

Our Canadian Christian Heritage Under Fire #5 - We Need Revival in Canada

by Ian Goligher

The only hope for Canada's spiritual decline is for another gracious, extraordinary, unusual, miraculous, holy ghost revival.

Duration: 42:53

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 7:14, Psalm 24:3-6, Proverbs 28:13, Isaiah 55:6, Jeremiah 29:13, Matthew 6:33, James 4:8

Topics: "Canada"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the need for revival in our lives and in our churches. He emphasizes that even though the opportunities to spread the gospel may be limited, personal revival is always possible. The preacher shares a story about a prayer meeting held in a barn before a revival took place on the Isle of Lewis. During the meeting, a young man read Psalm 24 and emphasized the importance of having clean hands and a pure heart in order to receive God's blessing. The preacher encourages the listeners to have a humble and repentant posture, turning away from wickedness and seeking God's face.

Transcript

In this series of our Canadian Christian Heritage Under Fire, we are done with analyzing, done with looking at the who's who, what's what, and how came we to be where we're at today. We now must face the reality of the issues that we have talked about in New Evangelicalism, the Christian mosaic, a nation of multifaceted people, and all the issues that face us to reach men and women with the gospel today. If you were not with us last Sunday evening, I highly recommend that you get a copy of that tape, as it will, I think, lay some of the groundwork of where we're at in this particular day in Evangelicalism.

Now, tonight I want to bring you back to 2 Chronicles 7 to verse 14, and I believe we have here God's recipe and God's remedy for the times in which we live. The Lord says, if my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land. 2 Chronicles 7 verse 14.

Revival is the answer. What is revival? It is to put new life into a dead or dying thing. It is to bring that which was once strong and healthy back to its original order and power.

Now, this is the testimony of revivals in the past, that the church was limping and dying, and suddenly God in his grace and power brought that church into vibrant usefulness to the glory of God. This year, 2004, is the centenary of the Welsh revival of 1904, when a man called Evan Roberts was the instrument of God in the preaching of the gospel, and the Lord poured out his spirit. Now, weels new revivals in the 1700s, in the 1800s, and hence you have a long history of the meal-voiced choirs of the miners going and coming from their work in the mines, singing the glorious hymns of the Christian faith, and that has become a part almost of the Welsh culture and the Welsh traditions, and it comes from the mighty moving of God, converting hundreds and thousands of people to the gospel of the Lord Jesus.

Another outstanding revival that took place within the last hundred years was on the Isle of Lewis in Scotland, and there a man called Duncan Campbell was the main figure as the preacher of the gospel. And again, a most unusual time, when hundreds of people were drawn to hear the gospel with a thirst for their souls and to know the way of salvation. Now, we are interested in that movement on the Isle of Lewis and in Duncan Campbell, because Duncan Campbell came to Canada on an itinerant ministry, and he preached in the Prairie Provinces, and he preached for L.E. Maxwell, a Prairie Bible Institute in Three Hills Bible College.

And his ministry there was certainly welcomed by Mr. Maxwell, who was of a kindred spirit. You could put those two men on a par. You could put those two men on the same vision for the gospel of the Lord Jesus.

And while he was in the prairies, he visited the city of Saskatoon, and he preached at a Baptist church in the year 1969. They were tremendous meetings, but it was not revival. There was an intensity of the atmosphere of the presence of God, and the Lord visited that particular congregation with a time of blessing.

But outside of that, nothing really unusual happened. There was no mass conversion of the community. But before Duncan Campbell left Saskatoon, he said this, God is going to visit Canada with revival, and he's going to begin in this very church, the Ebenezer Baptist church that he was preaching in, in Saskatoon.

Now, the minister of that church had prayed for three years that the Lord would bring Duncan Campbell into their midst to preach the word. He had a vision for revival. He had a vision for the blessing and the power of God in his own congregation and in his own area.

But it was not until two years later that Saskatoon hit the news headlines. Two years after Duncan Campbell's visit. And the newspaper headlines read something like this, is Canada seeing revival? Saskatoon, vortex of revival.

