

# Revival

by Bill Stafford

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*Bill Stafford's sermon on 'Revival' explores the cycle of spiritual renewal through desperation, manifestation, and revelation of God's presence.*

**Duration:** 1:19:58

**Scripture:** 2 Kings 4:1

**Topics:** "Revival", "Surrender to God"

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## Description

Bill Stafford emphasizes the necessity of personal revival through desperation, manifestation, and revelation, urging believers to confront their spiritual dryness and recognize their need for God's presence. He reflects on the importance of humility and surrender, acknowledging that true spirituality comes from yielding to God rather than striving for self-righteousness. Stafford illustrates this through the story of a desperate widow in 2 Kings 4, who, despite having only a pot of oil, experiences God's miraculous provision when she brings empty vessels to Him. He calls for a collective awakening to the reality of God's indwelling presence and the need for brokenness to experience true abundance in life. Ultimately, he encourages the congregation to seek a fresh touch from God, moving beyond mere knowledge to active obedience.

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## Transcript

The hardest thing I face in my whole life is staying fresh. And that means a constant time when God has to deal with me personally and surface stuff that I'd rather not talk about. But you'll never and I will never walk with God unless He continually shows me, me.

In all of my ministry, in all of my life, God let me get unto the right preachers at the right time to surface me so I could detest what I saw and never, ever know or even feel that I even deserve to be in this place. The only thing I deserve is hell and judgment and the wrath of God. And what I have, I have because someone died for me and died as me and took my place and bore my hell and my wrath on the cross, satisfied the just demands of a holy God so that I as a sinner could run to the cross and say, God, don't give me what I deserve.

And if that didn't happen in your life, you will never walk in the glory of God dealing with you in a personal way to remind you we are never deserving of anything. We only deserve judgment and wrath, but Jesus paid it all. So I just want to give glory.

Brother Michael was talking. I'm telling you folks, I just walked across there with my wife and walked her to the hotel and I said, Mom, pray for me because I don't know what I'm going to say. I have nothing that God wants me to say.

And sitting right there while they were singing, God turned me to 2 Kings chapter 4. And I'm going to just talk just a little while because I'm going to tell you our problem is not hearing more preaching. Our problem is acting on what we've already heard. I've heard enough that I ought to stay right with God.

Are you hearing me? I've sat with the finest. I've preached with the best. Never knew why I was there, but I got it.

Amen. But God just does it. But He puts you wherever it is necessary to deal with you and to deal with me.

And how many times in past years I have preached down at people as if I were spiritual. And God never allows that to stay in a man's life. If He does stay in his life, He will never have the glory and the touch of God on him and He'll never have the freshness of ministry and He'll die a bitter old man.

God help us to meet with Him this week. Just three things from 2 Kings chapter 4. And I believe I'm right. If I'm not right, I'll shut up and we'll go to bed because I'm just not interested in impressing you with anything.

I mean, what good is that? All I'm interested in is hearing what Brother Michael said tonight, appropriating it to my life and say, am I really fresh tonight? Or am I just saying something because I've got to? But I believe that God has given me a word to say to you tonight and I'm going to say it and then shut up. In 2 Kings 4 verse 1, Now there cried a certain woman to the wives of the sons of the prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant, my husband, is dead. And thou knowest that thy servant did fear the Lord, and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen, slaves.

Elisha said unto her, What shall I do for thee? Tell me, what hast thou in the house? And she said, Thine handmaid hath not anything in the house save a pot of oil. Then he said, Go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbors, even empty vessels. Underline it, even empty vessels, borrow, not a few.

And when thou art come in, thou shalt shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons, and thou shalt pour out into all those vessels, and thou shalt set aside that which is full. So she went from him, shut the door upon her and upon her sons, brought the vessels to her, and she poured out. And it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said unto her son, Bring me yet a vessel.

And he said unto her, There is not a vessel more. And the oil stayed, stopped. Then she came and told the man of God, and he said, Go, sell the oil, pay thy debt, and leave thou and thy children on the rest.

I really ask God, is there any way during this time with us together, with this number of people, could we have a divine encounter with the Holy God and get serious about our relationship with Him and walk from this place totally under the touch and power and anointing of God to where? That was a manifestation of God's presence and power wherever we went. And they were aware that it's not us, there's somebody else. Just an awareness of the presence of God.

