

Revival Praying

by Glenn Meldrum

Revival is a spiritual work obtained and advanced through spiritual means, and Spirit-inspired prayer is essential for genuine spiritual awakening.

Scripture: Psalm 91:1, Matthew 21:13, Luke 10:41, Acts 1:14, James 4:2

Topics: "Revival Prayer", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

Glenn Meldrum emphasizes the vital role of prayer in experiencing genuine revival, highlighting that all true revivals have been birthed in prayer and that praying saints are instrumental in ushering in revival. He stresses that prayer should be a way of life for every believer, as it is the primary method of receiving God's help and advancing His kingdom. Meldrum underscores the importance of understanding prayer as a lifestyle, not just a religious duty, and how a Christian's prayer life directly impacts their spiritual depth and effectiveness in serving God.

Transcript

Revival is a spiritual work obtained and advanced through spiritual means. That is why we cannot have a genuine spiritual awakening without Spirit inspired prayer. Church history clearly validates this truth--that praying saints are the instruments the Lord has chosen to birth revival. "All true revivals have been born in prayer," penned E. M. Bounds. "When God's people become so concerned about the state of religion that they lie on their faces day and night in earnest supplication, the blessing will be sure to fall" (Bounds, On Prayer, 98).

Praying for revival should be a part of every believer's devotional life. Intercession remains the responsibility of every Christian without exception. Unfortunately, most Christians are unskilled in prayer, including the majority of those who call themselves intercessors. The purpose of this chapter is to highlight various dimensions of revival praying with the hope that many will eagerly enlist in Christ's school of prayer and subsequently storm hell's strongholds.

A WAY OF LIFE

Prayer for the Christian is not an option; it is a way of life. God designed prayer to be the primary method of receiving His help and advancing His kingdom. James taught that we do not have, because we do not ask (Jam. 4:2). There is virtually nothing the Lord will do for His people apart from prayer (this is an extremely important point). Not just that, a true man or woman of God will never live or act apart from that

means of grace. In this hectic American culture, we have become too busy for prayer, and our lives are spiritually bankrupt to prove it.

A Christian will never rise above his prayer life. Robert Murray McCheyne noted, "What a man is on his knees before God is all that he is, this and nothing more" (Campbell, Heart). The quantity and quality of prayer directly relates to the spiritual depth of a believer. The average Christian seldom, if ever, taps into the power of prayer. Through prayer, there is power for holiness, power to love God, power to serve, power to set captives free, power for signs and wonders, power to build Christ's kingdom and power for revival. Prevailing prayer opens the door to Holy Ghost power and without prayer that door remains securely closed.

The Lord designed prayer to be the lifeblood of a believer, an act of intimacy lived out between God and man. Oh! The joy of prayer! Few however, avail themselves of the privilege. Most Christians know little or nothing of the joy that flows out of abiding in the secret place of the Most High (Ps. 91:1). We can be so concerned about what we get from the Savior that we seldom know the enjoyment of just loving Him and being loved by Him.

Jesus viewed prayer as an accepted fact of relationship with the Father. Prayer was His lifestyle, not a religious duty as the Pharisees reduced it to. The Messiah desired to build a community of faith based upon a lifestyle of intimate fellowship with the Father. To accomplish this, He developed a people who made prayer a way of life. Jesus demonstrated the effectiveness of such a lifestyle through the power He manifested in word and deed. He walked in perfect communion with the Father, which sustained Him each day, all the way to the cross.

How Christians understand prayer will determine how the local church functions and whether or not that church will ever experience genuine revival. We must define prayer according to Christ's definition, not our own. Consequently, to comprehend how Jesus characterized prayer we need to examine how He viewed the house of God.

A HOUSE OF PRAYER

Jesus was not like the religious leaders of His day. He lived in unbroken fellowship with His Father, walked in perfect holiness, preached with authority and shook the status quo. He directly opposed the dead religious traditions of the elders and denounced the popularized religion of the day by preaching the truth in simplicity and power. His righteous soul was filled with wrath against those who desecrated His temple through their religious pride and spiritual barrenness. He could not remain silent.

One day Jesus entered the temple courts and committed an act of holy violence. The radical Messiah was on the loose. He made a scourge of rope and drove out those who defiled His House. Jesus was declaring to Israel her sin. His voice echoed throughout the temple courts, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you have made it a 'den of thieves'" (Mt. 21:13; NKJV).