Renewed morality found in wake of revival. And these were the press reports. Because God did do a very strange and wonderful work, and he began in that very church and congregation in Saskatoon.

And it was in 1971 when two evangelists who were called the Sutera Twins visited on an evangelistic campaign. Now, these two brothers studied at Bob Jones University in earlier years and became evangelists. And in their ministry at that time, God began to move.

And in that church and to other churches, souls were saved. God worked in a mighty new way. Now, it was not a charismatic false puff of emotionalism.

And even those that were involved in it renounced and denounced any attempt of tongue speaking and any attempt of extraordinary non-biblical emotionalism and would only permit the sound preaching of the word and sought real definite conversions. And yet the history of the churches at that time is that souls were converted and God was working in grace. Now, here is a note from the biographer of Duncan Campbell.

Now, obviously he was working at a distance because he wasn't in the midst of the revival. But knowing their Scottish faith mission heritage, they would be very careful about how they would report any moving of God. And this is the most reliable report that I have to hand.

And I want to just give you a little tidbit of it here. What began as a typical evangelistic campaign mushroomed into a spiritual awakening. This is in Saskatoon.

The church was packed and the venue moved three times until a large auditorium was necessary to accommodate the people. The Holy Spirit moved quietly and powerfully. Church leaders and Christian workers confessed sin and were reconciled to each other.

Businessmen in the city were surprised when people called to pay for stolen goods. Broken homes were restored. Alcoholics and drug addicts were delivered.

And countless numbers freed from bondage of self and satanic oppression to witness effectively for Christ. Reports indicated similar happenings in other centers throughout western Canada. And it wasn't restricted to that Ebenezer Baptist Church, which was a church of German extraction.

There were other denominations that were blessed with the moving of the Spirit of God at this time. Now these German Baptist churches, remember, these are the churches that we used to hear Mrs. Schafrake and her husband speak of in this church. She used to pray in the prayer meetings of this church.

Where are the churches that had hundreds of people in their prayer meetings? Now this was in Vancouver. It was in the prairies, Edmonton and Saskatoon and Winnipeg and these other various locations. And you who have been in this church for a while, and you the Schafrakes, know the burden and the lament that they as older believers have seen the demise, the decline of the spirituality of the church.

The prayer meetings abandoned. Modernism and the world coming in where they felt at sea in the very church that used to be enjoying the mighty moving and grace of God. Now we are indebted tonight to every move of God and every blessing that God has given in whatever circle.

But let's remember that's now over 30 years ago. We're speaking about 1971 when God in grace moved at that very time. The only hope for this country tonight, the only hope of the gospel in this land is for another gracious, extraordinary, unusual, miraculous, holy ghost revival.

When God will do the unusual, what is by no means the normal in any church life or ministry. When God sweeps communities to hear the word of God with a new thirst and desire that could not be put there before. Here's a note from Duncan Campbell's biographer that I marveled when I read this.

At the time, this is two years after his visit to Saskatoon, two years after he said God is going to visit Canada in revival and this is the church where it's going to begin. Two years later he was in Edinburgh and there was a day when Duncan Campbell felt moved to pray for Canada and he prayed for two hours

that God would begin to work in this nation. And the biographer says this, I just want to read to you this little note.

A short time before the news of this awakening in Saskatoon began to reach the British Isles, Duncan Campbell at his home in Edinburgh was especially moved one day to spend two hours in prayer for Canada and was assured that God was moving there. Now if you count that awfully strange, you read the life of Duncan Campbell. You learn about the evening that he came off ship on the Isle of Lewis close to midnight and to get there he had left another convention and meeting where he was booked to preach and he said, I must leave.

I must go to this particular place and he immediately left and when he arrived there were two ministers there and they said to him, Mr. Campbell are you walking with God? He said, well I know I'm seeking God. That was his answer and when he arrived at that church it was thronged with people that wanted to hear the preaching of the gospel and his life is dotted with these strange providences of God moving in a strange way, in a miraculous way and touching many, many lives. Now here is something for us to think about tonight.

