

What Is Revival?

by Bill McLeod

Revival is a time when God works powerfully in the lives of individuals and communities, leading to a deep sense of conviction, repentance, and a renewed commitment to following God.

Duration: 59:57

Scripture: 1 Peter 2:2

Topics: "Revival"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares his personal journey of transformation in his relationship with the Bible. He admits that he used to find the Bible boring and only spent a minimal amount of time with it. However, through a revelation from 1 Peter 2, he realized that by laying aside sinful behaviors, he developed a hunger for the word of God. He also references Romans 12:1-2 and James 4:6-10 as passages that encourage personal revival. The speaker then mentions the example of Asahel Nettleton, a revivalist who saw thousands of conversions without giving public invitations, highlighting the power of God in his ministry.

Transcript

I want to read from Isaiah 57, verse 15. It says, For thus says the High and Lofty One that inhabits eternity, he doesn't have a street address, whose name is Holy. I dwell in the high and holy place with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

I'm not accustomed to lecturing, I'm a preacher, and if I get to preaching sometimes you'll understand what's happened. I'm reverting to the old standard, you see. But we'll do our best.

What is revival? J. Edwin Orr, who's probably done more for revival than any person I can think of that is by way of research and writing. He's written many, many books on it. I have most of his books in my library.

And he tells of driving one time and he saw a church with a sign in front of it, and the sign said, Revival every night but Monday. He drove about 50 miles and he saw another church and the sign in front of this church said, Revival every Monday night. So he said, I thought if these two churches could get together, they could have perennial revival.

Of course, what they meant by revival was simply a meeting, you know, not necessarily what we would call a revival meeting at all. And there is a lot of hazy thinking about revival. I don't think I'll talk about the distinction that some are making between revival and awakening, the idea being that awakening is a revival that covers a wide area.

I don't think we need to do that because historically at least this kind of distinction was never made. A revival was a revival, whether one person experienced it or 50,000 people or a whole country experienced it, a revival was a revival. Well, first of all, in some of these things you have heard before, some I've, most of them I've gained from my reading over the years, revival is the finger of God pointed at you.

You know, when God is really working, people rarely say afterward, that was a wonderful message. They don't say that. They say something like this, oh, God spoke to my heart.

And sometimes they can't say anything. Sometimes they try to say, I remember a man came to me one time after a meeting and he tried to say something and he couldn't and he burst into tears and he dropped on his knees and began to pray. God has spoken to his heart.

I recall a Christian worker telling me in one of the sessions where God had been working powerfully and he literally ran out of the session and he ran to get to the prayer room and he never made it to the prayer room. He fell on his knees in the hallway and he spent a half an hour before God, just weeping and praying before God. Revival is the finger of God pointed at me, pointed at you.

Charles Finney said revival was a new outburst of obedience to God on the part of Christians, looking at it from the practical aspect. And of course this is true. Believers begin to obey God in a new way.

William Sprague wrote an interesting and excellent book on revival many years ago, and here's what he said about revival. Whenever, then, you see religion rising up from a state of comparative depression to a tone of increased vigor and strength, whenever you see professing Christians becoming more faithful to their obligations, and behold, the strength of the Church increased by fresh accession of piety from the world, there is a state of things which you need not hesitate to denominate a revival of religion. That's to the point.

Richard Owen Roberts, he has five thousand books in his library on the subject of revival alone, and he has a listing of fifty thousand books on revival, he said. Now, he gives us some characteristics of true revival. I'll give them to you.

First of all, an intense spirit of conviction of sin is felt. I think of a man telling me how that when God spoke to him, he said God showed him every sin he'd ever committed from the time he was a child to that moment when he met with God. He was totally shattered.

He phoned me, he wanted to come and see me, he couldn't speak. He was incoherent. He was under such stress because of what the Spirit of God had just done in his heart.

Deep agony over sin will be present. Long-standing habits of indulgence will be broken. I remember a pastor in some meetings in Western Canada years ago.

He came for counseling, and he had a serious problem. He was hooked on porno. And he had led his wife into this.

There were practices, some of the rotten stuff they saw in these videos and so on. And he said, I'm so hooked on this stuff that I think I have demons. Well we checked it out, he didn't have any demons.

And I showed him from the book of James, it says every man is tempted when he's drawn away of his own lust. I said my brother it's you. You have to accept personal responsibility for your problem.

Jeremiah 3.13 says only acknowledge your iniquity that you have transgressed against the Lord your God. We blame it on our wife, on our husband, on our kids, on our parents, on the neighbors, on our job, on the country we live in, or something else. And as long as we do that, we don't get anywhere with God.

We have to accept personal responsibility for our sin. So he did. And we went to prayer.

There were two of us there with this pastor. And he began to pray, and he really met God. In the middle of his prayer, he prayed with such intensity I thought he would break in two.

