

# Henry Blackaby (video)

by Henry Blackaby

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## Transcript

For some who may not be aware of Henry Blackbee, he's a man that God has uniquely used in marvelous ways around the world. And I would probably ask him, why are you, Dr. Blackbee, interested in a conference like this? It was our occasion to meet him for the first time in his office in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, where God saw fit to do a wonderful work. That was the beginning of our relationship with each other.

And from that simple beginning, we see how God has knit our hearts together because of a burden for the same kind of thing, for God to do what he longs to do, what he needs to do, to revive his people so that the world, the ends of the earth, can feel the impact of it. Dr. Blackbee, why don't you come and share with us tonight? And I hope that as you do so, why don't you just give folks a word as to why you can relate to all this happening, even in relation to what it was like pastoring a small Baptist church in Saskatchewan, and God saw fit to do a deep work. In Vancouver, I grew up with a revival pastor, Uncle.

And then God let me be a part of what he chose to do in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. I was pastoring in California during the 60s, and a little church called, and knowing I had grown up in Canada, to ask if I would consider coming to be their pastor. There were 10 people in the church that were left, and they were so discouraged and so disheartened, unknown to me, they had already set a date to disband the church.

And I was told they went down on their knees, believing that they should disband as a church. They came up off their knees, with a sense that God had said, I want you to try one more time. And if Henry comes, I have a purpose for your church.

And so they agreed. And when I chose to go to that church, the total income from the church was \$90 for the month. And the chairman of the deacons resigned because he didn't want the church to survive.

And so we came without any promise of support from men, but certainly promise of God's wonderful provision in his own unique way. But in the 12 years that I was there, a revival church remembered that Jesus had given a commission in Mark's gospel. Mark's gospel's great commission is different.

In that gospel he says, take the good news of God's salvation to every person. Not just every nation, but every person. And so we stood before God, and asked God to show us how he wanted to do that.

The moment our hearts were committed to obey God, we began to hear from towns and villages all over. And they called us and said, would you be willing to come and start a Bible study in our town? And we did. We had made a commitment that if God shows us where he was working, that's his invitation to join him.

Some of you have read that in experiencing life. God is always at work around you. And he is seeking those whose hearts are loyal to him, so he could prove himself strong in every act.

Town after town after town that did not have any evangelical church began to ask us to come. In those years that we were there, that little congregation started 39 new congregations all over the province and in the adjoining provinces. I drove the 510 miles one way to start one of our mission churches in Winnipeg.

But when you start to see God raising up churches, you also have a burden to make sure that you have a secure pastor for those churches. How did God tell us in his word that we're to get laborers? How did he tell us to do it? Pray that the Lord of the harvest will thrust forth laborers into his harvest. I learned and our church learned that if you ever pray for God to thrust forth laborers, you better get ready to receive them and to do something in them.

Most of the reason we Bible tarry is because we don't expect God to do anything, so we're not ready when he does. But though this church had not had a university student or a college student in its congregation, as we prayed for laborers, I began to sense that God said, and all the laborers that I need for my new churches are on that college campus. They're not saved yet.

Just go and lead them to me, and I will call them. And so during those years, I baptized over 180 university students, and over half of them fell call into the ministry. I mean, they just came forward saying, God is calling me.

And so our little church, without any manual to tell us what to do, we started a theological college to train these that God was calling to himself. And we started, it was first called the Christian Training Center, and then we changed its name to the Canadian Baptist Theological College. And we had over 400 people come to be servants of God across that venue.

But I want us to take a moment and look into the life of the Lord Jesus for a moment. In Matthew chapter 4, I want you to think about the Lord and the circumstances of this moment. Jesus was always immersed in Scripture.

And so whatever he did, he did in response to what God had already revealed in his Word. And in a moment we'll begin reading at verse 12, when you'll see the place of Scripture. I believe one of the reasons why revival carries in our day is that this is the most unscriptural group of people I've ever known.

We are disoriented to the Word of God. We may have a little emotional time, but that's not adequate for revival. You need to be immersed, as John the Baptist in chapter 3 said, when Christ comes, he'll immerse you in Holy Spirit and fire.

And Jesus affirmed that. And I've gone back to that verse, and I've asked myself a question that you ought to ask. Do you think John the Baptist was telling the truth? That when Christ comes, he immerses in Holy Spirit and fire.

And if that's true, then, and he said this in verse 311 of Matthew, if that is true, then should you not ask the question, has Christ come to my life? Not have you accepted him, but what's the evidence that he has accepted you? The key is not whether you accept him, it's whether he accepts you. How would you know that he has accepted you? He will immerse you in Holy Spirit and fire. So take seriously the announcement by John the Baptist, and later affirmed by Jesus, and ask yourself the question, what's the evidence that Christ has come to my life? Now you may say, well I don't know how to go about that.

