

A Revival Sermon (Compilation)

by Compilations

The church needs to be revived and purified to experience the power of God and to be a true reflection of God's glory.

Duration: 41:43

Scripture: Psalm 44:1, Isaiah 59:1-2, Isaiah 59:9-10, Habakkuk 3:4, Matthew 6:33, Philippians 3:8

Topics: "Compilations"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the negative influence of worldly distractions, particularly television, on one's spiritual life. He argues that giving one's heart to worldly things leads to enslavement, while giving one's heart to God brings freedom. The preacher expresses his frustration with hearing opinions and desires to hear more preaching about Jesus Christ with the authority of God. He then quotes Isaiah 59:1-4 to explain why the gospel is not spreading and why believers are living in spiritual poverty. The sermon concludes with a plea for repentance and a reminder that God's hand is not shortened, but our sins have separated us from Him.

Transcript

I see before us the greatest potential that any generation of Christians has ever known. All the walls are down to preach the gospel to the entire known world. Endless possibilities to live and die for the glory of God.

And yet the work is hindered. The glory of God is tarnished. And it's because the people of God no longer know how to discern the things of God.

I pray God that we will see His holiness beneath Him. That the fear of the Lord will come down upon this place. That man will cry, bent, double, with agony of heart before God.

For the Lord thy God is a consuming fire. Even a jealous God will be the delivered soul burned into our system, and our thinking, and our philosophy, and ideology. You couldn't fudge people from it.

But thank God the fire can fudge it. The fire can remove it. The fire is cleansing.

I don't believe one percent of the Christians in America or the world know God. They know theology, they know about God, they know references in the scriptures. But who really knows God? We live in a day where we think that in order to be relevant to our culture, we must be like our culture.

We live in a day where we think in order for the gospel to be relevant, we must somehow adapt it to the culture. And nothing on the face of the earth or in the bowels of hell could be further from the truth. We are relevant not because we are like our culture, we are relevant because we are absolutely different.

And our gospel has power not because it is acceptable to carnal men. Our gospel has power because it is a scandal to men. Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot see him, neither his ear heavy that it cannot hear.

But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you that he will not hear you. For your hands are defiled with blood, your fingers with iniquity, your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness. None calleth for justice, nor any pleaded for truth.

They trust in vanity and speak lies. They conceive mischief and bring forth iniquity. Why are we not seeing the gospel sweep the world in this day in which we're living? Why are God's people so generally living in abject spiritual poverty, with so little spiritual power that the enemy comes in like a flood, flooding both church and state with all the wickedness of hell, and we seem impotent to do anything about it? And perhaps most immediately, why are we, and I speak of us as a church, I speak of us as parents, I speak of us as witnesses for Christ, why are we with such promises and with the prospect of full, final success for the gospel laid before us, why are we seeing so few people genuinely seeing it? We were created not just to obey.

We were created so that every beat of our heart would be for the glory of God, every thought of our mind for the glory of God, that we would be God-besought, as the Puritans would say. That we would live for Him, that we would love Him, love Him truly, passionately, cling to Him. That's what God desires.

So, my dear friend, you can in a sense be a righteous man in that you have more conformed your life to the law of God, but let me ask you a question. Do you live for His glory? For Him, for Him, for Him? Again, the very word revive presupposes life. There has been life which has become, oh, what could you say, sick, or weak, or apathetic.

You can only revive what has already had vitality. It means to revitalize. I think the nearest thing, an analogy I can give you is somebody who's, well, been drowning and they're on the edge of death and suddenly comes, somebody comes along and resuscitates them.

Now, you don't do that with a corpse. You've never seen anybody resuscitate a corpse. You don't know when somebody has been dead a day or two and try and revive it.

You say it's dead. But if there's still life there, you can resuscitate life. Now, if we're going to realize how much we need revival, we've got to recognize again the awesomeness of sin.

We've got to recognize that sin offends God. If you look back into most great moves of God, you will find out that they break forth in this context. There has been, prior to that revival, a reductionism of the gospel, in which in some way the gospel has been reduced down to a ritual or a few set of superstitious laws, that if someone assents to them, they are Christian.

There have been, throughout history, divine visitations of the Holy Spirit reviving men and promoting godliness among them very, very quickly. And we hope for those times. But I have seen that those times seem to be more frequent among men who have already done what Scripture commanded them to do, with regard to separating from the world and drawing near unto God.

