

# Two Tests of Revival

by Jack Crans

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*Jack Crans emphasizes the critical need for revival in the church to impact the lost and transform communities through the power of the Holy Spirit.*

**Duration:** 43:56

**Scripture:** Philippians 2:12-13, 1 Peter 1:25

**Topics:** "Revival"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the parable of the vineyard from Matthew 20. The owner of the vineyard goes out at different times of the day to hire workers, and at the end of the day, he pays them all the same wage, regardless of how long they worked. The preacher then talks about a visual aid his mother used, with different colored pages representing different aspects of the gospel message. He emphasizes the importance of sharing the word of God and having a burden for souls. The sermon concludes with the preacher sharing his experiences working in a prison and expressing his dislike for it, while also challenging the misconception that prisons are comfortable places.

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## Transcript

I'm sure all of you that have been here this weekend who haven't been in the podium can only imagine the privilege to be able to speak. And I count it an honor and certainly a heavy thing to be able to be the closing speaker. I'm glad that last evening was the coming together of the results of the meeting and perhaps the Lord has some finished business even here today.

Dear friends of mine came down from Burlington, Kent and Pat Laidlaw. Kent is commander of the police up in the Halton Burlington area and Kent and Pat will be part of the Burlington Fellowship that will host the Sutura Crusade in a few more weeks, I understand. So Kent and Pat, appreciate you being here and coming down just for this service this afternoon.

Okay, second half of November and the early part of December in Burlington. Okay, so Kent and Pat, wave your hands so they know where you are. Okay, thank you.

Blesses my heart to have dear ones like that step in. I was reading the Canadian Revival Fellowship brochure, particularly the one related to their new headquarters and came upon their chart of goals and objectives for Canadian Revival Fellowship and it's a five-step process. A process that only comes from the Holy Spirit and only comes by the word if it's genuine and the basis of it is cleansing.

Step number one, inward direction of revival, cleansing. The sideward direction of revival, which would be restoration and fellowship. The onward, or pardon me, the upward direction of revival, intercession.

And the onward direction of revival, which would be follow through. And lastly, step five, outreach. The outward direction of revival.

I am given peace by the Holy Spirit today that seeing that that is step number five, I don't think that God makes any mistakes in allowing me to be the closing speaker. I came here with a heavy heart. My first revival meeting.

My first time with the Souters and I want to thank all of you for evidencing the love of the Holy Spirit this weekend to me. I've tried not to be absent, but as present as much as possible. I took five days out of my schedule, which I can guarantee you robbed some very important people, not only of my presence, but most importantly, the one I represent, the Lord Jesus Christ.

I am only one of thousands of missionaries on the face of the earth. I would ask you as I speak today to not see me as just a prison minister or missionary, but that you would hear me speak today as a missionary who represents the lost all over the world. I would love to be a missionary to the Indians of Erie and Jaya.

I would love to be a missionary to the Indians of the Southwest. I would love to be many places for my Savior, as would many of us. God calls us to special places and ministries.

This morning, as I spoke to the young people and I would ask if any tape you hear that I speak, it would be that youth breakfast, because it was in the youth breakfast that I shared more of my burden for the prisoner and my outlook on the prisoner. But lest I take us off course today, I really think that this last session needs to be a cry to revivalists from the lost. There's a little pamphlet that we hand out in jail all the time.

It was written by Watchman Nee. It's printed, I think, by the Overseas Missionary Crusade or CLC, Christian Literature Crusade. And that little pamphlet is called Why This Waste.

I recommend it to you. It's a beautiful message in there about a woman named Mary of Bethany and Mary's love for the Lord and how Mary, all through the New Testament, just was satisfied to love Jesus. And she was seen at his feet on many occasions.

As a matter of fact, Jesus reproved Martha for all of her busyness and said to Martha, she that waited on tables, Martha, Mary has chosen the better part. It was Mary who broke her most precious object and anointed the body of Jesus Christ. And a fragrance filled the room and Judas said, what a waste.

