

Ploughman And The Reaper

by David Guzik

This sermon emphasizes the importance of revival, focusing on the need for personal, church, and global revival. It highlights the historical impact of revivalists like Dr. J. Edwin Orr and the call for a deep, quality revival that brings forth lasting fruit. The speaker urges humility, dedication to God's work, and readiness for a powerful outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

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Transcript

Good afternoon everyone. You know, I come from an area in the world where churches are built in former supermarkets and factory zones and warehouses and such. To climb up steps into a pulpit such as this, it's a great treat.

It's a great treat for me to speak to you. This is my second Revival Conference. Last year I was with the group in Scotland and had a wonderful time.

Though I do confess that I feel somewhat out of place. I'm just a Bible teacher, an expositor, and if God uses me to benefit his body in any way, it's mostly as a Bible teacher and as an expositor. I'm not a great preacher, still less am I really a prophet like some of the brothers we've heard this conference.

But I am a Bible teacher with a great love and a great passion, a great interest in Revival. I'm interested in Revival biblically because it is a profoundly biblically phenomenon. I'm interested in Revival historically.

When I went to university, that was the major area of my studies, was in history. And I'm astounded by the historical evidence and phenomenon of Revival. I'm interested in Revival having been a pastor for some 20 years.

I'm interested in Revival pastorally. I know that the church of Jesus Christ needs Revival. But also, and maybe I should say especially, I am interested in Revival personally.

But because I have experienced tremendous seasons of personal Revival in my own life, and with one of them that was centered around this great interest that I started developing in Revival through my interest in a great man of God who has gone home to heaven for some 22 years now, a man named Dr. J. Edwin Orr. He was an Ulster man, but God used him to impact the world in a mighty way. I never knew him when he was alive, although I heard him a few times as a young pastor in conferences.

It really kind of torments me right now. He lived just a few miles away from me. As a young pastor, I could have visited him often, but I was just ignorant and too busy.

Now, having heard him as a young pastor on a few occasions, I got some of his books and used bookstores. I would see a title by J. Edwin Orr, and I'd pick it up and I'd put it in my library. I'll read that sometime.

Well, that sometime turned out to be a trip that I took one time to go at a conference on the other side of the nation. As I would do, and as you probably do sometimes, you're going to take a trip, you take a book to read with you. I remembered this book by J. Edwin Orr on my bookshelf called This is the Victory.

I took it off, I put it in my bag, and I started reading it during my travels, and I was profoundly touched by that book. It described his travels as a young man throughout the United States, going from east to west, and up into Canada, and going over all the United States, preaching the message of revival as a young man. And I tell you, it just spoke to my heart so powerfully about what God can do in a work of revival, but both in his day and especially in our own day, and I started getting my hands on as much stuff from Dr. J. Edwin Orr as I could.

I found out that there was really very few of his resources on the internet, and so I was happy when the website JEdwinOrr.com was founded. And it's just an attempt to get his materials, his audio materials, some print materials. I recommend it to you highly.

JEdwinOrr.com. It's a really wonderful resource. Well, I learned through all of this that there are amazing times of rapid advance in the work of God on this earth. Do you know that? Now, you know that in your own spiritual life, don't you? You know that there are seasons of rapid spiritual advance in your own Christian life, right? I trust that some of you here are experiencing that or have begun to experience it at this conference, but it's true for the body of Christ as a whole.

And again, so much of this was communicated to me by this ministry of Dr. J. Edwin Orr. As a young man on fire for God in Belfast, he left a good paying job in the middle of the Great Depression, believing that God would use him as he traveled all about the United Kingdom and then all about the world to promote and to prepare God's people for revival. And he did it all by faith.

He left with less than a pound in his pocket. He trusted God every day along the way, and he came back with less than a pound in his pocket. But God had provided every need, not only for him, but for his widowed mother at home.

Now, later on, J. Edwin Orr went on to become a great scholar of the Bible and a great scholar of revival. So great of a scholar that F. F. Bruce, the wonderful Christian writer and commentator and scholar, he said this of Dr. J. Edwin Orr. He said, Some men study history, some men write about history, and some men make history.

