

# How to Pray for Revival

by David Guzik

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*To pray for revival, remember the great things God has done in the past, pray for the pastor, leaders, and congregation, and seek a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit.*

**Duration:** 53:52

**Scripture:** Psalm 85:1, Psalm 85:6, Matthew 6:33, Acts 2:4, Acts 4:31

**Topics:** "Prayer For Revival", "Spiritual Awakening"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker recounts a story from the 19th century about a preacher named Mr. Lewis who desired to bring revival to his community. Despite facing challenges and a lack of results initially, Mr. Lewis persisted in his efforts and organized a concert of prayer to seek God's intervention. The speaker emphasizes the importance of praying for revival when remembering the great things God has done in the past. The sermon encourages listeners to persevere in prayer and seek God's outpouring of awakening and revival upon their communities.

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## Transcript

Tonight, our text is Psalm 85 verse 6. The topic for this evening is how to pray for revival. We read there Psalm 85 verse 6, will you not revive us again that your people may rejoice in you? Charles Spurgeon said of this text, brethren, if you will pray this prayer, it will be better than my preaching from it. And my only motive in preaching from it is that you may pray it.

I feel the same way. You know, the real fruit of a message like this isn't born in understanding, it isn't born in just listening to it. Whatever you pray from this passage of scripture tonight is more important than my preaching from it.

And I think if there's anything that we've really gotten a hold of in the past many months, as oftentimes we've gathered here on Sunday night and talked about God's great work in the past, what he could do among us, is we've really gotten a sense that prayer is an essential component to what God wants to do in a community, in a church, in an individual life. Prayer is an essential awakening work, a preparatory work for awakening or revival. And so I think a lot of times when we encourage people to pray for awakening, to pray for revival, they wonder, well, how? What do I pray for? Is it kind of a Buddhist thing where you get together and you just go into a dark room and you say revival, revival, revival, revival over about a thousand times and sort of chant the word and hope that that'll get you somewhere before God? What exactly do you pray? How do you pray for it? And I think that this text gives us a few guidelines.

First of all, I would like to suggest to you that this text tonight tells us, first of all, when to pray for revival. If you look at Psalm 85, verse one, you can get from it the idea that you should pray for revival when you remember the great things that God has done in the past. Look at verse one.

Lord, you have been favorable to your land. You have brought back the captivity of Jacob. The son of Korah here, one of the sons of Korah who wrote this song, when he declared this, he was remembering the great things that God had done in the past, said, Lord, you've done great things in the past.

Do it again. And we find oftentimes that one of the greatest encouragements we have to praying for a great work of God in our midst, whether it be in our own life, in our family, in our congregation, in our community, is recognizing some of the great things that God has done in days gone by. I mean, when you hear some of the great things the Lord has done in the past, you say, well, Lord, why not here? Why not now? Why can't you do similar things among us today? And it's a great encouragement to our faith.

So you should remember to pray for revival when you remember the great things that God has done in the past. Then again, another time to pray for revival is when we sense that we're under a cloud of divine displeasure or a lack of blessing. Look at verses four and five of Psalm eighty five, he says, Restore us, O God, of our salvation and cause your anger towards us to cease.

Will you be angry with us forever? Will you prolong your anger to all generations? Do you get the point there? He's saying when we sense that maybe God is displeased with us, when we look around and sense perhaps a lack of blessing, a lack of the outpouring of God's spirit. Well, that's all the more time to say, Lord, we want to pray and plead with you that you would send forth your goodness, that you would send forth your kindness to us. And so in the midst of this prayer where he says, Restore us, O God, of our salvation, cause your anger towards us to cease, end it for us, God.

And that's the time to pray as well. You know, sometimes we we have to take off the rose colored glasses that we wear. I generally tend to be an optimistic person.

I think that's a good thing. I think it's generally a good quality. I think it goes along with being a believer.

I think it goes along with being a person of faith is to have a generally optimistic viewpoint, and that's good. But there's sometimes where you have to take a cold, hard look at reality. And that's what the psalmist was doing.

Restore us, O God, of our salvation. Look at it again there. Verse four, he says, We're apart from you.

We need to be restored. Cause your anger towards us to cease. Lord, it seems like you're angry with us.

Please cause your anger to cease. Will you be angry with us forever? Will you prolong your anger to all generations? Oh, Lord, please. We feel like we're under the stroke of your hand.

Lighten the weight of your stroke against us. So when do you pray for revival? Will you pray when you remember the great things that God has done in the past? You pray when you sense that maybe you're under a cloud of divine displeasure or lack of blessing. But how about just when you sense the need for personal or congregational revival? I mean, that's the prompting from verse six.

Will you not revive us again? Lord, we need it. We need to be revived. There's a sense of deadness.