And in the middle of his prayer, he laughed. I mean he just laughed. And you could almost hear the chains hit the floor.

He was free, and he knew it. And you know the next day, he gave his testimony. And we don't have people, if people have moral problems, we've never encouraged them to share those problems in a mixed company.

Women to women, fine. Men to men, fine. But not in a mixed company.

And he didn't do that. All he did was this. He said, yesterday, Jesus Christ set me free from a sin I had no power over.

And he said, I want to sing my testimony. We were in a big church, a seat a thousand. There weren't that many there, but six or seven hundred, I suppose.

And he sang, O happy day that fixed my choice on thee, my Savior, and my God. He started to sing, and all of a sudden, dear people, I can't explain it. The Spirit of God came over the whole congregation, and all of us began to weep.

It was just as if you closed your eyes, you could fancy God had lowered an angel on a golden chord, and he was singing. We found it after this guy was not a singer. I never heard anything like it in my life.

Finally, he was weeping. And then he got to this place, now rest my long divided heart, fixed on this blissful center rest. Nor ever from my Lord depart, with him of every good possess.

It was fantastic, you know, just. And you know, I talked to the guy doing the taping before the meeting. I said, and now tonight I want you to tape everything, because he'd just been taping my messages.

Tape all the testimonies. He said, I'll do that. So afterwards, I went to talk to him.

I said, you got everything tonight? No, he said, I got your sermon. I said, didn't you tape everything tonight? And he said, no. I said, don't you remember before the meeting you sat here, and I stood here, and I said, please tape everything tonight, including all the testimonies? I don't remember that, he said.

I said, okay, forget it, and I walked away. And I was muttering to myself, you know how you do sometimes? And finally, Lord, you get on your knees, and stay there until you can thank me. I didn't want

that on tape tonight.

So we don't have it on tape, but we have it in our memory, and I'll never forget it. Jesus Christ set him absolutely free. That's one of the things that happens, as Owen Roberts is saying.

Long-standing habits of indulgence will be broken. Sins long forgotten will be dealt with seriously. Confession of sin will become the order of the day.

Renewal of interest in the Word of God will be evident. In Cammie, Idaho, I had a crusade years ago in a Baptist church, and a Nazarene pastor at a very large church in the area asked me if I'd preach for him Sunday morning. So I did.

I don't remember what I spoke on. I preached on Revival, gave an invitation, and he came forward, his assistant. The Sunday school seemed as if all the leaders in the church responded that Sunday morning.

Thursday of that following week, he phoned me long distance. He said, Bill, can you tell me what's happening? I said, I don't know what's going on. He said, before I met with God Sunday morning, you know, five minutes with the Bible was about all I could hack.

To be perfectly honest, he said, I spent very little time with the Bible. I found it boring. He said, now, he said, I can spend five hours a day with the Bible.

What's happened? Well, I think it's quite clear in 1 Peter chapter 2, wherefore, laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby. And dear people, when we deal with these sins, we automatically have a hunger for the word of God. And that's one of the things Orrin Roberts is dealing with here.

Prayer becomes a delight. Agony for perishing souls will be normal. Holiness will become the prime object of the awakened person's life.

A revived people will become the instruments of revival. Social concerns will take on new meaning and effort. And the twelfth thing he mentioned is giving to Christian work will increase dramatically.

I know in the first twelve months after the revival in 1971, one of the Baptist groups in Western Canada reported that for the first time in their history, they went over the top in their budget, in their financial budget. This had never happened before. But it happened then, because God's people were giving because they wanted to give.

Tozer said, the beginning of revival is to get thoroughly dissatisfied with yourself. That's the place to start. Thoroughly dissatisfied with yourself.

Someone said revival is the application of Bible truth to human experience. Revival is a time when theology and experience flourish together. I don't know who said that, somebody said that.

In the Solomon Islands, in the last fifty years, they've had three major revivals, the last one about six, seven years ago. They do not call them revival, they call them the falling of love. Because that's what happens.

When revival comes, it's like a falling of love. Christians learn how to love one another, and to love the souls of men. Revival is an extraordinary working of the Holy Spirit, producing extraordinary results.

Something out of the ordinary that the Holy Spirit does. Revival is an application of Bible truth to individuals in a personal and a powerful way. And you know, summing it up in a sense, revival is Christians coming up to a New Testament standard.

That's basically what it is. There's an old saying that we have been subnormal for so long that when the normal comes along we think it's abnormal. Christians coming up to a New Testament standard.

Evan Roberts said revival is a time when God bends the Church and then saves the world. And God can't save the world until he bends or breaks the Church, is really what he's saying. Someone called revival a time of extraordinary interest in the things of God.

