

Revival Before Revival

by Bill McLeod

Revival comes from God and requires obedience, fasting, and being led by the Spirit of God to experience spiritual growth and blessings.

Duration: 57:48

Scripture: Isaiah 30:21, Joel 2:12, Romans 8:14

Topics: "Revival"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a personal story about a moment of surrender to God. He describes how he witnessed a stroke of lightning after struggling to surrender, which gave him the confidence to fully surrender. The speaker then talks about a man who bargained with God, saying he would only go into full-time service if called by the age of 30. The speaker emphasizes the importance of not being ashamed to talk about Jesus and encourages listeners to stir up the gift of God within them. He also shares a story about a man who experienced a transformation after repeatedly coming forward during a crusade and committing to daily evangelism. The speaker concludes by highlighting the importance of obeying God and taking action in order to see God's power at work.

Transcript

Can I begin by asking this question, how many of you took some time today to pray for this meeting tonight? Can I see your hands? Well, probably half. Okay, try and, try and always, any Christian meeting you're attending, never go without praying. Always pray.

And we forget sometimes, I know that too. Revival, J. Evan Orr, the last thing he said publicly before he died in his sleep that night, was this, O Holy Ghost, revival comes from thee. Of course, that's part of a song he wrote also, as you know.

And we understand that revival comes from the Spirit of God, but there is a human element as well. And God has taught me something here, I might entitle it, Revival Before Revival. Many years ago, at the Pioneer Camp in Lake of the Woods, I was directing a team camp.

And on the way down, to get there then, it's different now, but there was no road into the lake. You had to go by a thing called the Greater Winnipeg Water District Railway, a little Turnerville trolley thing, you know, two coaches. And so on the way down to the camp, the Lord laid a burden on my heart to give out tracts.

And initially I didn't really want to. But the Lord kept talking to me about it, and finally I did, and enjoyed doing it. I can't say we were praying for revival, I can't say we were expecting revival, but we saw revival at that team camp.

And it was so powerful, the kids were often sitting at the dinner table with their heads on the dinner plate. They couldn't eat, all they could see was their sin. I remember one kid, he was sitting there, a bunch of them around the table, sitting this way, nobody saying a word.

And finally one kid looked up, my camp name was Shippy. And he said, Shippy, can a sinner know he's saved? He said, yes he can. Bang, his head went down on the plate again.

But the Lord showed me, I mention this because the Lord showed me clearly, if I had not obeyed him on the train, we would not have seen this work of God. So obedience has something to do with revival, I know. The second time at the Burden of Revival camp, Cecil Carter was the speaker.

We just had 24 Christian workers there, and we were not expecting revival. We were glad to have Cecil along. If any of you know anything of Cecil's ministry, you'll understand why.

And before his first message, we'd agreed he would bring a message, then we would ask questions, and close in time with prayer. Before he was halfway through his message, I knew there would be no questions. And the minute he was through, I just said, brethren, let's pray.

I didn't say let's kneel. Everybody fell on his knees and began to cry to God. It was a deep work of God.

There were several pastors there that night. They said they could never preach again. If God didn't clean up their lives, they could never preach again.

God had shown them the depths of their sin in a marvelous way. I heard Henry Blackaby bring a message one time in his church in Saskatoon years ago. It was called, Compassion, the Secret of Revival.

It's a wonderful message. I think that what happened with Cecil Carter was he was a man of great compassion. He was an unusual person.

He ran a hardware store. He was associated with the Plymouth Brethren, and he felt God wanted him in full-time service. He went up the mountains one day to see if he couldn't really give himself totally to God, and he couldn't.

He knelt there. It was a beautiful day. The sun was shining.

He knelt there, and he just couldn't do it. He finally said, Lord, I'm sorry, I can't surrender to you. And a stroke of lightning hit the ground about 30 feet away.

He said, I can do it, I can do it. He opened his eyes, people, there wasn't a cloud in the sky. And then he asked God.

He felt strongly God wanted him in full-time Christian work, but nothing ever opened up. He was a great witness, a great athlete. He took top honors two years in a row running a mile in British Columbia, a great athlete, and a great heart for God.

And he bargained with God, and he said, If you don't call me into full-time service by the time I'm 30, I'll not think of it again, I'll just do what I'm doing now. His 30th birthday came, nothing happened. 10.30 that night, Percy Wills from Victoria, B.C., phoned him and said, God has been laying a burden on my heart to invite you to become a missionary for the Shantyman's Christian Association.

Well, it didn't take him long to get rid of the store and get on the road. I've never met a person that I saw so much of Christ in as Cecil Carter. And he's still alive.

The last time I saw him, he'd had a heart attack, and he said, I really can't do much anymore. Last year, he said, I just led 35 men to Christ on the sidewalks of Prince George, and they're all baptized in the church, but I just don't get much done anymore. But compassion, tremendous compassion for souls, for Christians, for God.

