

The Moment of Revival

by Colin Peckham

The sermon emphasizes the importance of prayer and the need for revival in our lives and in the world, highlighting the significance of clean hands and a pure heart in entering the presence of God.

Scripture: Psalm 119:53

Topics: "Revival Prayer", "Holy Living"

Description

Colin Peckham emphasizes the importance of prayer as the essential preparation for revival, drawing examples from historical revivals in Northern Ireland, the Hebrides, and America. He highlights the need for a deep, exclusive relationship with God, where clean hands and pure hearts are required to ascend into His presence and experience revival power. The sermon underscores the connection between the holiness of God and the manifestation of revival, urging believers to seek God fervently with a genuine heart.

Transcript

Scripture reading: 2 Chronicles 7:1-4

In the 16th century we had the great European Reformation. In the 17th century there were continuing movements of the Spirit. In the 18th century we had the enormous spiritual upheaval in England under the ministry of George Whitfield and the Wesleys, when norms were established in the whole English-speaking world, which continue on until today. In the 19th century we had the great American '58 revival and the '59 revival in the United Kingdom, particularly in Ireland and in Scotland and England as well. Then in 1904-05 we had the revival in Wales, and this was really part of the previous century.

Since then there has been nothing in the Western World virtually of a national scale. It has been a dry time, an almost fruitless century in terms of great revivals in the West. It's something which has driven people to prayer. It is something which has broken people's hearts as they've cried to God.

But God is not dead! In Korea in the last twenty years, nine million people have been added to the Church. In Nepal, in 1951 there was not one known Christian in the country, and now there is one-half million. Suddenly it has happened! In China up to 6000 people are being born again every day. It's the biggest revival that has happened in the history of the world. This is something very wonderful! In Africa in some places the Church is increasing at a far greater rate than the population, and in parts of South America as well.

God is moving in various places, and when we hear these stories, it comes to us with such great longing that God would come to us and meet us again at the point of our need. America has known revival, England has known revival, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland--the Western World has known the touch of God in many places. But now there's a great drought, and we cry to God. There are centuries of waiting, which have given rise in the East to an explosion of new life. We behold the barrenness of our own present-day situation, and surely there is wrenched from our hearts a desperate cry, almost a gushing sob, "O Lord, do it here!"

My wife and I have just come from Japan. We had three conventions there in two weeks. On Friday morning of the first convention, a large convention, I was speaking on revival and God came down on that meeting. Scores of people sought the Lord. I was speaking by interpretation, and so the leader of the convention took over and handled these people who came and sought the Lord. Then they went back to their seats, and we were about to sing the last hymn. Suddenly a pastor from the back gave a great and a bitter cry after God, for the movement of the Spirit, and then again, this cry rent the whole atmosphere, and again the third time. Suddenly people were seeking God all over.

We went to the second convention and I was speaking for one week on revival. I said, "God is touching Korea and God is touching China," and the interpreter spoke. "Wouldn't it be wonderful if God came to Japan?" Silence from the interpreter. So I said again, "Wouldn't it be wonderful if God came to Japan?" Silence. So I said again, "It would be a wonderful thing if God came to Japan in revival power." Then I looked at the interpreter because he had translated nothing, and he was standing sobbing, sobbing. The burden of God was on him.

We need a sense of God in our meetings. There are so many ordinary meetings. You go to a meeting and you come out untouched. Where is God? We need the presence and the power of the Almighty God breaking our hearts, even as we're listening to the word of God coming to us--we need the melting of God.

The Psalmist says, "Horror hath taken hold upon me because of the wicked that forsake Thy law" (Psalm 119:53). And he said again, "It is time for Thee to work, Lord, for they have made void Thy law" (Psalm 119:126). "Oh that Thou wouldest rend the heavens, that Thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at Thy presence...." (Isaiah 64:1).

Preparation For Revival

In our Scripture text (2 Chronicles 7:1-4), we have the moment when God came. "When Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven...." So the preparation for revival was prayer. Prayer is essential.

We had a friend who is now in heaven, a man who had a great burden for revival. He started one hundred prayer meetings for revival in Northern Ireland. Most of them have died with the long wait and he has gone to Heaven. At the height of that movement, he was given an opportunity to speak at the Bangor worldwide missionary convention in Britain for ten minutes about these one hundred prayer meetings for revival.