And of course, the message in that is if all we could do the rest of our lives was to just know him, it would be enough. And I want you to know there's a lot of people I meet, that's all they'll ever get a chance to do, spend time with Jesus. And that's why I give that pamphlet to prisoners, particularly prisoners who are doing 15, 20, some life, some 19 years old, who will never again see the light of day.

I think it's a good thing, isn't it? To encourage a lifer to realize the vital importance of spending your life at the feet of Christ. The message is your life won't be a waste at all. But in revival, we're challenged to know Christ and to know the fellowship of his suffering and to come to know his resurrection life in us.

And I think that there's a danger in revival if all of us were to stop at the feet of Jesus and stay there. For there is an aspect of revival, and I believe history proves it out in revival history, that when true revival takes place, there is oftentimes and maybe in all occasions, a direct impact on the world around God's people. I've spent 22 of my 40 years in prison.

And prior to that, even as a 16-year-old, my heart was broken for a street corner society that I recognize as much different than a world that I had to endure as a child. I still remember after my mother died, my father praying with us before leaving the house for school. And just in a symbolic gesture, he would put his hand up on the door, not that we were going to go past him, and there he would pray and ask God's blessing and direction on his sons as we went into the public schools.

We came from a tough little town, and I thank the Lord that he sobered me as a young man in taking my mother home, but also sobered me in helping me to realize, and I'll say in a very small way, his marvelous grace in my own family and life. Brother Ed asked me this morning if there was a song that we could sing, and I said he's done such a wonderful job in leading. I couldn't suggest anything, but there was a hymn on my heart that I did not find in the book, and it was, give me a burden for souls, dear Lord, a burden to save the lost.

Give me a burden for souls. Or another hymn came to my mind as I sat there. It was, love found a way to redeem my soul.

That's not in that great hymn book either. Then the organist played a song. There's a powerful message in it.

Lord, where there is darkness, let me sow light. Where there is injury, pardon. Where there is despair, hope.

And let me die that thou would take me up into glory. I'm here to tell you on behalf of millions and millions of people on the face of the earth, they need a revived church. I challenge you to find the new book written by Dr. Woodward Kroll of Back to the Bible that he has just written called The Vanishing Ministry.

As Dr. Kroll cries out the need for over 1,500,000 churches to be planted, yes, even in the United States, a need in the days of the vanishing ministry. Prison, I believe, at least for North America, is at least a picture of a lost world of people. Again, speaking for 1,100,000 young people and adults in our country's prisons, they only reflect millions of others.

They reflect their children. They reflect little boys and little girls. Who grow to school, not even with the shame of a father in prison, because shame has left that community a long time ago.

It's not a shame in some communities to go to jail because it's so common everybody goes. Everybody's daddy's in jail if you have one. Nine out of ten children where I live don't have a dad.

Nine out of ten. And the gross truth is that more and more are losing their mothers. Again, in the Sunday school hour is where I broke my heart over specifics.

I could talk about 13 year olds and 12 year olds and 19 year olds who have committed the worst of crimes. And I can guarantee you today, apart from some divine work, they're hopeless and helpless. I go to more institutions where there is no evidence of God's people who weep for the poor and the lost.

I believe, again, if we had time and we touched upon it in the pre-session on Thursday, that God's word does not excuse His people in any generation from ignoring the lost. Israel was to be a light to the nations. Israel was to be a testimony of God's grace to strangers and the poor and the fatherless and the widow in her affliction.

Job, the righteous man, as God called him, stood out as a figure unlike any other man on the face of the earth. What made Job so different was not only his faith and his love for God, but his obedience, his hatred of evil, and yet his love for the poor and his love for those whose needs needed being sought out. In the next few moments today, I want to take you into God's word.