And that's part of the story, too. It's not the whole story. Before the revival in Saskatoon, one Saturday night, I had 10 deacons.

We were having a deacons' prayer meeting, and we were praying about revival. And before we started, I simply said, brethren, there's not much point in us praying for revival if we have unconfessed sins in our hearts. That's all I said.

And the place just blew apart. The men started weeping. A fellow came running, one of the deacons came running, put his head on my shoulder and wept and wept and asked my forgiveness for having criticized me.

And one deacon grabbed another deacon, dragged them out of the room where they could be alone and make things right. I didn't know what to do with it. Probably the following day was Sunday, and I probably should have had the deacons up in the pulpit sharing what had happened, and I didn't know how to handle it.

I'd had no experience in that, and so it came and it went. But confession of sin certainly has a lot to do with revival. Then one Sunday morning, this was before the revival and this afternoon as well, I don't recall what I was speaking on, the church was burdened for revival and so was I. And halfway through the morning message, there came a power into the meeting, so great that people were getting up and running off to find a room where they could pray by themselves.

And once again, I didn't know what was happening. I saw that God was doing it. So I think it's a combination of obedience, preaching the word of God, compassion, and one other thing, and that's fasting.

Sammy Tippett has written a number of good books, and one of them, he tells a story. Something happened in East Berlin. East Berlin was under communism at the time, but they were not really as bad off as in Romania or Bulgaria.

Things were fairly open, and these two guys were trying to get their youth work going, and nothing seemed to happen. They could advertise, they could rent a building, and they would do this, and five kids would show up, five or six kids. And that was it.

So finally they decided to fast, and they decided to fast for seven days, seven days. They rented a building, did some advertising as they usually did, 65 kids showed up. Then they knew they'd stumbled on

something.

So about every three weeks, they'd have another seven days of fasting and prayer. At the end of 12 months, they had a thousand kids attending. And I know myself from crusade, I was in one crusade.

Crowds were great, nothing was happening, so we had a day of fasting. And that evening, God broke in. We've seen that happen again and again and again.

And fasting, one Christian worker said, every time I fast, all I can think about is food. Well, he looked at two. He could have been an archbishop, he certainly had the art.

I was in the hospital a while ago, well, last April, a year ago last April, for my hip. And the guy in the next bed was a Jewish doctor, and we got to know each other pretty well. And he's been in my home five times since then.

He's not a Christian yet. I don't know what's happening in his life. He asked me one time, he said, you know, I've got a problem, I eat too much.

What does the Bible say about that? Well, it said it calls you a glutton. That's an awful word. I said, that's not all it says.

What else does it say? Well, it said in the New Testament says, whose God is their belly. Oh, he said that's even worse. Anyway, revival comes from God, and God uses people in the process.

We must never forget that. I want to read from Romans chapter 8, verse 6. To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it's not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

So then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit. If so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.

Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwells in you.

Therefore, brethren, we are debtors not to the flesh to live after the flesh. For if you live after the flesh, you shall die. But if you through the Spirit do mortify, put to death the deeds of the body, you shall live.

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. I don't know what I'll be preaching on in other meetings. You know, Urban Lutz and I shared a crusade at the Schofield Memorial Church in Texas some years ago.

And they had asked both of us to send the messages we'd be bringing ahead so they could advertise. So Urban sent his, and I wrote and said, I don't know what I'm going to be speaking on, so forget about that. So we got there.

Urban got there three days before I did, and he left two days before I was through. In his last message, Urban Lutz had said, I sent you all the titles of the sermons I was going to preach, and I haven't preached one of them yet. So he had the same problem I had.

Made me feel a little better, you know. Okay, you pray and God will give you something to say. As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

That's a powerful statement, and it needs to be examined. I think many of us are afraid to be led by the Spirit of God. We don't trust His wisdom, we don't trust His goodness, we don't trust Him.

So we conveniently walk around as a dead Christian, never expecting God to lead us, never expecting God to use us. We're quite satisfied because we have a ticket to heaven. This is so wrong.

You haven't heard of George Bell. George Bell, years ago, started church in Winnipeg. Then he went to Brandon.

Brandon, about 40,000 people, and he started church there. He was a great house visitor. We had him, he's retired now, retired in Winnipeg.

I had him speak to my shepherd's college one day. He told us he probably had made 120,000 house calls over the years. He didn't do it once a week.

He did it five days a week. He said, by one o'clock every day, I was ringing the first doorbell. He said, it's not the only way, but it is a way.

And he was talking with some people from another church, and he was mentioning to them some things that God had done in their church where people had come in off the street, unexpectedly, under conviction, wanting some help. And this other guy from the other church said, that never happens in our church. And he said, I can tell you why.