Finney called revival a time of renewal of first love among Christians. Revival is an outpouring of the Holy Spirit of God on a cold Christian or a cold Church, resulting in great liberty and warmth. Let me refer to the Church in Saskatoon before the revival in 1971.

Annual meeting. Well, the nomination committee was meeting, and we were having difficulty getting people applying for positions in the Church. People didn't want to do anything.

People were saying, the chairman of the committee said this to me, he said, you know, Pastor, you know people are saying, they're saying if you absolutely, positively can't find anyone to do the job, give me a call and maybe I'll take it on. After the revival, the nomination committee met and said, Brother Reed, how's it going? He said, Pastor, my phone is burning off the wall. Everybody's calling.

Everybody wants a job. They're saying, give me something to do. So what made this difference? There had been a revival, and people had come into a right relationship with God, and they wanted to be involved.

Revival is sleeping Christians and sleeping sinners awakening to the realities of God. Somebody's called revival, well they said this, revival is like judgment day. As God the Holy Spirit confronts us about our sin.

Phinney, I remember reading something Phinney said as he witnessed the Spirit of God at work in one of his congregations. He said, this is just conviction of sin. What must judgment be like? As people were totally shattered when the Holy Spirit showed them their sin, their failures, and all the rest of it.

All right? Revival is God the Holy Spirit taking the work of God out of the hands of men, and making whole communities aware of the presence of God. Calvin Colton said that in an old book published in 1832. The title of the book is A History of American Revivals of Religion.

This old book has been republished six or seven years ago. I don't know where to get a hold of it, but I know it has been republished. A very interesting book on revivals that were occurring up until about 1812, from the late 1790s.

And he was talking about, in those days they used the term insulated conversion. We'd use the term isolated conversion. So he said we were never satisfied with insulated conversions.

A person here, a person there, a family here, a family there. That was fine, but that was not revival. And he said we kept on fasting and praying and preaching for revival, and he greatly emphasized the place of faith.

We believed God for revival. He said we kept on until, here's what he said, the Holy Spirit came and took the work of God out of our hands, and made the whole community aware of God. And then hundreds were converted.

Hundreds were converted. Well, revival. Now revival, Duncan Campbell said, is a people saturated with God.

That's a good way of putting it. Genuine revival usually results in large numbers of sinners coming to Jesus Christ. But Jonathan Edwards tells of a church revival.

He said it was as powerful a revival among Christians as he saw anywhere. Yet practically no sinners were converted at all. He didn't question that.

He said it's unusual, but he was persuaded it was a genuine work of God because of what he saw in the lives of Christians. Now revival always results in much restitution. I'm sure I could write a book of 500 pages on the subject of restitution alone, just from what I've witnessed personally in meetings over the years.

Every kind of problem people have dealt with. In meetings in Brandon, Manitoba, a fellow got saved one night. He was wanted in three Canadian provinces.

In Ontario he'd raped a girl in Ontario, and he gave himself up to chief of police in Brandon the following day, and they checked out his story. He talked to the father of the girl he'd raped, and he told his girl's father what had happened in his life the night before. That is, the night before he spoke to the father.

And the father told him, he said, if I had met you, I would have smashed you in the face. But he said, after listening to your testimony, we don't want to lay any charges. If God has done this in your life, we thank God for it.

And this happened in all three cases where he was wanted. And finally they'd just let him go. He went back to Ontario, got his wife.

She was living common law with some other guy, and they had two children. That is, this particular person had had two children with his wife before he left. He was living common law too.

He brought his wife back to Brandon. She got saved a night or two later. And it was just a wonderful thing, the way God just cleared the whole place for him.

But he was willing to go to jail if he had to the rest of his life. The first thing he did, I say, was go to the chief of police and give himself up. And this is common.

Sometimes at the end of a crusade we've asked this kind of a question, how many of you people have had to make restitution of some kind? Because God's been working in your heart. And it's not uncommon to see a third of our hands go up. So restitution is certainly a part of revival.

Exodus chapter 22 speaks of what it calls full restitution. Down in Omaha, Nebraska, a fellow gave his testimony one night. He had been high up in the American Air Force, and he'd been using the Air Force to transport drugs around the world.

He had a drug ring going all around the world, using Uncle Sam's Air Force. And so he went to a friend of his, who happened to be a judge, and told him what he'd been doing, and said, I'm thinking of giving myself up. What am I looking at? He says, you're looking at at least 12 years in jail.

So he shared that with the congregation and asked for our prayers, and we prayed for him. And he went down, met with his committee, and they told him this. They said, now look, for six months, don't ever set foot outside of Omaha, Nebraska, because if you do, when we catch you, we'll throw the book at you.

Now he didn't know that what they were doing was putting some detectives on his trail to follow him around for six months to see if he was really clean. So at the end of six months, they called him back in and told him what they'd done. They said, we believe you're clean.

