

Five Steps to Genuine Revival

by Ian Paisley

The sermon emphasizes the need for Christians to consider their ways and return to the cross in order to experience a genuine revival and make a true impact on the community.

Duration: 27:31

Scripture: Haggai 1:5, Haggai 1:7-8, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 11:12, Mark 11:24, Luke 14:23, Acts 6:4

Topics: "Prayer", "Revival"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of prayer and learning how to pray effectively. He urges believers to pray with fervor and passion, using prayer as a weapon against the enemy and to set free those who are captive. The preacher also highlights the significance of the cross and the sacrifice of Jesus, urging listeners to hate sin and the world because of its role in putting Jesus on the cross. He then references the Book of Haggai, specifically verses 7 and 8, calling believers to consider their ways and prioritize their Christian life. The sermon concludes with a reminder that divine power is necessary to accomplish God's work and that believers should rely on God's power rather than their own abilities.

Transcript

The first chapter of the Book of the Prophecy of Haggai, verses seven and eight. Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, Consider your ways. Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build a house, and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the Lord.

The burden of my message is to the people of God, to those that are saved by God's sovereign free grace. I want to call you Christian brother, Christian sister, to a consideration of your ways. If you look with me at verse five, you will find that the old prophet, he says, Consider your ways.

Then in verse seven he repeats it. Consider your ways. Fellow believers, we need to give an urgent consideration of our ways, top priority in our Christian life at the present time.

We have a description here of the plight of the people of God in the days of the old prophet. Look at verse six. You have so much and bring a little.

Is that not true of the Christian witness of today? What activity there is! Remind me of what old Billy Sunday said. The churches are like a canary in a cage. Much activity, but no progress.

And there are many churches like that. God says you have so much and bring a little. And my, we have churches today that are geared up in top gear with activity.

My, the whole machinery of the church is working at full speed and force. But have they moved their town for God? Have they raised Lazaruses from the dead? That is, have the foremost sinners in their neighborhood been born again? Have they made a vital impact against the dens of iniquity and the hell holes of the devil in their community? Alas, today many of our fundamentalist churches just merely decorate a site for the denomination. And as far as a vital impact for God upon their district, it does not exist.

The church of Jesus Christ was called into being to pull down the strongholds of the devil. The church of Jesus Christ was called into perpetual warfare against the powers of darkness. The church of Jesus Christ was called to the hottest part of the conflict with the world, the flesh and the devil.

But the militancy of the church is almost nil today. There are not many fighting fundamentalists left. We shun the battle.

We are afraid to declare war on the enemy. Always so much. But we bring in, eat but you have not enough.

There is dissatisfaction in the church, isn't there? Why, the people of God are not satisfied with what is going on. To many Christians, prayer is not a luxury. It is more like a purgatory to some Christians.

Man, if you call a prayer meeting, they hasten away. But if you are really living where God wants you to live, prayer will be a luxury. Why, you love to pray.

You love to be in the place where you can talk to your God and commune with the Most High and feel your soul uplifted and blessed and strengthened and inspired by the power of the Holy Ghost. Is that the way your prayer life is? Or when you kneel down to pray, you are speechless? There is no communing with God. Deep does not call to deep but the voice of His water springs.

He clothed you and there is none wore. And he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes. That is like some church finance, isn't it? Oh, the tragedy of it all.

And yet the amazing thing is that the people of God will not consider their ways and they will go on. There is an evangelical church not far from my own church in Belfast and their congregation started to grow very thin and the church was declining. So they called a special meeting to try and find ways to stop the decline.

Instead of calling a prayer meeting and asking God to baptize them with power and warm up their hearts and set them on fire, they had a discussion meeting as if God needed their suggestions. The Lord has already given us the plan. They said, you know, it would be helpful if we removed every second pew in the church.

Because if we did that, the crowd we have would look bigger. So they called in the joiners and they removed every second pew. And they were doing well.

It would make the church look better. And then they decided that they would shut off a certain section of the church and introduce this society and that society, this recreational facility and that recreational facility.

And you know, they thought they had done a wonderful job.

They would now need to remove every third and fourth pew because the church has declined and will decline. When I went preaching on the Raven Hill Road 30 years ago and commenced my ministry, 60 people called me to be their preacher. When I had preached for six months, I had 30 left.

And I remember one day, I wouldn't advise any preacher to do this, but when I was a young preacher, I was foolish. All young preachers are foolish. And I got so mad, I remember going into the pulpit and I counted all the windows of the church and I asked the stewards to open them.