There's a sense of coldness. There's a sense of lack of blessing in your work. Remember that old hymn, showers of blessing, showers of blessing, showers of blessing.

And it says, mercy drops round us are falling, but for the showers we plead. Oh, yeah. You might say, well, there's mercy drops falling around us.

That's great. But you know the great difference there is between a few scattered drops coming down outside, you know, a little scattered shower, a little bit of drizzle outside. You know the difference between that and a downpour.

There's a huge difference between the two. And so he says, oh, we sense it, Lord. We need revival.

So you pray when you remember the great things God has done in the past. You pray when you sense you're under a cloud of divine displeasure, lack of blessing. You pray when you sense the need for personal or congregational revival.

Well, when it comes time to pray for revival, who do you pray for? Who do you pray for? Well, let me say, first of all, and you got to hear me out to the end of this, because I don't list this first because I think it's most important. But first of all, if you're going to pray for revival, pray for the pastor. Pray for the pastor of the church.

If you want to see revival in a church, pray for the pastor of the church. Well, why? Well, first of all, because the pastor himself needs to be personally revived. He needs to have a live, active, thriving Christian life in himself.

Sometimes people forget that it's possible to stand behind a pulpit and not be spiritually quickened, not be spiritually alive yourself. Well, the pastor needs reviving. So pray for the pastor.

Pray, God, make sure that our pastor is revived. Bless his walk with you. Bless his personal relationship with you.

Secondly, I'd say pray for the pastor, because the pastor needs to be strengthened against temptation. You know, many temptations come the way of a pastor as they do the way of anybody else. Not only does the pastor have to deal with the temptations that are common to anyone.

Any one of you men, any one of you who deal with temptations that are common to any man, don't think that the pastor is any different than that. Of course he's not. He has to deal with the same kind of thing.

But upon that, I think there's an extra burden of temptation upon the pastor, where he has to deal with the temptations towards spiritual pride, towards spiritual ego and upliftedness, and perhaps a professionalism in his relationship with God. He's tempted towards those, perhaps in a way that those who are not in full-time ministry are not tempted. So pray for your pastor to be strengthened against temptation.

I would say as well that the pastor needs prayer because he needs to be strengthened against discouragement and filled with faith. You know from your own personal experience what a powerful tool discouragement is against you in your own Christian life. There's an old story about the devil who was going through his tool shed and he was throwing out old tools that he didn't need anymore.

But there was one that he kept in a very prized place and somebody asked the devil, well, what's that tool? And he said, well, it's the most valuable tool in my arsenal. It's the tool of discouragement. And

discouragement can work very powerfully against pastors, against those in ministry.

You know, when the pastor thinks of his own sinfulness, he can be discouraged. How many times I have stood behind this pulpit weighed down by a sense of unworthiness. Now, sometimes the sense of unworthiness was totally unjustified and sometimes it was justified.

You know, I had not been walking right and God was convicting my heart. And so that kind of discouragement can weigh very heavily upon a pastor. Just the sense of his own sinfulness, his own unworthiness.

He said, well, who am I? Who am I? I stand behind this pulpit and they think that I'm more holy than any of them. What a joke. What a laugh.

And you can be very weighed down by a sense of your sinfulness. A pastor can fall into discouragement when he thinks of the lack of results there may be in his work. Oh, you look about and you say, oh, Lord, so little fruit.

So little fruit, Lord. Why is the harvest so small, God? Why can't there be more fruit? How am I failing, God? I must be unfaithful before you. I must be an unworthy servant before you, God.

What's going on with this? And again, Satan knows how to take that and maybe thoughts that might be good and valid and helpful. Satan knows how to put a twist on them, a spin on them to drive a person in ministry into despair and discouragement. When the pastor thinks of the seeming deadness of many in the congregation, he can be discouraged.

Looks at a life that's been sitting under his preaching for years and looks at that man, that woman, they're just as spiritually dead as they were five years ago when they walked into our church. What's the work of God in their life? Where are they shining out now for Jesus Christ? You think of that and you go, oh, Lord, the deadness, whatever I'm doing in ministry, it seems incapable of transforming them. It seems incapable of touching them.

The discouragement comes upon the pastor. He thinks, he thinks, wow, look, look at the prayer meeting. Where is everybody? Where are the people at the prayer meeting? You know, it's been said that if you want to measure the popularity of the pastor, look at attendance on a Sunday morning.

If you want to measure the popularity of the church among Christians, look at the attendance at Sunday evening. If you want to measure the popularity of God at the church, look at the prayer meeting. And thoughts like that can drive a pastor to absolute despair.

You say, look at the prayer. Where are the people who will pray? Who are the people? Lord, we need prayer. It absolutely undergirds the work.

