

Revive Us Again

by Brad Whitt

This sermon focuses on the biblical doctrine of revival, addressing common misconceptions and cultural influences on the true meaning of revival. It emphasizes the need for personal repentance, prayer, and holiness as key components of revival, highlighting the scriptural picture of revival using Ezekiel 37 as an illustration. The purpose of revival is to bring joy in the Lord, restore God's glory, and lead to a renewed spiritual walk and impact on the community.

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Scripture: Psalms 85:6, Acts 2:2, Hosea 6:3, Psalms 85:6, 2 Chronicles 7:14

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Description

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Transcript

You're there in Psalm 85, the middle of your Bible, Psalm 85 and verse number 6. As I mentioned a moment ago, this morning we're going to begin a simple, really short, but what I'm praying is going to be a significant series of studies on what you might refer to as the biblical doctrine of revival. And I know that when I mention the word revival that today there are a lot of different connotations and even misconceptions about what that really and truly is, especially here in the South. There are cultural connotations and there are traditional connotations and there are even social connotations that sometimes can get in the way with us understanding what a real true biblical revival is.

It's kind of like the old lady I heard about one time who was standing there at the ticket agent trying to get a seat on an airplane and she told the ticket agent, she said, I don't want a window seat. And the ticket agent was just kind of caught off guard by that because everybody wants a window seat. And she said, well why wouldn't you want a window seat? She said, because I don't want my hair to get messed up.

And there are a lot of people today in the church that are kind of like that lady being confused or having a misconception about what it means to sit by a window. There are people in the church today who misunderstand the biblical concept of revival, what it is and why it is, and then how it comes about. And so

this morning we're gonna be learning what real revival is.

Next week we're gonna be learning what are those things that hinder revival in our life. And then lastly we're gonna see what real revival looks like, what happens when Jesus shows up. Because a lot of times people, especially here in the South, if you were raised in that real traditional country church, can I see your hands, especially if you were raised in one of those ones where you had a spring revival and a fall revival, remember? And we would put out the signs on the side of the road and we would put placards in the windows and we would have flyers printed up and we're gonna say revival is every year the third week in November.

We just knew God showed up the third week in November every single year because we called it revival. No, that's not what revival is. Revival is not people taking laps around the room.

Revival is not people walking on tops of the of the pews. Revival is not people acting like dogs and those sorts of things. Revival is when Jesus shows up.

And even though we're not gonna spend a whole lot of time here this morning, let me just encourage you to be a part of every single one of these studies because I really do believe that they're gonna be a real encouragement to your heart. They're gonna be a a real help in your walk with the Lord. And maybe, just maybe, you might be the person and this might be the place where God chooses to show up and show out.

When you think about revival, there's probably not a greater authority, if you will, in modern times than a man by the name of Dr. J. Edwin Orr. J. Edwin Orr is considered to be the greatest authority on revival, really, in the modern day. And Dr. Orr was preaching and teaching a series of lectures over at the Columbia Bible College and after, on revival, and after one of the lectures there was a young college student that walked up and he asked Dr. Orr, he said, Dr. Orr, besides praying for revival, what can I do to help bring it about? And he didn't even hesitate.

He looked back at that young man. He said, you can let it begin with you. You know, we used to sing a song like that, right? Lord, send a revival.

Lord, send a revival. Lord, send a revival and let it begin in me. You know, a generation ago, those who longed for revival and lived to see revival in their time, that little slogan like that, that they had, a motto, if you will, and it hadn't been developed by a team of marketers.

It certainly hadn't been put together and designed to be packaged neatly on t-shirts and hats and on wristbands, those sorts of things. No, it was just a simple, straightforward little model that said this right here, revival in our time. Revival in our time.

Because you see, they had heard and they had read about how God had moved before and the amazing transformation that his manifest presence had had on cities and communities and counties and even entire nations. And so they pleaded and they prayed for God to send revival to their generation. And as they cried out and as they prayed for revival, they were simply echoing what the psalmist says here in Psalm 85 verse 6. As he penned these words, this powerful personal prayer, watch what he says, will you not revive us again that your people may rejoice in you.

That really is an amazing verse, right? Because in that one little verse, we have the author of revival and we have the action of revival and we even have the aim of revival. Now again, the word revival, people

misunderstand it. They really don't understand what revival is.

