

# Capital City Church - Part 2

by David Ravenhill

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*David Ravenhill emphasizes the importance of prioritizing God's house and addressing internal spiritual issues for revival.*

**Duration:** 47:54

**Scripture:** 2 Chronicles 30:1

**Topics:** "Christian Life"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the revival that took place in Jerusalem during the time of Hezekiah. The people were in a right relationship with God and were praising and enjoying fellowship with Him. They wanted everyone to know about it, so they sent out couriers or evangelists to spread the word. The revival resulted in great joy in Jerusalem and the Levitical priests blessed the people. The preacher emphasizes the importance of not being unfaithful to God and encourages the people to yield to Him and serve Him.

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## Transcript

My father was a great man of God, great prayer warrior, preached for 70 years, started preaching on the streets of England when he was 17, died at age 87. So 70 entire years in the ministry. And I could never look at him and say that he was, you know, a hypocrite.

I could never say that he, you know, his message was one thing in the pulpit, his life was totally different. That was not the case. He was a great man of God and a man that influenced me, of course, as much as anybody.

But Hezekiah does not have that sort of a father. And so he looks to David, David, a man after God's own heart. I would suggest you that if you don't have a natural father, find somebody, you know, a Finney or Wesley or whoever it is and say, listen, I want to be like this man.

This man challenges me, whether it's Hudson Taylor or Charles Finney or John Wesley or David Brainerd or some other great man, a woman of God and say, that's the sort of man I want to grow up to be like, that's the sort of woman I want to grow up to be like. And so he patterns his life after this great man of God, David. Verse three, in the first year of his reign, in the first month, he opened the doors of the house of the Lord and he repaired them.

The first year of his reign, the first month of his reign. And if you will allow me to combine two verses, if you go over into verse 17, now they began the consecration on the first day of the first month. Let's put those two verses together.

The first day of the first month and read verse three again, in the first year of his reign, in the first month of his reign, on the first day of his reign, he opened the doors of the house of the Lord and he repaired them. That's what I call priority. When we get that serious about putting God first, where we don't put it off for another day, another week, another month, because, well, I'm getting involved in business right now, or I'm, you know, just taking my finals in school or whatever it is, and we've always got some sort of excuse.

This man, the very first day, the very first month, the very first year of his reign, he tackles a problem. The problem is God's house. And the first thing he does, he opens the doors.

The reason he opens the doors is because inside there is all sorts of uncleanness. As we work through most of this chapter together, you will find out that he does not do a single thing to the outside of God's house. The problem was not external, the problem was internal.

Let me suggest to you that as we look at God's house, keep in mind that in the Old Testament, God dwelt in buildings made with hands, but according to the New Testament, God no longer dwells in buildings made with hands, but this is God's house now. And the problem with God's house now is what was the problem in the Old Testament, it is not external, it's internal. Most of us look pretty good.

We know how to dress up the house of God. It doesn't need too much fixing up. The problem is an internal problem.

And the uncleanness is internal, it's not external. But he has, first of all, to open the doors, and then it says he repaired them. Doors serve a twofold function, to permit access and to prevent access.

When you go home tonight, you will open the door to your house. It will permit you access. Hopefully you won't have to climb down the chimney or through the window.

You're not center. And so you will go through the door, but once you get through that door, you will close that door and deadbolt it to prevent access. In other words, doors have to be repaired.

You don't just leave them open. They need to respond at certain times. They also need to close at certain times.

The psalmist says, lift up your heads or your gates, be you lifted up your everlasting doors that the King of glory may come in. There are times we need to open the door, but the psalmist says, I've set a watch over the door of my lips. In other words, I know when to close the doors.

This temple has got doors. The eye again is a door. If the eye be single, the whole body is full of light and so on.

These ears can defile. If I allow these ears to open to the wrong sort of thing, it can defile this body. My eyes can defile this body.

My mouth can defile the body and so on. So the doors have to be repaired. Again, behold, I stand at the door and knock.

If any man open the door, I will come in. I'll sup with him and he with me. And so the first thing he does, he repairs the doors to the house of the Lord.

But the doors, first of all, had to be open. One of the great strategies of the enemy is to try and get you to never open the doors. In other words, not to expose what is going on internally.

You know, after all, I've lived with this problem now for years. I'm an elder. I'm a person in the church that people look up to and so on and so forth.