Walk with your God. And that was the end of it. He never saw the inside of jail.

But you see, the Bible, God said, them that honor me, I will honor, and those that despise me will be like the esteemed. So if you honor God, God will honor you. We've had numerous cases of people that should have gone to jail.

None of them did. None of them did. I can't explain that.

Because God worked it out. Because they were willing to be totally honest before God. I know down in Woodstock, New Brunswick, years ago, this is Woodstock, New Brunswick, Woodstock, New York, Woodstock, South Africa.

This was Woodstock, New Brunswick, a town of about 5,000. And we had a crusade. There were 50 churches in the area cooperating.

We had to extend for five weeks. And God did some wonderful things there. And there was much restitution going on.

Woodstock is not far from the border of the state of Maine. And all kinds of people were going over to the border and confessing to the fact that they'd smuggled this over or smuggled something else over. And finally, one of the guards said, I've been working at this job for 25 years.

I've never had anybody come and confess to having smuggled goods. What's happening in Woodstock? And they said, it's called revival. He said, what's that? And the guy got saved.

Don't be smuggling watches and all kinds of stuff, you know, not declaring them. And I remember one fellow down in Woodstock, a pastor, and he had to go back to the seminary he graduated from because he had not done some of the studies he declared he had done, and he stood the chance of losing his degree. And he was willing to do that just to be right with God.

All right, a spirit of forgiveness, that's something you will see as a result of revival, a characteristic, let's call it that. In Binghamton, New York, a young man shared with us, he had a very wealthy uncle and they were very close friends. And his uncle told him, I've remembered you in my will.

And he told him how much he would be getting in his, when this particular person passed away. Well, he died. Before he died, some other relatives, Christian relatives, got a hold of him, drew up a new will, and had him sign it when he couldn't really even read it.

And so the old will was gone. This kid never got a dollar. Oh, he said, I was so angry.

It was just eating my heart away. Day and night, he said, I hated those Christians with a passion. Well, God dealt with him in the meetings.

And it was wonderful to see. He said, I'm just praising the Lord all over the place, he said. I never got a dollar.

Isn't that wonderful? Well, who could do that but God, you know. Some people think he's gone off, you know, he's flipped his lid. No, he hadn't.

He'd met with God. And money didn't mean anything anymore. Revivals are supernatural visitations of God, which cannot be gotten up by any human means.

We got a call from Rocky Mountain House down in Colorado years ago, and Harry Neville and Thiessen and I went down there. It was the annual conference of a Baptist group representing 25 or 30 churches. Normally they'd have 70 delegates come from these churches.

When they heard a revival team was coming from Canada, I don't know really how many came. I know the church was seated about 250, and there was probably 500 people in the meeting. And Harry and Evelyn shared, and I got to speaking, and all of a sudden I see two guys coming down the center aisle.

And they both looked angry, you know, big guys, see. Just marching down the aisle, came up on the platform, and they said, can we say something? I said, yes, I stood back. And they were rival contractors.

They were both Christians. They'd been running each other's work down for years. And in the first part of the meeting, God got ahold of them, and they went to a back room, made everything right between themselves.

Now they came, and they asked the congregation, the people, to forgive them for the lying they'd done, when they should have been loving each other with pure hearts, like it says in 1 Peter 1, 22. Well fine, they went back, and I continued on my message, and all of a sudden I see two ladies coming down the center aisle. And one was a little old lady, the other was a younger lady.

And they got up on the platform, and I stepped back, and the little lady said something like this. She said, many of you people know me, but you probably don't know that I'm the biggest liar in the country. She said, I make a practice of lying.

I've lied about hundreds of people. But she said, I've lied more about Becky here than any person I know. And she said, Becky dear, could you find it in your heart to forgive me? And they got into each other's arms and cried a while, and I'm waiting for my message over here, you know.

And they asked the congregation, she asked the congregation to forgive her. They went back to their seats. So I got to preaching again.

I see a man coming, and there was no invitation, but he knelt at the front. And the minute he did, I saw a young kid from way over here, came running across, a kid about 17 or 18, and he knelt beside, it was a father and son thing, and they began counseling each other. And I could hear the father saying, no, no, son, it was me.

And the kid said, no, dad, it was me, you know. And they're getting things right, you know. And I'm trying to preach.

And then the whole family came and knelt at the front, and they just, they put their arms around each other, about six people, and they began making things right. And so there's no use to preach anymore, you know. And so I just gave an invitation and said, if you'd like to accept Christ, come and stand over here, please.

Otherwise, if you're a Christian, you want to meet with God, just find a place to kneel and talk to God. And the place was crowded with people. Seven people came to be saved.

And that's revival. You have to move with it, whatever God may be doing. And sometimes, you know, you never get through your sermon.

