

Steps to Revival

by Brian Brodersen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of acknowledging our own sin, repenting from our wicked ways, and seeking complete devotion to God in order to experience revival.

Duration: 45:30

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 7:14, Psalm 119:11, Psalm 119:105, Matthew 6:33, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Hebrews 4:12, James 1:22

Topics: "Revival", "Repentance"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes that the message of revival is directed specifically to the church of God. The four steps to revival, according to the passage in 2 Chronicles 7:14, are acknowledgement of sin, repentance from sin, complete devotion, and prayer. The first step is for believers to humble themselves and acknowledge their own sin. The preacher also highlights the importance of prioritizing the eternal Word of God over worldly distractions like television.

Transcript

We come today to what could be called the sequel to our previous message on revival. In our last study, we looked at the possibility of judgment that we as a people seem to be facing, but we also considered that even though we deserve judgment, our God delights in mercy, and therefore the possibility exists that God could, even at this late hour, revive the church and awaken many in this world to their need to salvation. We saw that both the character of God, He being reluctant to judge and anxious to show mercy, and history, particularly that of Israel and our own nation, give us a basis to hope for the possibility of revival and awakening in the future.

Today I want to consider the steps that we as Christians must take if we're to have any hope that there could be brighter days in the future for our country and for the world at large. I'd like to draw our text from a familiar passage, 2 Chronicles 7, verse 14. In this particular text, God Himself gives us what I believe could be called the steps to revival.

God shows us what we are to do when conditions around us develop like they've developed at the time in which we're living. And so this is what the Lord said, verse 14, if my people, which 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. This is probably one of the most misapplied texts in all the Bible.

I have on several occasions heard people apply this text to the country at large, to the United States, implying that we as a country are the people of God and we need to turn back to Him and so forth. That isn't a totally accurate understanding of the passage. You see, this message was originally given to Israel.

Israel was what you call a theocracy. A theocracy is a kingdom under the direct rule of God. Now, since the time of Israel's theocracy, there has never been another theocracy.

And even though the United States of America and other countries have had a Christian influence in their government, and in our case, in the establishing of our nation, yet we could never see ourselves or say accurately that we are a Christian nation. The theocracy in the world today is the church. God began a new work after he set aside Israel because of their unbelief and he raised up a new nation, not a particular geographical or ethnic nation, but a nation called the church that spread throughout the whole world and made up of a variety of different people.

But we are that holy nation. We, the church, are God's people. And so this is a message that's really directed not to any nation at large, but to the church of God, the church of Jesus Christ.

This is a message for us. And as I said, I believe that this is the road to revival. These are the steps.

If we want to see a fresh work of God in our midst and an overflow of that into our society, we have got to take these steps ourselves. It begins with us. There are four steps to revival.

According to this passage, they are number one, acknowledgement of sin. Secondly, repentance from sin. Thirdly, complete devotion and fourthly, prayer.

So we want to look at each one of these points here today. First of all, the acknowledgement of sin. If my people will humble themselves, that's really what the Lord is getting at here when he talks about humbling ourselves.

He's talking about us acknowledging ourselves, our sin. You know, there is a human tendency, and I don't think that we as Christians are completely free from it. It's the tendency to point the finger at other people.

It's the tendency to blame others for the circumstances that we find ourselves in. And quite often when we are assessing the situation, we are quick to point out all of the different people that are to blame. We hear so often, oh, it's the government.

It's the fault of our government. They've departed from God and brought in all of these policies that are anti God, and they're the ones that are responsible for the condition of the country. I would say that that is true to a certain extent.

Others say, well, it's the liberal media. It's their constant barraging of liberal ideas through the newspapers and through the news programs and all of that. That's why we're in the state we're in.

It's that liberal influence coming from the media. I would agree that they have contributed to the problem. And then sometimes we hear it's Hollywood.

Hollywood is the culprit. They're the ones that are bringing down the country. They're the ones that are polluting the world.

I would agree again that they have made a major contribution to the problem. But here's what we need to realize. We are not ourselves without culpability.

We have a part as well. We have failed. We have not been the people that we should be, have we? And I have to look at myself honestly and say, you know, I haven't been the godly man in every case that I ought to be.

I haven't really sought the Lord with all my heart. I haven't devoted myself totally and completely to seeking him in prayer and those kinds of things. I have to recognize that I'm guilty as well.

