

Are we going to wait until the bombs are bursting or the canisters of bacteria and chemical are falling before we get serious about revival? Dear people, we have to make up our mind. Is this what we want, or is it not? Let me tell you how I came to the place where I saw the need of revival and it became an overwhelming passion with me. I began to see the problems in the church.

It started when I was in Winnipeg, a shantyman missionary to the logging camps, a member of a large evangelical church in Winnipeg. There were some problems in the church and some people thought the pastor should leave. And one day, a Christian businessman, a man with a very successful business of his own, phoned me and said he'd like to take me out and talk to me.

So he took me out and he talked to me and he represented some of the most influential and wealthy people in that church. He told me who they were. He said, now we feel the pastor should leave, but he won't get the message.

So here's what we propose to do. And I couldn't believe it, that Christians would operate in such an underhanded way. Is this what in the world? He said, what we're going to do is this, this particular group of people, we're going to leave the church and rent an independent hall and have you as our pastor.

When we do that, the church will fail financially, the pastor will have to leave, then we'll come back and you'll be the pastor of the church. I couldn't believe it. I just stared at him.

He took me home. I got on the telephone and phoned the pastor and told him what the battle plan was. And the thing broke.

And the mainspring in that dirty movement, president of one of the largest paper companies in Canada, decided it was getting too hot, so he went to Vancouver for three months holidays so he wouldn't be around when the pieces came down. And you know what happened when he was in Vancouver? The shareholders in his company got together and they kicked him out on the street. The very thing he tried to do to the pastor.

The fellow who took me for a ride in the car, God took him for a ride. And the same thing happened to him. The shareholders kicked him out on the street.

Two other of those men went to Minneapolis to start a business. They came crawling back to Winnipeg. Years later, they'd lost about every dollar they had.

But I just couldn't believe it. It just rocked my mind that Christians could even think of operating in a way like that. Maybe I was naive.

I don't know. In 1962, I moved to Saskatoon. I was really thrilled at the church I had.

Nice building, great location, couple of hundred people, quite a number of them Bible school graduates. I thought, this is fantastic. But I figured, well, now this church has been on the grease rack long enough, let's get it on the road.

So here's what I did. After I'd been there long enough to know who the people were, I divided the church into five teams for evangelism, you see. And so I put people on the teams, tried to have five balanced teams as far as I could.

And then I put a little thing on the bulletin board. I told the people, check the bulletin board, find out which team you're on, check the log at the side, which will tell you which night every five weeks your team will be on deck for evangelism, for calling. We have many names, people that need to be saved.

Then I left the door open. I said, however, if you feel that you're not quite prepared spiritually to do this kind of thing, then stay home and pray for the rest of the team. So they all stayed home and prayed.

So then I thought to myself, oh, I know what the problem is. They don't know how to do it. So we had classes in how to do it, how to win people to Christ.

Had a very good enrollment, and for eight weeks, almost 100% attendance. Fantastic! And then we came to the last night, and I told the people, now Tuesday night is visitation night. I expect to see you all out.

But I left the door open. If you feel you're not quite spiritually prepared to do this, then stay home and pray for the rest of the team as we go. Tuesday night came, all but two of them stayed home to pray.

Then I realized that the problem was not that they didn't know how to do it. The problem was that they didn't want to do it. Their hearts were not right.

Then I discovered we had people in the church that hadn't spoken to each other for two years. Some of them were brothers. And other things I discovered going on in the church.

And I got discouraged. I thought to myself, what are we going to do with this situation? I thought I'm going to pray for revival. So we started praying for revival, not really knowing what it was.

I'd read some books on it. I'd seen one revival some years before at a Christian workers' camp. We had a couple of dozen men there.

And Cecil Carter was the speaker. And God broke in on the first message. And it ended up with every man on his knees crying to God.

And I mean crying. Boy, that was great, see? And so we started praying for revival. Now, first of all, you have to make up your mind that it's important.