As far as the history of revival is concerned, J. Edwin Orr has done all three. And it's true. Now, he never lost his great passion for the reality of revival.

And I don't want to lose it either. So I want to spend in the few moments I have with you now, taking a look at a passage that Brother Frank read the first time we were together here at the conference. He read from Amos chapter 9, and I'd like you to turn in your Bibles to Amos chapter 9, beginning at verse 13.

We read there, Amos chapter 9, verse 13. Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes, him who sows seed. The mountains shall drip with sweet wine, and all the hills shall be full of rain, and the rivers shall flow with it.

Now, the book of Amos is filled with many strong warnings to God's people. In their prosperity, the people of Israel almost forgot God completely, but he didn't forget them. God, in his graciousness, he sent to them a bold prophet, a prophet like the simple farmer Amos, a prophet like some of the men that we've heard together here during this conference, and he sent those prophets to his people to turn his people back.

God knew that they would not turn back, and he said so through Amos, and so God pronounced judgment upon the people of Israel through the prophet Amos. Let me read to you some of the strong words of judgment against the people of Israel found in the book of Amos. For thus says the Lord, for three transgressions of Judah, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, because they have despised the law of the Lord, and have not kept his commandments.

Their lies lead them astray, lies which their father has followed, but I will send a fire upon Judah, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem. That's from chapter 2, verses 4 and 5. That's a heavy word of judgment, is it not? One more, from chapter 5, starting at verse 21. I hate, I despise your feast days, and I do not savor your sacred assemblies.

Though you offer me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not accept them. I will not regard your fattened peace offerings. Take away from me the noise of your songs, for I will not hear the melody of your stringed instruments.

That's a severe word of judgment from the prophet of God to his people, and would not a similar word of judgment be accurately heard in many churches today? As we've heard, and I bear the risk of repeating what my other brothers have said before, but there is so often a mechanical spirit in the church today. The kind of spirit where the operations of the church could continue just fine without the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, without the instructions of the Word of God, because we've got our system, we've got our plan, we've got our mechanism. You just wind it up and you let it go.

It's something we need to confront, and we need to hear the word of God's judgment, the word, should I say of his wrath. His wrath against, yes, the culture at large, but you know where judgment begins. Where does judgment begin? Judgment begins at the house of God.

And really, is that not the first work of revival? It's God bringing his judgment to the house of God. It's a cleansing judgment, it's a purifying judgment. Might I say it's a blessed judgment, is it not? But it is judgment nonetheless.

And nevertheless, God would not abandon his failing people in the days of Amos, and he promised them an ultimate resolution of restoration. And there in the rich images that came very easily to a farmer like Amos, God promised remarkable reinvigoration of the nation. He promised to make them alive again.

Did you see what he said? Look in at chapter 9, verse 13. He announced that behold, the days are coming. And under God's inspiration, the prophet Amos ended his words to the nation.

The whole book is filled with judgment, but it's almost as if God refused. I cannot end on judgment, God says, I must give them hope. I must point them towards a revival, a restoration, a reinvigoration, and that's exactly what he did.

He looked forward to a day of great prosperity, both materially and spiritually. And under the reign of Jeroboam II, they had material abundance, but not spiritual abundance. God promised to restore them to spiritual vitality.

And you know in those days, I would say that Israel had no idea how good it could be. They were in love with the material prosperity that Jeroboam II, under his reign, had given them, but they were far from God. They had no idea.

They had no idea how they were selling out the good things of God for a mess of pottage, the material treats from this world. This is how good it could be. Shall I read it to you again? When the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him who sows seed, the mountain shall drip with sweet wine, and all the hills shall flow with it.

Those days would come, and with those words, the prophet Amos described the miraculous and amazing blessing of God that would come upon his people. And you can just imagine what the scene would be like, right? You know how it works, right? Now, I'm not a farmer. I've never been a farmer.

I've never lived on a farm. About all I know about farms is what I see in the movies and such. But listen, I know enough, I know what a plowman is.

He's the guy who plows the field. He prepares it for planting. The plowman does his work, right? There he is plowing the field, and then after the plowman comes the man who plants the seed, right? He scatters it, he plants it, and then after him comes the man who waters the seed.