And if I were to open the doors now, what would people think? And so the enemy comes along and convinces us, do not open that door. After all, you've tried to open it in the past and nothing has happened. You've never got help.

You know, there's no answer to your problem and so on and so forth. And so we live behind closed doors. I pastored for many, many years.

I imagine I've heard just about every type of sin confessed, but I remember one couple that drove about 60 miles to come to the last church that I pastored. They would be there at just about every meeting, there at the prayer meeting, there at the Sunday morning service, other meetings. Many times the two of them would come up and help counsel.

I looked to them as a faithful, reliable couple, a couple that, again, tied and were very much a regular part of the activities of the church. One day I noticed that he was scheduled to come and see me. The gentleman, he came into my office and after a few sort of pleasantries of just talking, all of a sudden he got very serious and he said, I need to tell you something.

I had been in an incestuous relationship with my daughter for the last number of years, many years in fact. The daughter had been adopted as a child, a baby, and starting at a very young age, she was now in her teens, there'd been this incestuous relationship. My jaw sort of dropped a little bit because all of a sudden the doors opened.

I never imagined, not ever dreamed that such a thing was possible out of this particular gentleman. But you see, he was willing, again, honest enough to open the door because that uncleanness had built to a place where he knew he could not continue on. But many times the enemy will tell us, listen, whatever you do, don't open the door.

I could tell you stories like that, I'm sure almost every pastor could. Amazing, isn't it, what goes on behind closed doors. Ezekiel had the vision, of course, of the elders of Israel.

He had to tunnel through and he says there, they had all these carved images going on, they were worshipping all sorts of foreign gods and detestable idols and so on and so forth. God had to give him a revelation of the state of the spiritual leaders, quote unquote, of the nation of Israel. And he is shocked, horrified to see what is going on, if you like, behind closed doors.

Revival begins when we take seriously getting right with God, that which is right in the sight of the Lord. And we don't put it off one day or two days, but the very first day of the very first month of the very first year of his reign, he prepares to open the doors and deal with the situation that needs to be dealt with. You see, if you go back to the previous chapter, it says there in verse 24 that his father had cut in pieces the utensils of the house of God and he had closed the doors.

The house of God had been off limits. There was all sorts of idolatry and everything else going on and God's house was not accessible to the nation of Israel. But now comes this revival, now comes this restoration.

Verse five, he gathers together the leaders. He says, listen to me, all Levites, these are the spiritual leaders, obviously consecrate yourself now, consecrate the house of the Lord, the God of your fathers and carry the uncleanness out from the holy place. That is the problem.

The place that was to be the place of God, the place of God's presence, the habitation of God is defiled. And that place that God wants as his own, again, it was called the holy place, is everything but holy. It is unclean.

And so he prepares to consecrate the Levites and sends them in to carry out the uncleanness. But before he does that, he begins to give us a little bit of a background. He gives us a history of why the house of God is in the condition that it's in.

Verse six, our fathers have been unfaithful. Our fathers have been unfaithful. They've done evil in the sight of Lord our God and have forsaken him.

Notice that this uncleanness began with a breakdown in their relationship with God himself. That's where it begins. It begins with a breakdown in our relationship with God himself.

You have been unfaithful and you have forsaken him. Unfaithfulness is a word that is tied in with marriage. Unfaithfulness is when you find a mistress, if you like, on the side that somehow gives you more pleasure than your spouse.

Unfaithfulness. I remember during the revival in Pensacola, my wife made friends with a lady. One day I got a call from her husband and he said to me, listen, I'd love to get together with you.

Our wives are becoming friends and doing things together. I'd like to get to know you. And so we arranged a meeting, went to a restaurant just for a cup of coffee, a tea.

And before I knew it, he said to me, he said, as your wife told you very much about our relationship, meaning his relationship with his wife. And I said, well, I know just a little bit. And he proceeded to tell me how they were both involved in ministry a number of years ago.

He was now in the Bible school and how his wife had basically sort of been seduced by another leader, fallen in love with this man, had an affair with this man. And thankfully God had taken her out of that situation. Their marriage had been brought back together.

And this has been a number of years ago. But even as he recounted that story, his eyes welled up with tears, the pain to think that the one that I married, the one that I love, the one that I set my heart upon would betray me by going after another man. The Bible says in the book of James, you adulterers and adulteresses know you're not the friendship with the world is enmity against God.