Ask him. Ask him. Take time in the presence of God and say, Lord your scripture tells me that when you come, you immerse a person in Holy Spirit and fire.

I don't know what that looks like, but if you will show me, I want you to know I release everything in me to that encounter with the living Christ. And of course when the fire came at Pentecost, God's people were used by God to turn the Roman Empire completely upside down. And so we ask the question, has he come to our church? Has he come to our family? Has he come to my life? What's the evidence of the presence and power of Almighty God? I was noticing the question, can revival still change nations? Wrong question.

Can God still change nations through revival? Revival doesn't change a nation any more than experiencing God transforms a life. And people come to me and say, my life was transformed by experiencing God. And I'll stop and say, you mean God chose to use experiencing God to transform your life? Only God can transform a life.

Not a course. But he might choose to use a course to transform a life. And God can use revival to transform a nation.

And that's why we need to be very, very careful to have a relationship with God where he would choose to bring revival through his people. So here in the fourth chapter of Matthew, I want you to look to see what Jesus was announcing and what he did next. Beginning in verse 12.

Then when Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he departed to Galilee and leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, by the region of Zebulun and Naphtali. Notice that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet. Saying, the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, by the way of the sea beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, the people who sat in darkness, have seen a great light.

And upon those who sit in the region and shadow of death, light has dawned. Then notice the significance of verse 17. From that time, in other words, at the moment that Jesus knew God was going to fulfill

scripture, that God was going to bring light where there was darkness and death.

From that time, Jesus began to preach and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Before I go on, do you think that Jesus knew what he was saying? He had come from the Father, had he not? And he said, nobody knows the Father except the Son and those to whom he will reveal. Did Jesus know the capacity that God had to turn people and lives and cities upside down? Did he know what it meant for the kingdom, the rule of God to be right next to them? Did he know what could happen? He of all people knew exactly what would happen.

If God opened up his presence and power and activity in the midst of the people, when the king of heaven was present, did he know what they could experience? Yes. And what did he say had to happen before they could experience that mighty move of God? They had to repent. And the word repent means you're going in the wrong direction.

Turn around and go with me. And you will experience the reality of the mighty presence and power of God that is right next to you. So they followed him, and if you read on in this chapter toward the end, you'll see what Peter and Andrew, James, and later Matthew discovered.

Think about it. The kingdom of heaven is right next to you. The activity of almighty God is right next to where you are.

Come and follow me and see what it will look like. All of a sudden Peter the fisherman, because he followed Jesus, saw the blind see. He saw the deaf hear.

He saw the lame walk. He saw storms still, multitudes fed, and the dead raised back to life again. And the scriptures say if everything that Jesus said and did were written down, there wouldn't be enough books to just record what he did.

But if Peter stayed at his fishnets, he would have never experienced the presence and power of almighty God. What's revival? It's an encounter with the living Christ who says, you're going in the wrong direction. You say, well how would I know if I am? Look to see if there's any meaningful, significant activity of God happening around your life.

We have shifted from an intimate relationship with God to practicing religious activity. And we have assumed that regular, faithful religious activity is the power of God. It is not.

Where are the transformed lives around your life? Where is the clear evidence that God is present and active? Where the kingdom of God is happening right next to you. Could it be that God wants to do a work in your family? Does he want to touch your children? When I began to sense the presence and power of God and the scriptures that accompany his presence, I began to watch to see what he was doing with my children. And in summary, all four sons, at different times, felt clearly the call of God to pass it.

And all four helped pass it. And our daughter felt clearly the call of God to missions. And she and her husband and two children are in Germany, doing church planting in Germany, and that's where Marilyn is.

Someone said that she's going to be gone. She's gone all last week and all this week. So I'm alone.

And they said, did she go to see her daughter? And I said, well, she went to see her two grandchildren. And I noticed that some of the most significant aspects of the Lord's work is in our own family. And in our

own grandchildren.

We have 14 grandchildren. And by the way, someone asked me, they said, you don't expect all 14 of your grandchildren to respond to you. I said, I do.

God made a covenant with his people back then. It's the same God who wants to make a covenant with me. And the Spirit of God uses the Word of God as a sword.

To help me understand the will and ways of God. So as I was reading, here's what God said to me. As for me, says the Lord, this is my covenant with them.

My Spirit, who is upon you, and my words, which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart from your mouth. Nor from the mouth of your descendants. Nor from the mouth of your descendants' descendants.