Don't worry about it. I remember a fellow one time, we were in meetings, ten churches involved, and this fellow was sitting there with his wife. I had talked to him about the Lord before the meeting, and he said, well, the old lady, she's got it, but he said, you know, I'm just here to keep her happy, so don't bother me.

So he's sitting there, when suddenly, now here, this is what he told us afterwards. He said, the floor opened up, and he saw the flames of hell, and he thought he was going to slide into hell, and he grabbed ahold of his wife and said, honey, you'd better pray, I'm going to go to hell. And she didn't know what was going on, and began throwing me hand signals to stop preaching so he could come to the altar, and I didn't see him, the crowd was large, and I kept on preaching.

And finally, he came running to the front, and he fell on his knees, and he got saved. And the phrase I'd used, which God used in his life, was from Hebrews 10, which speaks about people doing despite unto the Spirit of grace, or insulting the Spirit of grace. And when he gave his testimony before the crowd, he just wept, he said, I was guilty of insulting the Spirit of God.

And I can't explain it. What did he see? I mean, nobody else saw anything like that. And God will work in ways we're not accustomed to.

We have to be careful not to write it off and say it can't be of God. God has many ways of working. You can't put God in a box, don't ever do that, and tell God how he is to come out from the box, how he is to do it.

Now, revival is people becoming aware of the presence of God in a new and powerful way. You'll often hear people saying, God was so near, and people feel God is speaking directly, of course, to them. We might say this too, that revival is people taking giant steps forward in a very short period of time.

A group of us went to a seminary in Toronto, and God met with us in a very powerful way. The meeting went on for 14 hours. I think it was probably the longest meeting I was ever in.

And the meeting got larger as time went on, because people got to telephones and phoned their friends and they came down to see what God was doing, and went on and on and on. Some of the staff told me, they said, more happened in this school in this one meeting than has happened in the 28 years of the existence of the seminary. Now, that may have been an exaggeration, but that's how they felt.

It changed lives. One of the professors, I'll never forget him, he came running down the aisle. We had a chair at the front, and people would come and kneel at the chair, and we'd pray, counsel and pray for them.

And he came running and fell across this chair, and in a stentorian voice he cried to God, and he said, Oh my God, all these years I sought and taught the academic, but today I want the spiritual. And he had a meeting with God. And many things of that kind were happening.

I remember one young man came. He gave his name. I don't remember his name.

Apparently he was a good singer and he worked with youth. He'd been in many churches in the area in Toronto. And he said, You people know me, he said, but you don't really know me.

He said, You know my name. He said, My name should really be Mr. Seward, because that's the kind of a mind I have. And he asked for a prayer.

He came, we knelt with him, prayed with him, and God did something great in his life. And this went on and on and on and on. God dealing with people in a very personal way.

Now I want to give some Bible verses that I feel have to do with revival. Second Chronicles 7.14, of course we all know this, If my people who are called by my name shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. However, this verse cannot be understood apart from chapter 6. In chapter 6 Solomon asks God to hear, I think eight times, or to hear and forgive eight times.

He asks God to hear a total of 12 times in chapter 6. And so Second Chronicles 7.14 is God's response to Solomon's request for God to hear and to forgive. And he suggests a number of scenarios in chapter 6. If this happens, and this happens, and this happens, and people pray, will you hear? So Second Chronicles 7.14. Revival is Psalm 68.9. You, O God, sent a plentiful rain, whereby you confirmed your inheritance when it was weary. And Peter spoke, remember, about times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.

And so God does this times when the church of God is weary, when God's people are weary spiritually speaking, and God will send a time of refreshing. He'll pour water on his people. And the Bible often uses water as a picture of revival, of spiritual blessing.

Revival is Psalm 102.13 and 14. You will arise and have mercy upon Zion, for the time to favor her. Yes, the set time has come, for your servants take pleasure in her stones, and favor the duster off.

Now remember the New Testament, Zion is the church. Hebrews 12.22 says so. He says, You are not come to the mountain that might be touched, that Sinai, you are come to Sion, Mount Sinai, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, or the universal gathering and church of the firstborn, and finally to God, to Jesus, to the blood of sprinkling.

Then Psalm 102.16, When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory. And I base my conviction that Jesus Christ will return at a time of worldwide revival on that particular statement. When the Lord shall build up Zion.

Zionism among Israel is strictly and only a political movement. They admit that. I've read that in their books.

It's a political movement. It has nothing really to do with God. When the Lord shall build up Zion, I say that's the church in the New Testament.

Again I say Hebrews 12.22. When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory. All right, then of course Psalm 139.23 and 24, Search me, O God, and know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way eternal.

