

Revival Possible and Actual

by Ian Paisley

Revival is possible and actual, coming from God, not man, and operating in His divinely ordained way.

Duration: 27:21

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Revival"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of being filled with the Spirit of God and immersing oneself in God's word before going out to witness. He shares the story of D.L. Murray, who committed to witnessing to one person every day but forgot one day. God reminded him of his commitment, even though it was dark and raining, and Murray obeyed by going out and sharing an umbrella with a stranger. The preacher also highlights the power of plain preaching of the gospel and the need for Christians to wake up from spiritual slumber and fulfill their responsibility to win souls for Christ. The sermon concludes with a call to not resist the Holy Spirit and to embrace the onus of revival.

Transcript

The fifty-second chapter of Isaiah's prophecy and verse ten. The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of God. God is never on the defensive.

God is always on the offensive. In the Old Testament scriptures and in Old Testament history, when a man went to battle, he covered over his arm with armor. Not so with the Lord.

The Lord, when he goes to battle, uncovers his arm. For no one can do anything against the Lord. The Lord does not need to defend himself.

So the Lord is always on the offensive. Of course, when men go to do a task, they strip from off themselves all cumbersome garments. And we have also a picture in this text of God in business, with his arm made bare with all the energy of omnipotence, lust to achieve the purpose and plan of Almighty God.

And the purpose and plan of Almighty God is the reviving of his church, the reviving of his work, and the reviving of his people. This text refers to the great revivals that God has given to the church. In the days that are past.

It also refers to the great revivals that God is going to give to his church in the future. Because of false doctrine, misinterpretation of the Word, a John Deans view of the power of God. We have in every hand

today, declared even in evangelical circles, that the age of revival is over.

That God cannot revive his work today and that God will not revive his work today. I come back to my text. The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations.

And all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God. The church in its history has had times of great barrenness. Times when the whole energies of the church were sapped.

That the church was in a paralytic condition. It had no strength, no fire, no zeal, no enthusiasm. And no outreach of barrenness revealed.

The water of God did not seem to run. The blessing of God did not seem to be about. The presence of God was not manifested.

It was a severe winter time in the church. There was a frostiness about the church's services. There was a chilling in the hearts.

There was a niceness about the whole structure and condition of the church. It was winter time indeed. And there was a bleakness and a barrenness that comes with the intense of cold.

And then suddenly, springtime came. Suddenly the hardest hearts were melted. Suddenly the church that was dead left off the grave clothes.

And came forth in strength. Suddenly the singing of birds were heard. And the wilderness blossomed like a rose.

And that which was barren became a fruitful field. What happened? God had made bare his arm in revival. There is such a thing, my brethren, as genuine revival.

Revivals have been in the church. And I believe and I'm confident will be in the church again. I want to speak about some things that have to do with revival.

First of all, I want to speak about the origin of revival. Have you read Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost? It would not be held up as a classical sermon in any good class. Teaching, preaching and teaching homiletics or hermeneutics.

Was a very plain statement. The statement of Peter. There was nothing clever about Peter's presentation.

There was nothing clever about Peter's sermon. There was nothing clever about the way Peter addressed the multitude on the day of Pentecost. It was simple.

It was plain. It was easy to be understood. But you could not call it a classic sermon.

You could not call it something to be held up as a model or preaching. And yet what happened? The great revival that ushered in the New Testament church took place. And three thousand souls were converted.

I am not talking about numbers. I am talking about genuine conversion. I am not talking about estimating this revival by a computer.

I am talking about three thousand souls passing from death to life. And the power of sin and Satan unto God. Who counted them? God the Holy Ghost counted them.

That is who counted them. Of course, that day of Pentecost had its prophecy, you know, in the Old Testament. And if you search far into the Old Testament, there is no use me searching for you.

You will find about three thousand being slain on the day of Pentecost of the Old Testament. And thank God three thousand were slain on the New Testament day of Pentecost. And God started that great movement, the New Testament church, which in a few years had removed the temples of idolatry and spread like wildfire through the whole Roman world.

We are talking about the mosques that are in England. If Christianity in England was what Christianity was in the first century, the mosques would fall before the power of the gospel. It used to be that we sent missionaries to Islamic countries.