It's the foundation. It's essential to everything. Well, where are the praying people? Look at this prayer meeting, that prayer meeting.

We have it, but nobody comes, it seems. It can be a great source of discouragement. Pastor thinks of gossip and backbiting.

Oh, it can drive him to discouragement. He needs your upholding in prayer. You know, one of the great discouragements for pastors, or at least maybe I should just speak of myself.

I know that many others, many of my colleagues that I speak to experience this as well. When a pastor thinks of those who have left the church, he can be very discouraged. You know, you see somebody leave, and people leave under all different kinds of circumstances.

Some people leave because, well, just praise God. They feel like God's moving them on, and it's a blissful departure. It's friendly, and it's just no awkwardness at all.

And you miss them. You know, maybe they've moved away. Maybe they felt God has just called them to another congregation.

You miss them. There's a little bit of a hole there in your heart and your friendship and such. But there's not the real discouragement there.

But sometimes folks leave. Sometimes folks leave because of some kind of conflict or difficulty, and that's very discouraging to a pastor. You look and you look at yourself and you say, well, what's wrong with me? What's wrong with me? I can't get it right with this person.

That it just seems to be a butting of heads. Why can't I serve them the way that I should? What's wrong with me? God, is this your frown of disapproval upon me or my ministry? This person sure seems to think so, as they stomp away in anger from the church. Other times people leave, and it's just sort of awkward.

It's just sort of strange, and they're godly people. Oh, maybe there's a voice somewhere that whispers into you that, well, if somebody leaves the church, it must mean that they're a very ungodly, wicked person. But you know that's not the case.

You know, that's sometimes very godly people, and sometimes that's even tougher because then you stand back and you say, oh, Lord, what is wrong with me that this person is leaving the church? That this person is going? God, I must be worthless in ministry. I must be useless. If I can't minister to a blessed saint like this, if they're turning their back on me, if they're expressing their stamp of disapproval upon my ministry, well, then what possible use can I be in this community? What possible effectiveness can I have? For all these reasons, discouragement can be a great, great tool against a pastor.

And so it's essential that you pray for the pastor. If you want to pray for revival, pray for the pastor. But let me put one more reason why you should pray for the pastor, is that the pastor needs prayer for spiritual power in his ministry.

I mean, if we believe that this is the Christian lecture society and it's just the pastor's job to deliver lectures to people and people hear it and take notes and learn what they will, just as much as you might go to the community college and hear a lecture on astronomy or on human biology or upon 17th century English literature, whatever you please. If this is the Christian lecture society, then there needs to be no great spiritual power behind what the pastor does, because the pastor just conveys information. But if this is the church of Jesus Christ, if this is the body of Christ, if this is a spiritual work that goes on, then it is absolutely essential that it be undergirded with spiritual power and spiritual power comes about by prayer.

James McGrady is an example of a man who made the most out of getting his congregation to pray for him. You may have heard that name before we talked about him or heard others talk about him here on Sunday nights. He was that man in the history of the United States who, well, he was a preacher who was so ugly that he attracted attention for his ugliness and it sort of gained him a following wherever he went.

McGrady came over the Allegheny Mountains to minister on the frontier of Kentucky. This was around the beginning of the 19th century, 1798, 1799. He had three little box-like Presbyterian churches out there on the frontier and he decided to teach these rough, lawless, wild frontier people to bring them the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Well, he described his first winter there in 1799 as, for the most part, weeping and mourning with the people of God. No results, no fruit. It was just difficult.

It was just hard going. All he could seem to do is just weep and mourn with the people of God over the low state of the cause of the gospel and the work of Jesus Christ in the community. Well, he set about to change that.

One of the things he used was the concert of prayer where he would gather together with other churches or other interested people, as many who would gather, not just his own congregation, but as many as would gather together once a month to gather together to earnestly seek the Lord for an outpouring of awakening and revival upon the community. But he did more than that. McGrady also asked his people to pray for him.

He got his congregation praying for him in a unique way. He said, OK, listen, a half hour before sundown or excuse me, a half hour at sundown on Saturday night. Pray for me.

And then a half hour at sunrise on Sunday morning, you pray for me. And he got all or most of his congregation to do that. And they prayed and prayed and he got them to pray.

And you should know that McGrady was no specimen as a preacher. He was noted for his bad voice. He was noted for his awkward gestures in the pulpit.

He was no pulpit master by any means. But God blessed. And in the year 1800 came a flood of blessing.

Some of the meetings that McGrady held had as many as twenty five thousand people in attendance. And this is out on the frontier. And there was an incredible example of fruit and blessing.

But it came because McGrady got his people praying for him. So who do you pray for? Well, you pray for the pastor. Now, I mentioned that first, not because I think it's most important.

