

Sit, Walk, Stand - Part 1

by Gareth Evans

Gareth Evans discusses the Welsh Revival's origins, its global impact, and the importance of being aware of God's presence in our lives today.

Duration: 9:16

Scripture: Psalm 16:11, John 4:23, Acts 16:25, James 4:8

Topics: "True Worship", "Spiritual Revival"

Description

This sermon reflects on the Welsh Revival of 1904, highlighting the impact it had globally, the characteristics that made it unique, and the misconception of expecting a duplication of past revivals. It also draws parallels to Paul's experience of revival in a prison, emphasizing the importance of being aware of God's presence in our lives for true worship and transformation.

Transcript

I don't know how much you know about the Welsh Revival. I'm just going to take a moment out just to talk a little bit about the Welsh Revival. My wife's mother, my mother-in-law, was a child in the church where the Welsh Revival started in 1904.

She was two years of age, and of course she does not remember much about it, but she certainly remembers the next decade and more when God continued to move by His Spirit throughout South Wales, and indeed throughout the world as a result of that. The impact of the Welsh Revival was felt in America. The Assembly's God, for example, came out of Azusa Street in 1906, and what happened in Azusa Street was a direct result of what had happened in Wales in 1904.

The Apostolic Church was birthed out of the Welsh Revival. India, there's a tremendous move of God's Spirit in India that came out of the Welsh Revival. In fact, many of Evan Roberts' writings, he was a young man God used at that time, were used throughout the world, and particularly in India.

They were translated into local languages and became a foundation of much of the growth of the church in India. So a lot of things came out of the Welsh Revival. But as Peter and I were talking, the characteristics of the Welsh Revival cannot be duplicated.

You know, people say, oh, if only we had the same things happening today. God does not move the same way in revivals. I want you to know, it is my conviction, there is a tremendous revival happening right today

in Great Britain.

I've been in Britain for the last four years visiting, and I've seen a tremendous move of God's Spirit there. Among the laity and the church leaders in Britain, and particularly in the Anglican Church, there is a tremendous move of God's Spirit, and I believe it's revival. But if we look at the revival of 1904 and expect a duplication of that, we're not going to see the same thing happening.

God moves in different ways. And God will move, I believe, in Australia. If you are earnest and hungry and want to know more about God.

For those who know little about the Welsh Revival, I'm just going to take one moment and tell you how it started, as far as the reports that we get are. A young man, Evan Roberts, went away for a week's Bible teaching, just like this. And the first day he was there, an Anglican vicar preached on the fullness of the Holy Spirit, the day of Pentecost, and the need for God to pour his Spirit out upon our dry land once again.

And Evan Roberts, 21 years of age, was so challenged by that word, he left after the first day. Now please don't leave today. Unless God wants to use you as a catalyst for revival, you may all leave in that case.

But don't leave otherwise. But Evan left the first day, went back home to his village of Loughra, which is where my wife is from, in Wales, a small village. And his mother and his sister thought maybe he was ill, because he came home and he went to his bedroom, and he locked himself in his bedroom, and was just praying for God to give him the fullness of the Spirit that this Reverend Joshua had spoken about.

He came down, he went to his church the following day, on the Monday I believe, saw his pastor, it was a Calvinistic Methodist church, it was a pretty dead church. He asked if he could have the keys to the building, because he wanted to get the young people to pray. He got about 12 or 15 of the young people from the church to come to a prayer meeting.

They did not want to come to a prayer meeting. They had not prayed before. It was not customary for them to do so.

And Evan taught them in Welsh to pray, Lord, send the Holy Spirit now for Jesus' sake. And because they were not used to praying, he made them go around in a circle, and they all said the same words one after the other. Does this sound a little like revival to you? Sounds very boring to me, but this is what happened.

After a while they got very tired, and he said, Evan, change the prayer. He said, OK, let's pray, Lord, send the Holy Spirit more powerfully for Jesus' sake. He made them go around in circles.

And I think it was a 12-year-old girl who started crying. And she said, Oh, Lord Jesus, I love you. And she started crying and praying for her friends in school and for her mum and dad.

Then her friends started praying the same way. And from the rotation of the prayer, it became a prayer of the heart, and the Lord visited and came in the midst of those people. While they were praying, they were unaware of what was happening in the village around them.