You don't go knocking on doors. He said, knocking on doors is not the only way to do it, I understand that. But if you're not obeying God, to some extent, don't expect anything unusual to happen, because it won't.

I think he was right. 120,000 house calls? My daughter is a member of a church in Lupin, Ontario. They have never done house calling, but they have a group of dedicated young married couples.

One of the couples in that church has led 17 couples to Christ by inviting them into their home for meals or inviting them to go to a football game or a hockey game or something else. 17 couples. There's many ways of doing it.

But when God leads you to do it, do it. Because if you don't, you can't expect to get more blessing by praying more. It isn't going to work that way.

We have to line up with God. As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. You carry tracts with you? I know a certain Christian leader, I won't mention his name, but he has publicly said he doesn't believe in giving out tracts.

So I won't mention his name, because he is a great man of God. I don't know where he came up with it. He's dead now, so I can't ask him.

If I remember in heaven, I'll ask him there maybe. Because some people hide behind that. Well, Dr. Thompson said that he doesn't believe in giving out tracts, and so I think he's right, and that the flesh appeals to that, it likes that, and so it goes.

You carry tracts with you? Ever give them out? Most Christians don't. They're afraid of approaching. There's a tough-looking guy sitting there, and God says, give him a tract, you don't want to do that.

He might chew your head off, you know, this kind of stuff. He said, God said in John 10, that when he puts forth his own sheep, he goes before. I do a lot of house calling.

I was out house calling the other day in the Transformed. We started church there a year and a half ago, and we do some house calling, and walking down the sidewalk, there's a couple coming, and the Lord said, talk to them. So I stopped and I said, can I have a minute of your time? Certainly, he said.

What's on your mind? They were Christians, you know. We had a great time of visit on the corner, you know. But I didn't know they were Christians before.

Didn't know a thing about them. But God had said, speak to them, so I spoke to them. So the first house I called on that night was at Jehovah's Witness.

Big guy. Boy, he was a roughie. I think I probably put a little crack in his shell.

Anyhow, nothing happened there as far as I know. But there are people, as many as are led. He wants to lead us.

He wants to make us a successful Christian witness. But he can't do that if I keep on saying no, no, no. I've got to start saying yes, and thank God that he's leading me to say something, to do something, to take a stand.

What do you do when you hear somebody curse and take the name of God or Christ in vain? Do you say anything, do anything? Well, the average Christian doesn't. He feels kind of hurt, but he doesn't do anything. Those are wonderful opportunities.

I was walking past a bunch of teenagers in front of a drug store one day, and one of these kids was really sounding off in the name of Christ. And so I broke into the group and walked up to him and said, Son, listen, you're talking about my best friend, Jesus Christ. I don't like the way you handle it.

And those kids all stared at me like I came from Mars, you know. And nobody said a word, you know. So I quietly walked away.

And different times we've had an opportunity to say something. Don't worry about how tough the guy looks or the gal looks. Don't worry about that.

Isn't God a little tougher? Of course he is. Say something. Stand up.

There's an old song that's not in the books anymore, probably because people don't want it in the books. When you count up those who love the Lord, count me, count me. When you count up those who trust his work, count me, count me.

Anybody heard that song? It's a great old song. It's not sung anymore. So for some reason, we tell God how to lead us.

We put up boundaries. God can lead me this way, but not this way. I remember a fellow telling a story with tears.

He had been led by God on a Saturday morning to visit every home in the block where he lived. And he said no to God, and that same Saturday morning in one of the homes, the guy took his life. And no doubt God was trying to get him in there.

He felt terrible about it. Another couple told me how they had neighbors, very friendly. They said, we used to visit over the fence, and we used to have coffee together, we used to go to ball games together, but we never ever talked about Jesus.

And they were both killed in a car accident, and we feel terrible about it. A kid got up in one of our meetings one time. I forget where it was, somewhere in the States.

And he was crying, and he said, you know, I've been a Christian for about eight months. I used to travel with a bunch. We did a lot of gambling and other stuff that was wrong.

And I got saved, and God asked me to go back to the gang and tell them what happened, and I didn't want to go back and tell them. And he said, one of those guys in the gang was my best buddy. He was shot to death last night, he said, and I've never shared Christ with him, and I feel awful.

Is there any way I can get a message to him that I'm very sorry I didn't tell him about Jesus? I said, no, there isn't as far as I know. Just make sure it doesn't happen again. I went to a place to get gas one time.

Nobody came out, so I went in. And there was a guy, he must have weighed 350 pounds, and he wasn't fat. He was just a big giant.

He was a customer talking with the proprietor. And the Lord led me to say something. So I walked up to this big guy.

I forget now what I said, but I told him something about Jesus. He stood there. Then he gave me the sweetest smile.

He said, thank you for telling me. He wasn't a Christian. But the devil told me, he's going to take your head off.