He doesn't say you fornicators because fornication is where there is no marriage. Adultery is where there is sexual activity outside of marriage. Notice how God sees us.

God sees us as a married, in a married state. We are married to the Lord Jesus Christ. And so he says, you are an adulterer if our relationship is not good enough and you find more pleasure in the world than

you do in relating to me.

Pretty serious charge, isn't it? You're an adulterer. You're an enemy of God. And so he is dealing here with how the problem began.

They were first of all unfaithful to God himself. They have forsaken him. The next thing he says, they've turned their face away from the dwelling place of the Lord.

You see, when you're unfaithful to an individual, in this case, obviously God himself, then the next thing you don't want to be where God lives, so to speak. If I could put this into a natural illustration, let's say we've got Tom and Mary. Tom and Mary are crazy about each other.

Maybe high school sweethearts. Maybe, you know, she's a cheerleader. He's on the hockey team, I guess, in Canada.

But, and, you know, after every match, Tom's over at Mary's house and they, you know, crazy and going out together and so on and so forth. And Mary's parents just get used to Tom being around. He's almost one of the family.

And then one day, Tom doesn't show up after a game. And maybe the parents think, well, he's been here four nights this week already. You know, we'll give him a break and they give him a pass.

And sure enough, the next game, Tom doesn't show up. And during the week, he doesn't show up. And so finally, you know, Mary's parents say to Mary, they say, hey, Mary, what's going on? I haven't seen Tom for about four days now.

Mary sort of gets a little flustered, drops her head a little bit. She said, well, dad, we broke up. You see, because there has been a breakdown in their relationship, he no longer wants to be where Mary lives.

He is now not frequenting the house of Mary in that sense. And so when there is a breakdown in our relationship with God, then the next thing is we don't want to be in the presence of God. We don't want to be in God's house.

We turn our back on the house of God. Not only that, but then the spiral begins to spiral out of control, if you like. It says they have also shut the doors of the porch and they've put out the lamps.

The lamp, of course, was the seven branch candlestick, which symbolized the work and the ministry of the Holy Spirit. In other words, there is no spiritual activity going on in their life. Why? Because they have cut off their relationship with God.

And therefore, the voice of God is no longer relevant. They are no longer listening for the voice of God. They're no longer being led by the Spirit of God.

And if you recall, if you've studied the tabernacle, that the candlestick was put in a strategic place. Moses could not just arrange the furniture any place he wanted. God told him exactly where to put it.

The candlestick was to give light to what was in front of it, the Bible says. And what was in front of the candlestick was a table of showbread. In other words, it was the illumination of the Spirit of God symbolically on the Word of God that brought it to life.

The letter kills, the Spirit gives life. And yet the light has gone out. There's no revelation.

There's no understanding. You know, the Word of God is dry. You're not getting anything out of it.

That is a sign that you need revival. Something has begun to cool in your relationship with God. That passion is missing that you once had.

That fervor that you once had is no longer there. You know, when they announce a special meeting, well, I don't feel like going tonight. You know, that is the beginning of a downward spiral, if you like.

Not only that, it says they've not burned incense. Verse 7, the burning of incense, of course, typifies two things, prayer primarily, but also praise. Now, prayer is not simply bringing God a shopping list.

It is fellowship. It's communion with God. Go back to the illustration of Tom and Mary.

Tom and Mary are madly in love with each other. At least they were. And as long as they were madly in love, you know, they're tweetering each other and sending emails to each other when they're not together.

And they are maintaining a relationship. But now that the relationship is over, the emails stop. The tweetering stops.

You know, the telephone calls stop. The text messaging stops. All of that stops.

Why? Because the relationship is broken. And so here is this downward spiral. It all begins.

We've forsaken him. We found another lover. We found something that satisfies us.

Now we don't want to be in the house of God. We'd rather be in the movie house or whatever the substitute happens to be, the hockey house, and so on. But now we are no longer communicating.

We no longer have the fellowship that we used to have. And then the last thing, it says, nor have they offered the burnt offering. The burnt offering, of course, was a voluntary offering.

The Bible says, thy people will volunteer freely in the day of thy power. In other words, when God is active in your life, you want to be involved in what God is doing. Isn't that right? One of the things that every revival does, people get, you know, charged up in a good sense, spiritually speaking, and they want, you know, to get involved.