If you can be satisfied with a status quo in your church, revival is not for you. But if you've caught a glimpse of what God can do, and if you know something about the inner workings of the church, Henry Teichrab told me that when he was holding meetings with others of our teams in Detroit, he said so much sin surfaced in those evangelical churches that he said if I had not been a well-grounded Christian, I would have chucked the whole thing. If that's all that Christianity can do for people, let's forget about it.

But that's not all that unusual. The best soul winner I had in my church, he used to come to me and have a list of a ten-block area where he called on every home. He maybe led several people to Christ.

He had invitations in one case from 25 homes to return for another visit. And then I found out in the revival that he had an immoral relationship with another man's wife. I couldn't believe it.

A man in my church, he looked like a patriarch. Anytime I thought about him, I thought, what a sweet, sweet Christian. In the revival, I discovered he too had an illicit relationship with a woman, not his wife.

The church is sick. Very sick. Because revival is normal New Testament Christianity.

What we see in the average church is totally, wholly abnormal. All right, we have to make up our minds about it. Because if we don't, we'll get nowhere as far as revival is concerned.

In the early 1800s, there were great revivals sweeping through the United States. And British Christians heard about it and they got so concerned, they asked if somebody could come and share in the churches of England as to what God was doing in the States. And a Reverend Calvin Colton was the man that they sent on and they sent him across.

But he had so many invitations from all over the British Isles, he just couldn't take this kind of time. He had to get back to his church in America. So he went back home and then he wrote a book called A History of American Revivals of Religion published in 1832.

I have a copy in my library. I got it for 25 cents. I wouldn't sell it to you for 25 dollars.

But don't try me with 50 because I do have some scotch blood in my veins. He said some marvelous things, some very helpful things in that book. One of them was this, that when the revivals first began, they began as sovereign works of God.

It would strike a church that was not prepared for it at all, not expecting it. But after this had happened, in several areas, that kind of revival never occurred again. From that point on, revivals only came where pastors worked for it and planned for it after they learned through the sovereign works of God what revival really was.

They learned how to work for revival. And then God waited for that. And in this book he said this.

He said this kind of revival never, after those few initial cases, never ever came to a church that was not prepared for it, expecting it, praying for it, believing God for it. And it never came to a church that wasn't expecting it, and it never failed to come to a church that was looking for it. And then he said this.

He used the term insulated conversions. We would not use that term today. We would talk about isolated conversions.

He said we were never satisfied with one or two, or a family or two coming to Christ. These insulated conversions were just an indication that God was alive, but this was not revival. So we kept fasting and praying and working and believing until, as he said, the Holy Ghost came and took the work out of our hands and then made the entire community aware of the presence and power of God and shook hundreds and sometimes thousands with the Word of God.

Do we want that today? Or are we satisfied with the way things are? Satisfied with a full church. I knew a full church. They had two services Sunday morning, about 500 in each.

But you know, the chief game in that church was who had the most skidoos. And one family had five skidoos, so they were top dog on the ladder in that particular church. And there was a young man who attended that church, and he came forward in one of our meetings.

I was not holding meetings in that church. And that kid was so discouraged by what he saw happening in that church, he was ready to chop the whole thing and serve Satan the rest of his days. But that night I said, young man, listen, I'm not in the slightest bit interested in what you're telling me about what's going on in the church.

I know what goes on in churches. What's going on in your life? And he prayed the prayer and asked the Lord to search him. And then he broke.

And oh, what a fountain of wickedness came pouring out of his lips to God. And he repented. Godly sorrow works repentance unto salvation, not to be repented of, but the sorrow of the world works death.

And oh, that kid met God that night. Then he started soul winning. His father was a Christian worker, not a preacher.

I mean, not a pastor, but a Christian worker. And he used his father's home and he started meetings. And he went after the hardest kids he could find out in the streets.

He led about a hundred young people to Jesus Christ. Finally he went to the Winnipeg Bible College, and he's a missionary today. His own church almost drove him into the arms of Satan.

But God rescued him through revival, and he experienced a personal revival. And you know, when we talk about praying for revival, there's three things we have to think about. Are we thinking about personal revival, or church revival, or a general awakening that'll sweep a whole country, or all three? Some of the things we're talking about would apply to all three, and some would not.