Why do we keep listening to the devil instead of listening to God? If God awakens you in the middle of the night and you can't sleep, well, get up and pray. Doesn't that make sense? I think it does. He awakens me every night of the year.

Sometimes, 1.30, 2 o'clock, 2.30, 3 o'clock, whenever. And sometimes, two or three times a night, I get up to pray as God leads me. I don't feel any more tired in the next day.

And the telephone isn't ringing in the middle of the night. I think it's a good time to be praying and talking to God. When God leads you to talk to some relative about Jesus, do it.

First, ask God to give you an opportunity. I had a case like that when I was in Saskatoon. There was a guy running a hardware store.

My house was here. The lane was here. His hardware store was right here.

I gave him a tract in the store one day. He said, I'll give it to the wife. She might read it.

He walked off. He's always busy, busy, busy, carrying around hard work, you know. So I prayed one day.

I said, Lord, give me a half an hour with that guy. Would you do that for me, please? And I believe He would and He did. I saw him sitting one day.

His truck was sitting there. And he was sitting with his feet on the ground, just sitting there staring off into space. So I went over and had a half an hour to talk to him about the Lord.

And the Lord stuck him there, you know. We'd ask him to do it. And he did it.

So now it's time to go. And sometimes we don't go when this happens. We say, well, maybe it's just an acquaintance, you know.

And so we're not really allowing the Spirit of God to lead us as He wants. And consequently, we often miss blessing after blessing in our walk with God and have something to do with revival. Because revival, what did Finney say? I know Finney has many enemies today.

I would say be very careful what you say about Finney. They say his converts never stopped. Finney was in one place.

There were 3,000 converts. He went back there three or four years later. The pastor said they didn't know of a single backslider, not even one out of 3,000.

I met a fellow in the States. He told me, he said, every one of Charles Finney's converts are roasting in hell. I felt like saying, have you been there to check it out? But does this stop him? I say, hands off.

Somebody once said, if you want to talk about raw spiritual power, you have to think of Charles Finney. Anyway, Finney talked about what he called the spirit of prayer. He said, if I ever lose the spirit of prayer, I can never converse individually or publicly effectively if I ever lose the spirit of prayer.

And if he lost the spirit of prayer, he fasted and prayed until it returned. And this was based on a verse in Zechariah. It speaks about God pouring out on his people the spirit of grace and supplication.

One translation says, the spirit of grace to supplicate. I like that. And so, the spirit of prayer, we've lost that.

We don't hear much about it anymore, almost nothing. Yet we have to have it. You can't do it in the flesh.

You'll give up. You'll never do it. As many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

So we've got to learn not to make our plans in concrete, make them in sand, because God may kick your little castle over at any time. I remember, you know, before revival, when it was time for a holiday, we studied the weather map. Raining in Ontario, let's go west.

Raining in the west, let's go east. Then revival came. And then we prayed, Lord, where do you want us to go for a holiday? Remember the Lord said to me the first time I prayed this prayer, why don't you go to Kamloops? And I didn't want to go because one of my kids has seven kids and they're small, and then at five in the morning they're pulling at Grandpa's hair.

I said, OK God, if that's what you want, I'm going. So we went. And we had quite a time.

God began to work. We started having afterglows in homes. We had a wonderful time.

And then God led me to go down to Penticton, where a brother of mine lives, and the same thing happened down there. We wouldn't have seen that if we had gone east instead of west. So God was asking us to go.

You pray about your holidays, where do you go? We should. See, all of life should be brought before God. I quote it again, as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

Now I know some people, they walk the deep end, and we had a lady in one of our churches, and she was helped. One time she went to a certain girl who was keeping company with a certain boy, and she said, the Holy Ghost has shown me that you shouldn't be keeping company with this boy. And she went home in tears and told her mother, and her mother got her war hat and came down to see this other lady.

And oftentimes people blame the Holy Ghost for certain things. The Holy Ghost told me. The Holy Ghost showed me.

Well, how can you argue with the Holy Ghost? You have to be very careful about that, and quiet. Pray in the Holy Ghost. Christ was told to do that, right? Do you pray in the Holy Ghost? So people say, what is that? Well, maybe I'm wrong, but it seems to me that praying in the Holy Ghost would be this, at least.

Praying when the Spirit leads me to pray. And praying for what the Spirit burdens me to pray. It's got to be, I would think, a minimum of those two things.

Praying in the Holy Ghost. You know, before the revival in the Sanctuary Tomb, we saw a lot of this kind of thing. God awakening people in the middle of the night.

And I remember people telling me, I used to be prayed out in five minutes. Last night I prayed for 45 minutes, I could have prayed all night. It's such a burden to pray.

And that was something God did. It didn't start that way. It started in a smaller way.