And that's where it all begins. God said, if my people will humble themselves, there is that tendency to overlook our own problems. The Laodicean church was addressed by Jesus.

He reiterated their own evaluation of themselves. And then he told them what his perspective on their situation was. He said, because you say, I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked.

I will spew you out of my mouth. Do you see how easy it is for us to have a view of ourselves that's not totally accurate? We can easily deceive ourselves. We can easily fool ourselves into thinking that everything's OK.

I don't have any problems. It's their problem. I think of David, David, who had sinned grievously, who had committed the horrific sin of adultery and then compounded it by having the husband of the woman Bathsheba put on the front lines in battle so he would die.

David had sinned so horribly, but yet he was going about his business as king. He was going about his business as the spiritual leader of Israel and, you know, just suppressing that conviction and trying to pretend like nothing was wrong in his life. And then Nathan, the prophet, comes to him with a parable.

David didn't know it was a parable at the time. He was thinking that the story that Nathan was telling was a story of an actual occurrence in his kingdom. And Nathan's telling the story about a great injustice that's taken place in David's kingdom where this wealthy man, he comes and he takes advantage of a poorer person.

And and all of this, as David's listening, he becomes enraged. He can't believe that such injustice would go on in his kingdom. And he becomes filled with anger and he says, that man shall die.

And Nathan turned to him and he said, David, you are the man. You see, he was blind to his own state. He was quick to point the finger.

He was quick to pronounce a judgment, but he's blind to his own condition. Of course, we know David was a true man of God. And when the message came, he humbled himself at that instant.

He said, I have sinned. But that's just that that tendency seen there in David, that we all have that tendency to point the finger somewhere else. I think of Isaiah the prophet in the early stages of his ministry.

He went about pronouncing woe upon the nation. And it's interesting to read the first five chapters of Isaiah and to find how many times he pronounces a judgment upon the nation. He says, woe unto the wicked.

Woe unto those who rise early to follow after strong drink. Woe unto those who draw iniquity with cords of deceit. Woe to those who call evil good and good evil.

Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes. And there Isaiah is going throughout the kingdom and he's pronouncing these judgments. He's pronouncing woe on the sinners in the land.

And then we come to the sixth chapter and an interesting thing happens. We read this in the year that King Uzziah died, Isaiah said, I saw the Lord. He was sitting up on the throne.

He was high and lifted up. And the train of his robe filled the temple with glory. And the cherubim were crying, holy, holy, holy.

And then Isaiah said, woe is me. You see, he was quick to pronounce woe on everybody else, but he hadn't included himself. But then he sees the Lord.

And if we can't see our own fault and the contribution that we've made to the problem, then it's probably, probably because we haven't seen the Lord. We haven't had a clear picture of him because the moment we see him like Isaiah, we must cry out as well. Woe is me.

I am undone. I am a man of unclean lips. You see, we are responsible partially for the problem.

And that's where we must start. We must start with ourselves. We look out there and I think, you know, sometimes it's ironic, you know, that sometimes from our pulpits, we're, you know, we're preaching to those people out there who aren't listening.

They don't hear what we're saying. We're telling them that they need to quit doing this and they need to get right. But we've got to start with ourselves.

And that's who the message is to here. If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves. Now, just one more illustration here.

I think of Daniel. Now, if there's anybody in the Bible that you could say was not to be implicated in the sins of the people, it would be Daniel. He's just an extremely godly man.

And as you read the account of his life, it's hard to find any inconsistency in him. As a matter of fact, my oldest son, when he was younger, he was reading through the life of Daniel and he came to me and he said, he said, dad, I know the Bible says all of sin, but what about Daniel? And I said, you know, it doesn't appear that he did. Does it? But of course he did.

But yet, you know, he, he was an upright man. He was a man of tremendous integrity and faith and commitment to God. But even Daniel, a man like that, as he prayed, he said, Lord, we have sinned.

He didn't say, Lord, they have sinned, get them. He said, Lord, we have sinned. And that's where we must start today with our own sins, with our own shortcomings, with the fact that we have not really lived up to the call of God upon our lives.

That's where we've got to start. That's where it all begins. If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves, that they will acknowledge their sin and we need to come to God today and we need to say honestly, Lord, search me.