But we'll have to sort this out, of course, in our own mind. All right. Initially, make up your mind about it.

Is this what we want? Is this really normal New Testament Christianity? If it is, let's go for it and believe God for it and work for it until it comes. Then, secondly, pastors, mobilize your resources. You're not expected to do it all.

I know some people in a church think you should. Billy Sunday said the average church thinks the pastor's some kind of an ecclesiastical locomotive that'll huff and puff and grunt and groan and pull the whole church through the glory. And you know, preachers are expected by congregations to spend all week preening the feathers of their sermonic peacocks and then to strut these sermons out on Sunday for their admiration of the congregation.

Is that how you look at it? Well, that's the way a lot of people look at it. I heard Paul Valentine one time talk about the church, a football team, with a coach, the pastor. And they're playing a game and the opponent, the opposing team, the world, the flesh, and the devil, all of them 300-pounders that can do 100 yards in 10 seconds.

But in this game, it's played differently by different rules. The team are up in the bleachers and the coach plays the game all by himself. So he's down there and he calls the signals and he snaps the ball.

Then he's got to be fast enough to run back and catch his own snap. Then he's got to throw a forward pass away down the field. Then he's got to be fast enough to catch his own forward pass.

And he just gets his hands in the forward pass when the world, the flesh, and the devil, and remember, it's a half a ton hitting him. And down he goes. And the ball spurts loose and they get it.

And they run down the field and they score a touchdown. And all this while, the coach is lying on the field. He can't get up.

He's knocked right out. And the team are up in the bleachers looking at their watch. You know, he's been lying there for five minutes.

He's not much good. We need a new coach. But that's the way people look at it so often.

Pastors, listen. There are immense resources in your church, no matter how cold and dead it is. Don't expect it might, but don't expect it's going to happen overnight.

We prayed for years, and with great intensity for two years for revival. Before it came, we learned to mobilize our resources in Acts chapter 4. Peter and John were threatened by the Jewish Sanhedrin council in Jerusalem and told, you are not to preach or teach anymore in the name of Jesus. So they went back to the church in Jerusalem and had a strategy session.

What are we going to do? Let's get the Baptist World Alliance because they've got 30 million members. Let's get them to put on a letter thing. We'll get them to snow them under.

We'll snow the Sanhedrin under with letters. No, they had a prayer meeting. That's all they did.

They just had a prayer meeting. And the prayer meeting resulted in a powerful revival. Funny thing, people, they didn't pray for revival, but this is what they prayed for.

Grant unto your servants that with all boldness they may speak thy word, and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of your holy servant Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together, and they were all filled the second time for many, the first time for some, with the Holy Spirit. And they spoke the word of God with boldness.

And it says, With great power the apostles gave witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. This has been called the second Pentecost. Now one of the reasons that second revival came so quickly, I mean, at the end of one prayer meeting was because these people in that prayer meeting were already walking in the Spirit.

Here's what I did in Saskatoon. I gradually began to emphasize the prayer meeting. I cleared the decks for prayer Wednesday night.

No more choir practice on Wednesday night. Absolutely nothing else. No club meetings on Wednesday night.

Because, you know, people, as I studied the Bible, I saw that prayer was to have priority in the church. I know one of the largest churches in North America, they don't even have a prayer meeting, an evangelical church. If I told you what church it is, many of you would know it.

You'd be shocked. They don't even have a prayer meeting. They don't really need that.

They've got such a program going. Our Lord said, My house shall be called a house of prayer for all people. Shall we make it that? Can we make it that? I tried and succeeded.

Here's what I did. I used to tell the people, Miss Sunday morning if you have to. Miss Sunday evening if you have to.

But under no circumstances, Miss Wednesday night. And you know what happened? The prayer meetings started to grow. From 25 to 35 to 45 to 55 to 65 to 75.

And we did other things. We encouraged the people to bring their children. We had a children's prayer meeting that went on coincident with the adult prayer meeting.