Says the Lord from this time and forevermore. Did that say from you, from your children, and your grandchildren? That's what it said to me. Why is there no revival? And with many denominations.

Evangelical denominations. And hundreds and hundreds of prayer ministries. Why is there no revival? Why does revival tarry? Part of the answer to me came from Luke 12, 54-56.

And then some verses from chapter 13. Jesus turned to the people of his day and said. You see the signs of the weather.

And you make adjustments. Because you know what the weather is about to do. But you do not recognize the time in which you live.

In other words, they would make major adjustments to the weather. But they did not realize that the king of the universe was in their midst. We can sing about the king.

And then walk away without any reference to him in the way we live. We can't do that anymore. Because if you're in a revival conference, you've got to ask the question.

What will God require? As he would seek to bring a mighty movement of his presence. I can speak to you on that because on a number of occasions. I have been present when God's power fell on the people.

I was with the Campus Crusade group in Colorado. It must have been 2,000 to 3,000 of their global Campus Crusade directors. And Nancy Alida Moss and I were speaking.

And all of a sudden, there was a mighty touch of God. And spontaneously, people began to come to the altar. And throw themselves at the altar and weep and cry out before God.

Others began to run to the altar. And I watched some trying to comfort them. And I stopped and said, don't you try to comfort anyone who's under conviction of sin.

You can pray with them and repent yourself. Bill Bright turned to me and said, you go take hold of the microphone. Because I've never been in a moment like this in my life.

And I did. So for 11 hours, I stood at the microphone. And watched the presence and power of God touch that people.

And I meet them all over the world who were in that meeting. God chose that moment. But there was a huge seasons of prayer that preceded that.

I had learned that many of these were praying in the doorways. In their dorm room, in the classrooms, out under trees. They had spontaneously, in earnest, prayed in every corner of that place.

And in answer to their prayer, God had suddenly come and touched their lives deeply. That's revival. I won't put a meaning to revival different than what you see in this picture.

It's when God's people choose to return to Him, He returns to them. And that moment of His returning is life transforming. I happened to be waiting at this university and someone met me and reminded me they were there.

And there, on a Tuesday night, as I was about to speak, two young men just ran down the aisle and up on the platform. I was still trying to speak. But I knew that God had touched them in an unusual way.

And they came to the microphone and they said, We've been trying to repent for two days and God won't let us. He told us we had to come before the entire student body and faculty and confess our sin. They said, You see us as the Bible teachers and student leaders and the Godhead.

We just want you to know our life is full of pornography. God has deeply convicted us of that. And we've come to repent and forsake that.

And I said, Then come to the back of the platform and cry out to God for mercy. That He withholds from you what you really deserve. Having lived that way on the campus, without repentance, is an affront to a holy God.

Then I said, Are there any other young men, because God has convicted these two, that you would come and join them and repent from your sin? And just a horde of young men came and up onto the platform and began to cry out unto God. Then I noticed right next to me there was a stately young lady. She was crying and she said, Can I say a word? And I said, Certainly.

She turned to the whole group. The president of the university was right down over here. She said, You think you fellas are the only ones who have sinned this way.

We girls have too. And I want you to know we have not dressed appropriately, but our dress code has caused you to sin. And we come to repent before God.

I said, You go over by the piano and you cry out unto God for mercy. And He says that He does not give you what you really deserve. That is a grievous sin that you have done to affect the entire campus.

Well, some parents who were there came to the microphone. That meeting lasted all night long until the morning. And students went out from that campus to 30 other campuses around the nation.

And I went from there to Southwestern Seminary where two of my sons were attending. And one of these students gave a testimony of how God had come to their campus and that God would not let them loose until they had repented. And that service at Southwestern Seminary, they canceled all classes and went through the night and the next day.

I've been where God's chosen come. And it's when, like Jesus said, you need to repent. And you may say, Well, where in do I need to repent? Ask Him if there's no evident working of God in and through your life and you're just merely practicing religion and nobody else's life, no other lives are being transformed through yours.

You're out of fellowship with God. Repent. Cry unto God.

Oh God, why does my life not make a difference in anybody else's? Why is my Sunday school class not crying out unto God for revival? Why is my church not a house of prayer like you said? Well, there are several, and I need to bring this to a close, but there are several things that I feel are causing revival to carry. There's an awful lot of preaching without calling God's people to repent. I cannot remember the last time I heard a preacher calling on God's people to repent.

It's always the lost need to repent. No! The primary call to repentance in all of the Bible is to God's people. And even Romans 6, 23 is not addressed to lost people, but to God's people in Rome.

The wages of sin is death. That was written to God's people. But in our day, the reason revival carries is because there's no call for God's people to repent.

