

Revival

by David Legge

The sermon emphasizes the need for revival among God's people, particularly in Ulster, due to complacency, sin, and a lack of real prayer and faith.

Duration: 31:27

Scripture: Psalm 85:4

Topics: "Revival"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the need for revival and the eradication of unbelief. He laments the lack of holiness in society and the negative perception of those who strive for holiness. The preacher shares a story about two elderly women who fervently prayed for revival despite their physical limitations. He highlights the impact of God's presence on an entire community, leading to the closure of sinful establishments. The sermon concludes with a call for repentance and a plea for God to turn His anger away from His people. The message is based on Psalm 85:4-7.

Transcript

Our reading is taken from Psalm 85. Let me say before we read the Word of God that this is a message I bring to you from my heart. It's not specifically a doctrinal message, it's not really an exegetical message from the Word of God, but it's a message, and I say this before God, that burns upon my heart continually.

I believe it's the message that God would have me bring today. It wasn't the message that I set out to bring to you early this morning, but it's the message that I'm bringing now to you. It's a message of exhortation, a message of self-examination, and it will be wasted if you have not a heart of expectation to hear what God would say to you today.

It is a message that I don't want you to apply to your mother or father, to your son or daughter, to a deacon that you know in the church, to a friend or a brother and sister in Christ, but to you, to your heart. So, let's read the Word of God together. Psalm 85, and we're only reading a few verses, verse four to seven.

Turn us, O God, of our salvation, and cause thine anger toward us to cease. Wilt thou be angry with us forever? Wilt thou draw thine anger to all generations? Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee? Show us thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us thy salvation. If I were to tell you to do one thing that should encourage you in your Christian life day by day, it would be this.

Go into the Christian bookshop in Newcastle and buy books, as many as you can, on the subject of revival. One of the greatest stimulants to my Christian walk and maturity has been that, to read about how God, not a preacher, not a denomination, not a Christian community, but how God himself has come down, as it were, from heaven and saturated a people for himself. I read about a revival in Lewes in the 40s and in the 50s, just across the ocean there into the Hebrides, to the northwest of Scotland.

And I read how God came down. Now listen, God himself, not an evangelistic campaign, not even a fiery gospel evangelist, but God himself, who needs not a man or a woman, God came down and God bled. I read of how they heard about this great gospel preaching and how they came in their busloads.

There were no invitations put out, there were no posters put up, but they just came in their busloads up the mountains, down the valleys, on the hills, and they all came to hear the word of God, for God was there. I read of stories of bus drivers that had to stop on the side of the road, the tears tripping them, they were under conviction of sin, and everyone in the bus was crying and weeping and wailing. I read of whole busloads being converted before they even get to the church itself.

They haven't heard the gospel yet, but God has come upon them. God is working with them, God's spirit is striving with them, and there is a mighty move of God. I wondered how this all came to pass.

And as I read on, I read about two old women in their 80s, who were bedridden, who were blind, who were covered in sores because they couldn't get out of their bed. But day after day, night after night, week after week, they cried from their hearts to God, that God would move, that God would revive them again. The pubs were closed, and the clubs were shut down, and the dances were eradicated, because God not just came into a church, or into a community's lives, or into individual lives, but God came down upon a whole community, a whole society.

Can you imagine what it would be like if God came down upon Kilkenny? I read about the Welsh Revival, not too long ago, and it was in our century, the 1900s. I read of how it came about. It began in a little CE with a group of young people, and one little girl stood to her feet among those young people, and looked to heaven and said, oh I do love Jesus.

That's how it started. One little girl, oh I do love Jesus, and she sat down, and like a fire, God's Spirit moved throughout that CE, that young people. It moved throughout the young people in the city, and in the town, and then right like a fire throughout the whole community.

So much so that it influenced the whole world. I read about the city of Coleraine in 1859, and I read about an open air meeting where there were over 15,000 people gathered into the square there around the town hall in Coleraine, our Coleraine. There's a Presbyterian minister stood and preached the gospel, and the open air he was preaching there to those people, and all of a sudden in the silence he heard this, ah, a cry, and a man falls to his feet, falls to his knees in conviction of sin, and then another cry over here, and another over here, and from the back, and in the middle, and all of a sudden people are falling down, and it's not the Toronto blessing.