Run by the children themselves. The whole thing was chaired by children. Trained by adults.

And they were trained to pray. Finally we had to have two children's prayer meetings. And we often had 40 children in the prayer meeting alone.

That's one thing we did. Then after we got the prayer meeting really going. And people, I said something else.

You can't lay things like this. You can't start increasing the prayer appeal all at once. Because the people are cold and they won't accept it.

You'll always have a few people that are warm. And they're the ones that will first respond. And that's what we did.

And as they got warmer, other cold people began to get warm. And then they got warmer. Now it wasn't revival yet.

But the church was warming up. So then we began having a half hour prayer meeting at the end of every Sunday evening service. For those that wanted to stay.

And we'd have anywhere from 20 to 40 people or so that would stay for a half hour of prayer. And we kept it to half an hour. And then our young people, we had two young people's groups.

And we had both of them do the same thing. And all your young people's meetings were a half hour of prayer. And normally in their meetings, nobody went home.

Everybody stayed for the half hour of prayer. Then we started cottage prayer meetings all over the city. They were never too well attended, but there was always somebody there praying.

Then after a couple of months, we started a prayer wheel. And we challenged everybody in the church to try and take 15 minutes in the day or night. And some people were on shift work and it would work better for them at night than the daytime and so on.

Whatever so, after a while, we had the whole 24 hours taken up. And sometimes there were two or three people that had the same 15-minute slot. And so we had... Boy, the volume of prayer was really increasing, you see.

And we started a deacon's prayer meeting. We had 10 deacons. We started a deacon's prayer meeting Saturday night at 9 o'clock, which ended when we were finished.

There was a lot of prayer. No revival yet, but a lot of prayer. And the prayer meeting grew.

75, 85, 95, 105, 120. I couldn't see anything happening outwardly in the church apart from the prayer meeting. Then Ralph and Lou came.

Supposed to stay for a week and a half. They stayed for a little over seven weeks. Our church would hold about 300 comfortably.

You could pack 400 in. And it was by Saturday night of that week, we started on the Wednesday night with about 150, and by Saturday we were packed. Monday we had to move to a neighboring church seating maybe 500.

The first night we had 700 in there. And some very unusual things were happening. In one of those meetings in that Anglican church, now we had all the young people sitting on the platform, had a large platform, just to make room for other people because, you know, so many people had showed up.

We only stayed there two nights and we had to get out. But a boy about ten years of age came darting up on the platform from our church. He was the son of the vice chairman of the congregation.

And he wheeled in behind the pulpit and just took over and began to preach. And he preached with tears for a few moments. He called on the sinners to get saved and the Christians to get right with God.

And then he was totally overcome. And just stood there weeping. And his father came up and put his arm around him and took him back to his pulpit.

Boy, I never seen anything like that before. But Jonathan Edwards said that many of the great revivals that swept the United States in the late 1700s were started through children's prayer meetings. Adults would come to hear their children pray and come under tremendous conviction of sin.

Then we moved to a neighboring Anglican church seating maybe a thousand. That proved to be too small. And we moved to a building seating 1,400.

And the first night we had 1,700 or so packed in there. And the caretaker got so angry. He lost his cool.

He was even swearing and telling us, You can't do it. The fire marshal will close this place down. Get rid of some of these people.

So I asked all my people to leave and go down to the Alliance Church. And I said, I'll have a meeting with you there. So several hundred went out.

And then some more came in off the street. And we had the same problem. And you know, a beautiful thing happened.

The caretaker got saved about a week later. Boy, then he didn't care if we had him hanging on the lights, you know. And we saw the glory of God.

Our prayer meetings went up to 150, 175, 14 weeks after the revival. I was on the road all the time. I was still a pastor, but conducting board meetings by long distance, telephoning sometimes from 2,000 miles away didn't work too well.

And finally, I resigned. They didn't want me to, but I did resign. And one Sunday morning, they laid their hands on me, the representative of the church, the deacons, and committed me to a revival ministry in front of the congregation.