Therefore is judgment far from us. Neither does justice overtake us. We wait for light, but behold obscurity. For brightness, but we walk in darkness. We grope for the wall like the blind. We grope as if we had no eyes.

We stumble at noonday as in the night. We're in desolate places as dead men. We roar like bears and mourn like doves and look for judgment, but there is none.

We look for salvation, but it's far from us. That, today, is what Habakkuk calls the hiding of God's power. Oh yes, he has done great things.

We have to say with the psalmist in Psalm 44, we have heard with our ears, our fathers have told us what great things God didst in their day. I have read the book of Acts. I have read the histories of revival.

I have read the stories of the mighty movings of God. I have heard it from others who have seen it, but today is the hiding of God's power. In a time when more than ever before we needed to know by experience the reality of the mighty power of God to intervene.

In a day when hell is let loose upon the earth, when Satan has at his disposal everything apparently that would deceive men, would take our very offspring, our sons and our daughters, and cut them off from truth, drive them into the darkness to damn their souls eternally. In a day when never as never before we needed the power of God is a hiding of God's power. We're groping like bright blind men.

We're crying for light, but we're surrounded by obscurity. We're pleading for deliverance, but it's far from us. God says my hand isn't shortened, my ear is not heavy.

I can still do all that the word of God says, but your iniquities have separated between you and your God. Your sins have hid his face from you that he will not hear you. Go down to verse 11.

As I say, we mourn like bears, we are we roar like bears, we mourn like doves, we look for judgment. There's none. We look for salvation, but it is far from us.

Why? For our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us, for our transgressions are with us, and as for our iniquities, we know them. The fullness of Christ, the little song, is what we need. Paul prayed for the fullness of Christ among the believers.

Brothers and sisters, we do not have the fullness of Christ here. The church at Ephesus was one of the most spiritual churches that Paul founded, but yet when he talked to the church at Ephesus, he said to them, I pray daily, I don't cease to pray to God for you, that you might be filled with all the fullness of God, and we are not filled with all the fullness of God here yet. We are not.

Yes, he gave some corrections there in the book of Ephesians. He told them a few things that they needed to do, and a few things that they didn't need to do, but I think we need to recognize that about one-third of that whole book was filled with Paul's desire that they would be filled with all the fullness of God, and this morning I tell you, yes, there are some corrections that are needed in our lives. Yes, we need to run away from materialism, like the brother said.

Yes, we need to be careful that we don't get caught up in building our own kingdoms here upon the earth, but I'll tell you, brothers and sisters, I don't know any way for us to stop those things from happening in a real way, in a lasting way, and in a thorough way, except that we be filled with all the fullness of Christ until

the things on earth grow strangely dim in the light of his glory and grace. I know no other way for it to happen. Yes, I can stand up here this morning, and I can give correction out of the Bible, and I do, and I believe in that, but my friends, that is not what's going to change our hearts and lives.

We need to be filled with the fullness of Christ all in all is Jesus, and Jesus is everything. That is still the New Testament picture, and our people, even our good people, even our obedient people, even our converted people sit in the church sometimes after crossing every T and dotting every I, and they go, I'm still empty. I know I need to do this because, well, that's what I need to do, but I'm just, it's not what I thought.

Why is it, other than the fact that the great, what is being called the church today is not the church, true church is made up of just converted people, show forth their conversion and fruit, but at the same time, why is it that you walk in with the most prosperous group of Christians on face of the earth, more freedom than anyone else to do anything in the will of God, and why is it you walk into a Christian bookstore and more than half the books are written about how empty we are, and I'll tell you why. Even for those of you who are obedient and striving to please God, that will not fill you. Eternity has been placed in your heart, an infinite hole there is.

Pascal was right, even though he's been twisted a bit in modern interpretation, he was right in this. Nothing can fill you. Take the entire universe, take all the ministries of the world, combine them in one and give them to you, and you will still not be filled.

Be the most important person ever used in the history of the world apart from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and you will still not be filled. That is not enough, but only the person of God. The judgment of God has not come upon politicians in America, it's coming upon the church.