But you know what it's like when you're not in a right relationship with God and the pastor stands up maybe at the beginning of the year, and he says, listen, we've had an increase in children in Sunday school this year. And, you know, Sister So-and-so is retiring. She's 99 years of age, and she's been doing this for the last 20 years, you know.

And we need somebody to help out with the fifth graders or, you know, six-year-old boys or whatever, you know. And he starts, would anybody like to volunteer? And all of a sudden, everybody begins to pray. You know what it's like.

Because, you know, the moment you make contact with pastor, you know, and so all of a sudden we sort of bow our heads. And it's like pulling teeth, you know. I pastored, I know.

But, you know, when God is doing something, you want to be involved. Listen, I'll do it. Oh, it may cost you your Saturday night.

You may have to prepare. Again, some of those kids maybe don't have dads. Some of those kids need somebody.

It's more than just teaching a Sunday school lesson. It's being a pastor to those kids, maybe taking them fishing, taking them on a camping trip, you know, instilling God into their lives, being a spiritual mentor. And you say, that's too costly.

I don't want to do that. But God says, listen, how much do you love me? You know, are you prepared to give up your Saturday night, prepared to pray, prepared to give up maybe a Saturday every once in a while, take those kids out, and so on. But the burnt offerings were no longer being offered.

And then verse 8, therefore, the wrath of the Lord was against Judah. We don't hear much about the wrath of God. I think one of the problems today in much of our preaching is that we have, you know, we've customized a God to our own making.

The psalmist, I think it's Psalm 50, where he talks about, you thought that I was altogether like you are. In other words, we've reduced God down to this, you know, amiable, very cuddly, warm, fuzzy sort of a God that never gets upset, never gets ruffled, and so on and so forth. And we overemphasize the father heart of God.

He is a father and so on. But the Bible also talks about the severity of God, the goodness of God and the severity of God. And sometimes we miss the fact that God is also a God of anger.

He is a jealous God. I know what I would feel like, and I know you would too if you were to find out that your wife or your husband had been cheating on you. Boy, all of a sudden I would be angry.

There would be a jealousy there to think, you know, that this woman that I've been living with for the last 45 years, you know, has found somebody else or whatever. God is a God of wrath. It is a righteous wrath.

It is a righteous anger. It is not a sinful anger. It is a display of His love, His righteous love towards us.

And He is angry. Why? With His own people because they have forsaken Him. And His wrath is against Judah, the very people of praise.

It says that He made them an object of terror, of horror, and of hissing, as you see with your own eyes. For behold, our fathers have fallen by the sword. Our sons and our daughters and our wives are in captivity for this.

Notice He puts the emphasis, first of all, on our fathers. Our fathers have fallen by the sword. In other words, our fathers have been killed.

As a result of that, our sons and our daughters and our wives are in captivity for this. Some of you men, I hope this is not the case, but you may say, listen, I've got a daughter that is sexually active. I've got a son that's taking drugs and so on and so forth.

You've got sons and daughters in bondage. They've been taken captive. Why? Because you yourself have not been the father that you should have been.

You have not put God as a priority in your life. You've had a breakdown in your own relationship. And then you wonder, why is it that my son, why is it that my daughter's in captivity and bondage and so on? Why is it that death has resulted? Because it says, our fathers have fallen by the sword.

You say, well, all that, of course, is Old Testament. And we're in the New Testament now, the new covenant and so on and so forth. Well, the Bible says, listen, for this cause, many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have already gone to a premature death.

You think God does not still get angry? That God does not still sort of pull the plug? Paul says, listen, many of you, because of your relationship or your lack thereof, your relationship with God is not what it should be. Your relationship with one another is not what it should be. Therefore, many of you are already sick.

Many of you have already died, gone to a premature death and so on. Again, we need to understand that God is a God that is a God of severity, a God of judgment, as well as a God of love. And many times we find it hard to balance those two.

So he gives us the background. This is how it all began. He said, this is how this downward spiral began.

First of all, a breakdown in your relationship. You forsook me. Then you forsook the house of God.

Then you allow the lamps to go out and so on and so forth until ultimately you're in this place of bondage and the enemy has come in and many of you have been taken captive. But here is a 25-year-old man, verse 10, now it is in my heart to make a covenant with the Lord, the God of Israel, that his burning anger may turn away from us. This man is sincere.

Covenants are very serious things. This man doesn't say, listen, I'm going to try for a while to see if we can sort of turn things around. No, he makes a covenant.