Here's a statement I came across as I was reading about these things. An awakened church is to be the principal instrument in converting the world and the Lord did that in Wales. He did that in the Isle of Lewis.

He did it in Saskatoon and if God is going to move again in a nation or in a community, he's going to begin in his church because judgment begins in the house of God and he will purify his church and he will stir the hearts of his people to seek the Lord. He will give them a new burden just as he did to that pastor at Saskatoon three years before Duncan Campbell arrived and while it took five years therefore before the moving of God was really poured out, that pastor did not pray in vain. Now we face the challenge tonight of what we're going to do about the spiritual decline in our nation, the worldliness, the falling away of the churches, the corruption of the gospel and the misrepresentation of the gospel.

What are we going to do about it? It would be wrong for us to analyze it to death and not face this challenge. That's why we come tonight to 2nd Chronicles 7 14 because God has the remedy and God has the answer for us if we will take heed. And here I want you to go through this verse with me tonight.

I want us to take this this verse apart line by line, statement by statement and I want you to see how we can begin to plead this very promise. I want you to notice the time of the promise for revival. If my people which are called by my name shall humble themselves and pray.

Now the time of it was at the dedication of the temple and God knows, God knew at that time that Israel in future days would get into trouble, that there would be difficulties and indeed there would be apostasy, that the influence of the other nations would creep in and that God would have to punish or chastise his own people for their failures and for their sins. So it was at a time when the temple was being dedicated and God was showing the way of his merciful dealings. Isn't it a great thing to know tonight that God is dealing with us as his people on the basis of mercy.

He knows our weakness. He knows our tendencies. He knows our frailty.

He knows that if left to ourselves we will grow weary and cold and dry but he desires that we live in the spirit and in the power of God. Also it was at a time of the shut up heaven. You'll notice that verse 13 and 14 are separated by a semicolon in the English Bible.

If I shut up heaven, now the shut up heaven means no rain and as you notice in verse 13 it means the multiplication of locusts and diseases and pestilence. Now who's doing these things? The Lord is. Who is shutting up the heaven so that the rain doesn't come upon the land? Now this land of Canada, while it is rich materially, spiritually the heaven is shut up.

That's the day in which we're living. We're living in a time when we have to be, face it, the heavens are shut up and the ravages of the locusts of unbelief and ungodliness are doing an awful work of immorality in this nation and it's like a plague upon this nation today. But it is then, it is at this time that God says, if my people will pray.

So here's the time of the promise. At this time we should realize that our only hope is to pray. To reduce the problem to a human level and say, well we have seen that it's because of neo-orthodoxy, new evangelicalism, false doctrine and the worldly spirit, let's attack those things.

But those things are just the locusts, those things are the pestilence and if the heaven is shut up, all our attempts to turn this nation to reach men and women with the gospel will be pointless and fruitless. The great need is for God to open again the windows of heaven and pull us out of blessing and for that we need to pray. If you look at the people for this promise of revival, it says, if my people which are called by my name.

So the Lord is making a promise to his own covenant people Israel. They are chosen, they're called, they are redeemed, but God's glory is wrapped up in them. They are the people upon whom the Lord has put his name.

It's like a business owner giving the name of the business to a subsidiary and say, go run that business in my name. It's like a franchise. You go run that part of the business with your own ingenuity, your own guidelines, but do it in my name.

And if someone goes off and blows it, becomes a scoundrel, bad business practices, corruption, he's misusing and abusing the name of the business. When God gives us his name and he allows us to use his name and if you call yourself a Christian, you are using the name of God's son or Messiah, Christ. And we use that name, we call ourselves Christian and if we take that name upon us, we are the people that the Lord lays the responsibility.

What is the giving of the name about? To be witnesses, to be his witnesses. And the Lord Jesus said, ye shall be my witnesses. We are giving that name that we will honor him, promote him and glorify him.

If you remember the prayer of Joshua, what shall be done unto thy great name? Now there ought to be the number one primary motive that you would pray for revival. Not primarily that we would see every seat in the church filled. Not that we would be a church used to reach a community.