And so let me just kind of help you understand. It comes right, it's found right there in the word. The word revival literally means to renew, to restore, to repair, to refresh, literally re-life or life again.

And it's talking about what God does supernaturally in the lives of believers. This is not evangelism for the saint or rather for the sinner. This is not evangelism for the sinner, but rather this is empowerment and encouragement for the saint.

Paul Rees, well-known Bible Conference preacher from Canada, he wrote this. He said, revival and evangelism, although closely linked, are not to be confused. Revival is an experience in the church.

Evangelism is an expression of the church. So I've got a buddy of mine by the name of Bradley Graves. He pastors out in Oklahoma.

And about a week and a half, two weeks ago, he and another friend of mine named Malachi O'Brien. I love Malachi. Malachi's a squirrely little dude.

Today he just ran his 150th consecutive days of marathons. He's run a marathon a day for over 150 days. I told you he's squirrely.

I love Malachi. And so Malachi and Bradley decided to go to Asbury. We've been hearing a lot about Asbury.

They want to see, is it real? Is it genuine? What can they tell by being there? And so they went there and they came out of it. And we were talking back and forth on text. And Bradley Graves made an amazing statement and it's absolutely true.

And don't you think about this. He said revival is the work that God does for and in the church. Evangelism is the work that the church does for God.

That's a great way of understanding the difference between revival and evangelism. Dr. Stephen Oldford. I love Dr. Oldford.

And I love my time getting to be around him there at the Oldford Institute when I was first starting my first doctorate. And Dr. Oldford had that heavy British accent. And Dr. Oldford, he wrote a little classic book called The Heartcry for Revival.

And he wrote that the term revival is one which is grossly misunderstood. In many quarters today, primarily in the United States, it is employed to describe evangelistic meetings. Now while the salvation of sinners and the restoration of backsliders are both byproducts of revival, these spiritual experiences cannot be said to define revival.

So what is revival? You've heard a lot about it lately. You've been watching it online. Tucker Carlson had an episode on it.

It's been on Fox News, so you know it's got to be real, right? Just kidding. And so what is revival? Well, I've got a definition for you. I want you to look up here.

So this is the definition. As far as I know, this is mine. I went back and checked it last night and some dude had lifted like 95% of one of my sermons and posted it as his.

But I'm not bitter about it, okay? As long as the truth being preached, I'm fine with that. But I want you to look right here. Don't you see what this is? It's a pretty good definition of revival.

Watch what it is. So revival is the sovereign, that means it's all of God. Revival is the sovereign supernatural, which means you can't market it, you can't make it up.

The sovereign supernatural movement of God among His people, so it's for Christians, that comes as a direct result of repentance and prayer and holiness. It results in a fresh Christian walk in believers and the drawing of the lost of Christ. So we're going to leave that up there for just a second in case you want to write it down.

But it's a pretty good definition, if I do say so myself, of what revival is and what revival does. Now sometimes it is referred to as spiritual awakening. Sometimes it's called spiritual renewal.

Other times it's referred to as the outpouring of the Spirit of God. But the simplest, most straightforward, time-honored term is simply revival. And that's what we're gonna be looking at and learning about over the next few weeks.

So if you're taking notes here this morning, just jot down a few little simple things. Number one, as we're taking some notes and learning about what revival is and what revival does and why do we need revival, number one, notice the special prompting for revival here in Psalm 85, because we need to ask ourselves the question, why do we need revival? Why are we even talking about this this morning other than the fact that there seems to be little pockets of revival breaking out around our nation? Well look there at the word the psalmist uses. If you look at the word the psalmist uses, you're going to get just a little bit of a hint.

He says, will you not revive us again? So revive, re-life, life again. In other words, something has happened, something's gone wrong, something has happened in the life of the believer, something has happened in the life of the church, something has happened in the walk and the witness of those of us who have received the gift of eternal life. Now the question that everybody always wants to ask and have answered is, does this mean that we've lost our salvation? Look right here.

No, you cannot lose your salvation. Once a person is really, truly, genuinely, actually saved, you can never become unsafe. That's why it's called eternal life.

