

Reformation and Revival, 2

by Ian Murray

Revival is a larger outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which is connected to preaching and empowers people to experience the truth and the love of God.

Duration: 45:28

Scripture: Luke 4:18

Topics: "Revival Preaching", "Emotional Repentance"

Description

The video is a description of a sermon preached by Edward Griffin on the text 'the harvest is past, the summer is ended and we are not saved.' The speaker describes the sermon as incredibly powerful and moving, with Dr. Griffin speaking with tears and tender appeals for nearly an hour. The sermon's climax is described as a moment of intense emotional strain, where Dr. Griffin falls to his knees in agony. The video also emphasizes the importance of preachers experiencing the love and power of God in their own hearts in order to effectively convey the message of salvation.

Transcript

Before I take up my subject this evening, can I add a note to what we were considering last evening, that one or two practical consequences that flow from the distinctions that we will make. Reminding you briefly, I put before you these three different understandings of revival, and depending on which view one holds, certain consequences tend to follow, and I want to just mention them briefly. The first view says we should not be looking for or praying for revival, because God has graciously given us his spirit to abide with us forever, and we should therefore be realizing what is presently ours.

That view states something that is true, but its danger is that it anticipates nothing more than what we see at the present time. It doesn't create expectancy. It doesn't encourage earnest prayer.

That's its danger. The second view says revival is conditional upon obedience. The practical consequence of that view, I believe, very often is real discouragement, because if revival comes by our obedience, if there's no revival, it's logically deducible that we are in a state of disobedience, and therefore we are in a state of judgment, and therefore those who hold the second view very often take that position.

If there's no revival, it must be that we're under judgment. The danger there is that it's making revival the norm instead of the extraordinary. The norm is that Christ is with us always, the Holy Spirit is present, but there are times of exceptional blessing and power.

But that second view says revival ought to be the norm, and if it isn't here, we're all under judgment. So as somebody has said, there are no alternatives between feast and famine. It's a discouraging view, ultimately.

The third view then, which we considered, was that it is true, Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. I am with you always. We mustn't forget that.

But Christ, as the head of the church, is pleased at his own times to grant unto his people larger outpourings of the Holy Spirit, a larger measure of grace and manifested power, and we call those seasons revival. Now I believe that third view includes what is good in the other views, but it safeguards against their dangers. The first view underrates the importance of revival.

The second view exaggerates the importance of revival. The third view says, yes, today the Lord is with us, but tomorrow by his grace we may know more of his presence and power. It doesn't underrate revival, neither does it exaggerate it to the point at which we are dispirited and discouraged because we do not have it at this present moment.

I wanted to touch on those things because I think they are very important. All our views have practical consequences, don't they? The subject before us this evening is revival and preaching, or the Holy Spirit and preaching. And I lay it down as a principle at the outset that the times of the greatest engathering of people into the kingdom of God have always been times when preachers have been filled with the Holy Spirit.

That is surely the pattern in the New Testament. We see it in Jerusalem, we see it in Samaria, we see it in Antioch, Iconium, Melonica, Corinth. It is the New Testament pattern, and it is surely the pattern in history.

Martin Luther, the Reformation leader, says that before the Reformation, preachers spoke, he says, frigidly, mumblingly, slovenly, and there was no revival. But when God began a new day of grace, it first appeared in a different preaching. Preaching and revival always have gone together.

Now surely we do not need to search for a reason for that. The reason is clear in the Scripture. It is set down in our Lord's own ministry.

The people we read were astonished at his doctrine, for his word was with power. He spoke as one having authority, and not as the scribes. And why? Well, our Lord himself tells us, the Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach.

And therefore, when Christ sends out his servants to preach, it is by that same anointing that they are to be recognized. So, you remember when Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit, we read in the book of Acts, the Jewish leaders took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus. There was an obvious similarity between the power with which the apostles spoke, and what had been witnessed in the days of our Lord's earthly ministry.

When they saw the boldness, we read, of Peter and John, they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus. And that is the pattern, is it not, through the New Testament. Antioch, we read, that much people were added to the Lord.

Why? The instrument was Barnabas, the man, Paul, we read, of the Holy Spirit. At Iconium, Luke says, the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit. And then we read, they so spake, that a great multitude of

Jews and Greeks believed.

The two things belong together. Authority, boldness, the anointing of the Holy Spirit. So Paul, in that well-known statement, says, Our gospel came not to you in word only, but in power and in the Holy Spirit.