You see, because we can deceive ourselves, we can think that we're doing just great. That's why David in Psalm 139, as he finishes up the Psalm, and as he's talking about that perfect hatred toward the ungodly, he says, search me, oh God. He says, I'm pronouncing judgment upon them and rightfully so.

But what about myself? Search me, oh God, know my heart. And that's where we need to be at today. Search me.

And I'm certain as we ask God to do that, we will find areas in our life that are out of sync with what God is wanting to do and what he's called us to be. And that's where we need to take the next step that's laid out for us here. And that's the step of repentance.

If my people who are called by my name will turn from their wicked ways. You see, it's not good enough to merely acknowledge that we're sinning. We must turn away from our sins as well.

Now we're living in a time when sin is dominating the lives of so many Christians. Sin is rampant in the church today. It's out of control, not just the Catholic church.

They're getting all the publicity, but you know what? The evangelical church is full of sin as well. They could do reports and articles on the sexual immorality and infidelity in evangelical churches. It's something that's happened where we've just developed a high tolerance for sin today.

And there are many sins that are affecting the church, many sins that are affecting our church here. These are the prevalent sins in our culture today. Idolatry, sexual immorality, divorce, hatred, jealousy, selfish ambition, slander, gossip.

These are the things that you find unbelievably as relatively common in Christian churches today. Idolatry. Now you might say, wait a second, we don't have any statues around here.

I don't have any images that I bow down to. I don't burn incense before any image. What do you mean idolatry? Well, you see, idolatry has a number of manifestations.

Bowing down to images is just one of them. Idolatry is a matter of the heart. A person becomes idolatrous when they allow something to take the primary place in their life.

As Pastor Chuck has said many times, the master passion of your life becomes your God. If the Lord God of the Bible is your master passion, then you're right where you ought to be. But if something else is your master passion, if something else has taken over and is driving you, then you are caught up in idolatry.

Three manifestations of idolatry that are common around us today are number one, the love of self, number two, the love of things, and number three, the love of pleasure. Many, many Christian people are caught up in one or all three of these things, the love of self, the attitude that says it's all about me. And maybe you don't come out and verbalize it because you know that would bring a lightning bolt up on your head.

But yet that's the way you really conduct your life. It's all about me. Everything revolves around you and what you want and your agenda.

And basically, you are on the throne of your life. And for you to utter the words, Lord Jesus, it's a contradiction. Because you're calling him Lord, but you're not doing at all what he says you're doing your own thing.

Then there's the love of things. I want this. I want that.

I've got to get this. And boy, living in an affluent culture, how we can easily get caught up in this. The love of things and things come in and they take the place and we don't have time to devote ourselves entirely to God because we've got to devote ourselves to our three jobs so we can get more things.

That's idolatry. Materialism is idolatry. We don't talk about materialism too much, sort of a taboo subject.

Don't want to offend the rich. It's a reality, idolatry, loving things, living for things, loving pleasure. As long as it feels good, that's all that matters.

A lot of people in the church conduct themselves by that philosophy, indicating that they're involved in the love of pleasure, idolatry. It feels good to me. It doesn't matter.

Nothing else matters as long as it feels good to me. And then, of course, we have the issue of sexual immorality rampant in the church today. Adultery is becoming so commonplace in the Christian church.

It's not only happening with people in the congregation. Quite often, it's the people in the pulpit that are involved in adulterous relationships. And we've lost the understanding of the seriousness of the sin of adultery.

Remember, under the Old Testament, it was a capital crime punishable by death. And God has not changed his attitude on adultery at all today. And yet we find that it's tolerated in the church.

It's just swept under the carpet so often. We see many times people in ministry, as I said, falling into the sin. And the most important thing, the big issue is let's try to get them back into ministry as quick as we can.

That's the wrong approach. This is a grievous sin before God. And then we have the issue of fornication.

The difference between the two is the difference between being married and unmarried. Fornication is sexual activity outside of the marriage relationship. And in our churches today, we have much of this going on, people involved with one another sexually, but not committed to one another in the marriage relationship.

And many times this is just being overlooked, swept under the carpet. And we're living in such a distorted time spiritually that we've even relegated these kinds of things now to psychological disorders. And you read today about the sex addicts.

They've gone off to the Christian psychologist who told them, you know, you're not really responsible for the adultery or the fornication. You are a sex addict and you can't, you know, be freed from that. That's a lifelong addiction and we'll just, you know, help you through therapy and medication.