God was trying us, and as we responded, He gave us more. You know, we finally were doing so much in the area of prayer, if I had laid that all on the people at one shot, it would have never gone. They would have collapsed.

They couldn't carry it. It was a thing that gradually happened. So when they could carry one thing, we added a little more, and we added a little more, and a little more.

And people were taking a hold of it. And everything we tried actually worked, except cottage meetings. And I don't know why the cottage meetings didn't, but they didn't seem to succeed.

Everything else did. In the area of prayer, as we call on the God, on the Lord. Praying in the Holy Ghost.

And then, of course, as the Spirit leads us to confess. You know, we like to do it privately, and sometimes God wants it done publicly. We have to be careful here.

If problems of moral nature should probably not be, should not be confessed in a mixed audience, I don't think I've known a case where that was done and trouble ensued as a result. But you know, we're brothers and sisters in the family of God. God may be leading you or leading me to go to some other person, make something right.

And oftentimes, our attitude is, well, not me. He's to blame, not me. So why should I go to him? Some of you heard Bill Orr's testimony about his mother.

His mother dumped him. And his mother became a Christian. He still couldn't forgive her.

And then I was holding meetings in the First Alliance Church in New York City, and one day the pastor said, Bill Orr, the singing postman in St. Louis, he's going to be in town, he's going to be doing some singing for us, and read some songs for us. So that was just great. I'd heard about him and never met him.

I was hearing those meetings that God spoke one night. I saw him kneeling at the altar. I thought he'd gone to counsel somebody he knew.

And he said, No, no, it was my own heart. The next day, he got on a plane and flew down, I think it was to South Carolina, to meet his mom to make things right. And he said, You know, when I was walking that final distance to my mom's house, he said, like a thousand demons were screaming at me, you stupid fool.

She's the one that needs forgiveness. You're not the one that needs forgiveness. He just kept on and on until he rang the doorbell and it quit.

And she came. And he asked for forgiveness. I remember him saying, You know, she's the sweetest woman in the world.

He persuaded to move to St. Louis. He got her a house and he got her a car. And right after that, we did a crusade together in Pittsburgh.

And Bill said to me, I hope you notice, I've got a freedom I haven't had in 25 years. And he never lost that freedom. Every time Bill shared his testimony, things happened in people's hearts.

You know, there's a scale of hardness. I did some prospecting one time. I took a course in it and did somewhat in the bush.

We had a thing called the scale of hardness, one to ten. One was soapstone and ten was diamond. Now, if you get, lady, if you get a ring and you can cut glass with it, that doesn't mean it's a diamond.

Anything on the scale of hardness from six to ten will scratch glass, you know. So don't make that mistake. Anyway, in Ephesians, in one chapter we have number one and number ten.

We're told not to walk as other Gentiles walk, who being past feelings, past feelings, that's number one. And then in the same chapter, we're told to have a soft, tender heart, a kind, tender heart, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake. Now, pardon me, that should be number one, number ten, the diamond, the guy with the hard heart.

People, we have to be so careful here. You know, drop the masks, let God lead us, and be totally surrendered to God. So if He leads me to give a sum of money I can't afford to give, I'll do it anyhow.

And if God is leading me to do it, and if God leads me to talk to some clerk in a store, I'll do that. Or if God leads me to give a tract to a neighbor, I'll do that. I'll be willing, I'll be a servant to God.

Paul said he was a servant and an apostle. A servant and then an apostle. He was an apostle because he was a servant.

And so we have to learn to be a servant to God. And not be afraid to pray the prayer, Dear God, start of the day, show me what you want me to do, show me what you want me to be. Is there some person I can be a blessing to today? You show me, and I just wait, expect God to answer.

And God will. I know I've flown I suppose 400 times over the years, and every time I pray, Dear God, get me next to a person I can share the gospel with. Every time I pray that, it happens.

But, if I'm a little dozy spiritually, and I pray it, I don't really mean it, nothing happens. So clear. Strange things happen.

You know back in the days when they had no smoking or smoking. So this gal says, smoking or not smoking? I said, non-smoking please. And she said, oh smoking, we have lots of room there.

Oh I said, I'm sorry sister you didn't hear me, I said non-smoking. And she stared at me, she got a little upset. And she said, well twice you've told me you want smoking, what's the big deal? Well I said, the big deal is you haven't heard me.

I want non-smoking. Then she got red in the face and she said, I don't know what you're up to, what are you doing? She said, three times in a row you've told me you want smoking, what's the big deal? Well I said, then it dawned on me, even me, stick me anywhere you want. So she sticks me in smoking.

So I'm next to a guy, you know, from Halifax. We get airborne, I start witnessing, he looks at me and he says, oh no, oh no, I said what's wrong? He said, my best pal in Halifax just got born again last week, now you're telling me the same thing. So God orders things.