Now, that same Holy Spirit is the one who restored preaching at the time of the Reformation. We have said, have we not, in these days, how the sermon was made central again in the church at the Reformation. But it was not made central by any human decision.

It was the voice of Christ, speaking by His Spirit through men, which made the sermon central again in the church. John Calvin says that preaching is dead and powerless if the Lord does not make it efficacious. We cannot, he says, receive a single word which is preached to us in His name unless His Majesty is there present.

Sir William Perkins, in that great statement on preaching, he says, The demonstration of the Spirit is when the minister of the Word does in time of preaching so behave himself that all, even ignorant persons and unbelievers, may judge that it is not so much he that speaks as the Spirit of God in him and by him. This, says Perkins, this makes the ministry lively and powerful. So it follows then that if times of revival are times when there are fuller givings of the Holy Spirit, it will be pre-eminently seen in gospel preaching.

The Holy Spirit is sent to glorify Christ in the salvation of men and women. That means the proclamation of the Word of God and how shall they preach except they be sent. Preaching and the Holy Spirit.

Now let me just touch briefly on the evidence. It's an overwhelming evidence. I'm sure I don't need to labour the point that the special eras of preaching, when the greatest work has been done, have always, in point of fact, been times of revival.

I think that's quite incontrovertible. True of the Reformation. After the Reformation, the successor of John Knox in Scotland was a man called Robert Bruce.

Those who were alive in his day said that his ministry was a great light through the whole land. And the explanation, this is what was said, the extraordinary effusion of the Spirit, the power and efficacy of the Spirit most sensibly accompanying the word he preached. That is, to the senses of the people who heard.

No man, says someone, no man in his time spake with such evidence and power of the Spirit. No man had so many fields of conversion. John Livingstone, quite a young man at the time, preached for Kirk of Shott near Glasgow on the 21st of June in the year 1630.

Very memorable date in Scottish history when God so spoke through the word that a whole area of southwest Scotland was influenced. And John Livingstone says about that day, it was the one day in all my life wherein I got most of the presence of God in public. And then he says, there is some time, somewhat, in preaching that cannot be ascribed either to the matter or expression and cannot be described what it is or from whence it comes, but with a sweet violence it pierces into the heart and affections and comes immediately from the Lord.

So the early 17th century in England and in New England also was a time of powerful revival. And then, as many of you will recall, long declines set in, days of persecution, days of dryness. John Owen, writing in the year 1676 when these days of dryness had come, he said he didn't expect to see a different day until God did something in preaching.

And this is what he said, When God shall be pleased to give unto the people who are called by his name in a more abundant manner, pastors after his own heart to feed them with knowledge and understanding, when he shall revive and increase a holy, humble, zealous, self-denying, powerful ministry by a more plentiful effusion of the Spirit from above, then, and not until then, may we hope to see the pristine glory and beauty of our religion restored to its primitive state and condition. 1676. You know, more than 50 years would have passed before the first week of January in the year 1739 in London when a group of preachers and others were met together and God so filled them with the spirit that a new day of grace had begun.

Whitfield says, It was a Pentecost season indeed. Sometimes whole nights were spent in prayer. Often have they, that's the men who were present, been filled with new wine, and often I have seen them overwhelmed with the divine presence and heard them cry out, Will God indeed dwell with men upon earth? And what was the effect of that? The effect was to be seen firstly in the preaching.

Boldness, authority, power, people conscious that God was there. One hearer of Whitfield's said, Mr Whitfield's words seemed to cut like a sword. Oh, with what energy and melting tenderness did he beseech sinners to be reconciled to God.

When the sermon ended, the people seemed chained to the ground. John Newton, whose words we've been singing this week, says how he first heard Whitfield, and before he heard him he had heard of the great work that God had done under his hand, but he says, The heart had not been told me. Never before had I such an idea and foretaste of heaven.

And after giving an account of how Whitfield handled the theme of one of his sermons, he says, Something like this was his plan, but the power, the experience, the warmth with which he treated it I can by no means express, though I hope I feel the influence of it still. Now this is how preaching was recovered. Let me give you another quote from one of the Welsh preachers of the same time, Daniel Rowland.

Thomas Charles went to hear him preach, and Rowland and Charles said, I had such a view of Christ as our high priest of his love, compassion, power, and all sufficiency as filled my soul with astonishment, with joy unspeakable. My mind was overwhelmed and overpowered with amazement. The truths exhibited to my view appeared too wonderfully gracious to be believed.

