

Revival - God's Part, My Part

by Bill McLeod

Revival is possible through prayer and preparation, and it requires both God's part and man's part.

Duration: 33:28

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 29:36, 2 Chronicles 30:12, Proverbs 1:23, Acts 15:18, 1 Timothy 6:7, 2 Timothy 4:2, Hebrews 13:5

Topics: "Revival"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the issue of unemployment and aimlessness among young people in third world countries. He highlights the desperation of these individuals who would do anything to escape their circumstances and find a better life. The speaker also points out the contrast in attitude towards material possessions in Canada, where people are not content with just food and clothing. He suggests that God sometimes uses natural disasters and economic problems to get people's attention and remind them of their need for Him. The speaker emphasizes the decline of evangelicalism in Canada and expresses concern about the increasing crime rates in cities like Winnipeg. He also shares a personal story of a millionaire who experienced a spiritual transformation after being broken by God. The sermon concludes with a reminder to prioritize God's business above personal pursuits, citing biblical references.

Transcript

Well, good morning. Thank you. I want to take a verse from Acts chapter 15.

It's a verse that says, Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world. I'm to speak on the subject of revival, God's part, and my part. God has something, of course, a great deal to do with revival, and we Christians have something to do with revival as well.

One of the reasons why I'm very excited about revival is because, to me at least, the focus of revival is world missions, world evangelism. Most of the great revivals, if not all of them of the past, have focused that way. And even in more recent times, the revival in the Hebrides, in the late 1940s and early 50s, I read somewhere that there was a higher percentage of converts in that revival that went into full-time Christian service than from any revival of which we have a record in history.

And that's saying a lot. That happened here in Canada too. I think any of our teams could truthfully say that they know of people who found Christ in their meetings or who perhaps experienced revival in their meetings who are now on the mission field.

I think of one crusade in Canada where around 30 people went into full-time Christian work as a result of God's work in their hearts. And some of those people are in Africa today and in Indonesia and I think in South America. I remember once having a crusade with Bill Orr in a church in the States and there were five high school football coaches who gave themselves to God for full-time service.

And to me this is an exciting aspect of what God wants to do. 1858, the great revival then, it lasted about a year, but for 40 years after that revival there was what somebody has called a revival umbrella. And Finney and Moody, Spurgeon, Andrew Murray, men like this were laboring under that revival umbrella without even knowing it.

There came a time when that sort of stopped until the 1905 Welsh revival. And by the way, a lot of people feel that the Welsh revival was confined to Wales. It wasn't.

Dr. Orr has done a magnificent job in researching that and he's shown us that there were revivals all around the world at the time of the Welsh revival. There were powerful revivals in North America, in Canada, and in the States. Atlanta, Georgia then had a population of 65,000 people.

They said there were not 200 adults unconverted in Atlanta, Georgia after that movement of God. That was associated with the Welsh revival. And then of course, from all of these revivals, I say again, people have gone out to the ends of the earth.

What we're looking for today is a revival that will touch the whole world. I think we should be praying with that in mind. There's a verse in Psalm 102, it says, that when the Lord shall build up Zion, He shall appear in His glory.

And I think there's grounds for believing that the word Zion there does not refer to Israel the nation, but to the people of God. For in Hebrews 12, 22, the people of God are spoken of as being Zion. He says, You are come unto Mount Sinai, unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the General Assembly and Church of the Firstborn, who are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of the sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.

And there, Zion is connected with the Christian. When the Lord shall build up Zion, He shall appear in His glory. And so I feel strongly myself, it's a reference to the fact that we're going to see revival around the world.

And when the Lord shall build up Zion, He shall appear in His glory. The glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior, Jesus Christ. Now when Charles Finney, the famous lawyer turned evangelist in the United States, began his ministry, he discovered he had a great problem because thousands of Christians believe that revivals only came when God felt like it.

As if God was some sort of a capricious personality, He did it when He felt like it, like tossing off a yawn. As a matter of fact, people were so entrenched in hyper-Calvinism then that parents would not talk to their own children about becoming Christians lest they were not one of the elect. Can you believe it? That's how bad it was.