I was just thinking of the cycle of revival, and then we'll give you the three things and we'll go. The cycle of revival begins at desperation. The sad thing is, we don't know how to get desperate.

And you know, when Brother Michael said what he said about Sunday night services and churches going into a mode of claiming success when they can't even keep people long for one service, much less for three a week. And we call that a new method and a new way. There's never been a time when we need to be so desperate that we're willing to go and hear the Word of God because I cannot walk in the wickedness of this society and with the deception that's coming down the tube without more of the truth of the Word of God.

The problem is this. We cannot tell the difference between the spirit of truth and the spirit of error because we don't know the Word of God. So desperation is the first point that we have to come to in revival.

Secondly, after desperation comes manifestation. God will never manifest Himself in power and glory to me until there is a divine awareness that I'm a desperate creature, have nothing to offer anybody unless God does a fresh work in my heart. I must hear from God.

So desperation leads to manifestation. Manifestation leads to that glorious, glorious revelation. God reveals Himself in such personal glory and there is such an awareness of His presence.

That does not mean He shows up. That means He makes Himself very real to us because He is in us. We are indwelt.

I get tired of people talking about going to the house of God. I got news for you. You're it.

Amen. Have you ever walked in church with Baptists on Sunday morning? They don't know who you are. I go to about 40 churches a year and I'm dry as a gourd.

I hope my preaching is not that bad. That's what happens when you get old. You dry up.

But anyway, listen. What we must remember is that I'm never out of His presence. He does not live anywhere else except in bodies and He never leaves a body once He indwells it.

But He can be suppressed and He can be denied and He can be pushed to a corner. Instead of being accessed to all of the rooms in my heart, He can only have access to one and I keep the rest for myself. We need a divine awareness that my body is His sanctuary and wherever I go, I am never out of His presence.

I don't pray for His presence. I have Him. If you don't have Him, you're not saved.

Hello. You see, we're walking around saying we're trying to find God. He's not lost.

Amen. Every person seated here can only be assured of your salvation if you know the indwelling divine nature of a living God. And it's that awareness one more time that, wait a minute, I'm not looking for a blessing.

I'm not looking for a little support. I'm not trying to find something new. I have Him living in me.

And suddenly that awareness becomes alive, the revelation of His presence and power, to all of a sudden you can praise Him anywhere, anytime, no matter what may come or go. Why? We're never away from the presence of a living God. That's the thrill of continual revival.

But revelation comes after desperation and manifestation. Then comes revelation. After revelation comes repentance and brokenness.

Repentance and brokenness. After repentance and brokenness comes abundance. God never fails to bless and to bring abundance as a result of revival.

America is where she is because of past revivals of spiritual awareness. God's presence literally blessing our nation. And now then we're lost.

We're hunting the way. We don't know where to go. We're trying everything in the world.

And the more that we preach the gospel, the more we're detested because the world detests to be made aware that they're a sinner. CEOs, they want to find a better way without repentance. But the homeless and the big shot come the same way.

Amen? May God help us to remember that one of the glorious privileges of revival is abundance. God blesses. He gives us things.

He gives us material things. He blesses us. Thank God for the abundance of a holy God that has blessed America.

But then after that abundance, we're right back to selfishness because unless we learn to be generous and godly and share and pour out, God didn't save me to hold on to myself. Individuality is what's killing us. Well, I'm just what I am.

Well, God's sick of that. He knew what you were when He found you. He knew what I was when He found me.

I would to God, He would just leave me alone, but He won't. Why? He's trying to make me realize He didn't save me for my individuality. He saved me to break it so He could pour through me a lifestyle of the presence and power of a living God.

And by the way, that puts everybody on the same level. No big shots, no little shots. We all just ought to be shot.

How do you like that? I'm sick and tired of folks strutting spiritually. Amen. They could strut sitting down.

There they look in the mirror and saying, How great thou art. I'm not kidding you. And the biggest problem that I've had in my life was trying to be spiritual.

I don't have to try. I trust Him that if I yield to Him and surrender to Him, He'll deal with me and He'll be my spirituality. And He'll perform through me to where the world will wonder, How in the world can He do that with that guy? Ladies and gentlemen, He'll do it with anybody if you'll quit trying to defend ourselves and love ourselves and not know how to repent and do those things that are necessary to confess my stinking, rotten, selfish self.