And then after that, the seeds grow, the harvest comes in, and then comes in the reaper. Now, wouldn't you say that the work of the plowman and the work of the reaper is somewhat separated, right? The reaper doesn't begin his work the day after the plowman starts. But did you see what Amos tells him? I'll read it to you again.

When the plowman shall overtake the reaper. There's the reaper doing his job, and he's bringing in such a big, such a great crop has grown that his work of reaping extends into the time when the plowman must get busy, and the plowman is pushing the reaper out of the way. I must plant, I must plant.

The harvest is so rich, it's so abundant. God has blessed us so much that the plowman is running over on top of the reaper, and as he says, the treader of grapes, him who sows seed. In other words, there is such a great blessing, the magnitude of it, the amount of it is so great that the plowman overtakes the reaper.

Now, this shows us something. It shows us that when God sends blessing and restoration, the fruit comes quickly. Now, normally, the work of plowman and reaper work apart.

Their work is separated by many months, but in these unique seasons of blessing and restoration, they bump into each other. The crops are so big, and we pray for such quick fruit to happen among us. There

have been such seasons.

There have been such seasons recorded in the Bible. There have been many such seasons recorded in history. I'm standing in the pulpit that was basically ground zero for one such quick outpouring, when some 100,000 souls were brought to God in a period of months.

A remarkably quick harvest, would you not say? Think of another one that touched this land some 150 years ago, the great work 1859 or so. You know, it didn't begin here, though. It didn't even begin in America, where it is popularly thought to begin.

It began in Canada. You see, at that time, the work of evangelical Christianity had been in decline for about 12 years. Churches were shrinking, or at least failing to keep up with the growth rate, and many people had become very spiritually disillusioned, often because of the fall of William Miller and his great prophetic expectation that Jesus would return in 1844.

When he did not, there was a great falling away. There were many people disillusioned by this. And then also, it was a season in the United States of great financial prosperity.

People were making a lot of money, and when people make a lot of money, it's easy for them to forget about God. The issue of slavery, great social issues, also divided the church in a remarkable way in the United States. It seemed like nothing could bring them together.

People were disillusioned because of prophetic failures. People were making money and materialistic, and people were divided on great social issues. But sometime before 1857, a British Methodist named William Arthur preached a series of powerful sermons in Ohio, and then he published these messages in a book titled Tongues of Fire.

Arthur asked his readers to get back to Pentecost. Now friends, this was before the Pentecostal movement. But he was asking his readers to get back to Pentecost, to seek God for a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit and power, and he appealed to them to pray to God to send upon his church a new Pentecost.

His book concluded with a remarkable prayer. Let me read it to you now. Listen carefully.

This was the prayer. Descend upon all the churches, renew Pentecost in this our age. Baptize thy people generally again with tongues of fire.

Crown this century with a revival of pure religion, greater than that of the last century, greater than that of the first, and greater than any demonstration of the Spirit ever yet given to man. Evangelicals of all denominations read this book and were turned on fire by it, and many said that within a few years this extraordinary prayer was answered. The early stages of this revival saw concerted concerts of prayer, if you could say, all over the United States and Canada.

Denominations were officially committed to prayer for revival and very much engaged upon it. For example, here's a prayer recorded at a Presbyterian General Assembly in the period before the revival. They said, we would upon our bended knees offer the prayer of Habakkuk, O Lord, revive thy work.

Next to a state of actual revival is the sense of its need and the struggle to attain it. At any sacrifice of treasure, toil, or time, we must trust that is not distant when this state of general revival shall be ours. It's a

glorious thing when Presbyterians pray like that.

Now it's a great mistake to think of this as just a localized work somewhere. It began actually in Canada under the work of a Methodist ministry couple named Walter and Phoebe Palmer. There they were ministering at summer camp meetings, and they stopped in Hamilton.

Their baggage was lost, and they had an unexpected stay there because of lost baggage. And the ministers of that town arranged to have combined meetings with them on very short notice, and very few people attended the first meetings. Yet after that there arose such an awakening from Hamilton and Canada that business leaders and common people all repented, and that revival continued in Canada through 1860.