It is forever. It is eternal. So a Christian can never lose their salvation, but the Bible does teach that a Christian can lose the joy of their salvation, or the power, or the vitality in their salvation.

For example, remember David, Bathsheba? He sinned with Bathsheba. He did what he shouldn't have done, and then on top of that he had her husband Uriah murdered. And this is a guy who's a man after God's own heart, right? And then David, as a result of all of that, he cries out, Oh God, restore to me the joy of your salvation.

He didn't say restore my salvation. He said restore to me the joy of your salvation. He hadn't lost his salvation.

He lost the joy. And as a result, now there was a chore, now it was a challenge to even live the Christian life. And that's kind of where we are today.

We no longer pray like we should, if we're being honest. We no longer live like we should. We certainly no longer witness like we should.

We are not being sought and light in a dark and corrupt world. And as a result, we see all the degradation, all the depravity, all the degeneration in our community, in our nation. Something has to take place.

If you looked up there at the beginning of Psalm 85, that very first verse, he says, Lord, you've been favorable to your land. You've brought back the captivity of Jacob. You've forgiven the iniquity of your people.

You have conquered all their sin. Selah. In other words, what do you think about that? You have taken away all of your wrath.

You have turned from the fierceness of your anger. So that's salvation. They've been forgiven.

They've been set free. They're no longer at war with God. But now watch this.

Something happens in between these two verses. Verse 4, Restore us, O God, of our salvation. So he's still the God of their salvation.

Restore us, O God, of our salvation and cause your anger toward us to cease. Will you be angry with us forever? Will you prolong your anger to all generations? Now, time out. Wait a minute.

Time out. Wait a minute. He just wrote in one verse that God's anger had been turned away, and in the next verse, he's praying for God's anger to cease and even asking that it not proceed to be passed down upon the generations.

So what's going on here? Well, to put it in Bible terms, they've left their first love. They've left their first love. They've gotten cold and comfortable in their salvation.

They've gotten cold and comfortable in their walk with the Lord, and as a result, they've drifted into sin and rebellion. And so in order to make them realize what's going on and what they had done, God begins to judge them. In West Tennessee, we would say God takes them to the woodshed.

Anybody here raised in a family that believed and practiced corporal punishment? Can I see your hands? In other words, you got spanked when you were growing up. Can I see your hands? My daddy could jerk a belt so fast, it's like starting a weed eater. And so you get disciplined.

That's what God is saying. God is gonna judge them. In other words, this is always what perceives in prompts of moving of the Spirit of God.

This is what happens before a real revival breaks out. In the church, there is coldness and apathy. In the culture, there is corruption and anarchy, and into that setting, in direct response to the prayers and petitions of usually a small handful of believers, a small group, that then begins to pray and ask God to move.

And God begins to stir in that little group, and they begin to tell others within the church, and God begins to stir and strengthen them. And then they begin to tell others outside of church, and God begins to save and sanctify them. And it grows and spreads and moves and manifests itself until the entire area is embraced with the power and the presence of God.

And you say, Pastor, I don't know. Pastor, I just don't know. I think the days are too dark.

I think we're too far gone in order for God to do anything like that today. Look right here. It's on the darkest night that you need a flashlight.

It's on the darkest night that you need a flashlight. D.M. Patton said, it is a foolish blunder to suppose that any age can be too evil for revival. And so the prompting for revival is a sin-soaked society and a cold, complacent, comfortable, even carnal church.

Let me ask you a question. Do you think that we're living in a sinful society? Do you think that we're living in a wicked world? We got people who don't even know what a woman is. Good Lord.

I mean, if they just lived on a farm, they would know the difference between boys and girls. I mean, you can go on—I mean, any farm boy knows the difference between boys and girls. I mean, you learn that really, really quickly.

We live in a sinful society. We live in a wicked world. And so, let me get a little more personal.

Do you think that we as a church and as individual believers have gotten a little comfortable, a little complacent, a little cold, maybe even a little carnal? I can pray when I want to pray, and I can watch what I want to watch, and I can go where I want to go, and I can drink what I want to drink, and I can do what I want to do. If I want to witness, I'll witness. If I want to tithe, I'll tithe.

If I want to come to church, I'll come to church when I want to come to church and preach. You can't say nothing to me about it, or I'll get mad at you, and I'll go somewhere else where they won't say anything to me about it. Those things are not opportunities for the Christian.