I am determined to get right with God. Nothing is going to stop me. This is a covenant.

This is a blood sacrifice, if you like, that I am prepared to make in order to see God's burning anger turned away from us. Verse 11, my sons do not be negligent now. In other words, quit being apathetic, quit being indifferent.

We talked about that this morning, basically wake up, don't be asleep. For the Lord has chosen you to stand before him, to minister to him and to be his ministers and burn incense. Now you'll notice what he is doing here.

I believe he's showing them, listen, this is what we have fallen from. This is the privilege that we have neglected and it is still true. The greatest privilege, he says, is that you and I have access to stand before him.

If you received in the mail tomorrow morning, an invitation to go to parliament, to meet with your prime minister on a one-on-one basis, have a private luncheon with him here, you'll get in the mail, little embossed card, you know, with the government seal on it and so on. And here is a private personal invitation. You would be flashing that around, thrilled to think that, listen, I am one of just a handful of people that have ever received one of these, a one-on-one meeting with the prime minister or the queen of England or some other dignitary.

And yet we have access into the presence of God, don't we? I may have shared with you before, I picked up a book a number of years ago by A. W. Tozer and he made a statement that I pondered for quite a while. He said, imagine if only once a year you could see the stars. In other words, there was only one night a year where the stars were visible and that day was approaching and you know that tonight is the night when we can look up into the heavens and see the stars for the first time in the entire year.

This is something that only happens once a year. You would put the children to bed early, especially if they had not experienced this before. And then you would wake them up and you would take them outside and they would marvel as they see the stars for the first time.

But he says, because they are accessible every single night, we don't really get that much, you know, excitement out of it. It's just mundane. It's something we just take for granted.

The stars are And he says in the Old Testament, one man once a year had access into the presence of God on that day of atonement. And yet now that veil has been rent and we have access 24 seven. But how often do we avail ourselves? If this was the night once a year where that veil had not been rent, but let's say that every single one of us for one night alone on this particular night, every house of God in Canada would be jammed to the gills because this is a night where somehow there is an open heaven and our prayers are going to be answered where we have access in the presence of God.

But at midnight, that thing closes until another year opens. Boy, it would change everything. But because we have access all the time, we don't avail ourselves out.

And he says, listen, don't forget now, don't be negligent. God has chosen you to stand before what an honor. The second thing to minister to him.

I don't understand fully how you can minister to a God that is so absolutely complete within himself, a God that needs absolutely nothing. He is self-existent. He is the holy one.

That doesn't just mean in the sense of righteousness and purity, but it means an absolute transcendency. There is none like him. He is incomparable with anybody else.

And how that one that is so self-sufficient can be ministered to, but he can, we can minister to him. Again, it boggles the mind, doesn't it? And then it says, and to be his ministers, that you and I can represent God himself. We can be ambassadors, as the New Testament says.

An ambassador, you check it out in the dictionary, is the highest ranking office that a person can have outside of a kingdom. In other words, if you were the ambassador to France from Canada, you have all the backing of the government of Canada behind you. You are the highest ranking member living outside of that kingdom.

And we represent the kingdom of heaven on earth. We are ambassadors for Christ. We represent him.

We have his authority. We have his backing. We have all the backing of the kingdom of God behind us.

And so this young man gathers together the Levites and he says, listen, this is what we've lost. This is what sin has done. Sin has separated us from our calling, this holy calling, this sacred calling, this high calling.

We need to get back to it. And the thing that will bring us back to it is to get rid of the uncleanness. And so the process begins.

Verse 15, he assembled or they assembled their brothers. They consecrated themselves. They went in to cleanse the house of the Lord, according to the commandment of the King, by the word of the Lord.

Now notice the standard. They went in to cleanse the house of the Lord according to the word of the Lord. In other words, the standard was not what is politically correct.

The standard was God's word. If God says this is a sin, it's sin, regardless of what society says. The priests went into the inner part of the house of the Lord to cleanse it.

Verse 16, and every unclean thing that they found in the temple, they brought out to the court of the house of the Lord. The Levites received it. They carried it out to the Kidron Valley.

That was basically the place of fires, the garbage dump, if you like. But notice they went into the inner part. The psalmist said in his confession in Psalm 51, thou desirest truth in the inward part.