Jesus was proclaiming that the temple was HIS house and He was defining the purpose of HIS house. This was Jesus, the radical, God incarnate in flesh and blood. He was teaching that His house was primarily to be a house of prayer, not a house of preaching, fellowship, social service or ministry--but a house of prayer. All those other dimensions of church life are necessary for her vitality, but should flow out of her prayer life.

When Jesus drove out the people that defiled His temple He was emphatically stating that prayerlessness is sin. Anything that keeps us from the place of prayer grieves His heart. Overturning the moneychanger's tables had less to do with their greed than with prayerlessness. Actually, their prayerlessness allowed their greed to flourish.

God created His house to be a house of prayer. If the church is not primarily a house of prayer then she is not a house of God. Whenever the church fails to be a house of prayer, she has failed her calling and become little more than a social institution. Restoring the place of prayer to God's house was a deliberate mission of the Savior. He purposely instilled in the minds of his followers that prayer must be the priority of their lives and that everything they did was to flow out of prayer. This was so important that Jesus went right into the proverbial lion's den and drove out those who dishonored His house. This event was engraved on the minds of His disciples and His words, "My House shall be called a house of prayer" burned inside of them.

Might not Jesus today accuse much of the western church of becoming a den of thieves because they have forsaken the place of prayer? Lack of Holy Spirit power is a direct result of prayerlessness. Jesus will never be glorified when there is an absence spiritual power in the local assembly. Instead of restoring the power through prayer, multitudes of churches have become nothing more than social clubs, self-help centers or pro-activist organizations. Prayerless churches are the result of prayerless pastors who reproduce after their own kind. Though filled with activity, such churches are devoid of supernatural power and worthless in the scheme of eternity. They may implement the most fashionable church growth teaching while never fulfilling the will of God.

Churches may be full of activity as the temple in Jerusalem was. They may supply services to help people as the merchants did. Or even be busy with ministry as the priests were. Not realizing that Jesus is standing at the door, scourge in hand, ready to drive out the desecraters of His house. E. M. Bounds wisely instructed, "As God's house is a house of prayer, prayer should enter into and underlie everything that is done there. Prayer belongs to every sort of work relating to the church. As God's house is a house where the business of praying is carried on, so is it a place where the business of making praying people out of prayerless people is done. Any church that calls itself the house of God but fails to magnify and teach the great lesson of prayer, should change its teaching to conform to the divine prayer pattern; or, it should change the name of its building to something other than a church" (Bounds, *On Prayer*, 186). No matter how much activity a congregation produces, if the people are not a people of prayer then the church is not a house of prayer and they have failed their Christian calling.

The kingdom of heaven either progresses or regresses according to the prayers of the saints. Prayerlessness produces powerlessness, which in turn produces barrenness. A church can be spiritually barren whether it has a congregation of 50 or 5,000. Size does not constitute life or success according to the standards of Christ's kingdom. Since prayer is a spiritual act, prayerless Christians and prayerless churches are helpless in advancing the Savior's spiritual kingdom. They may even be detrimental to the cause of Christ and a hindrance to revival.

When true revival is withheld from the land, the fault lies at the feet of every pastor and believer who has ceased to be a person of prayer. Revival is the Lord's visitation, or habitation, among men. Without soul stirring prayer there can be no revival! The very idea that God's house should be a house of prayer implies that His people should be a people of prayer.

PEOPLE OF PRAYER

Prayer is so vitally important that a person cannot become a Christian, or remain one, without it. This means that prayerless people cannot be true Christians. Since the relationship between God and man begins with the prayer of repentance, it can only continue and grow through that same means. It is thoroughly unbiblical and illogical to believe that there can be a relationship with Jesus without deep personal communication on a constant basis.

Prayer is not something you do, it is who you are. A person of prayer is a person in continual fellowship with the Master. No greater privilege has ever been granted to man than to walk with God in unbroken fellowship. Paul called this walking in the Spirit. A husband and wife can talk while doing errands, but nothing takes the place of intimate communication without outside distractions. True intimacy is the place where dreams are revealed, and the joys and tears of life are shared. Few Christians experience the wonder of such a relationship with Jesus because they have not chosen to develop a lifestyle of prayer. "Our spiritual immaturity never shows up more than in our lack of praying, be it alone or in a church meeting" (Ravenhill, Revival, 29).