They're obligations. Reading your Bible, and praying, and witnessing, and giving, and serving, and attending, and worshiping—those are the SOP. Those are the standard operating procedures for a Christian.

We've got far too many Christians today who are playing church, not being the church. And there may be those of you here this morning, and you've gotten a little cold and comfortable in your Christianity. You've gotten complacent.

Maybe you've got a little bit carnal, and you've fallen into sin, and as a result of that, you've severed your fellowship with God, and you're not watching what you ought to watch, and you're not going where you want to go, and you're not doing what you ought to do. And as a result of that, when you go to bed at night, and you lay your head on your pillow, there is no joy. There's no peace in your life.

There's no joy in your heart. And as a result of that, when you pray, your prayers feel like boulders, and heaven seems as hard as concrete. What you need more than anything else is repentance and revival.

Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones, the good doctor, as they called him, he said, I am profoundly convinced that the greatest need in the world today is a real heaven-sent revival in the church. And again, this isn't people

acting crazy. It's simply God showing up.

So you've got this special prompting for the revival. Then number two, you have the scriptural picture of revival. Look back in verse 6. He says, will you not revive us again? And as you study your Bible, what you're going to notice is that there are many pictures and illustrations that God uses to describe revival or spiritual awakening.

Sometimes it's referred to as fire, like in Acts chapter 2 verse 3. Sometimes it's referred to as a fresh wind, Acts 2 verse 2. Sometimes it's described as refreshing rain. Hosea 6 verse 3 says, he will come to us like the rain, like the latter and former rain, to the earth. And those are great illustrations.

I love them. But my favorite, and I really think the best illustration in all the Bible about what God does in revival, is found in Ezekiel 37. And you don't have to turn there, because you know the story.

In Ezekiel 37, you've got the prophet who's standing before a valley that is full of dusty dry bones. And I bet we could all sing that little song. I bet we could.

Matter of fact, we're going to. I bet we could all sing that little song. It goes something like this, them bones, them bones, them dry bones, them bones, them bones, them dry bones, them bones, them bones, them dry bones.

Now hear the word of the Lord, the toe bones connected to the foot bone. You're not singing. The toe bones connected to the foot bone, the toe bones connected to the foot bone.

Now hear the word of the Lord. And it goes up from there. The toe bones connected to the foot bone, the foot bones connected to the ankle bones, connected to the shin bone, the shin bones connected to the knee bone, the knee bones connected to the thigh bone, the thigh bones connected to the hip bone, the hip bones connected to the back bone, the back Connected to the neck bone the neck bones connected to the Yeah, y'all didn't get that too good.

Did you? But them bones them bones gonna walk around them bones them bones gonna walk around them bones them bones gonna Walk around and guess what they did The Lord the Lord Arranged it the prophet Proclaimed it and all of a sudden them old bones began to rustle and rattle and come back together and as they did that they began to come back together and the sinews began to stretch out and muscles began to build up and the skin began to Stretch out and cover all those dried dusty dead bones, but there's still a problem because Ezekiel is standing there and there's this bunch of bones that have been brought back together They're standing up. But all he has now is a bunch of bodies standing there. No doubt in formation, but they're dead No life in them They had eyes but they could not see they had hands but they couldn't fight they had feet but they couldn't walk and by the way That's a pretty apt description of the modern-day church Organized formalized pasteurized but no life No breath No spirit And so in verse 9 I can tell y'all really like that Was my singing that bad And so the Lord said to Ezekiel prophesied to the breath prophesies on a man and say to the breath Thus says the Lord God come from the four winds Oh breath and breathe on these slain that they may live so I prophesied as he commanded me and breath came in to them and they lived and stood up on their feet an Exceedingly great army the psalmist put it this way all the way through the book.

He says revive us Oh Lord, will you not revive us again? Revive me in your way Revive me according to your loving-kindness Revive me according to your justice revive me according to your judgment. Revive

me according to your Revive me O Lord for your name's sake and so it is personal. It's intimate.