Amen. I've learned a long time ago, Amen yourself. Not many others will.

Singers can have music to back them up. We preachers preach acapella. Preach your lungs out now.

Well, give me something. So I've made me some CDs and put amens and hallelujah and praise God and glories and whoos on them. And when I ring a bell, I'm going to have them to push the button.

Amen. Listen to me. Not one person seated here tonight could fail to be able to walk out of here a brand new person if we'll hear God, forget where we have been, find the fresh touch of God for this meeting right now.

And no matter who preaches, whether it be Ken, whether it be Brother Michael, whether it be me, and listen, I didn't come to preach. I come to support this meeting with my presence and to be to my Brother Michael whatever I can be. All I pray for is a divine work of God in my heart so that I can walk away from here and say, I don't care about preaching, but I do care about Jesus Christ living in me and through me and letting me finish my course full of God.

Hallelujah. Amen. This woman, three things, by the way, selfishness and then selfishness always brings us back to desperation.

That's the cycle of revival. Now, in this text, here's a woman. Her husband's dead.

She is in a desperate situation. She has nothing but a pot of oil. That's all.

And she calls for Elisha, the man of God, and shares her desperation. And Elisha said, What do you want me to do? What do you have in your house? And she said, Nothing save a pot of oil. Where does God usually start working in us when He can reduce us to nothing? Zero with a rim knocked off.

How many times has God brought me from hero to zero? Amen. Right? And the very person He used to do it may not have been right with God, but He did me a tremendous favor by making me show up stuff in me that I needed to deal with. He helped surface junk.

He showed me that I can't walk with God unless you say, Well, He didn't do it right. That's His problem. My problem is to be right.

That's not easy. I'd rather tell Him what I think about it. Probably will before I do repent.

I'll say, God, just give me 15 minutes. I'll backslide and be right back. And you are your life, and you've done it too.

Amen. God knows us. But listen, this woman is desperate, helpless, no way out.

She is at the end of the road, and her sons are going to become captive to the enemy. Isn't that a good place for us to get to where we quit praying these little sentimental prayers and finally get on our face and say, Dear God, I'm not playing anymore. I'm captive.

I'm sunk. I'm at the end of the road. The very thing that we need the most is the very thing we try to get out of.

And a lot of times preachers will call me and say, Well, I just lost about 15 church members. I say, Well, it may be good riddance. Maybe God did you a favor.

That don't mean you're glad they're gone. Well, maybe not. I don't know.

But listen to me. Success is not always in crowds. Success sometimes is in reductions.

I knew I wouldn't get an amen. Why? Because we've got our plans. I hate for them to hear about our church.

Is that pride? Is your reputation more important than God conforming you and making you like Jesus through that person who is your mortal enemy? You say, Brother Bill, you don't understand. Hey, hey, listen. You don't want me to share.

I pastored one church 12 years. I'd have been an atheist if it hadn't been for Jesus. Amen.

I'm not lying to you. The meanest people I know are not in bars. They're in the church.

And they can stand there and look you in the face and call you what they please, say anything they want to say with your wife and children standing back and walk off and say, We'll get rid of you. I never shall forget that left to drive when I tried to leave. God wouldn't let me.

I heard Ian Thomas say one time, Sent plus went equals put. And no matter how much hell's raising, I put you there. And that's what it was.

You see, God has to do whatever's necessary to get us to the place to where even in our lifestyle, pride never conquers us. And what do I care what somebody says? If I'm right with God, walking with Jesus, I've got my sins confessed and things are under the blood? What does it matter? And man, of all the people, you won't get many preachers coming around when you really need them. They're only there whenever they say, Boy, he's doing great.

Let's go see him. That little boy tell me one time, he said, Just tell you the truth. I think you'd be a lot better off if you'd resign that church.

I said, Tell God. I'll leave in the morning. Listen to me.

I looked back over my life, and I thought by now, I'm going to be spiritual. And I'm repenting more than any time in my life. I sat and listened to Michael tonight.

And so many things pops up that you say, I've got to deal with this. You see, it's hard for me to get desperate because I'd rather you think of me as successful. Desperation.