Matter of fact, the main point of my message here this evening is to point out that perhaps praying for the pastor is not the most important. I'll point that out a little bit later. Secondly, should pray for the leaders and the officers of the church, elders, deacons, whatever you would call them in the particular congregation that you're out, board members, whoever the leadership of the church is beyond the pastor, assistant pastors, whatever you have, you pray for the leaders and the officers of the church.

Charles Spurgeon said, I have no doubt that often dead deacons and dead elders prevent a church's prospering. Therefore, let us pray earnestly for the leaders of God's congregation. Lord, revive them again.

Put more spiritual life in them. Well, you need to pray for elders. You need to pray for leaders.

You need to pray for board members. Pray that God would pour out upon them spiritual life the same sort of way that you would pray for the pastor. Make the prayer circle a little bigger and pray for the leaders.

So who do you pray for? You pray for the pastor. You pray for the leaders and the officers of the church. And I want to spend the most time to you tonight talking about the third area where I think you need to pray.

If you want to be effective in revival, I would say, take great care that you pray for the congregation. You see, if you want revival, pray for a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the congregation, not only on the preacher. Let me show you the importance of this with a scriptural illustration.

I want you to think of two spirit-filled preachers. Peter on the day of Pentecost. Do we agree? Spirit-filled.

Then Stephen before the Sanhedrin. Do we agree? Spirit-filled. Scripture specifically say both of them were full of the spirit when they preached.

Now, I want you to think of the different results between Peter on the day of Pentecost and Stephen before the Sanhedrin. Now, we wouldn't say that Stephen had no results because his greatest fruit was found not so much in his preaching, but in his prayer. His dying prayer was answered in the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, who became the great apostle Paul.

But was there any kind of response from the Sanhedrin when Stephen preached to them? Well, there was a response, but not the kind that you want after a sermon. They killed him. Now, think of Peter on the day of Pentecost.

Was there a response? Well, you better believe it. Thousands of people not saved in the sense, well, they raised their hand to respond to the contrary. I'm talking about converted by the spirit of God.

Thousands of people coming forth saying, what must I do to be saved? Thousands of people not waiting for an invitation. Do you realize that on the day of Pentecost, they didn't wait for an invitation? They were storming the platform, so to speak, saying, you stop, you have to stop preaching and tell us what to do to be saved. Now, what was the difference? Was the difference because Peter was filled with the spirit and Stephen wasn't? No, they were both filled with the spirit.

The difference was that the spirit of God worked differently upon the hearers. That was the difference. You see, Peter's preaching on the day of Pentecost was remarkably fruitful in conversions because the spirit of God was poured out upon the hearers.

You say, well, wait a minute. I thought that if I wanted to pray for revival, I shouldn't pray for the congregation. I shouldn't pray for those who sit under the teaching of the word of God.

Why don't I pray for the community? Well, you can pray for the community. That's fine. Do you understand? There's a sense and I know I'm almost splitting hairs here.

Forgive me this. But when you pray for the community, when you pray for those who don't know Christ, in a sense, you're not praying for revival. You're praying for awakening.

Revival speaks to a quickening, a life giving work among the people of God. And I want you to know that if the people of God come to life, then the public will be reached. There's no difficulty with that.

You revive the church and you'll bring awakening to the community. May I read you another quote from Charles Spurgeon? He said, look at the outside public, the myriads who never go to hear the gospel at all. How are they to be reached by a cold, dead church? So for their sakes, for the sake of this great city, for

the sake of this great nation, for the sake of the world, let us pray.

Oh, God, be pleased to revive us again. If you want a passion for this community, ask God to bring real revival, real quickening to his church. So who do you pray for? You pray for the pastor? Yes.

I appreciate all the prayers. You pray for the leadership of the church? Yes. But if I could say if anybody's misguided in where revival comes from, they neglect to pray for the congregation, for those who hear.

What do you God ask God to do when you pray? Well, notice it there in verse six. Look at the prayer. Will you not revive us again? You pray that God would bring life back to us.

I want you to notice the word that is not there in verse six. It's them. Lord, revive them.

I don't think those prayers go very far because revive them can have the attitude of, well, you know, man, I'm right. I'm revived. You know, God, why don't you just bring everybody else up to my spiritual level in this church? And then maybe we'd see something happen.

No, Lord, revive them. Revive us. Revive us together.

Not them, but us. Me, us, all of us. Lord, revive us.

Secondly, you have to ask God to do it for his glory. Look at it again in verse six. Will you not revive us again that we might become a famous church? Does it say that? But will you not revive us again so that I can become a famous pastor and everybody can know how spiritual I am? It doesn't say that, does it? Look at it.

