

# Why Does Revival Come to an End?

by Erlo Stegen

---

*Revival comes to an end due to sin, and the only way to maintain revival is to trust in God and obey His word.*

**Duration:** 51:56

**Scripture:** Genesis 3:9, Isaiah 59:1-2, Zechariah 4:6, Matthew 6:33, John 7:38, Acts 1:8, James 5:16

**Topics:** "Revival"

---

## Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares four examples of how God works through individuals when they are filled with the Holy Spirit. The first example is of a preacher who lost his authority and effectiveness in leading people to Christ. After three months of prayer and confession, he experienced a renewal and was able to preach with authority again. The second example is of a girl who was convicted of her sin and sought forgiveness, leading to a transformation in her life. The speaker then poses a personal question to the audience, asking if the rivers of living water are flowing from their lives. The sermon concludes with a discussion on the first point of sin that kills revival, using the story of Israel's defeat at the hands of the town of Ai as an example.

---

## Transcript

Tonight our theme will be, why does revival come to an end. Revival is not about churches being filled with people, but rather people filled with God. It is God coming down and walking amongst his people, God dwelling amongst men.

It is God in our midst, God at work. Charles Spurgeon, who is sometimes called the prince of preachers, said, without the spirit of God we can do nothing. We are as ships without wind.

We are useless. The theme this evening is, why does revival come to an end? What stops a revival? We will have a look at the reasons, some reasons for the termination of revival. There are times and seasons in the plan of God.

But at the same time, I believe with all my heart that revival should never come to an end. If the victorious Lord who triumphed over death and every power of the devil, if he to whom all power has been given in heaven and on earth, if the living God is in our midst in all his glory and majesty, something must happen. If the Almighty, Holy God, walks and lives among us and we are his temple, there should be revival in our midst without ceasing.

Because revival is God among us with his fire burning among us. Now what is the reason that revival comes to an end? There are revivals which started in our lifetime, but today we hear that the fire is no longer burning. It is tragic that revivals amongst white nations are very short lived.

Sometimes a few weeks, sometimes a few months. We need to ask ourselves, why is this so? Where does the fault lie? Amongst African and other nations, revivals last much longer. In Africa, Uganda, 40 years.

But when the children of the Lord started fighting, it was the end. In Korea, over 70 years. But then it became superficial and things entered which are not good.

But I wouldn't like to speak about that now, but about the portion of scripture which we find in the Old Testament in the book of Joshua about Achan's crime and punishment. Our scripture reading is taken from Joshua 7 verse 1, 6, 10 to 11. But the people of Israel broke faith in regard to the devoted things.

For Achan, the son of Kami, son of Zebedee, son of Zerah of the tribe of Judah, took some of the devoted things, and the anger of the Lord burned against the people of Israel. Then Joshua tore his clothes and fell to the earth on his face before the ark of the Lord. Until the evening, he and the elders of Israel, and they put dust on their heads.

The Lord said to Joshua, get up, why have you fallen on your face? Israel has sinned. They have transgressed my covenant that I commanded them. They have taken some of the devoted things.

They have stolen and lied and put them among their own belongings. The first point I'd like to speak about this evening is sin which kills revival. The first point is defeat.

This was just after the destruction of Jericho where the Lord undertook in such a marvelous way. Israel was triumphant, victorious. God was at work delivering Israel, giving them victory, doing the impossible.

But it came to an abrupt end the moment sin entered in. The little town of Ai overcame Israel. What a shocking picture of the people of God that cannot stand before their enemies.

That God's army had to flee and many of them lost their lives. When Joshua, the man of God, heard about it, he tore his clothes and immediately started with a day of prayer. When evening came, God came down and said, Joshua, what are you doing? Get up.

Israel has sinned. Here we have the key and the answer to our theme and our question. Why does revival come to an end? It is sin.

S-I-N. There is only one reason. Sin.

It doesn't matter how wonderful that revival is. If sin comes in, it is the end of revival. In a true Holy Spirit revival, a godly divine revival, God does not tolerate sin.