And when they opened the windows, and I said, and I opened all the doors. Now I said, I started here with 60 people. We had a choir, the choir's gone.

We had a superintendent of the Sunday school, he's gone. We had a treasurer and he's gone. And I said, if there's any other person here who wants to go now, the doors are open, the windows are open, and I'll sing the doxology while you go.

Nobody went, 30 stayed. So I said, now we have 350 seats and only 30 people. How do you fill them? Consider your ways.

So every Friday night, I went down to that church with five or six men and we started at 11 o'clock at night and we prayed upon every empty seat and said, Lord, bring in sinners to fill these seats. And we didn't pray dry prayers. We prayed with tears in our eyes.

We meant business. It was life or death. Either the church would go or it was finished.

And we prayed. But you know, you don't just fill seats by prayer. You've got to put legs in your prayers.

And we put legs in our prayers. And I went out every morning and I knocked upon the door and I preached. And I said to my men as we were praying, I said, you know what we want? We want the worst sinner on this road converted.

Who is the worst sinner? So they decided the worst sinner on the road was a man over 70 years of age who was the worst drunkard in the area. You could see him every night going from the public house or the liquor shop after it closed, crawling his way up the road, holding on to the wall. So we concentrated our prayers on that man.

We made him a target of old-fashioned holy ghost praying. And one night he came into the church. And a lot of the respectable people who weren't praying, they thought it was a miracle.

One of my officers said to me, that's a miracle. He said, you know, you've prayed as long as I've prayed for him, you wouldn't think it was much of a miracle. I thought God was mighty slow in answering the prayer.

He wasn't saved the first night he came in. Nor the second night. But glory to God, one night God saved him and sobered him and made him a trophy of grace.

Man, it went around the district like wildfire. Do you know who Paisley has got converted? And his companions came to see what was happening. It was noised abroad that Jesus was in the house.

And they got saved. And the old publican got mad. He says, if Paisley goes on, he'll be out of business.

Thank God he is out of business today. It's close. And then we had an unholy den, whole of iniquity opposite the church.

Where young men were led astray and their lives were made unclean. And their souls were destroyed. And I said to my young fellows, we've got to close that place down.

So we concentrated prayer on it. Made it a target for old-fashioned praying. Man, we meant business.

And what happened? The man that ran it went bankrupt. And he came to me and he said, you know, I have to close. I said, hallelujah for that.

He said, what do you mean? I said, God's answering my prayers. He said, you know, you could use that place. He said, I'll lease it to you for a certain rent.

I said, I never asked God for a lease on your place. I asked Him to close it. I'm not reopening it.

He said, I wouldn't give you a penny piece for it. And it closed and closed forever. Hallelujah.

We considered our ways. We got down to the business. Would-to-God preachers would get down to the business.

Do you remember the early church? We shall give ourselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word. Show me a man giving himself to prayer and the ministry of the Word, and I'll show you a man going places for God. I'll show you a church that's going on fire.

We need to consider our ways. Man, when you read the history of the old gospel preachers of the past, we're only like a lot of pygmies today. These men were giants.

These men meant to do things for God. Man, they meant to be at their best for God. Do you believe that God saves man through His Word? Then go and preach the Word as if you did believe it.

Expect God to do something. Don't just carry on. I wonder how many people in this great congregation are only playing at it.

They don't really mean to go places for God. Have heart. Have time for pleasure.

Man, if you see some Christians going out on their recreation, and I have nothing against recreation, only I have no time to engage in it. But man, they put their heart into it. Man, they're reading it.

They play tennis to the sweat. I never saw them sweating in the prairie. And man, if there's some other thing they engage in, they put their heart and soul and mind into it.

But my, when they come to church, they sit like lumps of putty in the pew. Man, they wouldn't budge or squeak. And if some fellow with the glory of God in his soul says, Amen, look at him.

There's something that happened to him. Mr. Nicholson, one of our great preachers, said some churches, if you brought a bucket of milk through the door, it would be ice cream before you got it to the pulpit. They're so cold.

Is that the sort of Christian you are? You're only playing at it. I have found in my Christian experience that if I'm going to do anything for God or be anything for God, I've got to put myself, body, soul and spirit into

it. Every bit of me.

From the big toe to the top of my head. Every bit on the altar for God. No reservations.