Verse six. Will you not revive us again that your people may rejoice in you so that you may get the glory, that you may be honored, that people may be looking at you and giving glory and honor to you, Lord God. You see the difference here.

I think many prayers for revival are fundamentally selfish. Fundamentally self-advancing, self-aggrandizing. Lord, lift me up.

Oh, lift your work up, but lift me up, Lord. Let me be known as a great leader of revival or us as a great church. You know, you have to put all of that away.

It all has to be distant from you. Lord, glorify yourself. If it's your will that we be anonymous or obscure or all of that, Lord, it would be easier to do your work that way.

So let it be so if it be your will. Oh, but Lord, let you be praised. Let you be honored.

Let you be glorified. So you ask God to bring life back to us. You ask God to do it for your glory.

Might I say that there's something written over this verse, sort of the watermark. Do you know what a watermark is? You've seen that in the new dollar bills that they print up, the hundred dollar bills, for example, you hold them up and you can see it. It's not visible right away.

But when you hold it up to the light, you can see that there's a design or picture, a pattern behind it. But what's behind verse six? It's praying for a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit. So pray for God to bring life back to us.

Ask God to do it for his glory. But ask for a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Revival comes from the Holy Spirit.

And I want you to understand that the only technology, the only machinery that we have to lay hold of the spirit of God is prayer. You have to let go of your other machinery. You have to let go of your other programs.

Again, Spurgeon said the machinery for getting up a revival may often be the greatest hindrance to true godliness. A church cannot be revived unless God revives it. It has to be a work of the spirit of God.

You can't start a campaign. Revival 2002, you know, and all this and a campaign and all the media and exposure and this and that and try to hype it into existence. Be gone with all of that.

It needs to happen by the Holy Spirit of God. Can I give you an example of what to pray for? If you want to put a bookmark there and in Psalm 85, but turn with me to Acts chapter two, let's look at Acts chapter two, the outpouring of the spirit of God on the day of Pentecost as sort of a picture or a model or an example of what to pray for a true revival here. Look at it here.

It's simple. Hopefully this is familiar territory, but let's look at it again. Acts chapter two, verse one.

Now, when the day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues as of fire and one sat upon each one of them.

And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues as the spirit gave them utterance. I want you to notice something there. You know how I said how it's important to pray for God's work, for God's outpouring upon the congregation.

This is it. This is the Holy Spirit falling, not just on Peter, who was going to preach the sermon that day, not just upon the twelve who were the apostles there that day, it was upon all of them. The one hundred and twenty in the whole meeting, everyone was touched by unique touch from the spirit of God.

This was not a revival among leaders. It was a revival among everyone. My friends, this is one of the great misconceptions about these great works of God in history is that they are organized or led by leaders or great men of God.

A revival. You've got to have a Finney revival. You've got to have a Wesley revival.

You've got to have a Moody revival. You've got to have a Whitfield. I want you to know that those men are actually the exception to the great moving of God in history.

In other words, I think God mixes it up. Sometimes he uses notable leaders. More often than not, he doesn't.

I think sometimes he uses notable leaders just to keep us off guard so we don't systematize these things. But more often than not, these great works of God have no great or notable leader. I don't know if I can explain this to you fully.

Let me just try to paint a picture here for you. In times of revival, meetings often last for hours and hours. Now, it isn't that people sit and listen to the pastor preach for hours and hours.

That's not how it works. You see, instead, it's more of a move of the spirit of God from the pews than from the pulpit. It's more from the seats than from the platform.

It's a movement of God upon the people. That's what happened on the day of Pentecost, right? Have you ever really fully appreciated that? That every one of them was filled with the Holy Spirit. Every one of them had the spirit of God come upon them.

This was what you might call a congregational outpouring of the Holy Spirit. You see, as I've read many of the accounts of this in the past, you would have perhaps at these great meetings, someone that we would call a pastor or worship leader. But much of the meeting would be prayer and singing and testimony and teaching from the congregation in that it was a movement of God upon the people.

In other words, the people are no longer passive. They're just sitting back in the chair. Well, you know, whatever's going to happen, you know, bless me and entertain me, feed me.

No, in these great times of outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the people gain a true spiritual eloquence in prayer. Have you ever had the awkward experience? I'm sure you have. I've had it a lot.

Well, you're with a group of people and say, well, let's pray. And nobody says anything. Nobody prays.

And then somebody will give a halting, you know, awkward prayer. And then there'll be another three minutes of silence. You know, in times of revival, it's not like that at all.

People gain a true spiritual eloquence. And I say true spiritual because it's not just the spinning out of eloquent words. It's not speech making before God.

It's heartfelt, earnest prayer. They're bold to share the scriptures. They exhort one another.