And, you know, but you've got to live with this addiction. No, this is just sin deeply rooted in our lives. And then, of course, there's the plague of pornography contributing to the fornication and the adultery, no doubt the plague of pornography, how prevalent it is.

Again, we have to take a look at ourselves. We're always pointing all those people in the pornography industry. Yeah.

Well, who's buying the stuff from them? Who's surfing the web and going to those sites? So often it's people in the church, it's people sometimes in leadership in the church. These are sins that are dominating our lives as Christians today. And there are things that God himself does not tolerate.

And then we come to the great and grievous sin of divorce. Do we remember that divorce is a sin? I don't know that we remember that today. People just so easily step into it.

And it's almost one of those kinds of things that we're afraid to even talk about in the context of sin today. And I think in some cases, some preachers are afraid to mention divorce from the pulpit as a sin for fear that half their church will leave. But listen, when I'm talking about divorce and divorce is a sin, but I want to clarify what I'm talking about.

There are certain circumstances under which divorce is allowed by God. And I don't want anybody to get the wrong impression or to think that you're being condemned when you're not guilty. Maybe you've been divorced.

But if you were divorced before you became a Christian, the Bible says, if anyone is in Christ, they are a new creation. So we're not talking about you. If you are divorced because your husband or your wife were unfaithful to you and that led to a divorce, we're not talking about you.

If you are divorced, say, as a woman, because you had to flee for your life because of the abuse of your husband, we're not talking about you. If you are divorced because you were married to an unbeliever and they decided to depart, we're not talking about you. This is who we're talking about.

We're talking about those today in the church who are coming up with things like, well, you know, he doesn't really meet my needs anymore. And because my needs aren't being met and, you know, my needs, I've prayed about it and the Lord has shown me that because my needs are not being met, that I can get out of this marriage. Do you know how many times we hear that in counseling sessions or we hear it from the man? Well, you know, she's not satisfying me anymore.

When I married her, she was thin and good looking and look, she's gained all this weight. And, you know, I, I just feel like God is releasing me from this. And, you know, as a matter of fact, as a matter of fact, I don't even know if it was ever God's will for us to get married.

I know it's been 25 years, but, you know, I've been thinking about that. I don't think it was God's will and God showing me is really this is the kind of stuff we hear. You wonder what we do all week, we sit behind desks listening to this kind of stuff.

So if there's a little cynicism in the pulpit, you can understand why sometimes. But this, this is the kind of stuff I'm talking about. This stuff should not be.

This should not be a woman came to me years ago and I knew her well, she was in ministry. I knew her husband. Well, she came, she said, I'm divorcing my husband.

I've been released. The Lord has freed me. I said, on what grounds adultery? I said, your husband hasn't committed adultery.

Nobody's thought about it. And the Lord's shown me that I'm free. No, I'm sorry.

The Lord has not shown you that that's your own desire leading you astray. We have to remember that divorce is a great sin. And it's a sin that needs to be repented of in the church.

If you're in a divorce process and you don't have a biblical basis, you better stop it. You need to stop that process and get right with God. God will heal your marriage.

But you've got to get right with him. And then we have many other sins that are very prevalent in the body. We have hatred toward others, other believers.

We hate them for some reason. We just carry around this animosity or we have jealousy. We see somebody who's all that, you know, disgusted because it's, you know, they've got something that I should have or something like that.

We've got the selfish ambition, people trying to climb the ladder to power. We've got slander and gossip. These are the kinds of things.

And this is what God said. If my people will turn from their wicked ways, you see, it's not enough to just acknowledge these things. We have got to stop it.

We've got to turn from it. And I think one thing that would help us is if we if we stopped and realized, you know, God hates this stuff and God is going to hold us accountable for these things. I think we've deceived ourselves into thinking that, hey, it's all grace.

You know, we're saved by grace. We don't have to worry about this. No, we need to consider this because God is going to bring everything into account.

And the New Testament tells us that one day we're going to stand before Christ and we're going to be judged for the things that we've done in the body, whether good or bad. Now, that's not a judgment to determine where we spend eternity, but it sounds to me like it's a serious judgment. We need to realize that.

So if there's going to be any change in our nation, it's got to begin in our churches. It's got to begin in our lives. We have got to humble ourselves and repent.