This is the Christian This is the church crying out for God to bring them together and bind them together and to breathe a friend's life into them again So that they can be the church militant and not the church impotent for his name's sake She got the scriptural picture in the special prompting then lastly There's a special purpose of revival look back one last time somebody somebody five he tells there's no uncertain terms What the purpose of revival is he says in verse 6 That your people may rejoice in you Show us your mercy Lord and grant us your salvation. I will hear what what God the Lord will speak For he will speak peace to his people and to his Saints But let them not turn back to follow it's a word of warning let them not turn back to following Surely his salvation is near to those who fear him that glory may dwell in our land Mercy and truth have met together righteousness and peace have kissed truth shall spring out of the earth and righteousness We shall look down from heaven. Yes, Lord Let's just Lord will give what is good and our land will yield its increase Righteousness will go before him and shall make his footsteps our pathway.

That is The purpose of revival It's not the excesses that you see. I Mean even in some of our Baptist subculture, it's not the excess that's not revival Revival he says here He says that your people may rejoice in you that your glory may dwell in our land So if you're like me the last several weeks, I mean you got my attention All of a sudden you got a Wednesday Morning chapel service at a Christian University Anybody here go to a Christian University that you had chapel that you had to go to require Can I see your hands anybody so, you know as well as I do They not that day black came from Tennessee, right All those degrees didn't help me on that one Those are not normally spiritual things you have to show up check in or you'll fail And it on a Wednesday morning just in a regular service Evidently God just showed up And then you hear reports Samford University Other universe Cedarville up in Ohio Years ago when it happened the first not the first time but the last time 1970s what 73 75 I think at Asbury It started at Asbury But the greatest beneficiaries if you will quote-unquote of that revival were Southern Baptist because it sat down on the campus at Southwestern Seminary And you had a generation of pastors that were sent out as a result of that and so if you're like me, I love studying revivals and so the revivals of the 20th century revivals of the 19th century going back into the 1800s and 1700s you've got The first and second great awakenings you heard Jonathan Edwards. You're familiar with that name You get the haystack revival the Sandy Creek revival, but there's there's one that maybe you hadn't heard of It's called the Shantung revival and it took place in northern China 1930s Charlie Culpepper Who ended up being a professor at MidAmerica, dr.

Charlie Culpepper, dr. Culpepper served In that area of China for something like 42 years Served alongside miss Bertha Smith from Calpin, South Carolina and you say well what kind of revival was it? Well, he described it as Revival that was marked by prayer repentance confession Are you Baptist holding on to your seat? Healing Renewing life in the churches and boldness and witnessing. Dr. Culpepper.

Thanks. I'll see his face in my mouth. Dr. Culpepper He said they were having a prayer meeting one night during that revival and they were meeting with dr Culpepper's wife who had had some issue with her eyes for a year I don't think she was totally blind but but an issue with her sight with her eyes And he said in the middle of all that God touched her eyes and healed her He said well, I just don't know whether God still does that or not.

Well, he ain't gonna do it in your life then He still Jehovah Rapha the Lord who healed by the way, but then he wrote this He said it was though God had walked into the room Everybody prayed aloud and We felt that heaven had come down how about you but man, I I won't revival in our time I'd love for revival to

break out right here this morning I mean where people are praying and confessing their sins are getting right with God. They're getting right with each other They're energized by the Spirit of God. They're out witnessing and sharing the goodness the gospel people are being saved You say that's right preacher.

That's right. I won't I won't God to do that Well, you know, the only thing stand between you and revival is you it's just you Lord send revival And let it begin in me I Think it was Gypsy Smith Romania Gypsy Smith. I Think it was Gypsy Smith.

I think it's that's right So he was an evangelist Served in Romania for many years. I think it was Gypsy Smith who said They was praying for revival and he went into his room he took a piece of chalk and And he drew a circle on the floor and then he stood in the middle of the circle and he prayed for God to send revival To the circle you can experience revival in your life. If you'll just get right with God.

Did you know that? and then when a group of folks get right with God and then They begin to pray and confess and they begin to say it begins to spread. It's got like wildfire And so what I want to do this morning number one if you're here this morning and you've never been saved You don't need to be revived. You need to be vibed You need to be saved and you can be saved like that grown man was in the first service You can just simply repent of your sins Surrender your life to Jesus Ask him to forgive you of your sin and he will do just that give you the greatest gift You could ever receive the gift of eternal life And oh, it's eternal

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