Did you ever notice this in Psalm 139? Do you know, do you happen to know how it begins? It begins by saying, O Lord, you have searched me. You have searched me, known me. Well if it's true that God has searched me and known me, why is he praying for God to search him and know him? I think the thing is this.

It's true, of course, that God knows us perfectly. But I need to know what God knows about me. I need to see myself as God sees me.

I know a couple who went home from a revival meeting, and so they had a talk. And it went something like this. So he says, Well, honey, look, now we live together, we love each other and all, and maybe there's some things in my life that are wrong.

You tell me, and then I'll tell you what I see is wrong in your life. And she says, Well, honey, to be perfectly frank and honest, I can't think of anything that I think you're doing wrong. I think you're doing everything just great.

He said, Well, that's how I feel about you. So then they concluded they didn't need a revival. When I heard this, I said to myself, I wonder what would have happened had they prayed Psalm 139, 23, and 24, and asked God to show them their sins.

Search me, O God. I don't know, many, many times over the years, people will say something like this. I don't think there's anything wrong with me, you know.

But I don't really feel I'm walking with God the way I should. So then you say, I would say, why don't you pray and ask God to search your heart and show you? And they start to pray. And all of a sudden they start to confess.

And sometimes all kinds of things come to the surface. Now prior to this, they say, Well, I don't know of anything. I'm not aware of anything.

They ask God to search them. God does this. And all of a sudden, it's a different story.

They brought a pastor's wife to me after a meeting one time. They said, She's all broken up. She's crying.

We've tried to counsel her. We can't help her. See if you can help her.

So I began to talk to her. And she said, Well, I've asked God to search my heart, and he doesn't show me anything. And she says, I don't know what's wrong, but something's wrong.

I'm not happy in the Lord. And she went on and on. And so we were kneeling at a pew.

And I know that God put this in my mouth. I just said, How do you like your husband's work? And that was the problem. And she just bust wide open and began to weep and cry.

She didn't like his work. She didn't like the basement suite they lived in because it only had one small window to the outside. She didn't like the city they lived in.

She came from British Columbia. She wanted to live among the mountains again. She just went on and on and on and on.

One thing after another. But nothing happened until I asked that question. So she said, I've been asking God and he hasn't shown me anything.

I don't believe that for a minute. You know, when people tell me that, you know what I usually say? Well, who's lying? You or God? Because, you know, in Job, here's what it says. Listen carefully.

It says, God never withdraws his eyes from the righteous. But with kings are they on the throne? Yes, it says. He establishes them forever, and they're exalted.

And then comes the if in the next verse. And if they be bound in fetters, the righteous, if they be bound in fetters and held in cords of affliction, then what? It says, then he shows them their work and their transgressions they've exceeded, and he opens their ear to discipline, and he commands that they return from iniquity. What does it say? He shows them their work.

He shows them their transgressions. So when people tell me God hasn't shown me anything, I know they're not telling the truth. I mean, either they're lying or God is lying.

The trouble is, you know, we put up, we shut the door. We don't really want to hear certain things, so we just don't hear it. All right, then, Isaiah 32, 14 and 15, it says, the palaces shall be forsaken, the multitude of the city shall be left, the forts and towers shall be for dens forever, a joy of wild asses, a pasture of flocks, until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest.

Nothing but desolation and wilderness until the Spirit is poured upon us from on high. And you know, with some of the great revivals of the past, some churches have increased by 300 percent. Their tongue fails for thirst.

I, the Lord, will hear them. I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them. I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in midst of the valleys.

I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. There are many promises of this kind, particularly in the Psalms and in Isaiah. And to me, they translate into revival promises, really.

Isaiah 44, pardon me, Isaiah 43, 20 and 21. I give waters in the wilderness and rivers in the desert to give drink to my people, my chosen. This people I have formed for myself, they shall show forth my praise.

Isaiah 44, 3 and 4. I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground. I will pour my Spirit upon your seed, and my blessing upon your offspring, and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the watercourses. That's certainly a promise of revival.

I'll pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground. I'll pour my Spirit on your seed, on your children, and my blessing on your offspring. And sometimes people say, well yes, it's true, you know.

God's poured his Spirit on my kids, but they haven't responded. They're still walking in the ways of the world. What does it say here? They shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the watercourses.

It's a promise that our kids can be revived. We need to believe for that. Of course, Isaiah 57, 15, we read this earlier.

For thus says the high and lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy. I dwell in the high and holy place with him also that is of a contrite, that's a broken, repentant and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite ones. Revival to Zechariah 10, 1. Ask you of the Lord, in the time of the latter rain.

So the Lord shall make bright clouds and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field. I think that's a promise of revival. To every one grass in the field.

John 7, 37 to 39. In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believes on me, as the scripture has said, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.

But this he spoke of the spirit which they that believe on him should receive. For the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified. I think it's a promise of revival.