Now Islam is mission-reising England and England is becoming a prey to Mohammedanism. What an indictment of the Christian church. Well, what was it that made Peter's sermon so powerful? It was not his expertise.

It was not his language. It was not his ability. It was not his presentation.

It was not his eloquence. It was not his oratory. It was not his promotion.

All these things we are told today by the modern church are all important to revival. Revival has to be promoted. You must get a clever scholar, a great preacher, a man who can play on words, a man who is well-received.

And until you get that, you cannot have revival. I will tell you, friend, the origin of revival rests not in man, but rests in God the Holy Ghost. The Spirit of God alone can originate revival.

We need to invite the Spirit of God back into the church. We need to invite the Spirit of God back into our lives. We need to invite the Spirit of God back into the pulpit.

We need to invite the Spirit of God back into our towns and our countryside. Only the blessed Spirit of God can originate revival. And when the Spirit of God originates revival, then the simplest message, the simplest statement becomes a burning flame that burns its way to victory in the hearts of sinners who for years have slept in their sin, unmoved, unconcerned, unconvicted.

The blessed Spirit of God alone can originate revival. And when He commences His work, He commences it in the hearts of God's people, and He stirs them up to pray. The first sign of revival is the stirring of the hearts of God's people to pray.

You need to pray today that God will pour upon you the spirit of prayer and the spirit of supplication. Let me say a word about the operation of revival. Revival operates in God's divinely ordained way.

God does not work contrary to His word. He always works in unison and in absolute conformity to His own word. For His word is His will, and God's will is uncovered in His word.

God has ordained that by the word of God preached, men shall be saved. Old, clean, homely preaching of the word of God is God's method to the salvation of souls. You see, the church doesn't like the plain preaching of the gospel.

Prophecy unto us smooth things. I wish our preacher didn't stick to that old, plain gospel. It's embarrassing.

But we bring our friends to church. The church of Jesus Christ is largely sleeping, like a great bedroom. And you have all the Christians in bed, and they're all sleeping.

And they're saying, please, don't wake me up. I want to sleep on. And of course, when God starts to operate a revival, people cannot sleep.

You can't sleep in church when the spirit of God awakes the people. Look at the first verse of this 52nd chapter. Awake, awake, put on strength.

Wake it up, you sleepy Christians. Awake, thou that sleepest. Arise from the dead.

Christ will give you life. If ever there was a time God's people needed to be awakened, it is today. Spirit of God operates by awaking people.

And then when they're awakened, when God's people are awakened, this fire of prayer starts to burn. Oh, what a wonderful thing it is when you go into a prayer meeting where the fire of God is burning. There's nothing so dead as a dead prayer meeting.

There's nothing more alive than a live prayer meeting. You ought to feel life in your soul. Then get into an old-fashioned, white-hot prayer meeting where men are praying.

And they're not stringing sentences together. And they're not saying the old things that you're hearing in prayer meetings. Oh, no.

They're praying. They're pleading with God. They're crying to God.

Sometimes it's a groan. Sometimes it's a tear. Sometimes it's a broken sentence.

Sometimes it's a sigh. But it's prayer. It's the way the Lord operates revival.

I want to say a word about the offensiveness of revival. People are offended when revival comes. When the preacher gets stirred up, my, they don't like it.

They say, couldn't we go back to the old days where we came to church and the service was just for 60 minutes, not a minute less, not a minute more, where the preacher never exhorted us to pray, where he preached such a nice sermon that we went out and we used with our own happiness and complacency. All was well. But boy, when the Lord starts working in a church, then this apathy, this complacency has to go.

There's nothing like God breaking the dignity of the church and writing in men's hearts the destiny of their souls. And that's what happens when a revival comes. It's a privilege to go into a dead church and start preaching this living gospel.

I had that experience over at the Isle of Man as a young preacher. I was asked to go and preach in two Methodist churches in Fort Aaron and Fort St. Mary in the tip of the island, the south part of the island, by a godly Methodist preacher. The conference came.

He was changed. And when I got there, there was an old pipe-smoking, tobacco-spitting rascal, and he had been appointed. So I was in trouble.

I remember sending a message home to the church at home and saying, you'd better pray for me. I'm going to have a riot or a revival. And when I went into the pulpit and started to preach, people woke up all right.