It's not some kind of charismatic experience. It is the Holy Spirit of God in conviction. They're not laughing, but they're weeping.

And the records tell us that there were so many people that came into that town hall to be counseled about their soul's salvation that they hadn't enough people to deal with them. That's here. That's our repro.

As we speak in Brazil, in China, in parts all over the world, now as we are speaking here, there is revival. God is moving in revival because the God of revival, praise him, is still alive. Do you believe that? If we look at our psalm, we see that these people here didn't believe it.

Turn us, O God, of our salvation. Cause thine anger toward us to cease. Wilt thou be angry with us forever? Verse 5. Wilt thou draw thine anger to all generations? Wilt thou not revive us again that thy people may rejoice in thee? Show us thy mercy, O Lord.

Grant us thy salvation. God was hiding his face from his own people for one reason. Sin.

That's always the reason. They realized it. My friends, I believe evangelicalism within the whole of Ulster and perhaps the British Isles, God is angry with them.

You might think that's a bit harsh. I believe that God is angry with them because there is sin among them. God is not moving among his people, and I believe that our God wants to move.

I believe that God wants to revive. I believe that revival is God's norm, and the only reason it doesn't happen is because God's people are not in a position to let it happen. Why is it that his servants say, Lord, wilt thou not cease thine anger toward us? Lord, come, hide our sins from thy face.

Lord, come and forgive us. Lord, come and have mercy upon us. The first thing I want you to see this people knew they needed was repentance.

Verse 4 and 5. Turn us, O God, of our salvation. We need to be turned. We need to be turned from our complacency, our sin, our selfish lives and self-indulgence.

We need to be turned from it by God because we're so stuck in it that we can't turn ourselves. David, what are you talking about? You're preaching an Ulster now. Oh, I know that.

And the sins of evangelicalism are many. There's false security. It's like the people that the prophet Amos spoke to, and he looked to them and said, woe unto you that are at ease in Zion.

And I believe in eternal security as much as any of you here. But let me say this. Some of us are so low and deep within it that we're too comfortable.

I believe it. But there are people running about our province and especially where I come from in East Belfast and you go from door to door and knock on it and you offer them the gospel and when I was a child, I asked the Lord into my heart, but it didn't work for me. Or I got saved at a mission or some friend led me to Christ and it just didn't work for me.

And they never tried Christ at all. It was some decision. I don't know how they made it, but it was not of the Spirit of God.

And there are people bound for hell, thinking they're saved and they're not. The word of God teaches and my friend, take note. If you're in that boat and you were saved as a child, or you think you were, listen.

If there's no fruit following, the Bible teaches that there's no root. And don't take that up with me. Take it up with the word of God.

By their fruits, he shall know them. You must have fruit in your life, my friend. And you need to ask the question, do you know Christ? Do you know an experience within your heart of salvation where God has come in supernaturally and done a work of grace so much so that all things are passed away and behold, all things have become new.

There's no real prayer today. Oh, come on. No real prayer? Do you not been at the prayer meeting? I'm saying to you, there's no real prayer.

Real prayer is not praying. What does the hymn writer say? I often say my prayers, but do I ever pray? You remember when Peter was locked up in prison, we were talking about it even in the prayer meeting. And it says that the church prayed to God without ceasing for him.

And that little word without ceasing is a Greek word. It has the idea of elastic. Unceasingly, unstoppingly, continually, stretched outedly is literally what it means.

They prayed and they prayed and they prayed and they prayed and prayed and prayed until God answered their prayer. There's very little praying like that in these days. There's very little praying that you're praying so much that you can't eat your food.

You have to fast before God. You can't do what you normally want to do. You're taken up with a burden for the lost and a burden for revival that God, God brings a spirit of intercession upon you so that you pray and pray and pray and pray.

When was the last time you heard an Ulster about an all night prayer meeting? Maybe there's one or two you know about, but they used to happen all the time, but they're not happening now. And what do we do? We say, God's not blessing in the ways that he used to. And, and just things aren't the same and there's not the same response.

And sinners seem so hard and they are hard, but God is a great God and there is nothing or no one too hard for the Lord. He is our God, the same God. My friend, sinners aren't any harder today than they've ever been, but perhaps God's people are.