So Finney came in and blew it to shreds. Perhaps he went too far. But sometimes this is necessary in order to bring the church back to the center where it should be.

Reverend Calvin Colton wrote an excellent book entitled A History of American Revivals of Religion. The book was published in 1832. I have a copy in my library.

And there were some revivals going on in the United States in the early 1800s. And when this movement first began, man had nothing to do with it at all. All of a sudden the church would experience a powerful moving of the Holy Spirit.

No preparation, no prayer. It just suddenly happened. And so in various areas, this went on for a period of time.

But he points out that when Christians came to understand what revival was and what God was trying to do to cleanse the church, they then began working for revival, praying for revival, fasting for revival until revival came. And once this kind of activity on the part of Christians started, the other kind of revival stopped entirely. It was a training period.

A training period. And so, Colton describes what they did. He said we were never satisfied with what they called insulated conversions.

We'd use the word isolated. You know, a convert here, two or three there, a family here and there. He said we were never satisfied with that.

We kept praying. We kept fasting. We kept believing until, and he said this, until the Holy Spirit came and took the work out of our hands, made the whole community aware of God, and then hundreds were converted.

That's revival. But man has a part as well as God. What is God's part? God's part is to get His people to pray.

In Zechariah 12, 10, it speaks about God pouring on His people the spirit of grace and supplication. That is prayer. One translation says the spirit of grace to supplicate.

I like that. Now, Phineas spoke frequently about what he called the spirit of prayer. He regarded it as being a distinct gift of God.

He said if I ever lose it, I cannot converse with individuals effectively, I cannot preach effectively if I ever lose the spirit of prayer. Now remember, he regarded it as being a gift from God. And I believe he based it on Zechariah 12, 10.

Somebody said long ago, a couple of hundred years ago, when God intends to send a great mercy to His people, He first sets them to praying. Men begin to pray. They don't know why.

They have a burden to pray. It's come from God. He's breathing on His people.

Then God has other ways of preparing His people for revival. In Psalm 55 it says, because they have no changes, therefore they do not fear God. Someone has said that a rut is just a grave with both the ends knocked off.

And we get into a rut. And because we have no changes, nothing ever happens that's untoward or evil. The result is that people dismiss God from their minds.

But it also says in Isaiah 26 that when God's judgments are in the world, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. Now in Lamentations 3, I think 33, Jeremiah said, God does not willingly grieve nor willingly afflict the children of men. It doesn't say He doesn't afflict them.

It says He doesn't do it willingly. He does it because often there's no other way to get men's attention. When the health is good and there's money in the bank and everything's going great, nationally or individually, we forget about God.

So God in His infinite love and mercy, He breaks into the pattern. Sometimes with natural calamities, floods, fires, earthquakes, volcano activity, who knows what, a thousand things are available to God to break across the pattern, waken people up and make them think about themselves. Economic problems.

If you study the history of the great revivals of the past, all of them were preceded by times of declension, apostasy. Do you know that before the frontier revivals in Kentucky, one person in five was an alcoholic? That's far worse than today. And after the revival, they said you could not find a drunkard in a hundred miles.

The 1858 revival was associated with an economic collapse. You can't say the revival took place because of the economic downturn. But there's no doubt it had something to do with it.

Do you know in Saskatchewan, prior to the revival in 1971, we went through a recession? 40,000 people moved out of Saskatchewan in an 18-month period. I lost about a hundred people from my church who moved away looking for jobs. And the economic situation was very insecure.

And people, that can be a great blessing. I wonder sometimes if what's happening in Canada now is not God at work preparing us for a nationwide revival. Honestly, I think it's so.

In the Maritimes, fishing is bringing in no money at all. In Quebec, the pulp industry is in very serious trouble because the American market is drying up because they're recycling newsprint. Western Canada, you know the problem here.

Thousands of farmers have gone bankrupt and thousands more likely will. Ontario, some years ago I was talking with some Ontario brethren and they were sort of bragging. They said, you know, we'll never have a bust in Ontario.