These, I believe, are characteristic quotations that could be multiplied endlessly from periods of revival. The effect upon preaching, the New Testament connection, the anointing of the Spirit, the advancement of the Kingdom of God. Now I want to move on to put the question, what is it more precisely that constitutes powerful preaching? We use the word, but what do we actually mean by powerful preaching? I haven't any time to engage in negatives, but the negative would be it's not natural gifts.

There are plenty of men with natural gifts who've never seen revival. It's not natural gifts. It's not extraordinary gifts.

Not one of these preachers from the Reformation onwards for three centuries made any claim to extraordinary gifts. I pass by those negatives. I want to give you two positive, certain marks of the power of the Holy Spirit in preaching.

The first is this. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth. He is a person.

He speaks to persons. And a Christian is someone who is taught by the Holy Spirit. And the Spirit's work is to vitalize the truth, to make the truth real to us.

And all of us who are Christians this evening, we have known that experience. The Word of God we may have had in our hands from childhood, but the day came when the truth became alive and powerful to us. Now what happens in a revival is that same Holy Spirit, given in greater abundance, and because he's the Spirit of truth, the first effect, the way in which the power of the Spirit is seen, is in the way in which the truth comes home to people.

Overpoweringly, as Thomas Child said, as a flood of light. It's not that Christians in a revival learn new things, but they see the truth as something more great and stupendous and marvelous than they ever saw before. The power of the Holy Spirit comes in vitalizing the truth, making it real.

Now, that begins first in preachers. Something happens to them. The Holy Spirit witnesses to them, and they begin to speak from a new level of experience, from a greater certainty.

They speak as witnesses. They speak knowing more of the felt presence of God. Him we proclaim, says Paul, striving with all the energy that He mightily inspires in us.

That's preaching. It's true that when we preach, all of us who are pastors, it's our duty to believe our Lord's presence. We are dependent upon Him.

But you know, in days of awakening, there's a felt, conscious presence of Christ which raises the character of preaching. C. H. Spurgeon says, I have discerned the special presence of the Lord with me by a consciousness as sure as that by which I know that I live. Jesus has been as real to me at my side in this pulpit as though I had beheld Him with my eyes.

Now, whenever preachers can say that, hearers are going to be affected. There is a conscious sense of God's presence. Let me quote Thomas Charles again.

A number of years later, in 1791, he was participant in a great revival in North Wales. He said, It is an easy and delightful thing to preach the gospel here in these days. Divine truths have their own infinite weight and importance in the minds of the people.

Beams of divine light, together with irresistible energy, accompany every truth delivered. It is delightful indeed to see how the stoutest heart bends and the hardest are melted down in the fire from God's altar. For the Word comes in power and in the Holy Spirit and is made mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.

Describing what happens in a town in North Wales. And one more similar quotation. I'm illustrating the power of the Holy Spirit as seen in vitalising the truth.

This from an open air service in Scotland in 1859-60. Just as the sun was setting, the rain was ceasing, an extraordinary sense of the divine presence fell upon the whole assembly. Suddenly the Christians were filled with great joy.

Simultaneously many of the anxious found the Lord and began to break forth in songs of praise. The cloud of glory rested there for a season and no visible signs or miraculous gifts could have added to the blessed consciousness and veritable certainty of the immediate presence and gracious working of God. Till

memory fails, or the more excellent glory of young Bale's faith of Emmanuel obliterates the remembrance of faith's brightest visions on earth, until then it is impossible for us to forget the awful nearness of God at that time, the overpowering sense of blended majesty, love and holiness, the soft pure radiance of a Redeemer's face that chased the doubt and sin from many a soul.

So that's my first point. The power of the Holy Spirit is seen in the way the truth is made real to men and women. The second thing I want to say is this.

The power of the Spirit is made evident in the experience which He gives of the love of God. And I want to say more on this. Of all the things which the Holy Spirit is said to give, surely the most fundamental is the awareness of the love of God.

The Holy Spirit is love. The first fruit of the Spirit is love. He is the author of the love described in 1 Corinthians 13.

He sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts. He strengthens the faith of Christians to know the indwelling of Christ so that being rooted and grounded in love we may go on to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge. And if it is true then that a revival is a larger giving of the Holy Spirit, if that is true, it must irresistibly follow that a revival is a time when the love of God is more abundantly known.