Not only is there no real prayer, I believe, but there are very few spirit-filled life. We are a reactionary people. You understand? The Roman Catholic church deifies the Virgin Mary, so we don't mention her.

Not right. We're afraid to mention her, yet she was probably the greatest woman that ever lived. But we go to the other extreme, like a pendulum, because they do some things wrong.

We swing to the other side. Well, it is the same with the Holy Spirit of God. The charismatics and all their madness and fanaticism do all that they do.

And because of that, we're so frightened of it that we go to the other extreme and we're afraid to mention the Holy Spirit. And if anybody talks about a spirit-filled life, about an experience that you get after you're saved, they're not talking about some kind of second blessing. You can call it what you like, but I'm telling you this.

When we're saved, we are sealed with the Spirit, the Word of God says. We're stamped. But Paul says to believers, be ye filled with the Holy Spirit.

Are you a Christian? Are you filled with the Holy Spirit? You can know you're filled with the Holy Spirit. Have you surrendered all to the Holy Spirit so that if he likes, he can go into any area of any room of your life, any compact bit of your life that you maybe have been holding from him, whether it's financial, whether it's sexual, whether it's mental or emotional or relational, whatever it may be. Can the Holy Spirit go in because you have given them the keys to everything? If you can't do that, you'll never know what's a Christian blessing.

You're saved, but you'll never know the fullness of the Spirit. There's no real faith in many places today. What am I talking about? The Word of God says that without faith, it is impossible to please God.

You've heard that verse, but these things are written for our learning. They're written so that we might know how to get to know God and how to see God move. But I feel today that when we tell people about the miracles that happened during revival and about the things that the Holy Ghost has done, and let me tell you this, I have been listening recently to a man who has experienced such and some believers will not believe him.

It is a symptom of our day. You know what frightens me? The gospel writer tells us that one day Jesus went into his own region of Galilee, his home. And you know what the Holy Spirit writes? Listen, Jesus could do no mighty work there because of their unbelief.

Remember Jairus' daughter? You remember he came and remember the Lord took a detour as if he didn't want to heal or raise her from the dead and they couldn't understand what was going on. And by the time the men got to him again, the girl was dead and they said, trouble the master no more. And he went to the house and the corpse was lying there and they were all standing around wailing and playing the mournful music.

And what did he do? Do you remember what he did? He says she only sleeps. And they laughed at him. You remember that? They laughed.

Who do you think you are? Look. Look at the color of her. She's dead.

And it says he put them out. He put them out. And Jesus Christ puts out unbelief.

Do you believe in God, my friend? I remember preaching on that little verse, asking it shall be given unto you, seeking you shall find, knocking the door shall be opened unto you. And the person, the pastor even, of the place where I was preaching, said to me after, do you really think that we can claim that verse for today? My friend, Oh, for the floods on a thirsty land. Oh, for a mighty revival.

Oh, for a sanctified, fearless bond, ready faithfully, filled with faith to heal its arrival. There's no real holiness. See, if you're a holy man or a woman today, they think you're a nut.

It's not right. They think you're a loopy loo. If you won't go to the pictures, if you won't watch the filth on the television, if you won't go to the clubs, even if you're not drinking, you're drinking soft drink, or you won't go to the pubs.

If you don't do that and do the other thing, they think you're cranky. It's not awful. Sure as not with the thought when they saw John the Baptist.

No, John Wesley said, give me 100 men that fear nothing but sin and the devil and God, and I'll turn the world upside down. 100 men who fear sin so much that they will run into the arms of God and give them everything and be used by God, and it is untold what God can do with such people. We need to repent.

I hope you know that now, looking at the word of God, that we in our age, we have missed it. God, I believe is angry with us. God, I believe wants to move, but God's people are immovable.

Someone said to me this week, you know, God's people are so like God, they're unchangeable. Not right? He tells us in verse 4 and 5, we need repentance. He tells us in verse 6 and 7, we need revival.

Will thou not revive us again that thy people may rejoice in thee? Now let me say this, God revives. You can't work it up. You can't get people into a frenzy and make God revive.

You can't do it, but what you can do is you can prepare yourself for it. The wee hymn says, empty that thou shouldest fill me. We can empty ourselves of all the dirt, all the sin, all the dross, all the self that is within us.