And I said, well, you're in a boom now but every boom was followed by a bust. Not in Ontario, they said, because our leaders are smart guys. They know what they're doing.

So what's happened? They're in a bust right now. And not only that, Canada used to be looked on as one of the most stable countries in the world. Economically, socially, politically, one of the most stable countries in the world.

Not anymore, dear people, not anymore. We've got the native people crying. We've got the French people in Quebec crying.

We've got everybody crying. We are the most strike-ridden country in the world, in case you didn't know that. Worse than Italy now.

I want to say again something I said in one of the pre-conference sessions. There are 75 countries in the world whose average annual income is 6% or less than what it is in Canada. And we're still not happy with

what we have.

We want more. There are at least 7 or 8 countries in the world where the average annual income is 1% of what we get here. Bangladesh, \$85 a year.

I was talking to a friend in Winnipeg recently, and he's got his own little business going, and he was clearing up to \$300, \$400 a day. And he didn't think that was unusual. And God is putting Canada into the nutcracker, I think, preparing us for what He has in mind as far as revival is concerned.

I say again, there's all kinds of avenues open to God. Because they have no changes, I say, therefore they don't fear God. And all of a sudden, the economic thing goes belly up, and people begin to cry to God.

Maybe I should say this too, you know. In most countries of the world, there is no such thing as unemployment insurance. There's no such thing as a widow's allowance.

There's no such thing as compensation for a workman that's hurt in the job. In some countries, unemployment is 40% or 45%. I've been in third world countries where at 2 o'clock in the morning, you will see thousands of young people just walking along the streets aimlessly.

They don't have a job. They don't have a purpose. They don't have anything.

Some of those kids would swim to Canada or the States if they could make it. Anything to get out of the country they're in. To get somewhere where they could be somebody, make some money, and so on.

And here in Canada, the Bible says, having food and clothing, let us be there with content. How many Canadians will be content with just food and clothing? Oh no, we've got to have more than that. And if we don't have more than that, we're going to scream.

And God is going to have to spank us. And I think he's begun personally. I really do.

We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. That's why Paul said, having food and clothing, that's in the same context, you know. Let us be content.

Godliness with contentment is great gain. Let your conduct be without covetousness and be content with such things as you have. For he has said, I will never leave you nor forsake you so that you may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

Do you live at that address? If you don't, you ought to change your address. It says in 2 Chronicles 29, Hezekiah, King Hezekiah, rejoiced. And all the people rejoiced that God had prepared the people for the thing was done suddenly.

It was a revival, a national revival. And it happened just bang out of the blue. But Hezekiah and the people recognized that God had prepared them for it.

They saw that. It's easy to see it after it happens. It's almost impossible to see it before it happens.

But God did it. And it says in chapter 30 of the same book, also in Judah, the hand of God was with them to give them one heart to obey the commandment of the kings and princes by the word of the Lord. Is God able to do that? Can God take a church and give it one heart? Well, He's done it before.

He can do it again. We heard about the Moravian church last night. And God came into that fighting, bickering church at a communion service and totally revamped it.

His hand came on them, and He gave them one heart. And by the way, that church, the Moravian church, in a hundred-year period, did more for missions than all the churches in the world put together at that time. God did it.

Whatsoever God does it shall be forever. Nothing can be put to it, or anything taken from it. And God does it that men should fear before Him.

We're supposed to rejoice at the great works of God. All right. God is busy preparing His people.

There's a verse that says, Let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap if we don't faint. In due season. Did you ever wonder why Jesus didn't come before He came? Galatians 4.4 says, When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son.

One translation says, At exactly the right time. In due time. At the right time.

We'll reap if we don't faint. Do you know that some of the early missionaries to the South Seas labored for thirteen years and never saw a convert? Could you do a thing like that? Wouldn't you get to feel, Oh, listen, the power of God is just not with me. The people were practicing cannibalism all around them.

They saw the awfulest orgies going on constantly day and night. They feared God, of course. But they saw that they could be next on the list.

But they stayed with it. Thirteen years. And, dear people, when the harvest came, what a harvest it was.