It's not programmed. It's not hype. It's not by machinery.

It's not like saying, OK, now you say something. Now you say something. No, it's the work of the spirit of God upon the people, people prompted by the Holy Spirit.

Often meetings might go like this, and I say often because there's no machinery, there's no program, there's no pattern to this, but there's a typical way that things might happen, as I've read, for example, many of the meetings during the great revival of 1858, 59 in America, they would have an opening song. There'd be a few short announcements. There would be a short message, maybe a five minute devotional exhortation by the person who's leading the meeting.

And then he would say the meeting is now open for prayer. And at that moment, anything might happen, honestly. There would be what you would often call an orderly flood of response from the congregation.

Not wild disorder, not chaos, not swinging from the chandeliers and that kind of nonsense, but what you might call an orderly flood. Sometimes prayer would rise spontaneously from the congregation as a whole, with each earnestly crying out to God for their needs. Sometimes people would line up to make public confession of sins or public profession of faith.

Sometimes they would share brief messages or lead out in song. This is a movement of God upon the people. Now, let me give you some historical examples of this kind of outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the congregation.

September 1904, Wales. This is from the diary of Seth Joshua, one of the great evangelists in Wales at that time. On the 19th, he says revival.

And this is at the very, very front edge of this great move of God. He says revival is breaking out here in greater power. The young receiving the greatest measure of blessing.

They break out into prayer, praise, testimony and exhortation. You see that that's what the meeting was like. People breaking out into prayer, praise, testimony, exhortation.

It would be as if the preachers preaching and as soon as he gives opportunity for people, I have to share this. I have to share what the Lord's doing. God's put in my heart a word of exhortation.

I just want to pray. My heart's so burdened. Would somebody pray for me? It doesn't have to be coaxed out of people.

You don't have to bring it out of them with elaborate invitations and manipulations. Then it's there because the spirit of God's poured out. The next day in his diary, he wrote this.

I cannot leave the building until midnight and even one o'clock in the morning. I closed the meeting several times and yet it would break out again, quite beyond control of human power. Well, he would try to end the meeting.

Now, let's let's go. Tomorrow's another day. We need to end the meeting and he'd give a closing prayer.

And as he said, amen, someone else would break out in a song and it would go for another half hour hour. Do you see the difference here? It's not just a passive. Well, you know, whatever.

Scotland, 1839, William Calmers Burns. He came to Kilsyth and he preached in his father's parish church. And so great was the power of God in that meeting that the prayers and the crying of the congregation drowned out the voice of the preacher.

He's there preaching and people are so stirred. People are just calling out to God. It's just so filled with with grief over their sin, with a great sense of need or conviction that they just fall out and they say, Lord, please touch me.

Please change me. Their prayers and crying out, it drowned out the voice of the preacher. Folks, that's not normal.

That's a unique outpouring of the spirit of God. That's what you pray for. A unique stirring of the spirit of God upon the congregation.

Well, yes, you pray for the pastor. Yes, you pray for the leaders in the church. But don't forget to pray for the congregation.

Let me describe to you another scene from the Welsh revival of 1905. This is from the account of Merlin Lewis. He was seven years old when the Welsh revival came.

He described what the meetings were like. Described how his father came home from the coal mine about three o'clock in the afternoon. He started his day at six o'clock in the morning.

So shift was done at three. Mr. Lewis came home. He took a bath, put on his Sunday clothes and he said, come, mother, we're going to the church.

They got there by four o'clock and the place was packed. Four o'clock in the afternoon, the church is packed. They can't find a seat.

But when they saw mother with three small children, they made room for her. And the man who was so mightily used of God in that Welsh revival, his name was Evan Roberts. And Evan Roberts arrived unexpectedly at that church.

But it was expecting to come in. But he arrived at that church unexpectedly at seven o'clock. The church was so crowded that he had to climb on a bench in the back and literally, both literally walk on the shoulders of men who were crowding the aisles to get to the pulpit.

The platform was so crowded because every inch of space was taken up in the room that he had to climb over the front of the pulpit to get behind it to preach. That's how crowded the place was. There were just people everywhere, literally standing room only.

And we got behind that pulpit. He only said one word. Now, he said it in Welsh.

And so it's one word in Welsh. It's three words in English. He said, let us pray.

Immediately, 1800 people began to prayer, pray. He asked this guy, Merlin Lewis, and say, well, what was it like? What was the prayer like? Was it was just like people in Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Father, Father, Father, you know, bless you, Lord, you know, that kind of prayer, which is sometimes how it is. I mean, in a time of worship, that's kind of where my heart is.

And if you were sitting right next to me, you would hear me say things like that. Thank you, Jesus. Lord God, you know, I love you.