And I'm sure that is true. What made the face of Stephen shine like an angel when he was about to be put to death? Wasn't it the love of Christ? What made Paul so passionate that if by all means he might save us, it was, he tells us, the constraining love of Jesus Christ. That is to say, it was not love which was Paul's own in the first place, but it was the love of Christ in Paul so that Paul could say, God, making his appeal through us, we beseech you in Christ's head be reconciled to God.

Hudson Taylor, a great pioneer missionary in China, as many of you know, his biography by Dr. and Mrs. Howard Taylor, give the key to the whole penetration of China with the Gospel. They give the key in this one sentence. They say it was love first, then suffering, then deeper love.

And then they add, thus only can God's work be done. Now those revival periods in the 17th century were times when this love was abundantly seen. And those dry years that followed were times when love waxed cold.

And when the awakening began in the 18th century, it began exactly at this point. Power of the Holy Spirit was seen in the love of God being poured out. Listen to the biographer of Powell Harris, Welsh leader, who in the month of June in 1735 met Christ in a new way in the belfry of a church in St. Gatsby in Wales.

His biographer says, the love of God was shed abroad in his heart. Christ had come in previously. He was a Christian before.

Christ had come in previously, but now he began to suck with him. Now he received the spirit of adoption, teaching him to cry, Abba, Father, and with it a desire to depart and to be with Christ. And this is what Powell Harris himself said, Love fell in showers on my soul so that I could scarcely contain myself.

I have no fear or any doubt of my salvation. I felt I was all love, so full of it that I could not ask for more. That's true of all those 18th century evangelists, leaders, preachers.

William Grimshaw of Powys in Yorkshire, John Wesley said a few such as him could make a nation tremble. He carried pride wherever he goes. But listen to how his friends described him.

Henry Venn, a friend of Grimshaw's, says, His soul at various times enjoyed very large manifestations of God's love that he might not face, and he drank deep into his spirit. His cup ran over, and at some season his faith was so strong and his hope so abundant that higher degrees of spiritual delight would have overpowered his mortal strength. Charles Wesley met Grimshaw first in 1746 and he says, His soul was full of triumphant love.

Someone else said, I have seen him so overpowered with love that he seemed as though he would have taken wing and fled to the altar, from the altar to the throne of God. We sang William Williams' great hymn this morning, Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah, another leading preacher of this era. And William Williams said, Love is the greatest thing in religion, and if that is forgotten, nothing can take its place.

And George Whitefield, his journal is full of sentences like this, Night and day Jesus fills me with his love. The love of Christ strikes me down. I was so overpowered with a sense of God's love that it almost took away my life.

You know Whitefield had a favourite prayer, and it went like this, Unloose, unloose my stammering tongue to tell, what did he want to tell? By love immense, unsearchable. And God granted that prayer. Love poured through him, the love of Christ.

You know Whitefield used to say that Christ loves the devil's castaways. And as he preached it, people were brought to believe it. A man in Boston heard him in 1740, he said he appears to be full of the love of God and fired with extraordinary zeal for the cause of Christ.

Others spoke of Whitefield as being lost in tender and intense love to soul. William Cowper, in that beautiful hymn on Whitefield, poem I should say, he loved the world that hated him. The tear that dropped upon his Bible was sincere.

And so on. I mustn't stop. You know these quotations, I'm sure many of you, and I hope you'll know the one from the words of D.L. Moody when he was in New York about 1870 seeking to collect money for buildings and work destroyed in the fire in Chicago.

And you remember how he says he wasn't being successful because my heart was not in the work of begging. I could not appeal. I was crying all the time that God would fill me with his spirit.

One day in the city of New York, I cannot describe it, I seldom refer to it. It is almost too sacred an experience to name. I can only say that God revealed himself to me.

And I had such an experience of his love that I had to ask him to stay his hand. I went to preaching again. The sermons were not different.

I did not present any new truth. And yet hundreds were converted. I would not now, he said.

I would not now be placed back where I was before that blessed experience. If you should give me all the world, it would be as a small dust of the balance. Let us move on then to say something about these experiences and this evidence of the power of the Holy Spirit.

How does it fit in to the three positions, the three views that we considered last night? How do you explain these experiences? Now the first view can't really explain it because it says, in the case of the apostles, they were filled with the Spirit after their conversion because they were converted before Pentecost. So obviously in their case, at regeneration, it was different and they received the Spirit at Pentecost. But for all Christians now, when we are made one with Christ, we are all filled with the Holy Spirit.

So there's no need of any further filling of the Holy Spirit. It happens at regeneration. Well, I don't think I need to detain you with an argument to show that that really doesn't hold up to the fact.