Hundreds, thousands. One place they had to build a church with a pulpit at both ends. The church was so long.

I think it was a thousand feet long or something. I forget now. It was a huge church.

So you'd have two services going on at one time. A preacher at both ends. But, listen, people, nothing happened for thirteen years.

Do you know what the trouble is with a lot of us? There's an old saying. The big trouble is, I'm in a hurry and God isn't. Known unto God are all His works and the foundation of the world.

Do you know that God doesn't have any backup plans? Satan can never, ever get to jump on God. Something happens and people say, Hey, the devil really fouled up God's work. No, no.

Oh, no. Oh, no. Known unto God are all His works.

Listen, God is not only one jump ahead of the devil. He's a millennium ahead of the devil. He's ten millenniums ahead of the devil.

God knows everything that will ever happen. And He knew it all from the very beginning of time. Because our God doesn't live in a time cage.

They don't have clocks or calendars in heaven. They don't think in terms of seconds and minutes and hours and days and weeks and months and years and centuries and millenniums. That's not Kurd there.

That's why he says he's the great I am. Not the great I used to be or the great I shall be, but the great I am. Colossians 3:11 says, Christ is all and in all.

Now, God's part. What's my part? What's your part if you're a Christian? Maybe you don't care. Maybe it really doesn't bother your heart at all that we aren't seeing revival.

Do you know at the turn of the century, Canada, your Canada was 20% evangelical. Do you know what it is today? It's around seven. Some people say six.

It's been going down. Doesn't that concern you? Doesn't what's happening, you know what they're saying about Winnipeg, my city? They're saying that there are more house break-ins in Winnipeg than any city in North America. Can you believe it? I can believe it.

I was only there about a month and somebody broke into my house. And since then they broke into three houses next door to mine in broad daylight on a Saturday afternoon, kicked in the back doors, walked in and took what they wanted. The police told us, they said, we solve about 600 a year, but there's thousands we never get to.

It's a major problem. And this year is the worst year in Winnipeg's history for homicides, murders in families. The father killing the family, the mother killing or something else.

They've never seen anything like it. And Canada is sort of falling apart. And dear people, I'm positive my God is doing it to wake us up, to make us pray and thank God.

There's a spirit of prayer in many places in our land. Be part of it. So prayer is part of what I can do.

There are other things besides. Take the promise which I quoted the other day from Proverbs 1, verse 23. God said, you turn, turn at my reproof.

Paul, writing to Timothy said, preached the word. Be instant, that means be urgent. In season, out of season.

Reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine. God says, now when you're rebuked and reproved by my word, turn, turn. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts and let him return unto the Lord and he will have mercy upon him and to our God for he will abundantly pardon.

I was in Argentina. And God was preparing something. When I saw what he was doing, it didn't blow me away, but it sure made me praise the Lord.

The year before I came, there were six Baptist groups, evangelical Baptist groups, laboring in Argentina. And they used to have a get-together weekend once a year. And it was a time of fellowship.

They'd have 800,000 people or more come together. So the year before I came, when they compared statistics, on the average, each church had won two people to Christ the preceding year. That's what it worked out to.

And you know what they did? They repented. And here's what they did. They set up a committee to plan the fellowship weekend for the following year.

And they told the committee, you're not to invite a speaker. We're all going to pray, God, send us someone that will talk about revival, because that's what we need. Now, they didn't know I was coming to South America.

I didn't know they were doing this. I'd never heard of these groups. I got there, working with the gospel mission in South America.

I think I preached 105 times in nine weeks. We had a great time. And I got into a Southern Baptist seminar in Buenos Aires, and I spoke there just once, and a professor came, and he said, what are you doing on, and he mentioned a certain weekend.

I said, hey, that's the only weekend I have free. Why are you asking? And he was part of a committee setting up this meeting, and he asked if I could come that weekend. I said, I would be delighted.

Now, see how God put it together? I had nothing to do with it. So I got there, Rosario, city of a million and a half, a church seating a thousand, about 1,200, 1,300 people there. You couldn't move.