Totally, absolutely, unconditionally, the lot for God. Tell me, is that what you're doing? Would you start considering your ways? Wouldn't America need a real revival? Wouldn't this land of yours, wouldn't it need an old-fashioned, heaven-sent, sky-blue revival? Wouldn't the fundamentalist churches need a baptism of all-time power? I'm not speaking of any charismatic emotionalism now. I'm talking about the real, genuine thing that changes man permanently and eternally.

That changes the face of a district. That changes a church from an old, dead, dry church as dead as the dust in Pharaoh's mummy. And you couldn't get anything deader than that to a church that's alive with the power of God.

God give us churches where sinners are scared. They're dead scared of getting saved. Couldn't go to that church for if I went, I would get saved.

Amen! That's the sort of churches we need today. Converting shops where people are really and truly born again of the Holy Ghost. Oh, would we consider our ways.

How much are we sown? And there's very, very little for God. Consider your ways. Oh, friends, I wouldn't go back to an old, dead ministry.

I wouldn't go back to old, dead, lifeless prayer meetings. I wouldn't want to preach in the church where there's no spiritual warmth or life. Some people have just enough religion to endure.

Thank God for the people that are enjoying it. Enjoying every minute of God. Are you enjoying it or enduring it? The look on some of your faces is a brave endurance test.

You're in at the moment. Consider your way. Where do you go to get the fire? You go up the mountain.

That's where you go. We sing an old hymn in our country, Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross. And there's a verse in it that says, Near the cross a trembling soul, Love and mercy found me.

There the bright and morning star Shed its beams around me. Near the cross I'll watch and wait. Do you know what we need this afternoon? We need to get back to the cross.

Commence the climb! Oh, there's a lot of people that are living in the lowlands. Where are you living, brother? Are you getting up the mountain? Thank God for the climbers. The men that are looking for higher ground.

My faith has no desire to stay where doubts abound and fears dismay. Though some may dwell where these abound, my constant aim is higher ground. Let's go up the mountain today.

Could I for a moment bring you to the place called Calvary? Could we stand this afternoon under the shadow of the old cross of shame? Could we gaze today afresh upon the bleeding, battered, broken body of God's dear Son? Could we count the thorns in that crown of agony? Could we count the purple drops that fall from His hands, His feet and side? Could I get my soul ignited with the warm passion of that great offering for sin? Oh, men and women today, see from His head, His hands, His feet. Sorrow and blood flow mingled down. Did there such love or sorrow meet? Or thorns compose so rich a crown? And when I

stand at that cross, I hate sin, because sin put Him in that tree.

How could I flirt with sin? How could I companion with sin? How could I take part in sin when I know that sin put Him in the tree? As I stand there under that cross, I hate the world. I hate the flesh. I hate the devil and that broken, bleeding, battered body of Christ is a handiwork of all three.

For it was you, my sins, my cruel sins, His chief tormentors were. Each of my crimes became an eel and unbelief the spear. If we could get up that mountain today, my, the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace.

Come on, brother, leave the lowland. You've stayed there long enough. Come on, sister, start the climb up Calvary's hill today.

Let's say in our hearts, we'll go up the mountain. We'll leave behind the world. We'll leave behind those things that soil and stain our souls.

And, oh God, I would more wholly be, I would be God's man or God's woman to this generation. I want to be at my best for God. Oh, bring me up the hill.

Melt my heart with Calvary love. Teach me the fullness of that blessed truth that I might know Him and the power of His resurrection. Do you want power? Man, here's a power that breaks the coffin lid.

Here's a power that rends the sepulcher's lock. Here is a power that breathes life into the dead. It's the power of His resurrection.

Some churches are engaged in corpse washing. They'll wash the corpses. I'm engaged in the resurrection business.

The church brings men to life. Man, it's a great thing when people start living to hear the cry of a newborn babe. Man, what a thrill that is.

The Lord helped us to know the power of His resurrection. Listen to it. And the fellowship of His suffering.

The fellowship of His suffering. Oh, how sweet to know as I onward go that the way of the cross leads home. Don't be afraid to suffer for Jesus.

The former Prime Minister of Ulster came on the television and he said Paisley is a demon doctor. At the next election he was almost denied. And my majority rose to 38,000.

I want to tell you, God will vindicate you if you serve Him. Don't you worry about what they say. I worry when they don't say anything.

That's when I get worried. There's one thing that will curse your church. It's the curse of indifference.

When people are mad, God's working. When people are indifferent, man, then you need to pray. The fellowship of His suffering.

Listen. Being made conformable unto His death. Oh, that we might be made conformable to the death of Christ.

Oh, there's power in that cross. That cross is the great generator. It generates life and power and light and dynamic strength in the cross.