Was it like that? Merlin Lewis would say, no, it wasn't like that at all. You see, everyone is praying his own prayer. Lewis described it like this, that there was one man praying right behind him.

Oh, God, give me another chance. I'll put things right if you'll just give me another chance. Someone praying off to the side saying, Lord, I'll go to India.

I won't argue anymore. Someone else, a mother was praying for her son in Liverpool. You see, just spontaneous prayer.

All Evan Roberts said was, let us pray. And the congregation broke into this outpouring of prayer. This went on for hours.

One man took his elbow and jabbed Mr. Lewis in the ribs. And he said, will you stop praying and tell me how I can become a Christian? I can't stand this anymore. That's the kind of great work that was happening there.

At two o'clock in the morning, after having arrived at four o'clock in the afternoon, Mr. Lewis said to his wife, come, mother, let's put the children to bed. So they walked home in the cold drizzle, put the kids to bed. He only had a few hours till work.

So Mr. Lewis slept in the rocking chair by the fire, got up to go to work at six o'clock in the morning, came home at three o'clock in the afternoon and said, come, mother, let's go to church. They came back to the church to see the same meeting continuing full tilt from the night before. Now, that's not normal.

It's almost we don't expect that to be normal, and that's okay. But we can plead for that kind of outpouring upon a congregation. You're there in Acts chapter two.

Look at verse 17 and 18 when Peter is explaining this great work to the people. He says, and it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh. Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy.

Your old men shall see visions. Your young men shall see visions. Excuse me.

Your old men shall dream dreams. And on my men servants, not my maid servants, I'll pour out my spirit in those days and they shall prophesy. You see, the whole point of this prophecy from Joel that Peter quotes on the day of Pentecost is that it's a broad work of the spirit of God among the people.

The emphasis is on the outpouring of the spirit on all flesh. Now, the Jewish people of Peter's day didn't think that way. They thought, what, 120 people gathered together for him and the Holy Spirit came upon them all.

That's not how it works. They were worse to use, I should say, to how the Holy Spirit worked in the Old Testament, where the Holy Spirit would come upon prophets or priests and he would only come upon special people for special duties. And now under the new covenant, it's different.

The Holy Spirit may, as he will, come upon common folk. I mean, the Jews of Peter's day would say, look, these are just common people. Holy Spirit doesn't come upon them.

But that's the whole point of Joel's prophecy is to say, yes, he does come upon them. That's what's happening right here, right now. And in this latter time, the servants of the Lord would be filled with the Holy Spirit in a unique way.

Now, let's face it, sometimes that's how the common churchgoer is. They simply want a building to worship in a nice service that's not too offensive and a good sermon. And after that, he thinks, leave me alone.

That isn't New Covenant Christianity. No, the New Covenant Christianity sees the ministry as belonging to the people and not to the clergy. Now, if you take a look through the book of Acts, you can find other examples of what I would call a congregational outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Acts chapter two, verse four said, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance, all filled with the Holy Spirit. Acts chapter four, verse thirty one. And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.

Acts chapter ten, verse forty four. And while Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard this word. Now, I have to say this, and perhaps this is a confession of mine, perhaps it's an admission of weakness or lack of experience.

But as I've thought through, I have at least never consciously been aware of ever seeing a meeting like this. Certainly, I don't remember one where I was preaching. Where in any real demonstrable way, you could say the Holy Spirit came upon all in the building.

Oh, certainly some are prompted, some are quickened. You can tell some people are just wrestling. You can tell by response that people.

But you know what? I must say that I don't think I've ever seen this. What you would really call a true congregational outpouring of the Holy Spirit. And as it occurred to me, we just don't think that way often anymore.

We think very much of the individual filling of the Holy Spirit. In other words, if you want to be filled with the Holy Spirit, raise your hand or come forward and we will lay hands on you and pray for you. And friends, that's fine.

I don't mean to depreciate that for one single moment. That's valid and valuable. I can quote to you passages from the book of Acts where that happened.

Acts chapter eight, verse 17. And then they laid hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit. Acts chapter 19, verse six.

And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them. So there is that work of the individual ministry of the filling of the Holy Spirit. But yet who can deny that we have a New Testament pattern of what we might call congregational outpouring of the Holy Spirit? I've never seen it.

I want to. I'm going to start praying for it and I want you to pray for it. But there would be a congregational outpouring of the Spirit of God.

Now, again, individual filling is valid and valuable. But shouldn't we pray for a congregational outpouring of the Holy Spirit? Look at Psalm 85, six again, would you please? The text is simple right in front of us there. Will you not revive us again that your people may rejoice in you? Notice how this prayer is phrased.

It's a prayer full of confidence, isn't it? It's in a rhetorical question. It's actually asking a question, isn't it? And what's the answer? Well, of course you will, God. It's a prayer full of confidence.