And I've been at that ever since. But 14 weeks after the revival, I was home for a Wednesday night prayer meeting. There was 165 people there.

I just happened to count. Nine people gave their testimony that night. I remember a lady sitting over a young married woman.

She didn't get to her feet. She just burst into tears. And suddenly she said, Oh, I'm just sitting here enjoying my wonderful God.

He's so great. And a teenage boy found Christ in the prayer meeting that night. And I said to the people at the end, I said, Boy, you don't even need a preacher around here.

You're doing better than when I was here. It was a revival. And God pushed it out all over the country.

One of the greatest experts on revival in the world heard about the revival in Canada, heard some things about it that weren't true, and said in a pastor's conference in Minneapolis, It's not of God. It's not really a genuine revival. It's never moved out of Saskatoon.

Well, he didn't know that we quit counting many, many years ago after 2,000 teams had gone out. Every province in Canada was visited. Every state in the American Union was visited, with the possible exception of Hawaii.

There may have been teams. A lot of the countries in South America were visited. Many European countries.

India was visited. He didn't know a thing about it. He finally found out.

And, you know, he was speaking at a Bible college in Canada, and I guess he tested the waters, and he asked this question. He said, How many of you people here, staff or students, could say honestly that the Canadian revival had a profound influence of some kind in your life? Almost every hand went up. And he

was obviously shaken by this.

Made some remark to the effect that he'd have to rethink some things he'd been thinking. Anyway, mobilize your resources. Pastor, God doesn't expect you to do it all.

Warm up your people. Challenge them about prayer. Circulate books among them on prayer and on revival.

Inform yourself about the great revivals of the past. And then, preach for revival. Preach for it.

Deal with sin. Don't use the revival word too much, or you'll weary the people about it, but preach to the needs. Find out what the needs are in your church.

Get into the homes of the people. Find out where they're struggling. Preach to meet their needs, and you'll always have people willing to listen.

And believe God. You know what I used to do in our church? Saturday nights, I'd go into the church, and I'd kneel at the end of every pew. Up and down.

It took a while. And I would pray for God to pour out His Spirit on the people sitting in that pew on Sunday the next day. I really meant it.

God bless those people. Speak to their hearts. Oh, we saw some marvelous things.

A firefighter from our church came to me one night, and he stood there just shaking, just trembling. He got out the word passed, and that's all he could say. He burst into tears, and he fell out of the chair and began to cry and sob as if his heart would break.

The Spirit of God had convicted him of his sin. Someone phoned me from my church one day. He had an office in the university.

He worked there. He was crying so badly, he was incoherent. But he made me to understand he had to see me immediately.

I said, Come right away. Fifteen minutes later, he burst into my office, ran across the room, fell on his knees at my office desk, put his head on the desk, and sobbed and cried. I thought one of his children had been killed, his wife had been killed.

Something terrible must have happened. I knelt beside him, put my arm around him, and waited. And finally, after a period of time, he was composed enough to tell me what happened.

He was sitting at his office desk when he said, The Holy Spirit came. And he tore my heart wide open. And he showed me every sin I'd ever committed from the time I was a child to that day.

He said, Oh, Pastor, it was like looking into hell. I had never seen myself before. He had to go to his wife and make some things right with his wife.

He had to go down to Regina. And he phoned beforehand, and they called a meeting of some government officials because he had been hurt, not on the job. And he got some friends of his to swear he was hurt on the job.

So he got workman's compensation, which amounted to thousands of dollars. He got it by lying. And he had to make that right.

And he told me this with all earnestness. He said, I don't care if I go to jail. I don't care if I lose my job.

I don't care if I lose my family. There's just one thing I care about. Pastor, I've got to be right with God.

Who persuaded him? The Lord did. A man from one of our largest Canadian Bible schools came to him one night and said, Pastor Bill, do you mind being late on the platform tonight? He said, It doesn't matter to me. You know why? He said, I'd like to get saved.

I said, What did you say? I'd like to become a Christian. I said, But you're a teacher in a Bible college. You mean you're not saved? No, he said, I know the language.