And there's only one thing I know that can drive us to being obedient in revival, and that is an appreciation of God's grace work in our own lives. I'm just going to give you a few scriptures, and I won't be able to study them all, but I want you to remember them, and I'll mention them. The first is in Philippians chapter 2, beginning in verse 12.

And I'll go through these quickly, but please bear with me. Remember, I speak on behalf of the lost on the face of the earth. Philippians 2, 12.

Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do his good pleasure. Do these things without murmuring and disputing.

For there's so much in the church that has kept us from working out our salvation. That's why there needs to be revival among the people of God, that we might get on with the task that God has borne us for. When the Holy Spirit fell upon the church in Acts, the Bible says that the power of God fell upon the church that it might be witnesses unto the ends of the earth.

And truly a very important manifestation of the presence of the Holy Spirit is the witness of God's people to the ends of the earth with the gospel. The Bible says here, wherefore, wherefore, based upon the fact that Jesus Christ, who was already mentioned this week, who was rich, became poor for us, we were able to taste the glory of heaven through the poverty of Christ, that ye may be blameless and harmless children of God without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation among whom you shine as lights in the world. Hold forth the word of life that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain.

A long time ago, I made this statement. You almost have to write it down to remember it, but it went like this. May those in darkness be so aware of the light that they must either be converted or bear the discomfoting presence of God's people.

May those in darkness be so aware of the light that they must either be converted or bear the discomfoting presence of God's people. When I read my Bible, I picture wisdom spoken of in Proverbs chapter 1, holding out her hand in the marketplace, in the concourse of people. God cries out and says, how long will you refuse me? God's looking for a people today who might be seen in the marketplace of men holding forth the word of life.

Hudson Taylor said it this way, we stand in the light of eternity in the presence of the crucified risen Lord of glory. His unconditional command says, go, I am with you always. It's sounding on and on, while with it mingles the low wail of thousands passing hour by hour into Christless graves.

It's profound, unutterably real. One reason I came to this revival conference, never expecting to be able to really speak to you, I have preached my heart out in Bible-believing churches, asking that God's people would respond to the lost in our own backyard. And you know what? It's one of the saddest things I do.

I've come here to ask revivalists to do it. Does knowing Christ better and closer give us his passion for men? I hope so. Look in 2 Peter 1, just for a moment, 2 Peter 1, beginning in verse 19.

And I'll move quicker because of the time. 2 Peter 1, beginning in verse 19. Now this is written to you and to me.

We are those who have tasted and seen that the Lord is good. We are those among the few on the planet earth who have had the privilege of holding in our hand the word of God. We're among the few.

2 Peter 1 says in verse 19, we, and take that personally today, you have a more sure word of prophecy unto which you do well to take heed. And that word of prophecy is as unto a light that shines in a dark place. The word of God, it shines in the night.

The light shineth in the darkness, John says, and the darkness never overcomes the light. It sounds too simple to even mention it, but it's true. Why are our cities so dark? You tell me.

Aren't our cities dark because of the absence of light? It doesn't take anyone too sharp to think that one through. This light is to shine in a dark place until the day dawn and the day star arise in your hearts. Has there been a rising of light in your life this weekend? Has there been an increase in your understanding of Calvary this weekend? Has there been for some of us a release, a liberty, perhaps a new joy, a new passion, a new love for Christ? Know this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of anyone's private interpretation.

For the prophecy of the scriptures did not come at any time by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. And it's still that way today. God wants to take those whose lives are committed to him and use them to speak his word.

And the same Holy Spirit that gave the word is the same Holy Spirit that accompanies the word. And I'm telling you today, there are countless millions who do not know or have never heard the word of God, no less even spoken in the power of the Holy Spirit. If we had time, I'd take you back to John 3, where Jesus likens the moving of the Holy Spirit unto the wind.

Who knows which way the wind blows or where it comes from, so is the Spirit of God. I'm here to tell you today there's a need for the refreshing wind of the Holy Spirit in the dark places of this world. Look in Hebrews chapter 2, if you will, Hebrews chapter 2, beginning in verse one.