But then it came to the United States. First it came through the South and swept through in remarkable patterns. There were pastors who were pleading with their people and telling them to pray for a descent of the Holy Spirit upon their congregation, and pastors who refused to go up in the pulpit until they felt the quickening of the Holy Spirit.

And once they felt it, they went and God poured out His Spirit, and it continued on in the remarkable New York City businessmen's prayer meetings. You know the story of that, don't you? Of this man Jeremiah Lamphere. He started a weekly noontime prayer meeting on Wednesday the 23rd of September 1857 on a church in Fulton Street.

He planned to have the prayer meeting last one hour, and he gave out announcements to encourage other people to come. At the first meeting, Lamphere stood alone in the room at noon until one other person came about ten minutes late. Eventually, six people came to pray with him on the first day.

The second week, there were twenty men. The third week, there were forty praying men. And after that, they started praying every day at noon.

And in six months, ten thousand businessmen gathered for prayer each day in New York. Now you know, one newspaper man in New York started speaking against the revival. And so another newspaper man from a competing newspaper, this was Horace Greeley, the famous man who said, go west young man.

Horace Greeley, his newspaper in New York, they said, well if my opponent, my competitor is against the revival, I'm going to be for it. And so the newspaper man, very much like the Welsh Revival was promoted by the secular press, he sent out reporters to go out and count how many people there were in prayer meetings all over the city on that day. And that's where they get the figure of ten thousand from a secular newspaper account.

And it spread. It spread all over. It spread in the winter of 1858, where the Baptists had so many candidates for baptism that they broke ice in the rivers and they baptized believers in the cold water.

It spread to New England and to Boston, where Finney was preaching at the New Park Street Church. Finney said there were too many converts to keep count. In Newark, New Jersey, the population of 70,000 saw 2,785 conversions.

In Philadelphia, 3,000 men gathered daily for prayer. In Washington, D.C., there were five daily prayer meetings and one of them was attended by some 5,000 men. All over the country, you can get report after report, all sorts of amazing, wonderful works of God.

And you could say that it was a miraculous time when the work of the plowman bumped up against the work of the weaver. Now again, it's a remarkable season. What does it mean to us today? Isn't that the question? I mean, I love to talk about what God has done in the past, don't you? But I see the great value of it in this.

You see, the value of the past is to give us faith for the present. We believe that God can do it again. Listen, we know from the Bible that he's done it in Bible times.

We know in history that he's done it through history. And I could go on and on and talk about revival after revival, and I know that there's brothers here who know more about the history of revival than certainly I do. The phenomenon is real, but we bring it to our own day today, and we say, God, why don't you do it today? Why? Is God a respecter of persons? Did God like them more 150 years ago than he likes us today? Did he say, well, you know, those are my special favorites.

I'll give them revival. But not these people who live in the 21st century. Is God's arm weak now? Has God grown weaker over the years? No, 150 years ago he was stronger.

1904, wow, he was mighty then. Oh, but today, you know, maybe God's tired. No, that's not it either, is it? Perhaps, perhaps God loved them more.

No, no, we could not say that. A thousand times over, we could never say that God loved them more. If I could call your attention to something, you could keep your finger in the Amos 9 passage.

I want to point out a passage to you from Psalm 119, verse 126. Psalm 119, verse 126. It's a unique thing to be able to say verse 126, but you can only say it talking about Psalm 119.

When we hear about God's great work in the past, I think this is the sort of thing it should stir us to today. To say this, Psalm 119, verse 126. It is time for you to act, O Lord, for they have regarded your law as void.

Is this not a prayer for us today? It's not a prayer for us to go to God. And I have to say that as I was studying the Psalm, I was astounded at the boldness of the Psalmist. The boldness to look up to heaven and tell God when it is time for him to act.

But he says, God, it is time for you to act, O Lord. Why? For they have regarded your law as void. Is it not true today? Can we not stand on this same principle today? Is it not true that the mass people in our Western culture regard the law of God as void? They don't give it a second thought.

It's irrelevant to them. They may think it's nice for you and for your spiritual delusions, but they regard it as void, as void for them. We can take this verse to God.