I've always known the language. My parents were Christians, you know. But I've never known Christ.

So I led him to the Lord Jesus in my office. Sherwood worked. Billy Graham's right-hand man for 25 years.

He edited the Billy Graham decision paper for that length of time. Heard about revival in Canada through Leonard Ravenhill. Leonard Ravenhill said, Would he? Sherwood worked.

Would he? There's a revival in Canada. It's next door to heaven. Hop a plane.

So he phoned up. And I don't know where he got my name. We never met.

He asked where the action was. Well, it says it's in different places. But I'm in Winnipeg.

That's close to Minneapolis. So he hopped a plane. He came down and only stayed for one night.

And that night, Harry and Evelyn Thiessen, one of our teams, gave their testimony. And God reached Woody's heart. It was quite a meeting.

We were in a church seating 1,200. We were packed to the doors. People started coming forward before the invitation was given.

Finally, we had the whole front of the church just lined with people kneeling, so we filled the choir loft and the platform. And still people were coming, so we started emptying the front pews. We just told people, Leave your pew and go to the back.

We filled the first three pews across that large church. And the third pew was the pew that Woody was sitting in. And he came to me and said, I'm Woody.

I'm Sherwood Woody. He said, Brother Bill, this is revival. I've never seen it before.

I've seen evangelism on the largest scale, but I've never seen revival. And then he said, My wife desperately needs this. And then he said, The Billy Graham Organization, not Billy.

Billy's clean. But the Billy Graham Organization desperately needs this. And then he said, And you know, I think I need it too.

And through Harry and Evelyn's testimony down in Minneapolis in an afterglow, Woody met God. And he wrote a book called The Afterglow. And he gives his testimony in that book.

Some of the things. And you know, Woody closed down the Billy Graham office in Minneapolis. They had hundreds of people working there.

He wanted me to bring a revival message to those people. And I did so. I forget how many responded.

I remember one lady got saved. A couple were involved in occult practices. They got straightened out.

God met their need. And others. And after we were through the counseling, a man came up to me, and he was trembling.

And he said, You'd better pray with me. And I said, Why? He said, God has so a hold of my heart, I can't even coordinate to sweep a floor. Please help me.

We talked with people that told us they couldn't coordinate to drive a car. They were afraid to get behind the wheel of a car because they couldn't coordinate to drive a car. Because the Spirit had a hold of their heart in such a powerful way.

Well, that's what we're talking about. So mobilize all the resources of the prayer power in your church. And believe God that it'll happen.

And then preach to it. And that's what he's talking about here in Ezekiel 37, you know. I'm not giving you a direct interpretation.

This has to do with Israel. I'm giving you a legitimate application. Our churches are like this.

Filled with disorganized dry bones. Very dry. Very dry.

How do you handle it? You prophesy to the bones. As you preach to the bones. That's what Ezekiel was told to do.

Preachers, that's what you have to do. Preach to the bones. And as you preach there'll be a noise.

And bones will start to move. Bone to his bone. And after a while you'll have some skeletons complete.

Now let me digress for a moment. I heard a little story about a fellow, a preacher, who was working with the bones. They said he used to take a sack and he'd go out in the back lanes gathering up human bones.

When he had a sack full, he'd go back to the church. And he'd sort out enough bones to make a skeleton. And he'd sit them up in the front pew.

And he'd paste them to the pew with some gum or whatever. And after a while he had one complete skeleton grinning at him from the front pew. Boy, that was exciting, you see.

So he went out with his bag and got some more bones. Finally he had two skeletons. Then he had three.

And after he got three skeletons, all of them sitting erect, grinning at him from the front pew, he'd get on the telephone and phone long distance to the area superintendent to tell him, Brother, I've got a Holy Ghost revival on my hands. But you know what happened? While he was on the phone, a big semi-truck, you know, a semi-truck, it happened to go past the church and it shook the church. And the skeletons came unglued.

And they all hit the floor. And when he got back upstairs from phoning, there was all these bones lying on the floor. And he had to start all over again.