And they woke up in anger. And they said, this is a disgrace. Who is this man? Who ever invited him here? Why did he come here? And then the Sunday school superintendent got converted.

I tell you, the day he was converted, it was like a bang going off in the church. He walked up and knelt down and asked God to save him. I tell you, there was trouble there.

And then more people got saved. Choir members, stewards, circuit stewards, a whole lot of them. God started to save them.

And one old man came up one night. I was preaching. And he says, what are you doing? Says, I go back to your place, sir.

You ain't seen anything yet. And that night, I think it was 14 people got converted. And oh, my, there was trouble.

Thank God they had all sensed when they got converted. They left the old dead end. They didn't stay there.

They got out. When I was praying, that old minister, he was outside smoking. I said, we've got the fire inside.

He's got the smoke outside. And it's not holy smoke he has. Yes, there's always an offensiveness when the gospel is preached.

Yes, the steepness has to give place to earnestness. Did you come to church today with earnestness? Did you come to church asking God to prepare your heart that He might stir you to the depth of your soul? The pulpit wine gives place to rich pulpit wine. The people drink it up, and they're blessed in their souls.

They go away with rejoicing spirits. Yes, there's always an offensiveness with the revival. When God blessed me and filled me with the Holy Spirit many years ago, down in the old church, the first morning I preached, we had a riot.

As a man got up and he said, he said, Paisley has gone mad. He never came back. I said, hallelujah, a seat for a sinner.

And thank God many sinners got those seats. And took those seats and came to Jesus Christ. What happens if a revival comes? Oh, my friend, when revival comes, there's an offensiveness.

The offense of the cross has not ceased. Unsafe people, ungodly people will not understand. They'll not understand why you're concerned for their soul.

Why you're shed tears for their soul. Why you're in agony for their soul. Not understand.

Parents come to me and say, I long to see my children saved. I understand that, mother. I understand that, father.

There's only one way to get them saved. And as that's to melt their hard hearts with your warm tears. We've got to learn what it is to sob for souls as those that give account.

We've got to learn what it is to plead with God and not take no for an answer. We've got to learn what it is to lay hold upon the horns of the altar of God. And that brings offensiveness.

There's always offensiveness where revival is. Let me say a word about the ordering of revival. When man interferes in God's work, God's spirit is always grieved and quenched away.

God is sovereign in his choice of instruments. In revival, God chooses most unusual people to do his work. In the 59 revival, God didn't go to the pulpits of Ulster and choose a minister.

God didn't go to the moderator of the General Assembly, or the bishops of the Church of Ireland, or the president of the Methodist Church. God saved a young man in the Palomino district. God saved another young man in the Balfina district.

God saved two other young men. And they decided to go to an old schoolhouse and to pray. And the people laughed at them.

Jeremy Neely says they told us God couldn't send revival. Said revival for all the things of the past. There'll never be another revival.

That encourages me because people are saying the very same thing today. And then there was a breaking down. And those young men went out to tell what God had done for their soul.

And God took them and used them. And the revival was spread by the testimony of those converts. Of course they were wrong.

They weren't theologians. They weren't clever. They weren't pulpit orators.

They weren't preachers. They were living witnesses. That's what they were.

You ever read that verse in the book of the Acts? Let's just turn to it. What a verse it is. Acts chapter 1. The last promise that Jesus gave before He ascended up to heaven to sit with His Father in His throne.

Carry on His great intercessory ministry for and behalf of His church. And in verse 8 of Acts 1 He said, Ye shall receive power. That's what the church needs.

After that the Holy Ghost has come upon you. And ye shall be preachers. Never said that.

Ye shall be scholars. Ye shall be clever orators. Ye shall be great evangelists.

Not a word of mine. Says ye shall be witnesses. You know what a witness is? It's a fellow tells what he himself has seen.

That's what a witness is. If you have an accident, there's no use bringing a professor with all his cleverness to be a witness for you if he didn't see the accident. But if there was some clodhopper standing by the side of the road and saw it, he's the best witness you could get.

He's going to tell what he actually saw. And that's what God's looking for. People that have an up-to-date experience and they can tell what they've seen.

Of course if you have no up-to-date experience you can't witness. People tell me it's hard to witness. It's not hard to witness if your Christian experience is up-to-date.