This is the tragedy of it for many, far too many. It's true in the church as well. The word of God is regarded as void.

So we look up to God and we say, it is time for you to act, O Lord. Now, I find this verse very personally challenging because it's one thing for me to look up to heaven and say, now, God, it's time for you to do something. But is it even possible for me to pray this prayer without looking at my own life, without realizing that to pray a prayer such as this requires something of me? It requires me to look at my life and say, God, in what way would you act upon me right now? This is the crying need.

As you've heard again and again, I offer to say no new thing to you right now, only to reinforce what my far more gifted brothers have said time and time before into this conference. But it's a time for seeking God. It's a time for putting away self.

It's a time for putting our focus upon Jesus Christ, about being concerned with holiness and the Lord's work of sanctification in our life and having a new commitment unto God. But you can't pray these prayers for revival without having that concern for your own life. It's never, O Lord, revive them.

It's, O God, revive me. Now, we also see from this verse in Amos chapter 9 that when God sends blessing and restoration, fruit also comes from unexpected places. Did you see what it said in that verse? It said the mountain shall drip with sweet wine and the hills shall flow with it.

Now, normally, grapes don't grow upon mountains. They grow in lower places. You know, I live in Germany.

I live in Germany and one of the wonderful things to do as a tourist in Germany is to drive through the Rhine River Valley or the Mosel River Valley and you see these beautiful low land hills surrounding the rivers. These valleys here formed by the rivers, they're very low, but yet they form wonderful, wonderful ground for growing grapes, beautiful vineyards. But here it says that the mountains shall drip with wine, sweet wine I should say, and we should pray for such a season of unexpected fruit.

Now, perhaps God wants to give you fruit in unexpected places, but here's the problem. You're not expecting it there. Isn't that the very nature of an unexpected place? If you were expecting it, it wouldn't be an unexpected place.

And so let God show you unexpected places in your life and in what you are allowed to do to serve Him where there might be fruit. Perhaps it's an unexpected place. Perhaps it's an unexpected person.

Perhaps it's unexpected ministry. Aren't we astounded as we think of the work of revival how often God uses the unexpected, the unexpected one. This verse also shows us that when God sends blessing and restoration, the fruit comes with great quality.

Amos looked forward to the day when the wine that came quickly and unexpectedly places, from unexpected places would be what? Would be sweet wine. Now, I'm not a wine connoisseur, but Amos used that phrase to describe good and high quality fruit from the work. And that's what we pray for.

You know, sometimes I think that the biggest problem in the church today is not that we see no fruit from our labors, but it's often such low quality fruit. It's fruit that does not remain. It's fruit that does not abide.

And I wonder, I wonder if there's not a person here who might be dangerously close to slipping into that very category. You wouldn't think so, would you? You wouldn't think that a person who's contemplating, maybe I just won't keep on going with Jesus Christ. Maybe I'll go back to my old loves, my old amusements, my old habits.

You wouldn't think that a person like that would come to a revival conference. But I know that God draws people under the strangest of circumstances, does he not? And so if I'm speaking to you right now, it's important for you to realize that your life needs to not just be fruit unto the Lord, but quality fruit. Fruit that will be to his glory.

Fruit that will be, as Amos put it, it'll be sweet wine. Perhaps the way that God wants to bless your life is to deepen your walk with him to where it's no longer a superficial thing. I hate to say it, but I'll say it straightforwardly to you.

Maybe your attendance at this very conference is a demonstration of superficial Christianity. It may very well be. Are there not Christians who live their life flitting about from conference to conference, from thrill to thrill, from excitement to excitement, but never sink down deep roots in the Lord Jesus Christ? Would it be strange for me to assume that there might not be one or two of those among us right now? And if it is, it's something to hear the tender heart of God speaking to your heart right now and say, Lord, you've given me this word that has seemed harsh and you've spoken to me throughout this conference, but you've spoken it to me so that I would repent of it.

That I would bring forth a quality fruit unto you. Here's the great truth of it. It's that God can make a massive impact upon the world with a small group of quality people, right? And I don't mean quality in the sense of being more justified before God, more righteous before his throne.