Luke 11, 13. If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him. We might say revival is Acts 2, 1-4.

Acts 4, 29-33. Acts 8, 5-17. Acts 10, 44-48.

Acts 13, 43-49. Acts 19, 1-20. In 2 Timothy 1, verses 6-8, the Apostle Paul apparently sensed that Timothy was getting cold.

Perhaps somebody gave him the information. Maybe God revealed this to him. We don't really know how or why.

But quite apparently, Paul felt that Timothy needed a personal revival. So he said, I remind you that you stir up the gift of God which is in you with the putting on of my hands. For God has not given us the spirit of fear or timidity, one translation says, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

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. Now, the phrase, stir up, one translation says, stir in the flame. Another translation says, rekindle a fire.

Do you know what the Spanish Bible says? The Spanish Bible says, revive the gift of God which is in you. Revive the gift of God which is in you. God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love, and of a sound and healthy mind.

We might say revival is Romans chapter 12, verses 1 and 2. Present your body as a living sacrifice. I call James chapter 4, verses 6 to 10, God's recipe for personal revival. Asahel Nettleton, a revivalist in the United States, a contemporary of Finney's, saw thousands of people converted.

He had a very unusual ministry. He never ever gave a public invitation, and yet thousands were converted. And the power of God was on him in a very unusual way.

And you would often read reports like this about his ministry. A church, 78 people were converted, and six years later only one had backslidden. Whereas today, we're being told that even these great evangelistic crusades that we have, about three percent of the converts go on with God.

That's what they're finding. I know a friend of mine, he was chairman Ron McCormick down in New Brunswick. He chaired a Billy Graham crusade there years ago, and thousands of people walked the aisles.

His church got 175 decision cards. They had a godly committee set up to follow up these 175 people. He said, Bill, we got exactly two out of 175.

That's not even three percent. And he said one of them was for baptism. We only had one for salvation out of 175 cards.

And there's obviously something wrong. Anyway, Asahel Nettleton, there's a book that came out a few years ago on his life. Get it if you can.

It's a very, very challenging work. And he called revivals, miracles sent down from heaven. Miracles sent down from heaven.

Now a few thoughts on what revival is not. And by the way, at the end of each session we'll have a period of time when you can ask questions and we'll try to try to answer them. Revival is not just a powerful excitement of some kind.

Revival is not people being healed, or speaking in tongues, or uttering pronouncements. I mean, sometimes people are healed, but it's not a marked feature of true revival. The most powerful revival of all was the 1858 revival in the United States.

There were 50,000 converts a week at a time when the population of the United States was the same as it is in Canada today, 30 million. This went on for a whole year. There were no manifestations of the Spirit apart from conversions to Christ.

No healing, no tongues, no prophetic announcements. It was the cleanest revival. There were none of this Toronto blessing thing, barking like dogs and braying like donkeys, and so on.

None of this. Those who've studied revivals admit it was the most powerful revival in the history of the Church since the days of the Apostles. It's an incredible story.

There's a book called The Event of the Century, which is a story of that revival. You should get that book and read it, The Event of the Century. You can order it through Canadian Revival Fellowship, I'm sure.

Anyway, it was simply God. And he seemed to move from county to county in the United States. He covered the whole land.

You'd read things like that Williamsport. Population 390. 375 were converted to Christ.

In some cases, entire villages were won to Christ. Everybody was saved. And you know in 1905, the Welsh revival, it was felt around the world.

It was felt in Canada. It's a powerful movement of God in Canada at that particular time, all through the United States. Wherever there were churches in the world, there was revival.

And one outstanding example was Atlanta, Georgia in 1905. With a population of 65,000, there were not 200 people unconverted out of a population of 65,000. Now that gives you an idea of what can happen in a time of revival.

Wonderful, powerful. It's not a successful evangelistic campaign. It's not people experiencing various kinds of body sensations.

It's not somebody publicly exposing others who are living in sin. There have been cases where this kind of thing has been proven to be demonic in origin. And Sir Robert Anderson, who was head of these Scotland Yard in the old country for many years, a devout Christian, in one of the books he wrote many years ago, he talks about a case like this where a 14-year-old girl in public meetings was pointing to certain people and declaring, you have this sin and you have that sin and so on.

And she was always right. And some came to the conclusion this was not of God, and so one night they got together at the back of the meeting and were talking as to how they should deal with this, and she came down the aisle and pointed at these men and said, what means this rebellion against the Holy Ghost? And they said, we're not rebelling against the Holy Ghost, but the Bible says, try the spirits whether they are of God, and we're going to try the spirit that's in you. And she ran out of the meeting and never came back.

So it was obviously a demonic thing. Just because something is supernatural does not mean it's from God. I'm sure we've all heard about people being slain in the spirit, and of course some people look on this as being a manifestation of the Holy Spirit's power.