That area that is unknown to anybody else other than you and God. That secret sin. The Bible talks about the secret sins in the light of your presence.

That activity that nobody knows about. Your wife doesn't know about it. Your husband doesn't know about it.

It's in the inner part, the way you think, the things that you're thinking of and so on. Those are the things. God wants to go right into the very core of your being, in other words.

That's revival. Revival gets to the very heart of a matter. And here is a young man again.

He says, listen, don't spare anything. We've got to go right to the very core of the problem. Verse 17, they began the consecration on the first day of the first month.

On the eighth day of the month, they entered the porch of the Lord. They consecrated the house of the Lord in eight days. They finished on the 16th day of the first month.

Sixteen days. House of God was not that big. You've got a number of Levites.

We're not told exactly how many Levites there were, but you have the whole Levitical tribe. And so you've got dozens and dozens of men going in there cleaning the house of God. And it takes them 16 days.

This was not a superficial cleaning. This was a thorough cleaning, what we would call a spring cleaning, if you like. You know, where we don't just dust over a few things.

We take everything out and air it out and clean it and, you know, make sure it is a thorough cleaning. And then they come to the king and they said, we've cleansed the whole house of the Lord. The altar of burnt offering and all the utensils, the table of shewbread and all the utensils, all the utensils, which King Ahaz has discarded during his reign in his unfaithfulness.

Everything was cleansed. And then you'll notice something, and this is true, I think, of just about every revival, that after this time of consecration, after this time of cleansing, there is now an incredible time of celebration. You go down to verse 25, and he stationed the Levites in the house of the Lord with symbols,

with harps, with lyres, according to the command of David of Gad, the king's seer, Nathan the prophet.

Verse 26, the Levites stood with the musical instruments of David and the priests with the trumpets. It says, when the burnt offering began, the song of the Lord began, and the trumpets accompanied by the instruments of David, king of Israel. The whole assembly worshipped.

The singers sang. The trumpets sounded. All this continued until the burnt offering was finished.

At the completion of the burnt offering, verse 29, the king and all who were present bowed down and worshipped. Moreover, King Hezekiah and the officials ordered the Levites to sing praises to the Lord with the words of David and Asaph the seer, and they sang praises with joy, and they bowed down and they worshipped. Every revival has produced a whole new batch of songs, because as the psalmist says, he lifted me also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and what? He put a new song in my mouth.

In other words, I want to express what God has done for me, not what He did for Charles Wesley, thank God, not what He did for this person, but I want to express how God set me free. And every revival, again, there's been revival songs, an expression of what God has done in the midst and through the work of the Spirit of God. And we find that following revival, again, there is always this time of rejoicing, this time of celebration.

There is a divine order in the Word of God, righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. And you can never switch those around, because there is no peace, the Bible says, for the wicked. First of all, you have to be righteous.

In other words, right standing. When you are in a state of righteousness before God, when you are standing right in His eyes, so to speak, then you have the peace of God, peace with God, the peace of God. And then because you have peace, then comes the joy.

It is always that order. They are now righteous. They are now standing right before God.

As the old hymn says, nothing between my soul and the Savior. And because of that, now, there is this incredible season of joy. They're bowing down, the instruments are, you know, going on.

I mean, this is a great celebration. It says, verse 35, there were so many burnt offerings. It says, well, I mean, the last part of the verse, thus the service of the house of the Lord was established again.

And Hezekiah and all the people rejoiced over what God had prepared for the people, because the thing came about suddenly. In other words, it doesn't take long. Suddenly, in this case, of course, 16 days, but that's not long when you consider the state of the nation.

This nation was in a place of apostasy. This nation had gone back into idolatry, perversion, every possible degrading thing. And now a young man, because of his determination, I'm going to put that which is wrong, right in the sight of the Lord.

And all of a sudden, God comes. You know, the suddenly is in the Bible. The day of Pentecost, suddenly the Spirit of God came.

And so the first thing that revival produces is a new song. The next thing that comes as a result of revival is evangelism. You'll notice as we go into the next chapter, now, Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah.

He wrote letters to Ephraim and Manasseh that they should come to the house of the Lord in Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover to the Lord God of Israel. For the people and the princess and all the assembly of Jerusalem had decided to celebrate the Passover in the second month. That was not the scheduled month, but nevertheless, they wanted to get things right.