How can we possibly say that all Christians today who are converted have the same fullness of the Spirit that the apostles had at Pentecost? We can be weak believers, we can be believers with weak assurance, can't we? A person can be a Christian and be very little use in the cause of Christ, sadly. We all know that, don't we? It's simply not true that every Christian is filled with the boldness and the joy and the assurance that was manifest in the apostles and in the disciples following Pentecost. I think the first view can't answer really this question.

How does the second view answer it? Well, it has a definite answer. It says these men who were Christians before, they received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. And then that view goes on to tell us how we also can receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Certain directions are given and we are told that until we get that experience we'll never be of real use in the Kingdom of God. That's, broadly speaking, the second view. And how are we to receive the baptism of the Spirit? Well, there's some divergence there.

Some say by the laying on of hands and prayer. I haven't time to go into that except to say that I believe the laying on of hands was peculiar to the New Testament because God commissioned men to be the means of communicating extraordinary gifts by the laying on of hands and God has commissioned no such men in our day. I have to give it to you so briefly because there's no time to go into it.

Others say, no, it's not by the laying on of hands, but it's by full surrender and faith. That's all that's needed. Come to a point where we surrender everything to Christ and you will have the baptism of the Spirit.

So, R. H. Horry gives six steps to be baptized with the Spirit and this is how he concludes. Our Lord Jesus says, All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye have received them and ye shall have them. When you pray for the Holy Spirit, you will pray for something according to God's will.

And therefore, you may know that your prayer is heard and that you have what you've asked for. You may feel no difference, but do not look at your feelings. Look at God's promise.

You will afterwards have, in actual experience, what you received in simple faith. Doesn't fit the fact, does it? These people that we've been talking about didn't come to any position of full surrender. They didn't, in simple faith, receive something they didn't know what.

They received power and authority and assurance and love and they knew it. Something happened to them. No question of just taking the bare promise and thinking that later, that's not it.

So, how does the third view handle this? Well, as we were saying last night, the third view says that revivals are sovereignly bestowed by Christ and also, Christ sovereignly grants effusions of the Spirit to

individuals. But this is not something under human control and direction. And therefore, the older writers, all belonging to this school before Finney, they never gave any directions how to be filled with the Spirit.

They didn't believe there were directions. They believed, quoting one of them, whether we view the outgoings of the Spirit's power as regulated by God's decree or as adjusted to the character and actions of men, the Holy Spirit is obstructed by no barrier, is subject to no bondage, but as the wind blows where it listeth, even so does this heavenly breath of omnipotence apply or refrain his spiritual impulses when and how and to whom and in what measure and with what result he pleases. The third view uses the phrase, baptism of the Spirit.

You'll find it in Whitefield, in Spurgeon and so on. But with this difference, the definite article, the baptism of the Spirit, suggests that there is one normative second experience for all Christians. The third view doesn't usually, and I believe should not, use the definite article.

You see, it's not the noun, but the verb that we have in the New Testament. He will baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire. It's ongoing, not once and for all.

Torrey argues that when our Lord says in Luke 11, how much more will you have in this Father, give the Holy Spirit, that's a promise of the baptism. So if you ask, you'll get it, says Torrey. But the third view says, it's not getting it.

That prayer for more of the Holy Spirit is lifelong prayer. It's not one thing that's going to lift us from being one person to another. It's not that.

But Christ, the head of the Church, will give us more of the Spirit. So let me briefly try to summarise the difference between the second and third view on this vital point. As I've said, the third view says, these givings are sovereign in Christ's hands and the measure is in His hands.

Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. There is no one experience which is made standard for everyone. I haven't time to read you a quotation from Richard Sibbes, but if you have Sibbes' works, look up, A Fountain Sealed, on page 443.

He's very good on that point. And the second difference is, that the third view says, as I've already said, there's no one second experience. On the contrary, it's progressive experience.

And the more we progress, the humbler we fall. The more we know, the more ignorant we feel we are. The more the Holy Spirit is present, the more we feel we haven't begun to love and to know Christ.

That's the difference. That's what you'll find in all the old testimonies and writers. Whitfield, almost at his death, says, Oh my ignorance, my ignorance, what a drone I've been, he says.

When he's 52 years old, he says, Oh loving, ever loving, Lord Jesus, how little, yea, how very little have I done for Thee. I am ashamed of myself. I am confounded.