You say things like that don't happen to people, they do happen, they can happen all the time. God's doing things like that. I've gone on planes, you know, where I had a second class ticket and I got a first class boarding pass.

That's happened several times. And every time that happens, God had me next to some guy who wanted me to share the gospel with him. The trouble is, you know, we're afraid to do that, we're afraid to let go.

And let God guide us. We don't trust the Spirit of God, basically that's the problem. We don't believe the Holy Spirit has the power, we don't believe He's got the wisdom, we don't believe He's got it right, somehow.

And so we start equivocating, well maybe if everything looks okay and she looks like a sweet soul, maybe I'll give her a tract, you know, this kind of thing. And so we bargain with God and we lose out. So as many as are led by the Spirit of God make up their mind that you become a Christian, God wants to use you.

I was in a crusade in the Maritimes one time and we had 50 churches going together. There wasn't 50 churches in the town but in the area. And we had a great time, we had to go on for five weeks.

And I remember one Sunday morning I had gone to a neighboring town to an early Sunday morning service and I had to be back by 11.30 at the church where we were holding the meetings and the pastor said, now Bill be back by 11.30 because we don't have anything else in the program. Well when I got there, and I got there a little late, and he had a flock of people on the platform giving their testimonies. And it went on and on and on and on until 12 o'clock.

And I got on the platform and sat next to the priest and said, hallelujah, isn't this great? And he said, yeah. And then a girl started down the aisle and the pastor turned to me and said, oh Bill, I don't know what she'll say, she's the shyest person in Canada. She can't talk to one person, getting all tongue-tied, I don't know what she'll say.

And she got up on the platform and she let loose for about ten minutes, you know. It's just great. So, are you available? In your own sphere, are you available? So your husband's not a Christian, you've got to be careful what you say.

Isn't God a little greater than your husband? I remember a gal one time in Selkirk, Manitoba, and she came for counseling. She and her husband, they were 28 years of age. And she said, he's been beating me up sometimes and he gets drunk and he's fine when he's sober, but he really beats me up.

So she'd gone to counseling and they all told her to give up on the guy and kick him out or move on, you know. She said, what do you say? Well, I said, I know of a case like that where the gal walked out and then the guy blew his brains out because she was his last hope. He said, well, my wife has moved out, there's no hope for me, so he just blew his brains out.

And so I said, stay with him. She said, how do I handle it? I said, love him to death. Do not overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good.

If you do something bad, you do something good. I was back in that church a couple of years later and she came tearing up and she says, you know what? He never lasted six months, this program, you know. Everything bad he did, she did something good.

Make him a cup of coffee, bring a slipper, do other things for him, you know. Be not overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good. And don't fear the face of man, no matter who it is.

I mean, God's on the throne. And God leads us. The problem is, I'm sure, from God's perspective, there are so few Christians that will let God lead them.

And some of you are sitting there saying, I'm not going to change, I can't do that, I'm not that kind of person, I'm a shy person, I can't really do that. That's fine, that's how you feel, that's how it will be as long as you live. And that's not the way to look at it.

The way to look at it is that I'm a person, I can talk. I can talk about the weather, right? I can talk about politics, talk about the kids, talk about stuff in the newspaper, talk about some film you saw. Why can't I talk about Jesus? Why can't I? Because I'm ashamed.

You know, Paul seemed to say that Timothy needed a revival. That's why we have what we have in 2 Timothy chapter 1. He said, I remind you, I put you in remembrance, I remind you to stir up. One translation is to stir into flame.

One translation says to rekindle a fire. And the Spanish Bible says to revive the gift of God. God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound, disciplined mind.

That's the spirit that lives in you if you're a born-again believer, not a spirit of fear. So Paul said to Timothy in that context, Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me, his prisoner, but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God, who saved us and called us

with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. Timothy, don't be afraid.

So Timothy's cooling off probably, and Paul either heard it or God showed him, or he sensed it or something, and so he's praying for him. It's sad sometimes to see a person who at one time was red-hot for God and now is ice-cold. You occasionally see that.

It's a sad thing to see and to watch. So as many as are led by the Spirit of God, and so we're talking about revival in these days. Are we willing? Are you willing to say yes to God? I remember a lady said one time, I work in an awful place, the filthy talk, dirty jokes going on from morning to night, the guys and the gals, the whole place.

I feel so out of place. She said, how do I handle it? Well, I said, quite simply, I said that when it happens tomorrow, just start singing, Jesus loves me this way, I know, and see what happens. A couple days later she came back, she said, you wouldn't believe it.

There hasn't been a dirty story told since. There's ways of handling things. You've got to be ready to do it, ready to say something, ready to sing whatever God may lead you to do, and he'll make you a blessing.