I simply mean quality in the sense of more committed and sold out to Jesus Christ. Simply in the sense of being those who would be more willing to endure some of the shame, some of the mocking, some of the difficult, some of the death to self that goes on in true ministry. You see, when God sends blessing and restoration, the workers may sometimes be anonymous.

If you look at verse 13 again, you see that you have a plowman, you have a reaper, you have the man who treads the grapes, you have the guy who sows the seeds, but are there any names given to us? None. They're anonymous people. And this shows that even in times of great harvest, the names may remain anonymous.

We think of the great names and well should we mark them and celebrate them. We think of the men like Evan Roberts, the men like Sidney Evans, the men of so many other names that we understand, but isn't it a wonderful thing to cherish in our hearts the anonymous people who we have no idea who they are by name that God has used mightily in works of revival. And if there is anyone here, if there is anyone here at this conference whose interest in revival has at its core a desire for self-promotion, a desire for fame, a desire for notoriety, to be known as someone who brought the revival, then I pray that with all charity, God will root that out of you completely.

There'll be a thorough death to self. Yet at the same time, we notice that in this season of great harvest, God may not raise up a high profile preacher or prophet. He may do all the work through relatively anonymous servants, yet nevertheless, we should be content to be such servants and we should always be aware of wanting revival out of the desire to make a name for ourselves.

You also see that when God sends revival, there's a division of labor. The plowman still plowed, the reaper still reaped, the treader of grapes still tread upon his grapes, and the guy who sowed seeds still sowed his seed. You see, because the important thing is the work of the harvest in general.

It's far greater than the work of any individual believer, but perhaps God has given you a particular function in the body of Christ. Be happy with it. Be content with it.

Don't long after someone else's gifts or callings. Do your work to the best and in great faith and trust that God will bring the others who need to do the work. May I say that the plowman is not in competition with

the reaper.

We refuse to compete. We refuse to measure ourselves against another. Might I say as well that when God sends blessing and restoration, the work is blessed, but it is still work.

To plow is work, to reap is work, to tread upon the grapes, to sow the seed, it is still work. God just doesn't do it all for them. But under God's blessing, the work is done with energy and joy.

The plowman just doesn't sit around and wait back. He's so filled with energy. He's so filled with joy that he's pushing the reaper out of the way so that he can get his job done.

And these seasons of unexpected blessing do not mean that God's people sit on their hands and do nothing. There's still work for the plowman and the reaper to do, but it's glorious, blessed work. I want to speak a word to those of you who are involved in ministry in some way.

Don't you wait for the day when the ministry becomes easy. There's always an element of sacrifice. There's always an element of being poured out of death to self.

But there is a way of work that is blessed and there is a way of work that is cursed. The great English preacher Charles Spurgeon described this kind of blessed work. May I read you a quote from him? He said, I meet with my brethren in the ministry who are able to preach day after day, day after day, who are not half so tired as they were.

And I saw a brother minister this week who has been having meetings in his church every day. And the people have been so earnest that they will often keep him from 6 o'clock in the evening until 2 in the morning. Oh, said one of their members, our minister will kill himself.

Not he, said I. That is the kind of work that will kill no man. It is preaching to sleepy congregations that kills good ministers, but not preaching to earnest people. So when I saw him, his eyes were sparkling and I said to him, brother, you do not look like a man who is being killed.

Killed, my brother, he said, while I am living twice as much as I did before, I was never so happy, never so hardy, never so well. That's how it is, isn't it? When God's blessing is upon the work, even though it is taxing, even though it is work, there is a special joy in the midst of it. Let me say that even when we are not in such blessed times, the work of God deserves our energy and our effort.

We do not work for God only when it seems glorious. No, but also when it seems more difficult. We are, to use the phrase that Paul spoke to Timothy, right? We are ready in season and out of season.

Yet without apology, we look forward to and enjoy special seasons of God's blessing. I remember speaking with a pastor friend some years ago, and this was a man who has a wonderful heart for revival, and he came to London and founded a church and did a wonderful work there, and he told me about an occasion when he was praying for revival. He was very excited about praying for revival, and he said that he felt the Lord speak to him very strongly, saying, stop praying for revival.