Now that's what goes on in our churches. But that's not what Ezekiel is talking about. He said, I prophesied as I was commanded.

He that prophesied, Paul said, speak unto men to edification, to exhortation, and to comfort. Feed the flock of God. Paul said, I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

Give it to them from Genesis right through to Revelation. No more of this telling a bunch of cute stories tied together with a piece of string and calling that preaching the Word of God. Give them the Word of God.

Preach the Word. Be instant. It means be urgent.

In season, out of season. Reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering in doctrine. Rebuke them sharply that they may be sound in the faith.

Brethren, prophesy to the bones and there be a noise. And bones will start moving to their proper bones. People will start getting organized.

And finally, there'll be flesh on the bones. And then skin. And it's getting a little exciting, but they're still all dead.

And then Ezekiel was told, prophesy to the wind, to the breath, to the Spirit. In 1 Kings 18, praying is called prophesying. It's a form of prophesying too.

Now we're prophesying, we're praying to the Spirit. O Spirit of God, come and breathe on these people that they might live. And it says, so I prophesied as I was commanding.

And what happened? The Spirit came and breathed on these people in the valley. And they lived and stood up upon their feet an exceeding great army. Application? Revival.

That's the way it comes. A little one, Isaiah said, shall become a thousand. And a small one, a strong nation.

I, the Lord, will hasten it in His time. I mentioned something the other day, and most of you were not here, so it'll bear repeating. A preacher called Stoddard, if I remember correctly, in the New England states, related through marriage to Jonathan Edwards.

Had a significant church, one of the larger churches in the New England states. And he knew what revival was, and he knew how to prepare for it, how to work for it. And he saw it.

In 25 years as pastor of that church, he had five significant revivals where hundreds found Christ. And the church was sweetened and revived. Five years, a revival.

Seven years, a revival. Three years, a revival. On the average, a revival every five years.

And there wasn't one other church in the New England states that was experiencing anything like this. Because they believed that revival had to come by the sovereign act and work of God without any human work at all. And that's not how it is.

Mark 16 says, and they went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them. Not working independently of them. So, O Holy Ghost, revival comes from Thee.

Send a revival. Start the work in me. If I were to become a pastor again, I would begin to mobilize the church for action.

I would begin in the area of prayer. I would emphasize the prayer meeting above every meeting in the church. And I'm not attacking what you're doing in your church.

You may have six or eight or ten prayer meetings going on in different homes, and you might get a larger attendance that way. And I'm not saying that's wrong. But I would like to say this, that I don't find this kind of prayer meeting in the book of Acts.

In each case, it was the church praying together. And I have no time to go into that in detail, but I think there is a certain power here that needs to be duplicated again today. Prepare for it.

Preach to it. Expect it. And God will do it.

How to prepare for revival. So much more might be said. In the book of Isaiah, there are three texts.

The only place is in the Old Testament. And there's a quotation from one of these texts in the New Testament. Texts that say, Prepare the way.

The first one in Isaiah 40. It says, Prepare the way of the Lord. Make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

He wants to come. Prepare the way. When Habakkuk prayed for revival, O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years.

In the midst of the years, make known. In wrath, remember mercy. What's the next statement? God came.

Make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Make sure that in your heart, there's nothing, absolutely nothing, between your soul and God's. Then there's another text.

In Isaiah 62, it says, Prepare the way of the people. Make sure there's nothing between your soul and anybody else. Don't be like Simon the Sorcerer, who believed and was baptized, of whom it was written in the same chapter and Acts, that his heart was not right in the sight of God.

Peter said, I see that you are in the gall of bitterness. Bitterness, I think, because all the attention that had been given to him for years was now gone, and the people were following Philip because they saw the power of God. And he was bitter.

And then he was caught up in the bond of iniquity. He'd been practicing witchcraft for years, and I don't think all the bonds had been broken. And Peter said, Repent, therefore, of this, your wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you.