Of course if it's blue molded, if it's as dry as the dust in Pharaoh's mummy, it'll be no good. But oh if you're filled with the Spirit of God, if you've touched God in the morning before you left your room, if you've filled your heart with God's Word before you did anything else, then you go out, you'll find it easy to witness. You'll want to witness.

D.L. Murray said I'm going to witness to one person every day about the Lord Jesus. And that's what he did. But one day he forgot to do it.

And he went to bed and God spoke to him. Said to him you didn't witness today. Said Lord it's too dark now.

God said get out of your bed, keep your word. Said go to bed. And he said he opened the door and he said it was raining cats and dogs.

And he stood there. And suddenly he saw a man walking down the street with an umbrella. And he walked over to the man.

He says can I share your umbrella? He says certainly. And he not only shared his umbrella but he shared Christ with the man. Murray had an up to date experience of Christ.

That's why he witnessed. And he was zealous in his witness. R.A. Torrey has a little book called Why God Used D.L. Murray.

And he tells in that book how Murray had a great Sunday school. This will appeal to those who are in Sunday school work here in this church. And Murray was intent to build the largest Sunday school he could have.

And he had almost 2,000 kids in a Sunday school. And he knew all about it. And one day he was walking down a road in Chicago.

And there's a nice little girl about five years of age. And she was standing there. Very sweet wee girl.

And Murray said would you like to come to my Sunday school? She said I would. I would. So he explained where it was.

And she says I'll come next Sunday. And Murray stood at the door of that auditorium. And he saw them all in.

But the little girl didn't come. And Murray's heart was broken. And he looked everywhere.

Every day he went out. He looked for that girl. And one day he was in a streetcar.

And he saw the wee girl standing by the side of the road. And he jumped off the streetcar and ran over to her. And when she saw him coming, she took to her heels and she started to run.

So Murray ran after her. And she ran down one street. And Murray after her.

She ran up another street. And Murray after her. She ran up another street.

And Murray still after her. And she ran down a laneway. And Murray still after her.

And she ran into a house. And Murray went after her into the house. And she ran upstairs and dived under the bed.

And Murray went up the stairs and dived under the bed and pulled her out. And he said the day I pulled that girl out, I pulled not only her but her father and her mother and her whole family into the kingdom of God. And her father was a well-known publican, a liquor man.

The man of God pulled her father out of that liquor shop into Christ the day he pulled that child under the bed. There's an offensiveness about revival. There is an ordering that is God's ordering about revival.

And He orders it when we are prepared to be witnesses to Jesus Christ. Did you witness to one soul this week that you're a child of God? Come on now, did you? Did you speak to one person and tell them the need of Christ? Did you give out one gospel tract or invite one soul to come and hear the gospel? Come on now, let's face up to it. Do you believe in hell? Do you? Do you believe that every man and every woman in this city that are not saved by grace will be in hell forever? Do you? Do you believe that? Do you believe that your neighbors whom you know and talk to, that if they're not saved, they'll be in hell? Do you really believe it? Well, if you really believed it, friend, you would be on the job to put them out of the fire.

You'd be on the job to see them saved. Oh, may God awaken us to the reality of hell. May God awaken us to the reality of our responsibility to win souls for Christ.

May every one of us this morning say, Lord, make bare your mighty arm. The final word I want to bring today is the onus of revival. There's an onus on every one of us not to resist the Spirit of God as He speaks to us.

I find today there is a resistance, a resistance among God's people. They don't want to be pressurized by the Holy Spirit to fulfill the responsibility as children of God. They don't want to have to go the second mile.

They don't want to have to make the sacrifice. They don't want to be put in the place where they have to put God first. The onus is upon you, child of God.

The onus is on you to respond to the Spirit of God, to be a willing people, an obedient people, a ready people, a diligent people, to have done what's right, and to make Christianity not something that's sewn on to our lives, but our whole life. To many Christians, Christianity is an appendage. It's an extra.

Christianity shouldn't be an extra. Christianity should be our whole life. We should be living epistles read of all men.

Your life is either a Bible or a libel. What is it today? A Bible or a libel? Oh, my friend, God wants to make Paris ours. May God speak to our hearts today, and may God burn this text into our hearts, that the ends of the earth may see the salvation of our God.

Revival is possible. Revival can become an actuality. May God hasten His reviving purposes amongst us for Jesus' sake.

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