If there is a so-called revival where sin is rampant, that is a false revival. Revival and sin don't go together. You can't test it.

If they say that there is revival, just check whether there is sin. Water and fire don't go together. One will kill the other.

Light and darkness don't go together. The Holy Spirit and other spirits don't go together. One opposes the other is against the other.

Even the spirit and the flesh oppose one another. The flesh is against the spirit. Even if they are Christians, the carnal Christian will always oppose the spiritual and the spiritual cannot go together with the carnal.

Do you now understand why Christians are at loggerheads with one another? A carnal Christian will always fight. He is the biggest enemy of the spiritual Christian. Our opposition doesn't come from the heathen, but from the carnal Christians.

A carnal Christian in the kingdom of God is a curse to the work of God. In this way, the devil from hell has got his agents among the Christians. That is why Romans 8 says that to be carnal brings death.

A carnal Christian goes against the spirit of God. The second point is hiding sin. Here we have a carnal so-called Christian amongst the people of God.

A soldier in the army of God. This soldier does things in secret. There are things which he hides, things which are not right.

He sins in secret and then hides it, but God in heaven sees it. The third point is punishment. What is the end? The punishment.

Even his wife and children are killed. He punished them with death. They kept quiet about it and had to die with him.

Actually, it wasn't only his family. The Bible says Israel had sinned. Israel had to flee.

Israel had to die. But how does it work with God? Just as he says, if you identify yourself with Achan, you are guilty with him. Only when he is out of your midst and you have dealt with him and have dealt with that sin, then you will be free.

This is a very dangerous matter. There is no future for us as long as we tolerate these things. And this was not just in the Old Testament.

God is still the same and this is how he works. In Luke 12, the Lord says, There is nothing covered that will not come to light. There is nothing that one does in secret behind closed doors that will not be shouted from the rooftops.

Christians, stop with your secret sins. Don't you know, God, how can you think that you can sin in secret and your fellow pastors and the elders and the other Christians know nothing about it? Did you never get converted? God sees that which is in secret. Those are the things that count.

Those are the things that grieve the Spirit of God. And revival is the work of the Holy Spirit. If he is grieved, then he stops working.

If the so-called revival then still continues, it is a strange spirit, a false revival. Then don't be a fool saying, it is wonderful what God is doing. Thousands of people come together.

It is false. It is not a true Holy Spirit revival. Where God reigns, there he is the captain.

Where he rules by his Spirit and where he is the leader, sin is not tolerated. And when they did that, purified and sanctified themselves, God was in their midst again. Then again they went from strength to strength.

Again they lived in victory. But when sin had come in, God said, no, I am no longer with you. The second point is disobedience.

That is the end of revival. In Acts 5.32 we read about the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him. Obedience to God is a prerequisite to receiving the Holy Spirit.

We learn the same lesson in the Old Testament where the Israelites who left Egypt never saw the promised land which God had promised to their forefathers because of their disobedience. Even if God has given you a promise, the day you are disobedient, he cancels it. His oath does not apply to a person who is disobedient.

You have got no right to make use of God's promises if you are disobedient. We must obey God. The Bible says that disobedience is the same as witchcraft.

That is what the prophet Samuel said to King Saul. Can we expect if there is witchcraft in our midst, if there are Sangomas, witches, witch doctors in our midst, busy with their things, that God will live and reign there? Together with all that, never, the word of God teaches us, disobedience is like witchcraft. As stubbornness is as idolatry, we will reign and rule together with idols, never.

The Bible says that being self-willed is as idolatry. Wanting it your way, it must be like this. I want it like that.

And if things go against your will, it is terrible. Everything is wrong. That is idolatry.

In revival, there may not be any stubbornness. God has dealt with your own self, or is it still alive in your life? Has God dealt with your own self, or is it still alive in your life? Then you are not part of revival. You have no part in it.

You are not in it, but outside it. You are a danger to the revival. The sooner you get out of it, the better.

The sooner you die, the better. Because as long as you live with your own self and your stubbornness, you are like a devil to the working of the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit is grieved, the Bible says, do not grieve the Holy Spirit and do not quench the Holy Spirit.