Tomorrow, God willing, I intend to take a sacrament upon it that I will begin, to begin to be a Christian. Now that is New Testament Christianity. Not as though I had already attained, neither were already perfect, but I follow after.

In other words, there's no one second experience. And I could give you more on that, but time prevents. I must begin to wind up.

My last point is the most important point, surely, of the evening. We're not all preachers here. This evening we're preachers' wives and other friends, but I'm speaking now especially to preachers.

I think from what we've said this evening, if what I have said is true, we who are called to preach have an urgent duty, a pressing duty, to seek to be filled with the Holy Spirit. And I say that for two reasons. The first is, our great work as the servants of Christ cannot truly be done without such heavenly help.

We are representatives of the God who is love. We are calling sinners to a feast of love. We are preaching about a heaven which is a world of love.

And if we are not enjoying those things in our own hearts, it will be evident in our preaching. And the state of our people is a reflection on our own state. And we will never preach aright until experimentally we ourselves are knowing much more of the reality and the power and the wonder of God's love in our hearts.

Bunyan, Mark Devil last night was urging you to read. You took it down, didn't you? You repeated it so many times. I have the same thing to urge on you.

The saint's knowledge of Christ's love. Bunyan's works, volume 2, page 39 I quote. Bunyan is saying, let him speak of love who is taken with love, that is captivated with love, that is carried away with love.

If this man speaks of it, his speaking signifies something. The powers and bands of love are upon him and he shows to all that he knows what he's speaking of. That's what we need.

That's where preaching begins to do its real work. I don't know how it is in the States, but in Britain and elsewhere there's a real danger that Reformed preaching is thought of pre-eminently as instruction, as teaching, doctrinal. But it is that.

But you know real preaching is much more than that. Real preaching is persuading, testifying, beseeching, entreating, exhorting, isn't it? And we don't have nearly enough of that. Paul says, by the space of three years I cease not to warn every one of you, night and day, with tears.

That's love. Listen to Edward Griffin, one of the great New England preachers of the last century, preaching on the text, the harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved. This is how I hear it described, the end of the sermon.

He says, I have heard many sermons from these works, all I think impressive, but this one from Dr. Griffin was beyond almost any sermon I ever heard. One felt as if he must cry out in amazement that any soul unprepared to die could remain quiet and unconcerned. During most of the sermon his face was wet with tears, and for nearly an hour he spoke to us with such tender and appealing sentences that it seemed as if his hearers must cry out in an agony of fear and trembling.

But what a climax the ending was. It was a wonder how he had endured the strain so long, and that he had not given up physically exhausted. The mental agony, the heart-breaking sympathy, were enough to break an angel down. When he fell on his knees as if he had been knocked on the head with an axe, with outstretched arms and tears flowing down his face, he cried out, Oh my dear fellow sinners, I beseech you to give your hearts to the Saviour now.

Give your life to Jesus Christ. Do not put it off. Do not leave this house without dedicating yourself to his service, lest you be left to say at last the harvest is past, the summer has ended and we are not saved.

So is it any wonder that an old writer on preaching says love is the sap of the gospel, the secret of lively and effectual preaching, the magic of eloquence. The purpose of preaching is to reclaim the hearts of men to God, and nothing but love can find out the mysterious avenues which lead to the heart. Now I just add to that in a word, when it comes to reformation of the church, we listened, didn't we, with sombre hearts this morning.

We were helped that the thought in my mind was this. We are facing tremendous progress. Tremendous.

No matter how progressive we try to be with church discipline or anything else, we are going to face great opposition. And I believe that that opposition is so great that nothing but the felt love of Christ in our hearts will enable us to stand in the difficulties we are likely to encounter. The spirit of church reformation is the spirit which is ready to lay down its life for the brethren.

That's what happened at the Reformation. You know the beautiful hymn of Timothy Dwight. For her, the church, for her my tears shall fall, for her my prayers ascend.

It's love. And brethren, any attempt at reformation without real love is simply going to do more damage than it's going to do good. So I'm pleading that we must be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Not that we put off reformation, but that we put this first. We have to be filled with the Holy Spirit. And my last point very briefly is the encouragement that Christ gives us to believe that with ardent love to the souls of men.

We, he says, we who are ministers, not only have a need of some experience of the saving influence of the Spirit of God, but we need a double portion at such a time as this. We need to be as full of light as a glass that is held up in the sun. The state of the times extremely requires a fullness of the Divine Spirit in ministers.

And we ought to give ourselves no rest until we have obtained it. May God help us so to do.

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