When you pray for revival, pray full of faith. You know, you hear about these great works of God. You see them in the scriptures.

You hear about them in history. And sometimes our reaction is, yeah, right. Like that could ever happen here.

You know what? If that's how you're feeling at the moment, don't pray. No, you pray when you're stirred up and full of faith. When you say, God could do that here.

Now, we don't demand of God to do something exactly like he did in Wales or exactly like he did here or exactly like he did there. God's sovereign. But we say, Lord, we want an outpouring of the Holy Spirit to

touch us like it touched them.

So pray full of confidence, pray full of boldness, pleading with God for revival. But you pray full of humility, desiring God's glory and God's praise. Do you see the difference? I think effective prayer for revival is prayer for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

But an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, not just on the pastor, not just on the leaders, but upon the congregation. Let me give you a final encouragement from the Welsh revival. To pray for revival and to pray for a congregational outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Jay Lenoir describes the story of a friend of his named H.J. Galley. Now, H.J. Galley just graduated from Spurgeon's College in London, and he was in his first pastorate somewhere near the city centre of London. Now, upon reading of reports of the Welsh revival in newspapers, he said, I got to see this for myself.

And so he made his way out. Now, he had the advantage of knowing a classmate of his who attended Spurgeon's Pastors' College there, but who was now pastoring a church in Wales that was very much in the middle of what God was doing. And so he contacted this man whose name was Williams, and he said, tell me about it.

I want to see it firsthand. And so Williams met him at the train station. And the first thing that Galley asked him was, he looked him in the eye and he said, is this truly revival? Now, we ask that question, don't we? You hear about this work, that work, but I mean, you want to know, is this the real deal? So he asked Williams, is this truly revival? And his Welsh friend replied, it is like the gate of heaven opened to our souls.

Well, Galley said, listen, I've come a long distance. I'd like to hear Evan Roberts preach. Where's he preaching? You know what Williams said in reply? Well, I don't know.

He doesn't tell anybody. And Galley wondered at that. He said, I thought Evan Roberts was the leader of this revival.

Well, no. What do you mean that the newspapers have it all wrong? Williams replied, God specially uses Evan Roberts, but the Holy Spirit is the leader of the revival. Well, you know, Galley said what I would say in response to that.

Don't we always say that? No, it's just kind of the now. Come on, brother. The Holy Spirit leads this revival.

So Galley asked that question. Oh, come on. Don't we always say that? Williams replied, Brother Galley, we mean that.

Look, Brother Galley, there's about a thousand churches in South Wales. Evan Roberts might show up at my church tonight. But if he doesn't, the Lord will be there mighty in power.

Oh, so you're having special meetings, Galley wondered. If he shows up at church tonight and Williams replied and said, my church has been packed for six weeks. You mean the other churches in town are using your church for united meetings? No, every church in town from Anglican to Salvation Army is packed.

Well, when do you have the meetings? From six to midnight. What? From six o'clock in the evening to midnight? No, from six in the morning to midnight. Well, Galley said not the same people the entire time.

He said, oh, no. You know, first we get the minors who come to the meeting before the shift starts. And then in the mid morning, we have the housekeepers who come around noon.

We have a united prayer meeting with the whole community in the afternoon. Schoolchildren come for special meetings. But from six in the evening until midnight, the place will be packed with everyone.

Galley was amazed. He said, how do you keep up with the preaching? Williams said, what did you say? He said, how do you keep up with the preaching six hours every evening? You know what Williams said? He said, I haven't preached for six weeks. Well, then Galley was amazed.

He said, who preached last night? He said, oh, maybe 17 people, including an old granny of 78 and a boy of 12. You see, people just so moved that they had to speak, that they had to give that word of exhortation, that they had to pray, that they had to plead, that they had to declare what God was doing. May God once again pour out his spirit on all flesh.

Will you not revive us again that your people may rejoice in you? Father, let this word stir us to prayer. You know, Lord, we're not here to manufacture anything, to manipulate anything. We're here to cry out before you and say, Lord, send revival.

Lord, you know that the pastor needs it. You know that the leaders of our church need it. Father, we pray for it for the whole congregation, that there would be a great outpouring.

Lord, I ask that we would see it in our midst, something remarkable. And Lord, we're not asking you to recreate something from the past. We're not asking you to imitate your work in days gone by.

Lord, you can do a new thing in a fresh way. But Lord, we want it to have the fingerprint of your spirit being poured out upon the whole congregation. Won't you do this, Lord? Won't you stir our hearts to pray for this diligently? To say unto you, Lord, will you not revive us again that your people may rejoice in you? Stir us to prayer, Lord.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

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