If a person is grieved, he is no longer free, but he withdraws. And so the Holy Spirit withdraws and is not free to work in us if we sin. If we persist, he is quenched and like a candle that is put out.

In these over 52 years, we have met up with a lot. I'd like to use the example of a family who backslid. One day a woman came to me.

I honor some women. She said, Elo, I want to share with you that I am troubled about my husband. She said, for a long time people used to come daily for help and my husband would be busy till late at night.

Sometimes people had to queue to speak to him. But now the last few weeks nobody is coming anymore. We must sit together and read the newspaper and listen to the radio.

Just imagine a farmer's wife crying, burdened because people don't come for any help. My husband was a tool in Jesus' hands, but now it's not there anymore. Sisters, are you just happy that your husband sits with you every evening, not leading a soul to Christ? Just happy that he is with you while souls are going to hell? Maybe you say, I am a busy man.

Just like the rich man, in his busyness he went to hell. Even if you are busy, at night the Lord should be able to bring people to you. We prayed together, O God, that man is backsliding and he is the way that is to hell, not to heaven.

We prayed to God and he was faithful to his word. And where two or three are gathered in my name, there I will be present. It didn't take long and the husband came and unburdened himself of a whole lot of rubbish.

A short while later he came again and said that God was working again. The second example of a businessman. In another place God was working through a certain man who had a normal job as a businessman.

He was a clerk but he brought many people to Christ. Before his conversion he didn't want to know anything of the Bible. He tore a Bible to pieces and his wife had to hide her Bible.

But then he got converted and he started preaching and the church grew and grew. I feel sorry for those of you who where the church doesn't grow. Some like taking their children to rugby matches.

But why don't you take your children to huts and preach the gospel? If one soul gets converted it is better than when the Springboks or Bafana Bafana win. Better than playing golf. Have you spoken about Jesus to the people on your farm? It's better than playing golf.

Have you spoken about Jesus to the people on your farm? If the Holy Spirit is in you, if you are filled with him, then he will direct you and convict people of sin, righteousness and judgment. Soon the room where they held services was too small and he got a bigger one and later a bigger one. Whenever he got here he was a blessing to us with his beaming face.

But after a while some black co-workers asked me what was wrong with that man. Had he lost his authority? Something was wrong. After three months he came at night like Nicodemus and said, For three months I have not led one person to Christ.

I can't bear it any longer. He said that for three months he went to his room again and again praying, confessing his sin in secret to God behind closed doors. But he didn't anymore and he came.

He said, I know where it started. I can take you to the place where I sinned. And since that day I have not led one soul to the Lord.

In these three months I found fault with the others and thought the Christians don't like me, don't want my company and look down upon me. But tonight I come to confess my sin. Mark those things.

When there is something wrong in your life and you are blunt and you feel others are shunning you, the fault is with you. There is something wrong in your life. They don't worry about me, you may say.

They don't like me. Wait a minute. The one with life will see the fault lies with you.

And when we got up he said, Should I stop preaching now? I said no. You should have stopped when you had hid your sin, not now that you have confessed it. No person in this world knew where he was.

Not his wife or children or anyone. Only he and then me because he told me. He left for home about twelve o'clock that night.

The telephone rang and he told me with great joy that when he got home a miracle had happened and there were three men standing at his front door. He asked them what they wanted and they said that they were sinners on their way to hell and asked for help and prayer. Three people entered the kingdom of God at twelve o'clock that night.

He said, Elo, tell the people all over the world how it works. You may even tell them my sin. But I said I won't tell people what was told to me in confidence, but I will tell people how it works.

The streams of living water were again gushing forth out of his life and he could preach with authority, leading people to Christ, not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord. The third example was a girl under a tree. One day we went to visit my brother Heino in Dalton.

As we sat outside in the garden with the co-workers, reading the Bible and praying, we saw a girl leaning against a very tall tree at the end of the garden. She was a shy girl. We called her to come over to us and then asked her what she wanted.