Richard Cross was his name. He was a man of God who knew how to pray. I've been blessed mightily in times when we've had prayer together. But he was a man without tact. He got up and walked to the rostrum. The church was packed. He said, "All those of you praying for revival, stand up." There was no response. "Perhaps you didn't hear me. I said, 'All those of you praying for revival, stand up.' Just two sisters at the back. Sleep on; take your rest." And Richard Cross sat down. He grasped the heart of it.

Prayer is the preparation for revival.

At the beginning of the revival in the Hebrides (about 1949), two old ladies in one house, and six or eight elders and deacons in a barn were praying, night after night, month after month, until the fire fell. We were there recently doing research on the Hebrides revival, and we said to someone who was in that revival, "Was it just the two old ladies and the six or eight elders who prayed?"

"O no, O no," she said. "It was a community at prayer."

We spoke to the widow of the minister who was there at the time. She was much younger than he. She said, "My husband preached there for a month before we got the call to go. He came back and he said, 'It only needs a spark. The people are praying. The place is prepared.'" That's the basis of the Hebrides revival.

In Northern Ireland, about 1859, four young men gathered together to pray. They prayed in the school hall in Kells, near Ballymena, where they gathered every night with a pile of peat under one arm to keep their bodies warm and a Bible under the other arm to keep their souls warm. Finally the fire fell from America across to Northern Ireland and suddenly Northern Ireland was ablaze.

William Burns of Cambuslang said, "Prayer unceasing and earnest is that wherein the great strength of revival lieth." John Wesley said, "God does nothing but by prayer and everything with it." D. L. Moody said, "Every movement of the Spirit can be traced to a bent figure." Matthew Henry said, "When God is going to do something wonderful He first sets His people apraying." Prayer is essential!

Prayer is exclusive. It was Solomon who prayed. Look at the first verse of this whole book of 2 Chronicles: "And Solomon the son of David was strengthened in his kingdom, and the Lord his God was with him, and magnified him exceedingly."

Solomon and the Lord talked together: "In that night did God appear unto Solomon, and said unto him, Ask what I shall give thee" (1:7). And Solomon said, "Give me now wisdom and knowledge..." (v. 10). God and Solomon were on speaking terms.

In chapter three, verse one, it says, "Then Solomon began to build the house of the Lord..." In chapter five at the end of verse thirteen, it says that Solomon praised the Lord and said, "The Lord is good; for His mercy endureth for ever. Then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord."

In verse fourteen of chapter six Solomon said, "O Lord God of Israel, there is no God like Thee in the heaven, nor in the earth; which keepest covenant, and showest mercy unto Thy servants, that walk before Thee with all their hearts."

Solomon had the right relationship with God. God was in heaven. God was great. He was not just a familiar friend. Solomon gave God His correct position. He said in effect, "I am here on earth, earthy, and God is great. I come as one who seeks the enormity of God, the greatness of God, the majesty of God, the glory of God." God is separate from man. He is the holy One and we come to Him who is transcendent that He might become imminent, right here, that we might know and sense the presence of the Lord.

Think of the story of John Smith in the Hebrides awakening. Those men were praying in the barn and he read Psalm 24: "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who shall stand in His holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He

shall receive the blessing from the Lord and righteousness from the God of his salvation."

After John Smith read those words, he said to the others, "My brethren, it seems so much humbug for us to be waiting here night after night into the small hours of the morning, waiting before God, if my hands are not clean and my heart is not pure. My hands must be clean and my heart must be pure. O God, are my hands clean? Is my heart pure? My brethren, are your hands clean? Are your hearts pure?"

At that moment God came to those men. Some of them fainted when God came down in revival power in that little barn. That was the beginning. They said they realized at that moment that the holiness of God and revival are linked inseparably; they cannot be taken apart. When God comes He reveals His holy presence, and we recognize that the holy God has come to dwell amongst us.

I repeat, prayer is exclusive. We can't just bounce into the presence of God and say, "O Lord, yes, please send a revival," and then bounce back out again. This is a life; this is a burden; this is someone who knows the presence of God.

We can pray and pray and pray, but unless our hands are clean and our hearts are pure, how can we ascend into the presence of God? We need clean hands, friends. We need our deeds to be clean and our hearts to be pure. It is that which gives us the right to enter in and have access to the God who is a holy God. When we have access to that holy God, then we have a claim upon that which He is able to give, because we come in prayer, asking God to come.

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