One day Jesus was invited to dine at the home of Mary and Martha. While Jesus was waiting for dinner to be served, a problem arose between the sisters, which was ultimately a question of priorities and lifestyle. Luke 10 gives the account. "Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made." In contrast, Mary "sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said." Martha began to complain, asserting that Mary should be helping her with the dinner preparations. Jesus intervened with a strong, but tender rebuke, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

Martha's fellowship with Jesus worked around her schedule, Mary's schedule revolved around Jesus. We could think of Martha as a person who prays and Mary as a person of prayer. Both made lifestyle choices; Martha kept herself at the center of her life while Mary centered hers around Jesus. The Martha type of person prays, but her prayers are selfishly motivated because self is still at the center of her life. A person of prayer sits at Jesus' feet and is consumed by the One who is a consuming fire. To know Christ's heart we must sit at His feet. Most Christians will never know His heart because their lifestyle choices will never allow for it.

Imagine Mary and Martha in their eighties. What memories would they have? Martha would be able to give tales of hot stoves, dirty dishes and fancy meals. Oh, but Mary gazed into those holy eyes that burn with fire and heard words from the lips of the Master that we have not been allowed to hear. What might our memories be when we are in our 80's? Of children or wealth, grown-up toys, or pain and suffering? Maybe they will be memories filled with dread as eternity looms near. What memories will endure into eternity? Would any of your life's labors be worth inscribing on the halls of heaven as a testimonial to your love of Christ while on earth? Would you be ashamed to mention your earthly pursuits in those sacred chambers because they proved worthless in the scheme of eternity?

The diary of David Brainerd has changed countless individuals because his life had eternal value. He did not squander his life on meaningless pursuits but spent it on the eternal things of God. Above all else, Brainerd knew his Saviour on his knees. This is where his passion for the Lord and compassion for souls grew to be white hot. Day by day, he grew more powerful in the Spirit even though he was slowly dying of tuberculosis. "But as his strength ebbed his compassion grew, grew till it became a great hunger that

would not be denied. Whole nights were spent in agonizing prayer in the dark woods, his clothes drenched with the sweat of his travail" (Shearer, 37).

In time, Brainerd's prayers brought revival to the Native Americans. His influence went further than he ever imagined, for his life aroused such men as Carey, Payson, and McCheyne. Bounds stated, "All I want is simply to enforce this thought, that the hidden life, a life whose days are spent in communion with God, in trying to reach the source of power, is the life that moves the world. Those living such lives may be soon forgotten. There may be no one to speak a eulogy over them. But by and by, the great moving current of their lives will begin to tell, as in the case of this young man (David Brainerd), who died at about thirty years of age. The missionary spirit of this nineteenth century is more due to the prayers and consecration of this one man than to any other one" (Bounds, Weapon, 161).

The world today desperately needs men and women of prayer who know how to prevail with God as David Brainerd did. When he prayed heaven moved, hell trembled, the earth shook and captives were set free. He accomplished great victories because he was a person of prayer.

PRAYING THAT CHANGES THE WORLD

The Lord has chosen to operate His kingdom in this world through prayer. According to His infinite wisdom and goodness, the Lord will move, or remain silent, according to the prayers of His saints. That places a tremendous responsibility upon Christians to be people of prayer, yielded and obedient to the Savior. "In dealing with mankind," wrote Bounds, "nothing is more important to God than prayer. Prayer is likewise of great importance to people. Failure to pray is failure in all of life. It is failure of duty, service, and spiritual progress. It is only by prayer that God can help people. He who does not pray, therefore, robs himself of God's help and places God where He cannot help people" (Bounds, Weapon, 8).

We often rationalize our prayerlessness by convincing ourselves that no one gets hurt if we do not pray. Nevertheless, prayerlessness is sin! It is rooted in pride, selfishness, self-sufficiency and lack of surrender. By not being a person of prayer, we harm family, friends, neighbors, co-workers and the church. Lack of prayer causes sin and selfishness to run amuck in our lives. It produces lifestyles of compromise and hypocrisy that drives our children and friends away from Christ. Prayerlessness stops revival from coming so multitudes die without ever receiving salvation.