I have two friends, they did not know each other, but they were two friends of mine, and they both tested that spirit and discovered it was not of God. And in the one case, this man who had a large experience in the occult, written books on and so on, and he was in one of these meetings, and so he saw people being slain in the spirit, and he said to myself, this is demonic, I'm going to test it. So here's what he did.

He prayed and said, Lord, the next group that goes forward, I will go with them, and if the power putting them on the floor is not your power, let me be the only one left standing. He was the only one that didn't go down. Forty people hit the floor, he didn't.

And this other friend of mine tested the same phenomenon in exactly the same way, and he was the only one left standing. There's a book called *The Death of a Guru*, I don't know if you've seen it or not, and in there they talk about a thing called the Shakti Path, or the Power Path. The guy who wrote the book is a Christian now, he was a Hindu guru, that is, a teacher for many, many years, and he tells about the Shakti Path thing.

It was related to the goddess of destruction in the Hindu system of gods. The Power Path. He said, as a guru, I would touch a worshipper on the forehead, and they would fall on the floor, and they would experience bodily sensations, warm currents running through their body, they might see bright lights burning, and so on.

And it was strictly a demonic thing. So, we have to be very careful not to be carried away because of some kind of supernatural manifestation. We have to test the spirits, as the Bible tells us so clearly.

You know, in some of these meetings today, the people stand up and holler, Holy Ghost come, and then people start falling on the floor and speaking in tongues, and I have some problems with that, personally. The vineyard movement actually started in this way. I've read the story, I've heard it on tape, from John Wimber, and I'm sure he's a man of God.

But the way the thing started, to me, has a question mark over it. A young man showed up at his church one Sunday. He'd never seen this fellow before, and the fellow said, I'd like to speak in your church tonight.

If you were a pastor, would you allow a total stranger to take over your pulpit and preach for you? I sure wouldn't. Anyway, this young man spoke on the Holy Spirit, and then he said, now I'm going to give an invitation. Nobody's to come forward but people under the age of 30.

Okay, so he gave an invitation, a bunch of people came forward. And then he said, Holy Ghost come, and these kids all fell on the floor and began roaring in tongues, and one guy, when he fell, he hit the mic with his mouth, and he had this mic jammed in his mouth, and he was lying on the floor roaring in tongues, was going out over the PA system, and this is how the vineyard movement started. I mean, Wimber says this quite, this is what went on.

And so then, he wasn't sure whether this was of God or not, and so he prayed for some light on it. The next day he got a phone call from out of state. Some friend of his said, I'm calling to say that what happened in your church is of God.

He didn't go to the Word of God. And one of the things that really bothered me was this. He did quote Ernest Donimore, a pastor in Ontario, wrote a two-volume book on Whitefield, a tremendous work of God, and in there he talks about Wesley and Whitefield, when they began to have some strange thing happen in meetings, people falling on the floor in trances, and so on, and initially they thought it was of God.

So he quotes this from their book. Well, I happen to have the book he was quoting from. I got the book out, and I thought it, and he quoted it accurately.

And so then he said, these men said it was of the Holy Ghost, whom I did doubt of the Holy Ghost. But in the very next paragraph, not the next chapter, in the very next paragraph, in that same book, here's what it said. Whitefield came to the conclusion it was not of God, it was turning people's eyes off of Christ and onto experiences, and it should be stopped.

And he talked to Wesley about it. Wesley didn't believe this. But a friend of Wesley's called Senec, John Senec, a Methodist preacher, came to Wesley and said, Wesley, this is not of God.

You must stop this. It's destroying the Revival. And from that point on, neither Wesley nor Whitefield encouraged this kind of thing or allowed it in their meetings.

So I say to myself, why didn't Mr. Wimber quote that paragraph? That really disturbed me to see that. Anyway, Peter, remember, called Revival times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. And I don't know who said this, but it goes back several hundred years.

You'll have to think to see what he's getting at. He said, Revival is God giving his children a bonnie blink of Jesus Christ. You see what he's saying? God giving his children a bonnie blink of Jesus Christ.

Okay, if God giving us a glorious picture of Christ, a new picture of Christ, a bonnie blink. You know, in the Revivals in China, under Goforth, the heathen, they had great difficulty in getting the unconverted to even attend their meetings. They had a few people converted, small churches scattered here and there.

When Revival came, the buildings were packed to the doors, because the heathen were saying, the Christian's God has come. Jesus has come. Jesus is alive.

He's in these meetings. And they went there by the thousands, and were converted by the thousands, too. And so, the center of every Revival, true Revival movement, has got to be Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

And if he's not the center, but if it's some doctrine that's the center of the movement, it's probably not a genuine Revival at all.

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