Whatever God has to pull out or inject to bring us to desperation will be revival, the beginning. And the demand. Look at the demand.

The demand on her is this. She's got to pay the debt. She had to be a Baptist preacher because she's in debt.

Broke. A demand. I've got to meet the need.

I've got to pay the debt. And it drove her to the place to hear from God. Thirdly, and I'm through.

Not only desperation and demand. By the way, let me inject a little more right there. Any demand God makes on you is not really a demand on you because He never said we could live it in the first place.

Any demand God makes on you is a demand on the Christ who lives in me that will bring me to brokenness, cast myself on His ability to where I can never take any glory and have to say, Dear God, I can't do it, but you said you would. I surrender. I yield.

Here's my heart. Here's my life. Whatever you have to do, I surrender all.

Ladies and gentlemen, that's the way it is with everybody. There's not a plan B. But God, you say, Brother Bill, I can't do God's promises. Hey, if you could, you'd be God.

That's why He got in you. So He could live through you what you can't live. Anybody can live Baptist life, but only Christians can live Christian life.

And any demand God makes on you, people say to me, Well, I just can't overcome that. No, you can't. But Jesus, the Overcomer, is in you, and if you'll let Him have it, He'll overcome it through you, and you'll never take any glory because you didn't do it.

It was the power of God and the ability of God that brought you out. That way there's no strutting, there's no spirituality, there's no big shots, there's no special people. It's just all of us abandoned to a holy God, letting Him be God.

Amen. Then last is only a desperation and a demand, but there's a great deliverance. He said, Go borrow vessels, empty vessels.

Do you realize that the reason why God can't fill most of us is we're too full of ourselves? Boy, some of you haven't smiled since I started. Why? Self is just as rotten as sin. Self.

Me. My. Mine.

Look what I've done. Look what I can do. God'll pass you by like a freight train passing a tram.

God will never bow to my self-love. God will never allow me to take any glory for anything in my life. That's from Him.

He's a jealous God. He'll only, only give me His power if He gets all the glory. Amen.

All right. So, bring empty vessels. And they brought, he said, don't bring a few.

Why? Because God's fixing to get on this situation. We need a lot of, brought empty vessels. Got in a room and shut the door.

And I don't know what happened except that pot of oil, she started pouring out and it just came with a oil line from glory. A pipeline. Not, Valdez wasn't the first one.

God sent one. Excuse me while I have a spell. Amen.

You know why some of you lost your joy? You know why there's no thrill in your life? There hasn't been a divine manifestation of God in power and glory on you in so long. You've got every program. You've memorized every program.

You know everything to do. And if Southern Baptists come up with any more, I'm going to die. Amen.

We don't need another program. We need death to self, alive to God. Resurrected power, fill me this hour.

Pour through me your life, your glory, your power. Make me your man to where I can give you all the glory. Amen.

You say, boy, what are you preaching? What he did to me while he preached. I heard him. I don't know what went on in that room, but all of a sudden the pipeline started and they filled every vessel, empty vessel.

Now, why can't God fill us? We need to bottom out. The tosure, tosure. And those old preachers called it bottoming out.

We've got to bottom out. We've got that thing stopped up and it just... The filling of the Holy Spirit is not filling up a glass. That's not what it's like.

The filling of the Holy Spirit is knocking the bottom out of the glass and putting it in the river. You know why some of you are so stagnant? Well, Lord, that's the same bottom you've had in that glass. You got filled once, got half full, and now you've got tadpoles.

I mean, it's literally sad. You've got spiritual tadpoles. And you're wondering, why don't I do things for God? Because God can't knock the bottom out.

They called it bottoming out. I want to be like that to keep the bottom knocked out. And when I hear a man of God preach like Brother Michael preached tonight, I didn't know what I was going to say.

And I walked to my wife to the elevator and said, Mama, pray. I don't know what I'm going to do. I'm desperate.

I'm desperate. And all I know I said to you tonight is what was fresh in my heart that God said to me in the message while ago and the music. You say, fill my cup, Lord.

No. No. Knock the bottom out.

Get in the river. Don't be stale. Get a fresh touch this way.

Amen. More I'd like to say, but God said quit, and I'm through. Father.

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