We've got to turn away from our wicked ways. And then thirdly, God said, if my people will seek my face now, this is a way of describing a hot pursuit of God, intense passion for him. Seeking God's faces is just a way of describing a person who is going after God.

You know, the Bible says regarding David, he was a man after God's heart. People say, well, how could that be? Look at how he messed up in life. Well, what that means is that David was a man in pursuit of God.

He did fail. Yes, but he did repent. And as he repented, he continued to pursue the Lord.

And that's what we're talking about. And I just want to say this, too, in regard to the sins, idolatry, the sexual immorality, the divorce, these things don't get the impression that you God's finished with you. If you're involved in these things, God will forgive you.

But you got to repent. You've got to confess. You've got to turn away from those things.

And there's plenty of mercy from God and compassion and willingness to heal and restore. And then God gives us those opportunities to pursue him. He calls us to seek his face.

And what we're talking about here is total devotion to the Lord, complete devotion. Now, we find God in the pages of Scripture. God is not stuck in the Bible, but this is the place where he primarily reveals himself to us.

And so in our devotion to God, in our seeking of his face, it means that we are going to be spending much of our time in the scriptures, reading them, meditating upon them. The Bible is to be the rallying point, the gathering point for the Christian church. And it's to be that gathering point for me as an individual.

If I'm seeking God's face, it's going to be manifest by the fact that the Bible is a priority in my life. There are millions and millions and millions of books that have been written. But there's only one book in the world that is the inspired, inerrant, authoritative word of God, and that's the Bible.

And we of all people in all of history are greatly privileged because we have Bibles. We have more Bibles than you could imagine. But what we have is brought us into an accountability.

Many years ago, a man wrote a book entitled Sodom had no Bibles. The implication is that if God judged Sodom without a Bible, what's he going to do for those countries that have access to the Bible freely? But God has blessed us extremely in giving us his word and allowing us the freedom to read it, to study it, to teach it, to proclaim it over the airwaves. A great privilege, but also a great responsibility comes with it.

And so when the Lord said, if they will seek my face, he's talking about people getting into his word and pursuing him and making that the passion and the priority of our lives individually. Now, we all have jobs, we all have a life, we all have to work. We're not talking about you just quit everything and go be a hermit somewhere.

We're not talking about joining a monastery. What we're talking about is just bringing the scriptures into every aspect of our lives and that our great passion and desire would center around the word of God. You know, in the early days of this work of God here at Calvary Chapel, one of the interesting marks was not just that people brought their Bibles to church, which we still do for the most part.

Some churches don't even do that anymore, but that people were found all throughout the community carrying their Bibles with them and reading them publicly and discussing them publicly. I believe that God wants to do something like that again. We are called to seek God's face, Bible reading and meditation individually, collectively Bible study and fellowship.

Now you say, OK, well, what are you telling us that for? Look, we're all here this morning. Great, I am so glad you're here. You're going to be here this week to all the different opportunities we have throughout the week.

You see, it's not just a Sunday thing, it's not just gathering on Sunday to get that fix for the week and then dragging yourself back in here from Sunday to Sunday. The person who is seeking God's face is taking advantage of every opportunity to gather around the word of God. And so we come together, this is a priority.

We come to Bible study and fellowship, not sitting home watching the idiot box, that mindless piece of electronics. You know, I just marvel at what people will take as a replacement for the eternal word of God.

I'm not saying you can never watch TV, but, you know, so many people, that's the priority.

That's life. Oh, I can't go to Bible study. This shows on, you know, it's not even real in the first place and it's filled with all kinds of vileness and corruption to just corrupt you.

Bible study and fellowship and praise and worship, you see, these are the things that these are the outward marks of a person who is seeking the face of God. We're seeking God's face. We want to know him better.

We want to understand him more. We want to not only know and understand him for our own benefit, but so we can benefit others, so we can help others, so we can answer their questions and steer them in the right direction. And so if my people will seek my face and then fourthly, if my people will pray, if my people will pray, prayer has got to be.

It has got to be the greatest of privileges, but at the same time, the most neglected. I mean, think about it, this prayer, this is access to God. Sometimes we think as we look around at the problems in our society, maybe we think, man, if I could just get to somebody at the top, if I could just, you know, talk to them and and tell them, hey, look, this is what we should do.