And God honored a breaking of the legalism, if you like, of having it on the first day. But then it says here, verse five, so a decree circulated, a proclamation throughout all Israel from Bathsheba to Dan that they should come and celebrate the Passover of the Lord, the God of Israel. Verse six, and couriers went throughout all Israel and Judah with letters from the hand of the king and his princes, even according to the command of the king saying, oh, sons of Israel, return to the Lord God of Abraham and Isaac and Israel, that He may return to those who have escaped and are left from the hands of the king of Assyria.

In other words, they want people to know what's going on in Jerusalem. Something incredible has happened in Jerusalem. God again has come.

They're in a right relationship with God. They are now praising God, enjoying fellowship with God, intimacy with God, and they want everybody to know about it. And so couriers are being sent out, if you could, you know, put that in New Testament setting, evangelists, letters, tracts, if you like, are being distributed.

Listen, you've got to come and see what's going on in Jerusalem. Something amazing is going on in Jerusalem. They want everybody in the entire nation to know.

In other words, all the other churches in the community, you've got to come and see what God is doing in our midst. They're excited about it. The king is, you know, writing letters, sending emails, if you like.

Verse seven, do not be like your fathers and your brothers who were unfaithful to the Lord God of Israel, that He made them a horror as you see. Do not stiffen your neck like your fathers, but yield to the Lord. Enter His sanctuary, which He has consecrated forever and serve the Lord your God, that His burning anger may turn away from you.

For if you return to the Lord, your brothers and your sons will find compassion before those who led them captive and will return to this land. For the Lord your God is gracious and compassionate. He will not turn His face away from you if you return to Him.

You see here we've got the balance, the wrath of God, but also the compassion of God. He's angry against sin. He's angry against the sin in your life because He knows the enemy has deceived you.

And He's angry just as you would be angry if you found out that somebody was seducing your daughter or, you know, having some sort of affair with your son, some illicit homosexual activity. Boy, you would be absolutely, you know, mad as could be. Isn't that right? To think that somebody has led my son into this sort of a lifestyle and so on.

God gets angry when His people get into sin because He knows the devastating results of sin. But He's also got a compassion. And He says, the moment I see you turn, you will find compassion before me.

And so the letters go out, the tracts go out, return to the Lord. For the Lord your God is gracious. Again, verse 9, compassionate, will not turn His face away from you if you return to Him.

Verse 10, so the couriers passed from city to city throughout the country of Ephraim and Manasseh as far as Zebulun. Some of them laughed them to scorn, some of them mocked them. Nevertheless, some of the men of Asim and Asim and Zebulun humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem.

You don't win all of them. There'll always be those that will laugh, always be those that mock, always be those that will slam the door in your face, if you like. But there are some that will listen to your word, humble themselves.

And they return, they come back to Jerusalem, come back to the house of God. The hand of God was also on Judah to give them one heart to do what the king and the princess commanded by the word of Lord. And so we see this incredible evangelism that goes on.

Let's drop down to the end of the chapter. Another thing, verse 26, there was great joy in Jerusalem. Again, righteousness, peace, joy, because nothing like this had happened since the days of Solomon, the son of David, king of Israel.

Then the Levitical priests arose, blessed the people, and their voice was heard, and their prayer came to his holy dwelling place in heaven. All of a sudden now God's answering prayer. All of a sudden, why, if I regard iniquity in my heart, God will not hear me.

Here is a nation living in sin. God has no, what's the word I'm looking for? Anyway, He's not going to answer them. But the moment they get right with God, suddenly the heavens are no longer brass.

And when we get right with God, all of a sudden God begins to answer prayer. It says their prayers ascended right into the dwelling place of God to heaven itself. So answer prayer again is another sign that we are in a place of revival.

And then the final thing before I close, it says in verse 5, as soon as the order spread, the sons of Israel provided in abundance the first fruits of grain, new wine, oil, honey, all the produce of the field. They brought in abundantly the tithe of all. Again, there was because of the blessing of God, people began to give.

My father has always said, you don't give to get blessed, you give because you're already blessed. It's not some sort of manipulation. Listen, you know, God will bless you if you give.

No, God has blessed you. Therefore you give. And they have been blessed now.

God had met with them. And as a result of that, boy, they had to be stopped from giving. It says they had so much that, you know, they had finally to say that's enough basically.