When the Holy Spirit came, He used anybody, whether a boy, a girl, a businessman, a farmer. One day we received a call from a place where there was no preacher, telling us that people came from all over, from the hills, to ask for help. All over, even where we had never preached the gospel.

Now this girl told us that she was troubled. Since she got converted, day after day, the Lord brought people who wanted to make peace with God. She was illiterate, but in a few months she won more people to the Lord than many ministers and evangelists in all their lives.

But now, she said, in the last two weeks, not one person had come to her to make her life right with God. Just imagine a young teenage girl crying, unable to sleep at night because she hadn't led anyone to Christ for two or three weeks. Something must be wrong, she said, because I cannot lead anyone to Christ anymore.

Maybe it is some months already that since you last led anyone to the Lord, but you are quite happy and not satisfied, friend. You have your eggs in the morning, you live your life that shows that you are spiritually dead. At night she cried to the Lord, why is this, Lord? Why can you not bring people anymore? These people know nothing about theology.

Just, I was a sinner and Jesus came and set me free from my sins. That is what they proclaim. Then the previous night she had a dream.

She was hesitant to tell us the dream, afraid that she was going off her mind. She asked, is there a book called Isaiah in the Bible? Yes, we said. She started smiling.

Is there a chapter 59? We said yes. A verse 27? We said yes. Eagerly, she said, please read it to me.

The Lord told me in my dream that as the Holy Spirit can't work anymore, I would find the answer in Isaiah 59 verse 2. We read her the first two verses of Isaiah 59. Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it

cannot save, or his ear dull, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he does not hear.

She wept and said, now I know the sin which I committed recently. I knew that I was sinning, but I continued with it. But now I want to confess it.

Please pray for me that God will forgive me. We wept with her and prayed for forgiveness, and after that the Lord started working again through her. Now I come to point 4. A personal question.

I have a question. As you sit here and I explain to you what it is like when God is at work, I have a personal question. Are there rivers of living water flowing forth from your life? Has the desert turned into a garden? Are there trees bearing nice fruit, healing leaves that have sprung up? Answer me, dear friend.

If I don't say many rivers, is there one river flowing from your life, this living water, even a single river from your life? If not, allow me to say that you are dead, finished, the Holy Spirit is not working in you. Don't say you are a believer, a preacher. There are many churches which don't grow or make any progress.

And where there is no fruit, don't tell me you are a Christian, you are a Pharisee, a hypocrite. There haven't been many months in this year yet. I don't want this which I say to just go in one ear and out the other.

Answer me, dear friend. In these two months, how many people have you won over to the Lord? How many people have been blessed by you? If you say no one, I say that you are dead. The Holy Spirit is not in you.

If God is in you, He can just be there and be quiet. He works through the Holy Spirit and those rivers of living water will flow forth. The power of God, of the Holy Spirit working in you will be there.

Revelation speaks, you have the name of being alive but you are dead. There is that where a person says that he is a believer, that he has the name of being a believer. He can even be here at Sisyphus, but he is dead.

Because God doesn't rule in your life. You rule yourself. It doesn't go according to His will, but your own will.

And that is where there aren't any rivers. I ask you, I want you to see whether you are a believer or not, a true believer, as the scriptures say. Jesus said, if you believe in me, as the scriptures say, do you hear what the scriptures say? In Revelation we read about trees which bear fruit always, every month, never coming to an end, no interruption.

If you don't have the fruit of the Holy Spirit, you will be thrown out and rejected from heaven. It is not what I say, but what the scriptures say. This is a service where we need to examine ourselves, that each one examines himself, that no one goes out without having done that.

You could even ask other people whether there are rivers in your life. Those who stay with you, those to whom you are preaching, do they see and experience rivers flowing out of your life? Even growing, so that they are also caught up by it. Do they get unceasing fruit in you? The lovely fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Fruit that never ends. The fifth point about logical thinking, an enemy, there is something else which I would like to mention, which is a great obstacle and enemy to revival, and that is logical thinking. God

teaches us so clearly in his word to trust in him with all our hearts and not to lean on our own understanding.

I would like to share with you how God dealt with me concerning this. I would like to use an example of potatoes. When we came here to Kwasi Zabantu, there were only a handful of co-workers.