There's, second, the loss of a biblical understanding of revival. Third, there is no reference point in experience to revival. The reason that I have such a burden for revival is I've been there.

If you've ever been in the presence of a mighty movement of God, you can never be satisfied to live without it. You know what could be, and you refuse to live without it. That means there's no or little significant, persistent prayer for revival.

It was interesting, I had a gathering on the phone in a conference call this morning to some of the most significant religious leaders in America, the most significant religious leaders and writers and speakers in America, about ten of them, and myself. It was for a whole hour that I was astounded that none of them even mentioned the need for repentance. What they did was list all the sins of America, then cry out to God to intervene and bless America.

I said, who asks God to bless America when we will not repent? Repentance is absolutely essential for revival. I do, as you would, want to quote 2 Chronicles 7, 13-15, see if I can't read that. I think we need to read more than just 2 Chronicles 7, 14.

When I send hurricanes across your land, when you see these things happening, if my people, my people who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray, and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I'll hear from heaven, forgive their sin, and heal their land. The healing of America awaits on the repentance of God's people. If we will not repent, we will continue to see the increase in the remedial judgments of God.

I'm one that believes that what we have seen are the remedial judgments of God. That is, God will send a minor judgment, and then watch to see if his people repent, if they ever get the message. So 9-11, I believe, was the beginning.

Then he sent Hurricane Ike, and then he sent the collapse of Wall Street. What does he have to do next? If we will not respond in the first movement of God, he will increase the judgment. If we won't respond then, he'll increase the judgment even further.

Until there's a point where he says, my people are not repenting, therefore I will judge the land. Did you hear even in the news today, the radical terrorists saying they're going to wait until the election, and then the first of the year? It's been seven years since they've attacked America, and they've let the word out. Beginning of next year, they're going to pick up and seek to destroy America.

How many warnings do we have to have before God's people fall on their faces before God, and cry out to God, Lord, we see what you're allowing, we're seeing what you're doing, and you're trying to get our attention. Why does the Bible tell you God's people are not getting the message? When was the last time you heard a major message calling God's people to repent? When was the last time any spiritual leader called you to an all-day time of prayer and brokenness before God, that he might hear our cry and spare our nation? One thing that I have appreciated about having my third son as my pastor, I've known his tender heart, and when he first came, the very first Sunday, he said, you just need to know where God has me. He has reminded me that his house is to be a house of prayer.

I'm going to do everything in teaching, and guiding, and speaking, until this church is indeed a house of prayer. Then he said, I'm looking forward to the day when a thousand gather in our auditorium on their faces before God, crying out to God for revival in America. He's going to do that, and I'm going to walk with him in it.

But I've not heard many who are inviting God's people to come before him corporately and pray for a mighty movement. I do not know of a revival in history or biblical. That was not preceded by or accompanied by significant intercession and prayer.

Don't rest until your life is involved in a prayer time. I found this happening in Saskatoon in my own life. Then I watched it happen in our church, and I watched God touch an entire province.

From one end to the other, with his word through his people. When we pray, God addresses us to himself, and that's revival. What is revival, Terry? God's people, among many things, are not humbling themselves and praying, and seeking God's face, and turning from their wicked ways.

So God is not forgiving us, and not healing our land. The healing of America waits on the repentance of God's people. Let's bow together in prayer.

What has the spirit of God said to you? For he will make every scripture and every message very, very personal. He's called you by name, as he has called me by name. And he said, and we want everyone to do, what changes are you willing to make so that revival can come to your people, to his people, through my life.

And we can see a nation turning back to God. But it's your life, isn't it? Don't say I'm older. Don't say I'm a woman.

Don't say I'm a businessman. You're a child of God. One child of God.

Only you, God, can see God in my life, in my works. Would you be that person? In your own heart, cry out to God. Or don't let me sleep tonight, until I've settled it with you.

I want to be such a person, in revival, in this my nation and my day. Father, you are speaking to us. What's on your heart, you are revealing through your spirit.

We see him, and hear him, and believe him. We're not the same. We cannot live business as usual, which has brought us to where we are as a nation.

You're looking for a qualitatively different people. In this conference, would you change us? Would you grant us the kind of repentance that you're looking for, so that you can bring revival? Prepare our hearts, as we are told in your word, to prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. For the one we're seeking will suddenly come to his temple, as a refiner's fire.

O Lord, come, and prepare our hearts ahead of time, that we will recognize that it's you, and have a heart and a life ready to respond. In these crucial days, help us to take seriously the condition of the land, and the requirements that you have shown us, for we can be the instrument of bringing revival. We ask it in your name.

Amen.

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