Oh, Paul says, God forbids that I should glory save in the cross. The preaching of the cross is to them that perish holiness, but unto us who are saved. What is it? It's the power of God.

Omnipotence let loose. Man, we need omnipotence to the let loose in the pulpit today, don't we? May the Lord disturb the sleep of death. Get us up the mountain.

Come on, let's start climbing. Let's leave the old ruts. There's no difference between a rut and a grave.

Only one is a little deeper than the other. A lot of Christians in the grave than in the rut today. And they do the same thing.

They never go to their church, say the same prayer. Then I was at a prayer meeting one night and I stood at the door and I said to the people coming out, what did you pray for? They couldn't tell me. Imagine going to a prayer meeting and not knowing what you prayed for.

So I said to them, I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll put all your prayers on a tape, for you say the same thing every week. And I'll play them over for you.

And you can sit at home. No need for you to come. Isn't there many prayer meetings like that? But I tell you, once people start going up the mountain to God, they'll pray different prayers.

They'll start meaning business. They'll not be worried whether their sentences ever end. They'll not be worrying whether grammatically they prayed correctly.

And they'll be worried about the answers. That's all I'm worrying about. Lord, give me the answer.

We need to learn to pray. Lord, teach me how to pray with prayer that binds the foe, with prayer that listens captive souls for whom Thy Son's blood did flow. Lord, teach me how to pray with prayer to scale the heights, with prayer to burst the gates of heaven and claim my blood-bought rights.

That's the way we need to pray. The kingdom of God suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. Go up the mountain.

It says bring wood. Have you been out in the forest of lost souls? Have you? My, in that forest of lost souls, there are giant timbers that I've got to fell for Jesus. I've gone around that forest.

I have seen these great timbers reaching almost to the sky. They baffled me. And I said, Lord, will these timbers ever be laid low? Will I ever succeed in gathering the commodity for the building of the church? And then I was reminded of the story of Elisha going with the men to build an enlarged house.

Do you remember the man started to cut down a tree? And my, the timber flew here and there. And he was doing well. He was getting into the heart of that great king of the forest.

And then something happened. The axe head flew off. And he was standing with the handle of the axe, but no head.

He didn't go on trying to chop down the tree. Man, there's a lot of churches trying that today. They've just got the axe handle.

And man, they're slogging away as hard as they can go and the sweat's running down their face. But they're not making any progress. They've lost the power.

Christian, have you lost the power? Have you? You know what the old prophet said? Where fell it? You know where you'll get the power back where you lost it? You'll have to get back to the very place that you lost it. No easy way. No quick cuts with God.

And the iron did swim. And old Elisha didn't get down on his knees and sit on the axe head. He made the man do it himself.

But preacher, there are some things preachers shouldn't do. I've learned that. There are some things you've got to do for yourself.

And he got the axe head on again. And man, when he started to cut down the tree, he made progress. Will we ever cut down these great timbers of the forest? We need divine power.

You know what he said? Alas, Master, it was borrowed. It's borrowed power that organizes the church. It's not in ourselves.

And if I set off to preach gospel sermons, I would fail. If I set off with my puny little ability and talents to face the world, the flesh, and the devil, the great juggernaut of hell would go over me and I would be obliterated overnight. Thank God there's a power that is divine.

Oh, there's an anointing that comes from heaven. Oh, the blessed Spirit of God is sent to fill us, to fill us, and fill us with His power. Be not drunk with wine for in a success, but be filled with the spirit.

The Christian's alternative for getting drunk. What is it? To be filled with the Holy Ghost. That's what the Bible says.

Don't look so skeptical this afternoon. That's what the Bible says. Be filled with the Holy Ghost.

Can God fill you with the Holy Ghost? Hallelujah, He can! He wants to do it. Man, if He fills you this afternoon, you'll be a different Christian. And people will say, what's happened to him? Something has happened.

The devil alone. I want to disturb the devil. I want to be the enemy of everything God's the enemy of.

I want to hate the things God hates and love the things God loves. I want to go up the mountain afresh and get my soul refreshed at Calvary. I wonder how many Christians here, and there's a longing in your soul today as a preacher, and you've said, brother, I would like to go up the hill of God.

I'd like to climb the mountain. I'd like to cut down those great trees of the forest for God. I don't want my life to be useless.

I'm sick of this old, dead way of living without power and grace. Oh, preacher today, I've considered my ways. I'm letting go.

I'm letting God. I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your body a living sacrifice.

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