Our first priority would be the glory and the honor of our Savior. Because tonight when the church is half empty, when the work of God declines, when the world rushes on and the church means nothing to them, it's the name of our God that is dishonored and we are not effective witnesses for him. And so the people to pray for this promise are the Lord's own people and he must begin with us.

And if we are to know revival in this nation, it's time for God's people to start praying. Then I'll bring you in this text to the posture for this promise of revival. If my people which are called by my name shall humble themselves.

Humble themselves. That means we should put an advert in the Langley Advance for next Sunday meeting. Please come to a meeting for self-humiliation.

That's not generally how evangelical churches advertise. Indeed most would run from that kind of title. But it will involve a great deal of heart searching.

If we really are serious to go through with God in this. That pastor that I spoke of who invited Dr. Duncan Campbell to Saskatoon for two years. Two years of heart searching prayer.

Two years of waiting on God. Searching his own heart. Searching his own ministry.

This is the posture that you and I need to take if we are serious about revival in our own lives and in our church. Before Duncan Campbell arrived on the Isle of Lewis for that most unusual time when God moved the whole island and community. There was a prayer meeting that had been held in a barn.

A few men had met together to pray. And they were praying with some fervency when a young man stood up and he took the Psalm 24. And I want you to read it in your own Bible here tonight.

I hope the Lord might write it in your heart. He took the Psalm 24 verse 3. Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart, who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully, he shall receive the blessing from the Lord and righteousness from the God of his salvation. This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob Selah.

That young man, after he read those verses, he stopped and he said to the other men, Brethren, it seems to me to be so much humbug to be waiting and praying as we are if we ourselves are not rightly related to God. God was searching his heart. And then lifting his hands toward heaven he cried, O God, are my hands clean? Is my heart? He got no further than those words but fell prostrate to the floor.

An awareness of God's presence filled that barn that night. God was preparing the people for the revival that was coming. And if God is going to give us revival in our days, this is the posture.

The humble, heart-searching, even prolonged, agonizing pleading with God. He will make us clean and fit vessels for his use. You'll notice in verse 14, we'll go back to 2nd Chronicles 7.14, that the second half of the verse says, and turn from their wicked ways.

And turn from their wicked ways. It's not just that they discover their wicked ways, but that they actually turn from them. I fear that this is where we will most likely fall short.

I fear that the people of God in our nation, and we included in this congregation tonight, we are very good at analyzing the situation. We are very good at saying, I think, I know what's wrong. I think, I think, but are we willing to put away the wicked and truly turn to God? The wicked could be in your home tonight.

It could be the one-eyed monster, the TV. If you fill your life and your mind with the filth of the world, can you expect God to hear your praying? It could be any other manner of vices, but God says to us tonight, turn from your wicked ways. Turn from them.

It could be the music of the world. It could be the language of the world. It could be the worship of self, materialism, making your own self an idol.

I, me, this is the age in Canada of pampering self. I don't think there was any other generation that pampered themselves more than we do today. More is spent on the body.

More is spent on beauty and clothing and dress and comfort to make an idol of ourselves. And the Lord says we need to turn from our wicked ways. We are Laodiceans in Canada.

When the church, I'm speaking here of the best of churches, I'm speaking that we too have the leaven of this Laodicean spirit in our midst. I am rich and increased with goods and I am in need of nothing. If you are a Christian that can live in material comfort without a burden for the glory of God, for his church, and for the souls of men, you are a Laodicean Christian.

That's where we're at tonight in Canada. And that's what God is speaking to us. Turn from your wicked ways.

Search your heart. That's the posture of pleading this promise. Then fourthly, there's the kind of praying required for this promise of revival.

The praying itself. My people which are called by my name shall humble themselves and pray. And asking for the help of Almighty God.

Now you will know that 2nd Chronicles 7:14 is God's response to Solomon's prayer in chapter 6. And if you go back to chapter 6 verse 26, you'll notice how Solomon worded this. When the heaven is shut up and there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee. Yet if they pray toward this place and confess thy name and turn from their sin, when thou dost afflict them, then hear thou from heaven.