I had meetings down in Saginaw, Michigan in a Baptist church, an alliance church I'm involved, and about 18 months later, the pastor of the alliance church wrote me a letter. He told me about a lady in his congregation. He said she was the shyest person in America, but God touched her in those meetings.

He said she has since then, in 18 months, she led 100 people to Jesus Christ. So what happened? Did she read a book on how to do it? No, no. What happened to Bill Lauder? Did he read a book on how to do it? No.

That's not what we need. What we need is an honest meeting with God where we humble ourselves under God's mighty hand and just tell God, Lord, anywhere, anytime, I would like to do it. You know, when I first went to South America, it was really interesting what was going on.

There were six Baptist groups, and they used to meet once a year to get together just to compare statistics and have a time of fellowship. And the year before, when they compared notes, the average Baptist church had only led two people to Christ in a whole year. So when they considered this, then they realized, we need revival.

So they set up a committee to plan for the following year. I didn't know a thing about them. They didn't know a thing about me.

And they told the committee, you're not to invite a speaker. We're all going to pray that God will send us someone that knows something about revival. So I'm down in South America.

I spoke one day in the Southern Baptist Seminary in Buenos Aires, and a professor came running up. He says, Bill, what are you doing? And he mentioned a certain weekend, so I got my book out. I was there for two months.

It was the only weekend. I didn't have anything to do. He said, we need you to speak at this gathering of these Baptists.

Now look how God put this thing together. They didn't know I was coming. I didn't know a thing about them.

But God just put this thing together. You've got to be open to God. Let God guide you.

He wants to. He said, I'll instruct you. I'll teach you.

My eye will be on you. He's promised us that. He said it again and again.

He's just looking for people that are available. We had a marvelous time in that weekend church. We seated about a thousand in Rosario and people standing everywhere.

I couldn't give invitations because of that. Just in the last meeting, we asked people to stay behind that needed revival or wanted to be saved. There must have been six, seven hundred people stayed behind.

Out of that came revival in churches. One pastor went back to Buenos Aires and started praying day and night. I think he prayed hours every day and revival took about two weeks later.

Touched his whole church. Two hundred sinners were converted in two weeks without any special meetings at all. Once the church got cleaned up.

The problem is not in the world. The problem is in the church. So much crime and disobedience and hatred and, you know, lying and all the rest of it.

And the Spirit of God is waiting, waiting, patiently waiting. We may wait too long here in North America. Some of the stuff that's going on now that God doesn't call a halt.

He's going to have to judge North America. I have no doubt. Well, if you live after the flesh, you will die.

But if you through the Spirit do mortify or put to death the deeds of the body, you shall live. You can't change yourself. You're struggling maybe with some sin and you've come to a place where you don't believe there's such a thing as victory.

You're going to have to put up with it the rest of your life. Let me say this. Sam Jones, he was a famous Southern Methodist evangelist of contemporary Guadalupe Moody's and they were good friends.

If by reason of bad planning they were both in the same city at the same time, Jones usually got the biggest crowd and he would twit Moody. He'd say, Moody, you can have my overflow. Well, they loved each other.

They didn't care who had the biggest crowd, you know. But Sam Jones had once been an alcoholic and got victory over it and seemingly took training. What in the ministry was greatly used of God in evangelism and especially there were tens of thousands of men who quit drinking liquor after being converted in his meeting.

And then one day in a hotel, the old lust for liquor returned and it was so strong he started for the door. There was a beer parlor down below. He ran back to the bed and knelt and prayed to God for help and he didn't come and he ran to the door again and back and forth about five or six times and finally, here's what he did.

He threw himself across the bed and he cried and said, Hey God, can't you do better than this? And it was gone. Never again. There's a verse in Micah, the last chapter, that says, God said that he would subdue our iniquity.

So I looked that word up. You know what it is? He will stamp on. And if God stamps on your problem, your wicked habit, whatever it is, he'll break it.

He knows how to do that. You have to be willing for God to do that. Maybe you love your sins so much you don't want him to do it.

And this sometimes happens as well. He said he would do that. He would subdue our iniquities.

You can't do it. God can do it. There's nothing God can't do.

We have to humble ourselves under God's mighty hand. So sometimes these days, tonight would be a good time, but sometimes get alone with God some point and get this thing settled. Be a servant, open, willing, ready, as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

And people, you have no idea what God can do through you. When I remember a fellow, and I better quit pretty soon, but this fellow, he came forward five times in one crusade I had. When I saw him coming forward the fifth time, I thought, this guy, what's wrong with the guy? Doesn't he meet with God? What's going on here? But after the fifth trip to the altar, the next night, during the testimony time, he came literally bounding up on the platform, and here's what he said, four weeks and five trips to the altar later, I can now say I am holy here.

He was an ink rancher. You know, he used to love to argue about predestination in the election, stuff like that, and he could argue under the table. He never tried to win the soul of Christ.