Again, an important word to you and I, Hebrews 2, beginning in verse one. Therefore, we, we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at first began to be spoken by the Lord and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him.

God bore witness both with signs and wonders and diverse miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit according to his will. We have received this message. First Peter chapter 1. First Peter chapter 1. Listen to the precious words of Peter and realize the privilege that you and I have today.

First Peter chapter 1, beginning in verse 3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy has begotten us unto a living hope by the resurrection of Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for who? For you. For you. You who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.

Look in verse 10. Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you. Searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ who was in them did signify when he testified beforehand the suffering of Christ and the glory that would follow, unto whom it was revealed that not unto themselves, but unto us.

They did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven, which things the angels even desire to look into. For verse 20, who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you. For you.

For you. For you. For me.

Getting and getting and getting and getting and getting and receiving and receiving all that Cal repurchased for you and for me. We ought to be carrying today in our hearts the great joy and privilege of knowing Christ as our Savior and realize the unique privilege of being able to be so attuned to the deep truths of God's Word. Verse 25 of that same chapter says, The word of the Lord endures forever, and this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

You. My friends, I don't think you do, and I hope you don't. Never take for granted the instruction that you have received this weekend.

Never, never take it for granted. I'm telling you that most people that I meet just in our world have a difficult time even yet hearing the simplicity of the wordless book. Remember the wordless book? That little page of papers my mother used to hold up to children started with a green page that talked about the fact that God made us, and then a black page where man fell into sin, and then a red page where God sent a Redeemer, and then a white page where God cleansed that sin, and then a gold page where God promised eternal life in heaven for those who believe.

I want you to know today most of the world would be happy to understand five pages of construction paper. And I go home wondering what will happen if out of revivalists there is no burden for souls. I wonder what stage we would have come to.

If having heard so much and learned so much, I believe that the word of God is that which is going to bring life and power in the ministry that will follow this weekend. The exciting thing about this weekend is it's not over. It's a continuum, and we're taking this book with us.

And this is the book that God promises to do the work out of. It may sound like a simple thing, and you might say, well, Jack, what does revival in prison ministry? How's that weaving in here? I want you to know today that revival's final product ought to be the affecting of the poor and the fatherless and the lost for the kingdom of heaven. A man who was intimate with the word of God listened to what John the beloved said about him.

His name was Gaius. Remember Gaius? A man who walked in the truth. John said about him in his third epistle, Gaius, beloved, I wish above all things that you may prosper and be in health, even as your soul prosperous.

For I rejoice greatly when the brothers came and testified of the truth that is in thee. Even as you walk in the truth, I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth. And what was the testimony of Gaius' life? What was the sign to John the beloved that Gaius was walking in the truth? What was the evidence in Gaius' life that he was endowed with the Holy Spirit and that he had a burden on his heart? I think one of the greatest texts in all the Bible that talks about missionaries and missionary endeavor, whether it's in prison, whether it's in the high crime areas of my own backyard, I want you to know today there are over 40 million people in America's ghettos today who have never darkened the doors of a church.

If for nothing else you read this brochure, it'll give you some statistics that'll shock you. When you see how large the mission field is out there today, and I can guarantee you right now that Satanists and Muslims are praying for the families in my city, and they mean business. John says in his 30 Thistle, the fifth verse, speaking to Gaius, Gaius, you man of truth, you do faithfully what you are doing to the brethren and to strangers.

Speaking of missionaries, these who have borne witness of thy love before the church, whom if you bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, you are doing well. For his namesake, they go forth taking nothing of the heathen. We therefore ought to receive these kinds of people, missionaries, that we might be fellow helpers to the truth.

John says, Gaius, you are a man who understands the truth. And Gaius, when I look at your life, one of the chief evidences of that is how you have become a blessing in the missionary enterprise of your own day. My friends, it's not enough to have a church with a hundred thousand dollar missions budget and lights all over a wall map.