Isn't that wonderful? Isn't that a strange thing for God to say? Stop praying for revival. I can actually think of a few reasons why God would want his people to stop praying for revival. Perhaps it would be exactly the situation that our brother Alan spoke of before, right? Stop praying for revival, and instead start thanking him because he's already sent it, or he is sending it right now.

I can see where that would be God's word to people, would it not be? I can see another reason why God would tell his people, stop praying for revival, and that would be because they're praying out of a wrong heart. They're praying out of a heart that says, Lord, revive them, and they pray with a sense of spiritual superiority. Might I say that this is a special danger for those among God's people who are interested in revival.

The devil will tempt you, your flesh will tempt you to adopt a spirit, a posture of spiritual superiority, and without saying the words, your attitude in the body of Christ is something like this, Lord, make them as spiritual as me. Listen, those kind of prayers, I believe, never work, and even if you never vocalize that to God, he knows your heart if that's within your heart. Might I say those kind of prayers never work, even if they're true.

Let's just say, for the sake of argument, that it's true, that God has brought true revival to your life, and how blessed it would be for your church, or your group of Christians, whoever you're in fellowship with, if they were brought up to the same place, let's say it's true that it would be blessed for them to come up to your same place. At the same time, those prayers never work, even if they are true, because they're too focused upon your own spirituality. Don't you think it's wonderful that Jesus never seemed to focus on his own spirituality? When he wanted to teach the disciples a lesson about the greatest in the kingdom, he says, okay, disciples, let me tell you about the greatest in the kingdom.

Now, I would expect Jesus' next words to be, look at me now, because he is the greatest in the kingdom, is he not? But what did he do? Without focus on his own spirituality, he brought to them a child, and he said, if you want to be great in the kingdom of God, become like this child. Of course, Jesus is the greatest, he is the most childlike in that appropriate spiritual sense, but he was not focused upon his own spirituality, instead he was focused upon God his father. And this is why I think such prayers are dangerous, and why they actually hinder the work of the church.

I believe that's why God may tell a person to stop praying for revival. But in the particular case of this man who told me this story, it wasn't the fact that God had sent revival and he just needed to believe it. It wasn't the fact that he was praying with the wrong heart.

No, God told him to stop praying for revival in another way. It was to say, stop praying for revival in the sense of waiting for it and seeing no value in the more ordinary work of the church. Friends, I know it's frustrating.

I know to do the daily functions of the church, it's not easy. It's not pleasant. And we long for God to send blessed seasons of revival when the plowmen would overtake the weepers.

And we'll continue to do that. But in the meantime, we will continue to plow and seed and plant and water and harvest as faithful servants, but as we do, we pray and we hope for a time when the plowman overtakes the weeper. I wish I were a prophet.

I wish I could stand before you with a prophetic word that came straight from heaven to you that would tell you, I know that I know that God will send revival and that he'll send it sooner than some of us think. I can't speak it as a prophet, but I can speak it as a man with the expectation of faith. It seems that God is stirring too many people.

And maybe, maybe it is true that there is yet a ways to go in the preparation of his church until God sends this. These are things that God alone knows. And if it is, what is the call for us? Let's get ready.

Let's make ourselves ready for revival. Let's be willing to do whatever God would prompt us to do. I believe, I believe that God will send us a time when the plowman will overtake the weeper.

Father, that is our prayer. Lord, without despising the ordinary work of your church, without despising the ministry that happens through our best efforts in a humble way, empowered by your spirit, without despising any of that ordinary work, we plead to you for a great outpouring of your spirit. We say, Lord, send such a season, when the harvest is so great, when it comes with such rapidity, when it comes with such size, when it comes with such quality, that all would know that it is the hand of God among us.

Do it, Lord. And Father, I think ahead now to the last session that we have this evening. I think, Lord, of all the wonderful words that have been spoken so far from this pulpit.

And I leave it to you, Holy Spirit, to anoint our brother, David Lead. Lord, anything lacking, any additional word of your spirit to this group and to all who view it over the world, that you would speak it to him. We rejoice in your word to us.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

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