Here we have in Isaiah, a people that came to God on a daily basis, they did. On a daily basis they came, and God hated it, every moment of it. Why? Because they had lost the ability to discern the holy, because the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

There is not much fear of God. If you could only catch a glimpse, a heavenly glimpse of who God is, if you could only see his wonder and his glory and his passion and his power and his love, if you could only just for one moment be taken to a place where you might get a clearer vision of who he is, you'd throw yourself on God. You'd be willing to cut yourself up in a thousand pieces and throw them around the world.

But there is no vision of God, and therefore the people perish. There is no law of God, therefore the people perish. It's funny when I talk about the theology of the holiness of God, everyone gets so excited.

When I talk about the practicality of it, everyone says I'm a legalist. I don't want to be the president of the United States, or the king of the empire, but to be a man who stands between a living God and a dying people. Do you know why we don't have revival? Because there's contempt to live without it, number one.

And the second thing is the price is too high. And the third thing, we couldn't handle it if it came. Once you get a clean heart, a sanctified heart I like to call it, it won't make a hill of beans I'm not worried about a revival in the world, I'm worried about a revival in the church, getting cleaned up and purified and sanctified, and getting all the dumb things that take up your time.

And what is called church, maybe I should call it churchianity in America today, if the forefront was the glory of God and purity and making his name holy among the nations, if that was at the forefront in every

pastor's mind, then there would be a sense that even though the unbelievers would not understand us, nor understand God, nor salvation, there would be something unexplainable that they could not deny. I want to say to you tonight, it will take the omnipotence of our great creative God to bring the church, the true church out of the mess it's in, and bring people out of their love of materialism, and their love of the world, and the love of the flesh, and their love for the things that are devilish in their heart. It's a miracle it's needed, a miracle of God, and thank God he can do the work, and thank God he can answer the prayer of a heart that says, very much, O God of hosts, God is mighty to deliver us.

We need a rekindling of the holy flame within our heart, and every person in the congregation needs to pray. Someone said to John Wesley, our preacher is useless, and he's hopeless. It's an easy thing to blame the preacher, but Wesley said, I'll tell you what you do, pray him on fire, and the whole village will come out to see him burning.

So we need to have fireman in the pulpit, and if you have fireman in the pulpit, there'll be not many snowmen in the pew. They'll melt, but the fire comes down upon us. We need that melting fire, the fire of the Holy Ghost.

They're too proper to want revival. They want everything pretty and clean, and they'll never get revival, because when revival comes, it's gonna rip everything apart, including us. You see, when you talk about revival, you can't talk about just getting zapped by God.

You've got to talk about an entirely radical restructuring of your life, because for the most part, Christian life in America is anti-biblical, and to bring revival is when God sweeps through a place and doesn't just quicken them in their sin, but purges them from their sin, separates them from the things that are obstacles in their life, and then fills them with the Holy Spirit. Revival, if it were to come, would cast most of us on the floor, weeping out and crying for mercy. Do we want revival? No, we don't.

Let's just put it that way, because that's the truth. But we can want it. What can make a person so entrenched in this world begin to hate this world and desire something different? A view of God, a view of the kingdom, a view of the fact that everything in this world is passing away.

It is rotting. In 20 years of preaching, I know that the only thing sufficient to keep a heart burning is a greater and greater picture of Jesus Christ and what God the Father has done for us in His most precious Son. I'm so tired of hearing from men's hearts and hearing from their minds and hearing from their opinions.

What I want is for someone to stand back and preach to me about Jesus Christ, someone to tell me, thus saith the Lord, and not apologize, and preach with the authority of God about the subject they've taken. You see, separation is legalism only when it's separation from the world and not separation unto the joy of Almighty God. You see, you could look at all of God's rules and you could keep them with all your might and you still would not be holy, because holiness is not just rule keeping, it is a heart that is passionately in love with God, that is passionately separated unto God, that has left everything else, not out of duty, not out of moral requirements, but out of passion for God.

And so you could come to church and do your little holy thing and still be so displeasing to God, because there is no love for the divine. But I want to leave you with a thing that has meant so much to me, because honestly, the standard I preach causes me to repent. Look at this passage, and this is for you, those of you who are loved by God and have been broken by the hard things I've said, and who may think, well,

could God ever use me? This is your answer.

This is about the Messiah, chapter 12, verse 20. A bruised reed He will not break, and a smoldering wick He will not snuff out, till He leads justice to victory. In His names the nations will put their hope.