And he said, Oh, pray ye to the Lord for me that none of these things that you've spoken may come upon me. Is your heart right in the sight of God? Are you right with other people in your own house, the circle of relatives and friends, your neighbor? I'll never forget a lady. She testified in some meetings we had, and she and her husband were the only Christians in this particular area, and they had a dog that was

well-trained in three areas, to sleep, to eat, and to bark.

It ran through neighbors' flower beds, and in their gardens, and left deposits on their front lawns, and they had kids they did not control who sometimes damaged neighbors' property, and it got so bad that the neighbors got together and sent a delegation to their house and said, Please move out of the neighborhood. Christians. And she got so angry that for two years she never said hello or goodbye to anybody in that area.

But then the Lord got her in revival meetings, and one morning in fear and trembling, she started off about 9.30 or 10 o'clock to call on her neighbors to make things right. She said, Oh, she was so scared when she rang the first door, but what will I say? What will they say? Oh, God, go before me. And He did.

And everywhere I went, she said, they received me so openly. They were so glad. They forgave me.

And she said, They made me drink coffee. I drank so much coffee. She said, You know, I had enough to last me a year.

But she had a glorious time just making things right. And then it says in Isaiah 57, Prepare ye the way, and the context has to do with revival. Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place with Him also, that is of a contrite and humble spirit.

That would be Jesus. To revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite ones for the iniquity of His covetousness. I was angry and I smote Him and I hid myself.

But then God said, I've seen His ways and I will heal Him. And God has seen your ways and mine and He wants to heal us. But, dear people, it's not enough just to pray for revival.

We have to prepare for revival in other ways. When God saw that none of them meant business, then He repented of the evil He had said He would bring upon them and He did it not. And when God sees that we mean business, He'll answer, and as I said before, a little one can become a thousand and a small one, a strong nation.

And if you ignore the chapter divisions, what's the next statement in Isaiah 61? The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord has anointed me to preach the gospel. A little one shall become a thousand. Then had the churches restored all Judea and Samaria and Galilee and were edified and walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.

And, dear people, God wants that today. But the key to revival is in your heart and your hands and in mine. And I'll be talking later on today to pastors, Christian workers on the same subject, what we can do.

And I'll be covering other ground in that particular session. Do pray that I'll have a word from God at that particular time. So, in closing, I would say this.

I hope you're not one of those that are waiting for God to do some sovereign work. God does that at times, I know. But the Spirit was given at Pentecost and has never been withdrawn.

And He's here today. And any person in this building could experience personal revival this afternoon if you really wanted to. God said, You'll seek Me and you'll find Me when you search for Me with all your heart.

Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. To Timothy, a fellow preacher, Paul wrote and said, Timothy, the Spanish Bible says, Timothy, revive the gift of God which is in you. Because God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound that is a healthy, disciplined mind.

The spirit that lives in every Christian is a spirit of love and power and a sound mind. And God says to every one of us, Revive the gift of God. Rekindle a fire, one translation says.

Stir into flame, another translation says. So then, dear people, there's something you can do and something I can do. Proverbs 1, 23.

God said, You turn at My reproof. Behold, I will pour out My Spirit unto you. I will make known My words unto you.

I will turn My hand upon you and purely purge away your dross and take away all your tin. Isaiah 1, 25. Lay aside every weight and the sin which does so easily beset us and let's run with patience the race that's set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.

Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit perfecting holiness in the fear of God. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified and fit for the Master's use and prepared unto every good work. Are you prepared? Are you ready in your heart of hearts? Or are you still madly chasing that elusive shadow called materialism? Or is your God lost, knowing the time that now it is high time to awake, or to sleep? For now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.

The night is far spent. The day is at hand. Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness.

That was written to Christians. And let's put on the armor of light. Let us walk honestly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality, and licentiousness, not in strife and envying, but put you on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh to fulfill the lust thereof.

When for the time you ought to be teachers, you have need that one teach you again, which be the first principles of the oracles of God, and are become such as have need of milk and not of solid food. For everyone that uses milk is a stranger, he says. He's a babe.

In the word of righteousness, he's a babe. Solid food belongs to them who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both evil and good. Let's go on, it says, unto perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptism.

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