This is how we can straighten out that problem. But, you know, that rarely happens. And even if you get to them, they don't necessarily care what you have to say.

They don't respond. But you know what? We have the incredible privilege of Christians as going to of going to God. The the maker of everything, the sustainer of everything, the governor of the whole universe, and we can go to him and we can say, Lord, did you see that that's going on there? Lord, what do you think about that? Lord, what do you want to do about that? Lord, we should do something about that, shouldn't we? Yes, we should.

And then God gives us direction and he begins to work. That's a privilege we have. But tragically, we neglect that great privilege.

The prayer meeting is the most sparsely attended meeting at most churches today. But listen to what history tells us about the importance of prayer in regard to spiritual awakening in a little pamphlet written by Dr. J. Edwin Orr, entitled *The Role of Prayer in Spiritual Awakening*. He says this.

He says in September of 1857, a man of prayer started a prayer meeting in the upper room of the Dutch Reformed Church in Manhattan. In response to his advertisement, only six people out of a population of a million showed up. But the following week, there were 14 and then 23 when it was decided to meet every day for prayer.

By late winter, they were filling the Dutch Reformed Church, then the Methodist Church on John Street, then Trinity Episcopal Church on Broadway at Wall Street. In February and March of 1858, every church and public hall in downtown New York was filled. Horace Greely, the famous editor, sent a reporter with horse and buggy racing around the prayer meetings to see how many men were praying.

In one hour, he could get to only 12 meetings, but he counted 6,100 men attending. Then a landslide of prayer began, which overflowed to the churches in the evenings. People began to be converted.

Listen to this. Ten thousand a week in New York City alone. Ten thousand a week in New York City alone.

The movement spread throughout New England. Then the church bells or the church bells bringing people to prayer at eight in the morning, 12 noon, six in the evening. In one year, more than a million people were converted.

In 1904, a group of missionaries became deeply concerned that the church had not been established in that land in the way that they knew God long for it to be. Korea had been known as the hermit kingdom, literally folding her mountains about herself and warding off any infiltration of Western ideas or religions. Only in subtle ways, such as through medicine or schools, could the gospel be preached.

Consequently, there began noonday prayer meetings. Missionaries of every mission station in Korea, by common consent, knelt for one hour to pray for victory in that land. After a couple of months, a missionary at one of the stations spoke up.

We will call him an efficiency expert and we have plenty of them. He said, we have been praying for a long time, but I've seen nothing radical happen. I would suggest that to save time, we dispense of these noon meetings and pray privately at our own devotions for revival in Korea.

But another missionary gave a quick response. I believe God has not answered our prayers because we are not praying enough. I recommend we continue these new meetings and spend an hour in the evening as well.

The plan was adopted unanimously. Word got around to other mission stations and soon every mission group in Korea was spending two hours a day in prayer for revival in that land. In a matter of weeks, a lightning bolt of revival struck and like a rolling prairie fire went the length and breadth of Korea.

More than 50,000 converts were added to the church. And that incredible. But what has happened in the past, I think, is just.

A promise of what God will do in the future if we will take the steps to revival, if we will begin to pray. And I think about it for a moment with me. What if we decided ourselves as a church? What if we decided we're going to set aside an hour a day at some point to pray that God would pour out his spirit? And what if we said, OK, one evening a week, we're going to get together with a couple of friends and we're going to pray and just begin to ask God to part of spirit.

You know what? I'll tell you what will happen. God will pour out his spirit. God will do a work because that's the promise of God.

As we read there in our text, it goes on to say that when this happens, when we follow these steps to revival, as we're calling them. God said, then I will hear from heaven, forgive their sin and heal their land. God promises to respond.

As we. Take his call seriously, as we acknowledge our sin, as we turn from our sin, as we begin a fresh day of seeking his face, as we begin to call upon him in prayer, we can anticipate healing coming from God. Now, is this going to result in a worldwide revival? We don't know.

Will it result in a transformation of our national life? We don't know. But here's what we do know. We know this for sure.

It'll result in the transformation of our lives. It'll result in the transformation of lives around us as well. It'll result in the transformation of families, the restoration of families.

It'll result in a fresh sense of the presence of God in our churches. And as that begins to happen, it'll flow over into our community and our communities can be transformed. And then perhaps we don't know for sure.