You take a reed and you want to make a beautiful instrument out of it, and you start working on it, and because of the weakness of the reed, it will break. So what do you do? I mean, there's thousands of reeds. You're not going to spend time fixing that reed back up so you can do something with it.

No! Toss it away. Get rid of it. Kick it out the door.

Throw it away. It's no good. Get you another reed.

God's not like that. God has called you, and He has called you to make you an instrument for His glory, for His beauty, and to be a means of blessing others. And because of some old hard preacher that He brought here, you feel broken.

You say, I've sinned. I'm broken. How could God ever use me? Look at all these faults this man has pointed out this week.

Well, God's probably just going to toss me. I mean, after all, He can find somebody better than me. He's not going to stick around with me and fix me and start all over again.

God's not going to waste His time on someone like me. It's done. No, it's not.

It's not done because He doesn't throw reeds away. Bruised reeds, He does break. You know what He's going to do with you? He who began a good work in you, He's going to perfect it.

He'll fix you because bruised reeds, He doesn't break. Look what it says here. And smoldering wicks, He will not snuff out.

Do you know what you were made to be? A light to the nations. That's you. That's you.

You were made to be lights to the nations. You, little girl, you're a light to the nations. You, man, you're a light to the nations.

That's what He's made you for. Oh, there's no glorious. There's no glory compared to the glory He's given you.

You know, angels get mad at you. They're envious of the things you've received from the Father. And you were created to be this wonderful light to the nations.

Oh, the love of God. I know a man who went for a place and he doesn't know if it was a dream or he left his room. But he saw things that cannot be explained and are not lawful to speak about.

But I suppose that if you could see those things, you would be driven to passionately chase after God with everything you ever hoped to be. And you would die with your hands lifted in the air, reaching for the one who you've longed to see. Now, revivals have been mainly this.

Whether they have been big revivals or small, they have been mainly the achieving of a oneness of mind among a number of Christians. I want to tell you how God will revive this church and how God will do it.

The only way he'll do it, there must be among us a oneness of determination to glorify the Lord alone.

Now, the Lord won't ask you whether you're Arminian or Calvinist, but he will ask you, are you determined to glorify me alone? Are you determined to glorify me alone? Now, in order to have this unity, all the Lord's people are going to have to get together on this. We're not going to honor men, although we will give honor to whom honor is due in a secondary way, but we're going to glorify the Lord. No one will seek honor for himself, but I'm wanting God to bless and honor wherever the people are dedicated to the glorification of the Triune God, each glad to have God use the other if he wants to do it.

Not any man looking to his own honor, but every man on the honor of somebody else. No man seeking his own advantage, but every man seeking the advantage of others. That's first.

I deny determination to glorify the Lord alone, and I do not believe that God can continue to bless nor send anything like a life-giving revival to a church until we are absorbed in something. To get anything done, you've got to be absorbed in it. Nobody ever did anything when he only did it halfway.

Remember, my brother and sister, you have just as much of God as you want, and this church has just as much blessing as it wants. No more. Say that hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled, so says the mighty word of God, and it cannot be broken.

Therefore, if you thirst, you will be given water up to your thirst. If you hunger, you will be fed up to the point your hunger takes you. Therefore, this church, as a congregation of men and women and young people, we have as much of God as we really want.

Are we such that God can bless us? Do we have this unity of determination to glorify the Lord alone, of absorption in the Lord's doings, of a determination to see the Lord works, of oneness in present expectation, of submission to the Lord, and of a resolution to put away everything that hinders? You see, here's the problem with why prayer isn't answered. Seek ye first the kingdom. Before you can even think about prayer, you have to have a right view of God's will and of the supremacy of his will, and that everything is all about God.

Prayer is not for a person who is not in the battle of advancing the kingdom, because prayer is all about advancing the kingdom. It's not about getting our needs met or advancing our own needs. It's about advancing the kingdom.

So prayer functions when you're a person who's given his life, whatever that is, whether it's as a preacher, a missionary, a factory worker, a carpenter, a homemaker, whatever, you've given your life to follow suit with what God's called you to do to advance your kingdom, his kingdom, and while you're working to advance his kingdom, you're praying for all things to fall in place in your own personal life and everywhere else in accordance with whatever will advance that kingdom of God. God blesses you as long as you pray. In other words, God is not going to be blessing this church tomorrow because it was praying 10 years ago.