We can empty ourselves. We can't fill ourselves with God, but we can empty of all the dirt. As the poet says, we can break up the fallow ground.

You know what that is? The farmer's land that hasn't been used in years. It hasn't been fruitful. It's been barren, but it's just been waiting there.

And when the farmer comes with a plough and ploughs it all up to break it up, then when the seed comes, it's ripe. It's good ground and the crops will come and the harvest will come, but you've got to break up the fallow ground. Take all the weeds out.

Take all the dirt and stones and the things that are getting in the way. But if we do not see, my friend, that all blessing will come from God, we've lost the plot. The remedy for God reviving is this.

2 Chronicles 7, 14. If my people that are called by my name will humble themselves, never ask God to humble you because he just might. Humble yourself and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways.

Then, then will I hear from heaven and forgive their sin and heal their land. Repentance, revival. And let me say this, that 2 Chronicles 7, verse 14 is a promise, a covenant promise.

And when God makes a covenant promise, he is bound by his own word to keep it. So, if you do what he's asking you to do, he is bound to come and bless. Repentance, revival, and then finally rejoicing.

Wilt thou not, verse 7, revive us again that thy people may rejoice in thee. Verse 6, show us thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us thy salvation. Do you have joy in your Christian life? Do you? Now, come on, let's be honest.

Do you enjoy being a Christian? If you're not praying, my friend, if you're not reading God's word, if you're not with God's people in the place of prayer, if you're not filled with the Holy Spirit or even seeking the filling of the Holy Spirit, you'll never be joyous. Are you victorious in your Christian life? Are you rejoicing in the fact that as you walk life's way, you have victory over temptation? You have victory over sin? You have victory over the devil and victory over the world that tries to implore you in like a magnet into its teeth? Do you know the victory of the Lord in your life? Or is your Christian life a roller coaster, a two-week wonder?

It's what mine used to be like. Two weeks it was up, two weeks it was down.

It was like Humpty Dumpty. When you were up, you were up. When you were down, you were down.

And when you're only halfway up, you were neither up nor down. That speak to you? So that's what like most Christians are like. Do you know that there is a victorious Christian life? Do you know that? That there is a walk with God, watchman, he called it the normal Christian life and half of us are not even living it.

It's not some supernatural thing for super Christians, for preachers, pastors and missionaries. It's for every child of God. But there's a price to be paid.

You women know what this is like. You walk up the street in Kilkenny, see a beautiful dress in the window. You say, it's not beautiful.

That would look lovely on me, wouldn't it? And you walk in and you get the woman to take it off the dummy and puts it in the other dummy and you wear it and you look over at the mirror and you look to see what it's like and she says, not that beautiful. That looks great on me. Takes a year or so.

And then you look at the tag and what happens? I bet that he'd kill me. Now at that point, do you cease wanting it? Of course you do. You still love it.

You would still love it, but you're not willing to pay the price. I doubt there's not one person here that doesn't want to live a victorious Christian life. And that's great.

But listen, my friends, most Christians are not willing to pay the price. Jesus Christ stands before you now. And he says to a church here, as he said to a church in Laodicea, behold, I stand at the door and knock.

If any man, individual, someone hears his voice today, any woman hears his voice now calling, he says, I will come into you and sup with you and he with me, I will have sweet communion. I will take you into that place of blessing, the place of pastures, the place of fullness, the place of maturity. Do you hear his voice? But will you go through the door? Will you? I pray to God that at least one person will.

Let us pray. Our Father, we take the exhortation of the earthly mother of the Lord Jesus Christ when he said unto them at the wedding of Cana, whatsoever he saith unto thee do. Lord, the Lord Jesus Christ, thy son has been speaking to his own children.

And Lord, it's a message not just for this church, but for every church across this aisle and further afield. Turn us, O God, of our salvation again unto thee. Wilt thou not revive us again that thy people may rejoice in thee? May we be found in the place of obedience.

We ask thee to speak, thy servant here. May we say like Paul, Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do? Bless us now as we wait on in thy presence and remember our blessed Saviour. In his name we pray.

Amen. We trust you've been blessed and challenged by the message you've just heard. Why not pass it on to a friend or colleague? If you have access to the internet, you may want to visit our website, which is updated weekly, at preachtheword.com. There you'll find our audio sermon archives and transcripts of Pastor Legge's messages.

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