God might move things out. Touching. The whole nation going around the world in each one of the great revivals in history, they have not been isolated to one location.

In each of the great revivals in history, things would start in a place and move from place to place. And what you would find is simultaneously you would have outpourings of the spirit of God in various places all over the world at the same time. But it's got to start somewhere.

And it can start with us. Matthew Henry said, when God intends great mercy for his people, the first thing he does is set them a praying God set us a praying God gives the promise. And again, I don't know.

On what scale God might work, but I do know this, that God will work, I think of Elijah, the prophet and the situation at his time, there was a great drought upon the land. The people were caught up in sin. They were caught up in idolatry.

And you remember the Lord sent Elijah to them to say that the drought was about to end and to call them to repentance. And they repented that day. And Elijah said an interesting thing.

He was talking about physical rain. But I think there's a spiritual lesson there. He said, I hear the sound of an abundance of rain.

You know, rain and water are oftentimes used in the scripture symbolically of an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. And so Elijah said, I hear the sound of an abundance of rain. And then he sent out his servant to see if there was any indication that it was going to rain.

He came back. He said, I don't see anything. The sky's blue.

It's crystal clear, not a cloud in the sky. And you know what it says? It says Elijah bowed down. He put his face between his knees and he prayed.

And he prayed seven times, the number seven indicating a fullness of prayer. And then he said to his servant, he said, go and see now. And so he went back and he looked out over the Mediterranean and he came back with this report.

He said, I see a cloud the size of a man's hand. And Isaiah said, tell Ahab to get down because a storm is coming. And it wasn't long before that little cloud the size of a man's hand turned into a dark and threatening sky.

And the heavens opened up and the rain began to pour out upon that land. And I believe that a similar thing would take place in the spiritual realm. And I believe that we're seeing.

Things move in that direction, there's a cloud, it's small, it's the size of a man's hand, but it might not take long before it grows. And as I mentioned in our last week's message, I personally am having the privilege of observing in the lives of some of the young people around the church here, a turning to God. And these

kinds of things are happening, an acknowledgment of sin, a turning away from sin, they're gathering together, they're seeking God's face, they've got their Bibles open, they're taking their Bibles with them wherever they go.

The other morning, my son got up early and left, said, where are you going? He goes to a prayer meeting at Starbucks. The 19 year old boy is going to have a prayer meeting at Starbucks. I'm encouraged.

God is doing something. Is revival coming to the church and an awakening to the nation? Well, I think to some degree that depends on what we do with God's call to us. I think to some degree we will determine that.

For he said, if my people who are called by my name, that's the big question, if will we do it? Will we do it? Will we be serious? God, help us to be serious. God, help us not to hear this message today and just walk away. God, help me not to preach it today and walk away and go, all right, that was a great message.

OK, now here we go. You know, back to that. That can happen easily.

You see, hearing it is one thing, but we need to put it into practice. God, help us to do it. Whether or not there is a worldwide revival coming, I don't know.

Whether or not there's a nationwide revival coming, I don't know. I'm going to continue to hope and pray so. But I do know this, as we've said many times already, that revival will come in our lives if we will do these things.

If my people will do these things, I will hear their prayer and I will heal. Let's pray. Father, here we are today.

Lord, as your people. And Lord, we pray that you would search our hearts. Lord, we know that in so many ways we've fallen short.

We thank you that you're a God of mercy. You're a God who delights to show mercy. You're a God who wants to pick us up and dust us off and send us on our way in pursuit of you.

And so do that with us today, Lord. Oh, Lord, may we not harden our hearts. Lord, and the sin that's in our lives, may we repent of it today.

May we turn from it. May we understand that you hate it. And Christ died to deliver us from it, and may we no longer be stuck in it.

Pull us out, Lord. Give us a heart to seek your face, Lord, to go in hot pursuit of you. To set aside those distracting things, those worthless things, to give ourselves entirely to devoting our time and energy to you.

And Lord, help us to pray. Help us, Lord, to take advantage of the greatest privilege that anyone could have, access to the king of the universe. And Lord, we pray that you would have mercy upon us.

Upon our families, upon our church, upon our community, upon our nation, and upon our world. Send an abundance of rain in these days, we pray. In Jesus name, amen.

Let's stand together. May God bless you. May he fill you with a passion for him and a heart for prayer in Jesus name, amen.

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