The level of our prosperity and the enjoyment of what we have in Christ depends on where we are today in the place of prayer. Here's the limitation of the blessing. God has so tied his blessing into the praying of his people that when the praying stops, the blessing stops.

When the praying declines, the blessing declines. Much prayer, much blessing. Little prayer, little blessing.

No prayer, no blessing. And that's it. And that's the law.

That's God's law. You can as soon have a harvest without sowing seed as have God's blessing without prayer. The law that God has settled, and it's true for us as a church, and it's true for you as an individual, is that prosperity spiritually depends on the basis of genuine believing and prevailing prayer.

And that prosperity that we gain in prayer will affect the work of God in every conceivable way. Doesn't depend ultimately. I'm not trying to get the preachers off the hook here, but it doesn't depend ultimately on the brilliance of the preachers or the dullness of the preachers.

Doesn't depend ultimately on the attractiveness or otherwise of their personality. It depends ultimately on whether we get through to God. There are so many things that are done in the name of revival.

So many things that are done in the name of church, name of Christianity, good motivation behind it. But how much of it is real? I mean, honestly, do you really want revival? Honestly, how much are you willing to pay for it? A few meetings on a few days of the week? How much do you really want revival? Because I can tell you here and now that revival will cost you your life. And most people I know aren't willing to pay that.

See, Christianity is sort of like an accessory in the United States of America. You know, when you buy a dress, you decide, well, you need a belt to go with it and choose to dress it up. And maybe if we were in England, you'd need a fine hat to go along with that dress.

That's the way most people see Christianity. It's just a part of their life, something they do. But Christianity is not a part of your life.

If it is a part of your life, it's nothing. Christianity is your life. Let me ask you something.

How much does Christianity cost you? We are not to live like monks, but we are to live like people who use the things of this world and are not owned by it and who live in this world. But our minds are set on things above and our treasures are in heaven and we live for that. No, we live for two days, the day when Christ hung before all men and the day when all men, including everyone in this building, will stand before Christ.

You will be judged and you will not be judged for what you give away. You'll be judged for what you keep. A man with ten million dollars a year can give away five million dollars.

He will be judged severely because you are not judged for what you give away. You are judged for what you keep. You are judged for the shape and condition of your heart.

Do you want God? Are you willing to lose everything? You see, when you look at the radical nature of the call of Christ, it is dangerous. See, your greatest problem is your Christ is safe. He's a very safe God.

He doesn't require much from you, doesn't ask you to die, doesn't ask you to sacrifice, just ask you to come on Sunday and on special meetings and to give a little bit, but not so much that it would hurt. But the Christ of the Bible is dangerous. As C.S. Lewis said, he's not a tame lion.

He's not safe. He can cost you everything. Someone said, what is it going to take to revive America, Brother Paul? Soldiers and bulldozers, bulldozers bulldozing down our buildings and soldiers with guns telling us to deny Christ.

That may be what it takes to bring revival. If we will not cleanse ourselves from all the things that are obstacles to our Christianity, then God will see fit to come in and cleanse us. On mission for God, it's the greatest privilege.

But you've got to realize that we are often so tied down, so in debt, such a lifestyle that's beyond our means that we're constantly running, constantly working, constantly anxious, constantly doing everything. If we were to get sick for two months, we'd lose our homes. We're so extended, we can't think about being on mission for God.

Cars and boats and golf clubs and guns and fishing poles and this and that and every other thing makes it almost impossible to think about serving Him. Everything is just so, there's just so much. And the key in our life is to just start tearing these things away, to start tearing out everything in your life that's not eternal and that does not lead to a closer relationship with your own immediate family and then the family of God.

Anything that's an obstacle that just needs to go. Anything that gets in the way of being godly. Some of you'd have a revival if you just take that stinking television set of yours and smash it with a sledgehammer because you'll go home tonight after talking about revival and watch something that 30 years ago would have been considered pornography by unbelievers.

Now you understand why I preach in a lot of Baptist churches only once. But what I'm saying is true. It's true.

You see, when you give your heart to the things of this world, it enslaves you. When you give your heart to the things of God, it sets you free. It sets you free.

How free are you? How free are you?

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