But you know, since he got his life straightened out, he phoned me one night before he made the fifth trip to the altar, and he was crying, and he said, Pastor Bill, I'm lying in pieces on the floor. God has torn me apart. I'm just lying in pieces on the floor.

I don't know what to do. Can God put me back together again? Certainly he can. And of course, we've got people praying for him, and God put him back together again.

And since that time, he's led all kinds of people to Christ. He wasn't into that before. And many of us are not into it.

We don't want to be into it. We're afraid of the consequences, you know, the embarrassment of somebody not accepting the tract you offer them. Don't be embarrassed by that.

It's not the first and won't be the last either, you know, as far as that's concerned. And anyway, as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. Before I leave that, just a thought here.

Philip in Samaria, great revival. All kinds of people being saved, demons possessed people being delivered. And in the middle of this, God says, put on the gazes.

So he goes. He doesn't say, now wait a minute, God, the crowds are big, the work isn't finished here, I'm going to have to pay you another two weeks. He didn't say that.

He went for gazes. When he gets there, here's a highway, and people moving, some walking, some riding on donkeys, some riding in chariots and stuff, maybe one or two on camels. And what's he going to do? So what do you do in a case like that? He's where God wants him to be.

What's he going to do now? And it says, the Spirit said, the Spirit said, go, join yourself to this chariot. He got that kind of guidance. Well, can't we expect that kind of guidance today? I think we can.

We need to. Go and join yourself to this chariot. He runs up alongside the chariot, the guy's reading from the book of Isaiah, he's in Isaiah 53, of course then it wasn't divided into chapters, and he leads this guy to Christ.

And the guy happens to be a big shot in the Ethiopian government. God wanted him there. And God can do that.

A bunch of guys, five men, including Paul and Barnabas, they were fasting, and they were praying, and the Holy Ghost said, I don't know how He said it, but He said, separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work for which I have called them. So it says, they being sent forth by the Holy Ghost. But it says, they had also John.

Now the Holy Ghost didn't say, separate me Barnabas and Saul and John. They had John, and John didn't stay long. He wasn't called.

He went back, and it created a division between Paul and Barnabas some years later. It shouldn't have, but it did. But the Spirit said, separate me Barnabas and Saul, was made plain so they knew what God wanted to do.

It won't be any different today if we fast and pray and call on God and wait God's time. Let Him speak. He knows what to say and how to say it, to whom to say it, the whole story.

Give God a chance here, because God needs that. You know, when Paul attempted to go into Asia, the Spirit of God said, no. They tried to go into Bithynia, and the Spirit of God said, no.

It was so clear, they knew they were not to go into Asia now. They were not to go into Bithynia now. And then he had a vision of a man in Macedonia saying, come over to Macedonia and help us.

And then they understood God is calling us to Macedonia. So they went. But they got guidance.

Why shouldn't we expect to get guidance today? And Bapt Singh in India, you know, they used to call him Billy Graham of India, and he was greatly used of God in winning people to Christ. And the missionaries used him for years. And then finally he came to the conclusion this is not the way to reach India for Christ.

So he broke amicably with the missionaries, and here's what they did. You may have heard this before. Here's what they did.

He got a small group of godly people together, five or six. They began to fast and pray with one thing in mind, God, what do you want us to do? And God showed them what he wanted them to do. Then they asked God, where do we go? And God showed them what town they were to go to.

And then they asked, well, who should be on the team? And Singh said, God showed him clearly who should be on the team. And when they started doing, he said, in a little book called Flames of Freedom,

not Flames of Freedom, called The Return of God's Glory, he said, when we started doing God's work in God's way, the glory of God returned, and we had meetings every bit as powerful as anything that Charles Finney ever saw. That annual conference, 20,000 people, this kind of thing.

George Berger, Operation Mobilization, he and boxing were good friends, close friends. I don't know how it is today. Boxing may be dead now.

He's up in years. I know they had around 700 assemblies. Some had several thousand people.

But he's not a writer, that little book of his. But he's just saying, do God's work in God's way, in God's time, and you will have God's blessing. Father, your word is so clear, and the testimony of history is so clear also, Father.

The eyes of the Lord, you said, are running to and fro throughout the whole earth to show themselves strong on behalf of them whose heart is perfect towards Him. Give me a perfect heart like this to thee. We sing in one of our songs, O God, just to have a perfect heart towards you, and to be willing, dear God, to say, to do, to go, as you might lead.

Forgive us, Lord God, for being obstinate and stubborn. Lord, our Father, some of us have missed hundreds of opportunities of serving you because of the fear of man. O God, forgive us, we pray, as we think about revival and pray for revival.

Father, help us to remember this other thing, obedience, compassion. Praying in the Spirit, O God, break through, we pray, into our midst in these days, in Christ's name.

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