I don't know whether it was that night or the following night they came back together. And many of the stories, but one story I'll tell you. A couple were at home and they heard singing.

It was not Christmas time. It was not the time for carols. So John, the old man, goes to the door of the house to see where the singing is coming from.

His wife Mary says, Well, who's there? And he says, There's nobody here. And she comes to the door to see as well where the singing is coming from. And they see a light down the road at the little Calvinistic Methodist chapel.

And so they think, Well, the singing must be coming from there. And so they start walking towards the chapel. And as they walk, they realize the singing is coming from the heavens above them.

And they came into the chapel, opened the door quietly, and saw just a little lantern at the front, an oil lamp, and there were maybe 15 young people praying. And so they quietly sat in the back pew and watched these young people praying. And the doors of the chapel opened and other people came into the chapel.

The young people are praying at the front. They start praying for their mums and dads. And their mums and dads are sitting at the back of the chapel.

And so mums and dads get on their knees and they weep in the way to the Lord. And then the young people, one or two of them, would get up because it's time to go home. It's late and mum and dad would wonder where I am.

And as they come up the aisle, they see their mum and dad on their knees weeping before God. That's when the Welsh Revival started. And then the other chapels in the villages wanted Evan Roberts, who was the catalyst to come and lead these young people in their groups.

And so they went to the different chapels. And every night the chapels were open for prayer. And the young people were leading the prayer times.

There's hardly any preaching recorded in the Welsh Revival. They would hear that Evan Roberts and young people were coming to their village. And so the people would crowd into the church to see this phenomena of these young people.

They'd be there two hours before the scheduled time. And in those two hours, God would visit the chapel long before Evan Roberts ever got there. And by the time he got there, the whole church would be on their knees weeping before God in repentance and crying out to God.

And that's how drunks and criminals and others came to the Lord. Swept right throughout South Wales, into all the valleys. And today if you go to Wales, you'll see church after church after church.

Built 1840, so and so. Rebuilt 1904. Sadly empty today, many of them.

That's the Welsh Revival. A catalyst, a young man who had a burden for God. He was not a preacher.

There's no recorded message that he preached. In fact, the Welsh Revival grew around the testimony of the people who came to know God. You go to the pub, and on the door of the pub would be a sign saying, Closed.

Owner converted. Down the mines, the miners would go to work an hour early so that they could sing worship and praise to God. They'd come home, arms linked, walking down the streets of the villages, singing praises to God, with their faces blackened with coal dust and tears running down their faces.

The magistrates were issued with white gloves because there were no cases to try in the courts. That's what happened in Wales in 1904, and that can happen again today. It's happening in Britain today, and it's a new phenomena.

And one can mistake the phenomena for the move of God, but lives are being changed. And I believe that we need to be aware that the Church of Jesus Christ is alive and well in the world. I am convinced of that.

I've had the privilege of traveling through West Africa and Europe over recent years, and the Church of Jesus Christ, believe me, saints, is alive and well. The media will not tell you that, but the Church of Jesus Christ is alive and well. When I see young people like you coming here, I know it's alive and well in Australia too.

And God wants to do things among you, and God is able to do things among you, and I believe God is doing things among you in Australia too. Amen? If you want to talk more about the revival, you can keep me up to early hours in the morning. I'll talk more about the revival and what happened in Wales, because it's still happening in the lives of individuals.

And I trust it will happen in your life. Why do I start that way? Well, Paul's experience of the revival is a rather different situation than what happened in Wales. It wasn't in a dry church that he saw God visit him, but it was in a prison.

It's hard to imagine revival coming in a prison, isn't it? Paul lived constantly in that reality of God's presence, and Peter this morning talked about what revival is. He defined it, and I like the definition. It was a long definition, but in the definition was an expression like this, the awareness of the presence of God.

One day soon, I hope to write a book. During my time in Australia, I want to draft a book on praise and worship. And I believe that true worship is what happens in the life of the believer when they become aware of the presence of God.

My definition of worship is man's response to his awareness of the presence of God. And Paul was certainly aware of the presence of God even in prison. I think the first time he was in prison in Philippi, I remember he was put there.

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