One of the first things prayer accomplishes is the transformation of the person who prays. He who does not pray stops the Spirit's revolutionizing power in his life. The Christian either rises or falls according to his prayer life. The Holy Spirit will not force His way through the barrier of prayerlessness. We must willfully open our hearts. True prayer is an act of surrender to God. Through it we place our lives in His service so we may advance His mission of building a community of faith by rescuing lost humanity. Only from the prayer closet are men and women empowered to take a city, state or nation for the glory of God

For the lost to be saved in great numbers the Holy Spirit must be powerfully present to convict of sin. He can awaken the consciences of the hardest sinners or coldest church folk. An eloquent preacher might stimulate the minds and emotions of people, but only the Spirit can pierce the heart and conscience. Until the church becomes a praying church, it will lack Holy Ghost power to convict sinners and transform society. "The history of revival proves that conviction comes as a result of the prayers of God's people. Where there is fervent prayer there is deep conviction. Where there is no conviction there is lack of earnest prayer" (Paul Smith, 33).

One divine moment of the presence of God can do more for the evangelization of the world than all the combined efforts of our programs, crusades, and church growth seminars. The Great Korean Revival of 1907 is a wonderful example of the fruit and power of prayer. Earnest preparations began as early as 1903 and grew in intensity. In 1906, Dr. Howard A. Johnston brought news to the missionaries that revival broke out in Wales and in Kasia Hills, India. The missionaries began praying at noon every day for revival. After a short period, they started to grow weary and some even wanted to discontinue the prayer meeting. Discouragement had almost stopped the revival from coming. Missionary Jonathan Goforth related, "Instead of discontinuing the prayer meeting we would give more time to prayer, not less. . . . We kept to it, until at last, after months of waiting, the answer came" (Jonathan Goforth, By, 23).

The Lord visited Pyongyang on the last day of a series of meetings where missionaries and national leaders had gathered to seek God's face for revival. It was Monday night, January 17, 1907. Graham Lee was leading the service. After a short sermon he called for prayers. The entire assembly began to pray out loud with such force that it became a roar, "like the falling of many waters," captivating the whole congregation. The sound of weeping was heard as a spirit of heaviness and sorrow for sin broke out among the whole audience. "They began to repent of their sins publicly one by one" (Lee, 76-77).

Missionary William Blair described the scene, "Man after man would rise, confess his sins, break down and weep, and then throw himself to the floor and beat the floor with his fists in perfect agony of conviction. . . . Sometimes after a confession the whole audience would break out in audible prayer, and the effect of that audience of men praying together in audible prayer was something indescribable. Again, after another confession, they would break out in uncontrollable weeping, and we would all weep, we couldn't help it. And so the meeting went on until two o'clock a.m. We had prayed to God for an outpouring of His Holy Spirit upon the people and it had come" (Lee, 77).

The next evening the outpouring of the Holy Spirit was even more intense. "Then began a meeting the like of which I had never seen before, nor wish to see again unless in God's sight it is absolutely necessary. Every sin a human being can commit was publicly confessed that night. Pale and trembling with emotion, in agony of mind and body, guilty souls, standing in the white light of their judgment, saw themselves as God saw them. Their sins rose up in all their vileness, till shame and grief and self-loathing took complete possession; pride was driven out, the face of man forgotten. Looking up to heaven, to Jesus whom they had betrayed, they smote themselves and cried out with bitter wailing: 'Lord, Lord, cast us not away forever!' Everything else was forgotten, nothing else mattered. The scorn of men, the penalty of the law, even death itself seemed of small consequences if only God forgave" (Lee, 77-78).

Such accounts of revival are the direct results of saints who passionately grab hold of the Savior in prayer. No human effort will ever compare to the power of the Spirit released upon men, women and children. Spiritual outpourings like the one in Korea are what revival praying is all about. It is worth a lifetime of effort to see God rend the heavens and come down with such holy power. Jesus continues to hold before us the wonderful hope of His awesome presence revealed in our day.

Jonathan Goforth was an eyewitness of the initial outpouring of the Great Korean Revival. After he returned to his mission field in China, he saw revival sweep the land. While on furlough, he preached in his native country of Canada and also in the United States. He believed that the Lord could pour out His glory in North America as He did in Korea and China. However, revival did not come to these two nations. Goforth stated the reason; the Lord "does not get the yielded channels" (Jonathan Goforth, When, 25). What an indictment against the church.

Prayer is the primary means for the church to experience a fresh anointing from God. The Holy Spirit super-abounds with all the power necessary to awaken the church and save the lost. The Great I Am uses simple, hungry souls to pray in revival and advanced it with such force that vast numbers of people are thrust into the irresistible influence of the Spirit. What program or pop-church growth teaching ever accomplished such a feat? How we settle for refuse when the Lord wants us to feast at His table! Nothing else on earth can do the work of the kingdom like the Spirit loosed upon men, women and children. Absolutely nothing!

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