So here, chapter 7 is really God's response to the very thing that Solomon asked in chapter 6. Don't ever tell me God doesn't hear our asking. God responded to Solomon in like words. Now in verse 24 of chapter 6, you'll notice the word that Solomon used.

And if my people Israel be put to the worst before the enemy, because they have sinned against thee, and shall return and confess thy name and pray and make supplication. And make supplication. What does that word supplication mean? It means to plead mercy.

Plead mercy. The people have sinned. Their back is against the wall.

They are at the mercy of their enemy. But they would rather fall into the hands of the mercy of God. And they supplicate.

They plead for mercy with God. That's what Christians ought to be doing today for this nation. Canada has sinned.

The church of the Lord Jesus has sinned grievously. The heaven has been shut up. There is no spiritual reign.

There is no moving of the spirit of God in this nation to speak of at this time. Ought we not to be pleading for mercy? And there is the praying. Now it's very honest prayer back in 2nd Chronicles 7-14.

And pray and seek my face. If you're really contending with someone or pleading with someone, there's a saying we use here in Canada. You get in their face.

If you've got faulty goods that you've paid for and you go back to the store and say I demand to see the manager and I want to see him face to face. And you're going to plead your cause eyeball to eyeball, face to face. That's the earnest, beseeching, determined praying that God is speaking about here.

To pray and seek my face. Now to do that, it will demand honesty. There are crooks who can do it, but there are very few thankfully that can look someone straight into the eye and tell a deliberate lie.

I don't think a born again Christian can do that with God. I don't think one who has a conscience that is subject to the spirit of God can get alone with God and lie to him face to face. And if we are earnest in prayer, it will demand great honesty.

I read to you about those business people in Saskatoon who were shocked and surprised when people converted in those churches suddenly appeared with goods and money that they had stolen. They wanted to get honest with God. And that's what the spirit of God does in our hearts as we pray this kind of praying.

Then there's the power to be experienced. What does the Lord promise to do? I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land. That's what happened in Wales in 1904.

A young man called Jenkins, conscious of his own inadequacy and poverty of spirit, pleaded for the anointing of the Holy Spirit upon his life. And God granted him such boldness and power that his ministry began to enjoy great blessing. In the Isle of Lewis, some even tried to run from Christianity.

One man, it is reported, to have actually prayed that God would not allow Duncan Campbell onto the island of Lewis. He was afraid of being converted. Now there's a kind of a skewed logic.

You pray to the God of heaven who's all-powerful to keep a man away from witnessing to you in case you'd get right with God. That's how twisted the thinking of the carnal mind is. But eventually that man came in to hear the preaching.

And eventually he arrived in the vestry meeting where Duncan Campbell was leading souls to Christ. And this man says, I need prayer to get right with God. And Duncan Campbell, in typical way of dealing with souls, he said, well, you need to pray for yourself.

He said, well, I have no prayer. And Duncan Campbell said, well, then you can plead for mercy. Plead for mercy.

Another testimony in Saskatoon. I think you know what I'm doing here tonight. I'm linking Wales, because it's a hundred years ago, Scotland with Duncan Campbell and the man that came to the prairies and said, revival's going to come.

And when it came, there were many, many conversions. There were many who turned to the Lord. Young people were converted.

Those with the habits of alcohol, drugs were delivered and set free. I read of a young 11 year old boy who was at school and there were some in the playground using an Ouija board. If you don't know what that is, don't dare ask.

You should never know what it is. It's an attempt to get in touch with the power of darkness. This 11 year old boy who had been to those evangelistic meetings stood in the playground and denounced this in the name of Jesus.

And it said that from that day forward, the Ouija board wouldn't work. Hallelujah. The power of the gospel right here in Canada.

I tell you, when I read of these things, I rejoiced. I do not believe tonight that God is finished with this nation. I do not believe it.

I'm not even going to try to predict what God is going to do in Canada. But it is His will that we be a people to be His voice and channel of mercy. Will you pray for that? Will you seriously take that to heart and live for God above the material things that are rightly yours? But material things will burn up and only what's done for Jesus will last.