I couldn't give invitations. There was no room for people to move. So I preached, I think, four times, but in the last meeting, I simply said, if God has spoken to your heart, you want to accept Christ as your personal Savior, or you're a Christian, you need to be revived.

Why? Stay behind. I guess about 700 people stayed behind. The interpreter got so excited, you know, to have a low boiling point in some respects down there.

He was actually jumping up and down, hollering, praising the Lord, hugging me just about cracked my ribs, you know. Then I had to counsel all these people through the interpreter, which isn't really easy. But God was at work.

A pastor told me, he said, God broke my heart because I had a bitter attitude to another pastor, a national pastor. He was from the States, this guy. And he said, I sat in the meeting there and I prayed and said, Dear God, I'll make it right if you'll bring him to me.

He opened his eyes and the guy was standing right beside him. He said, I don't know where he came from. He wasn't there when I started to pray.

So they made things right. A pastor went back to Buenos Aires. He had a church with about 500 people.

He got such a burden for revival, he began praying day and night. He was a great man of faith, by the way. And a revival broke within a couple of weeks.

And it swept the whole congregation. And a good thing it did because in the testimony time they discovered one of the men had been planning to shoot the preacher. So you preachers, be careful here.

If you don't get a revival, you might get shot. And people listened. Do you know what happened then? Listen.

After the church got cleaned up, God the Holy Spirit turned on the sinners. And 200 sinners were converted in two weeks without any special meetings, no special program, no special speaker, nothing. These were people coming, beating on the preacher's door day and night, saying, Preacher, I want to be saved.

200 of them. I was there not long after. They'd already baptized over 80 of these people.

But listen. It was not until the Christians dealt with sin that God was able to do that among the sinners. The problem has never been in the world.

It's always been in the church. The church gets to be apathetic, indifferent. They don't care.

They don't talk to people about Christ. They don't live a godly life. They take all the benefits that God gives.

They give nothing in return. They don't even expect or they're expected to give anything in return. And no doubt, some of us here today are just like that.

You're glad you've got a ticket to heaven, but don't bother me beyond that. I've got a lot of important things to do. Maybe you think you have, but nothing is quite so important as the work of God.

So, Jesus said in Matthew 6.33, Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things. I was with a millionaire in Lincoln, Nebraska recently. I hope we can get him to a conference sometime.

You talk over a man walking with God? I can't take time today. God absolutely shattered him physically, mentally, in every way a few years ago and then filled him with the Spirit and the miracles that God's been doing to him since. Seek first.

He's learned that. God's business comes first. His comes last.

And that's biblical. In Hosea 5, it says, they, that's Israel, they shall go of their flocks and with their herds to seek the Lord, but they will not find Him. He has withdrawn Himself from them.

Let me ask you a question. Why would God withdraw Himself from people that were earnestly seeking Him, so earnestly that they were willing to sacrifice animals to God? That's verse 6. In verse 15, I think it is, it says, God said, I will go and return to My place until, until they acknowledge their offense and seek My face. See, they were seeking the face of God, but they were not admitting their sin.

Do you know what the margin reading says? The margin says that the Hebrew says, until they be guilty, until they be guilty. Nobody likes accepting responsibility for his or hers own sins. Husbands love to have a wife so they've got someone to blame it on.

You know, wives blame husbands. Parents blame kids. Kids blame parents.

And nobody's to blame. Jeremiah 3.13, God said, Only acknowledge your iniquity, that you have transgressed against the Lord your God. And that's the essence of revival, is just to be guilty before God.

Yes, God, that's my sin. Show me my sin. Deal with my heart.

All people, that's our part. In revival, in Isaiah 40, there's three verses that talk about preparing the way. Isaiah 40, prepare the way of the Lord.

Isaiah 62, prepare the way of the people. Isaiah 57, prepare the way of revival. So we have to deal with what, whatever is between myself and God, and whatever is between myself and other people.

And that prepares the way for God. It prepares the way for the people. It prepares the way for revival.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/18/SID18460.mp3>
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/bill-mcleod/revival-gods-part-my-part/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net