But they brought in abundantly the tithe of all. When you are in a right relationship with somebody, again, money doesn't become much of an object. Isn't that right? You know, if it's your girlfriend, you're about ready to propose and you may not have too much money.

But boy, you'll take every last penny you've got to take it to that fancy restaurant to pop the question and so on. And money isn't a part of your consideration that much because you are madly in love. And the same thing is true when we're in love with God.

But there we have one of the great, wonderful revivals of the Old Testament, all because one man decided, listen, I can no longer continue on. And the moment that I have the right to do so, I will. The first

day of the first month or the first year of his reign.

Oh, he could have done what our politicians do, vote himself a pay increase, say, listen, let me settle into office a little bit, you know, get things squared away. And then I'll tackle this issue or that issue. No, he says this is the number one priority.

We are the people of God. We're called by God's name. But God is not happy with us.

We need to get right with God. And I'm not going to put it on the back burner any longer. I'm going to get serious about we can have there is a mystery.

My father was a revivalist and that was his heart. There is a mystery about corporate revival. I don't understand.

But I do know this personal revival is possible. You can have a personal revival with God. And all it takes is honesty and the willingness to say, listen, I'm going to open that door.

I've never opened it before. Oh, I'm not suggesting you stand up to every Tom, Dick and Harry and blab out, you know, some particular deep, dark secret. But I am suggesting this, that you get honest with God to the point where you say, God, I don't care who knows in that sense.

I want to get right. And I'll go to the past. I'll go to somebody if I can't get right by myself.

If I need to confess my fault to somebody, I'll go to that individual. But I've got to get right with God. I know I can't continue on like this.

That's the beginning of revival. Tomorrow night, we'll go into the very constructive, I hope, message about Hezekiah and how he resisted the activity of the king of Assyria. You see, when we get right with God, the enemy is going to be on the prowl.

The next thing that Hezekiah faces is an onslaught from the enemy. And the enemy is determined to come to the same Jerusalem where the spirit of God has been moving and take it over and captivate it and bring it back into bondage. And he has to take some very, very practical steps.

And we'll look at those. How to maintain. It's one thing to have a meeting place with God.

It's another thing to know, how do I maintain what I've got? How do I maintain this victory? How do I walk in this victory now? How do I not get back into the quagmire of sin that I've been involved in? But tonight, we're dealing with this one area, opening the doors. Let's just close in prayer. Let's take a moment.

Again, God knows your heart. I don't. Again, your husband, your wife, your father, your mother may not know what's going on, but God knows.

And all it takes is honesty, the seed that brought forth 30, 60 and a hundred foot fell into an honest heart. And we need to be honest. We need to be transparent.

Say, Lord, I'm going to open this area that I've never opened before. Lord, I'm tired of going on. The enemy said that I'll never get help.

But the enemy said, don't do it. What will people think if they found out? Lord, I need to be in a right place with you tonight. I need revival, personal revival in my life.

Father, I pray for every single individual here. The Lord, you would ignite a new fire. Lord, you would fan into flames.

Lord, those embers that have begun to die down. Lord, the coals that are going out. Lord, you would breathe the breath of God back into us.

Father, let this church, Lord, just literally pulsate with the very presence of God. Let it be known, Lord, around this community as a place where the presence of God dwells. But I think as my father used to say so many times, you don't have to advertise a fire.

When a building's on fire, everybody goes to see what's going on. Father, let this place be a spiritual fire. Lord, let it be that the community would say, listen, there's something happening in that place.

I'm going to go find out. People are talking about healings, about deliverance, about things that I've never heard of before. Father, place this place on the map, I pray.

Let your spirit dwell here, Lord, in a mighty, mighty way. Give us a divine visitation, Lord. Let it spread, Lord, throughout this great nation that, Lord, over the years has had moves of God.

But, Lord, we ask you, Lord, for the latter rain. Lord, you said ask of rain in the time of the latter rain. Lord, we ask for that great latter rain that would bring in a great harvest.

Lord, something above and beyond anything we could ever ask or think of. Lord, do something, we pray. Lord, let us be that young man, that young woman, Lord, like Hezekiah, that Lord would refuse to just go along with the status quo.

The Lord would get serious and say, as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. I'm going to open that door tonight, Lord. I'm going to put it right according to your Word.

I want that peace. I want that joy. I want that happiness.

I want a new vision and direction in my life. I want my prayers to be answered. Father, touch us, we pray, in Jesus' name.

Amen.

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