And if you're not saved tonight, if you're not a Christian, you better realize that there's a gospel in this Bible. There's a way back to God by the death and the blood of Jesus that is made ready for you. You only call on the name of the Lord.

We as God's people need a burden for revival in this nation. My great fear of preaching about revival is that we merely be observers of it or analyzers of it. Or that we get ourselves built up with some short-term expectation, see nothing of it, and we go back into a state of unbelief.

But I can only preach to you tonight what is the Word of God and what is the gospel we preach. And what God has done, whether it's at Pentecost, the Reformation, revivals, what He's done in this nation of Canada, these are facts, facts, gospel facts. And we need to pray God in grace we'll visit this land again and make our church a center of gospel blessing in these days.

There's no other answer to Canada. Yes, we can labor on. We can survive for a period as a church.

We can pay the bills. We can run an organized church. But we are not going to see anything significant done in this nation unless there's a revival.

We need it and we need to pray for it. Duncan Campbell said there are two stages to this. One, believing that God does send revivals and that it is the will of God to send a revival.

But the second stage is to actually expect it. The Isle of Lewis revival is the story of two women who were bedridden. They were in their 80s, unable to attend church meetings.

She wrote a letter. I forget whether it was to the minister or it was straight to the faith mission in Edinburgh to send Duncan Campbell to the Isle of Lewis. The minister said to her whether it was through him or not.

The minister said to her, the answer is he's not coming. But she said, that's man's answer. That's not what God has said to me.

He will be here. That woman and her sister were living in the full expectation revival was coming and could not be convinced otherwise. These are amazing things in the history of godly Christian.

I'm not talking now about some charismatic, emotional, fanatical thing. I'm talking about godly people who were in touch with God and God impressed upon them what he was going to do. Oh, that we had a church of such people.

Oh, that we were in touch with God. There's only one way of getting that. That's to shut the world out, get alone with God.

That's what we must do. That is the hope of Canada tonight. Anything else will be picking dead leaves of the tree.

Only God can send revival. I would that we could pray and pray and pray for revival in our land in our day. Life is very short, you know.

I have to realize the fact that I've got over half of my ministry used up. I've only got a few years left. I don't, well, I don't know how many years I have.

But in the average scheme of things, if I last out to 65, I don't have another 20 years. And let me tell you, another 20 years will go back, go by so quickly. When you get a baby born into your family, you think that's the way it's going to be for an awful long time.

Before you know it, as I've said before, when it talks about Noah, that they were marrying and giving in marriage. There's a very short little gap between the day you get married and you give your son or daughter to get married. There's really a very short gap, marrying and giving in marriage.

It's a short time. Since I've come to Canada in 1984, I've seen great changes in the spiritual landscape. It's not getting any easier.

The political issues that are at large today, the humanism that's stalking the land, the opportunities to get the gospel out are fewer. The effectiveness of knocking doors and witnessing to people one-to-one is very often, we would call it humanly speaking, pointless. We are in desperate need of a revival.

And that's the answer. May God be pleased to visit us and give us days of his grace in this nation and in our church. I remember talking to the Reverend Foster about this a number of years ago.

How can we know if God's ever going to send revival to our country? He says, you can't. Duncan Campbell did. But he said, what you can know is that there's never an excuse for not living in personal revival.

Never an excuse. We rate it off. These are the days in which we live.

These are the issues that we face. They affect me. I'm not the Christian I ought to be.

I'm not the man of prayer I ought to be. And we excuse our backslidings. There is never an excuse for not living in personal revival unless we excuse sin and worldliness.

That means we have a lot of heart searching to do. We need to pray that God will visit us and God will give us a vision for his glory. I think of Moses' prayer again or Joshua's prayer again.

What shall be done unto thy great name? Write that over the map of Canada tonight. What shall be done unto thy great name? When the idolatry is abounding as heathen nations multiply, our heathen peoples within this nation multiply, how we need to pray for God to come and visit us.

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