One day they came to me and said, You pray for the people. You counsel them. You do the preaching.

That is too much. May we take care of what the people will eat. Then you needn't worry about that.

I said to them, to my own understanding, Do you know what it means? How much food you need for a hundred people three times a day? Will you be able to cope with it? Tears filled their eyes and they said, Most probably we don't know. But we felt that the Lord laid it on our hearts to do this. But we whites are so callous, so hard.

We just say what we like and do what we like and don't mind whether we tread on any other man's foot. Whether we hurt him or her, the devil is in our hearts. Then it is like that.

But when Jesus is there, you are very, very sensitive to what you do, what you say, how you behave, because you are careful that you won't hurt a person the wrong way. And in doing so, you don't see Christ. They don't see Christ in you.

They see the devil in you. Now you see, I was the son of a farmer, grew up on a farm, a bit in business. I said, Do you know how much a hundred people eat a day? What do you think? Where will you get the food from? They said, In Fundisi we have got sweet potatoes and matumes at home.

They just had a little garden. We will bring that, they said. That was not enough according to my understanding, to my judgment, according to my knowledge.

But I left it and said, Let us see whether it is going to work. They came and said, In Fundisi we have prayed and asked the Lord what we should do. Could you order a lorry load of full potatoes? Those were not thirty, forty ton lorries like today, maybe five or ten ton lorries.

I said, What for? We want to plant them, they said. This was just before winter time. According to my knowledge, that was all wrong.

You have got to plant things at the right time. And I said, We can't do that. It is not the right time for that.

Tears filled their eyes again. They said, We prayed and asked the Lord what we should do and we felt he said we should plant potatoes. I was sorry and felt that I had done wrong.

So I said, I would order some, but not a lorry load, just a pickup load full, so that if frost came and we lost everything, it would not be such a great loss as with a whole lorry load. They said they are thankful for everything, even if it is one bag. So we got a pickup load of potato seed.

We planted it over on the other side, where the avocado trees are now, on the way to the Mceni Care Centre. On the right hand side. We ploughed for them.

They planted. It was winter time. Beautiful rains came.

The potatoes grew. It was a bit cold, but not too cold for the potatoes. It was a mild winter.

They grew as I have never seen potatoes before. No sickness, no insects, nothing. We got a bumper crop.

We dug them up and they were white, as if washed already. There were too many to eat here, so we sent them to Pietermaritzburg to the market. Prices were sky high.

We could buy blankets for at least a hundred people with sheets, bedding and everything. I said, God forgive me. I thought they knew nothing.

I am the one with the knowledge. What would have happened if we would have planted a lorry load full of potatoes? Out of season. There was no frost.

They grew marvelously. I wept. I cried.

I went to these poor people and said, please forgive me. I was disobedient, not only to you, but to God. If I would have ordered what you had asked me to do, a lorry full, what would have happened? That was the time when the Russians sent Sputniks into space.

And when they put Laika into it, the name of the dog that was in space, on my knees I said, God, take my understanding. I give it to you. Send it to the moon like Laika.

The sixth point. Away with everything which grieves or quenches the Holy Spirit. Whatever it is in your life, away with what grieves and quenches the Holy Spirit.

Deal with it ruthlessly in Jesus' name. Do away with it, that at last the Holy Spirit can convict the world through you of sin, righteousness and judgment. Just think what would have happened in our country and in the world if all of us would be filled with the Holy Spirit.

If we come together in two and twenty one again, how many wouldn't be here? Speak to God that he should show you if there is something in the way. For God's sake, please don't treat things lightly in your life which grieve the Holy Spirit. Rather cut off your right hand, pluck out your eye than to grieve him.

May he who has an ear hear. May God be with us in his mercy. May the love of the Father fill our hearts and may the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us so that he can lead us into all truth.

God, may it be so. The next conference in South Africa will be, God willing, from the 8th to the 10th of March, 21. Lord willing, God be with you.

Amen.

---

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/28/SID28900.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/erlo-stegen/why-does-revival-come-to-an-end/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**