Too many neighborhoods right under my nose and under yours have not received the privilege of those who know Christ as some have represented in a light bulb on a map. Paul and Teresa Rhodes are missionaries in West Erie and giant New Guinea with team. They just finished a year's furlough in the United States before they got on their plane to go back to Erie and giant New Guinea.

They're going back to a beautiful village called Testega. And in Testega, the whole village comes to church. As a matter of fact, Paul says sometimes it's as if it was the days of acts when people actually were falling out the windows because of the crowds in Testega.

Revival has broken out in God is blessing. But Paul and Teresa Rhodes said to me, Jack, if the Lord never lets us go back to Erie and giant New Guinea, we don't have to be convinced that the American city is a mission field unlike any we've ever seen. And Paul and Teresa Rhodes support the work of our ministry with their gifts from West Erie and giant New Guinea.

My friends today, what is the evidence of revival? Is it that you are like Mary of Bethany and you've learned to sit at Jesus' feet and enjoy him forever? I say to some of you, that's good. And Jesus would say you've chosen the better thing. Keep doing it till he comes.

But I can't believe all of us in this room are just called of God to sit at Jesus' feet. I believe that many of us here realize what Jesus did for us and the grace we've received through him. We're ready to die on his behalf.

Woodward Kroll, the great teacher from back to the Bible broadcast, taught me many years ago from Matthew chapter 20. You don't have to turn to it. Let me just tell you the story and I'm almost done.

Matthew 20 is that parable of a vineyard and a man who went out into the marketplace of the city and went among idle people in the marketplace and called people to come and work in his vineyard. The Bible says that it was around six o'clock in the morning that God called some and said, come and work and I'll pay you a fair day's wage. And then it was at nine o'clock in the morning, he went back and gathered some more and then at noon and then at three o'clock and finally at five o'clock in the afternoon, the owner of the vineyard went to the idle people of the marketplace and said, come and work in my vineyard.

At the end of the day, Jesus said the owner of the vineyard called his men who had worked for him together to pay them. And Jesus took the one who was called last and he paid him a fair day's wage. As a matter of fact, he paid him the same as he had promised to the man who began at 6 a.m. And the man who began at 6 a.m. began to grumble and complain.

And he said, Lord, is it fair that I've worked in the heat of the day all these hours and you're only paying me the same as you're paying this man called late? And then Jesus said something that we all remember. The last shall be first and the first shall be last. Many are called but few are chosen.

Dr. Crowl paused a minute and here's what he said. To help you better understand Matthew 20, here's what Jesus said. Many are called but of those called, few, few are choice.

Many are called, few are choice. You know, some of the people who have come to know Jesus Christ late in their life have been some of the greatest and most radiant believers I've ever met. While I'm standing here in front of you today, Shannon Butterfield, a dear black brother, three years ago was stumbling over trash cans in Coatesville.

Most of his brothers in his family are all addicted. His daddy was an alcoholic before coming to Christ. Matter of fact, Shannon said growing up with a last name Butterfield was a shame to him.

He never wanted anybody to know that he was a Butterfield. Several years we worked with Shannon. I could show you pictures of Shannon when he was nothing but skin and bones.

His eyes were always glazed and red, unkept. He looked like he just got off of a boat somewhere in this dirty, shabby clothes. Shannon went to the Bowery Mission in New York City twice and graduated from the discipleship program and fell back into sin.

Then he went to Keswick in New Jersey and fell back into sin. He came and lived at our house for eight months and fell back into sin. And finally, as the Lord continued to work on Shannon's life and wooed Shannon, not many months ago, a year ago, Shannon graduated from Word of Life Bible Institute with honors.

Today he's a chubby little guy with beautiful whites around his eyes, a joyous smile, a Bible that's just so wrinkled from use. And I'm telling you, Shannon goes into jail as one called late and he shines like a light in the universe. But you see, Shannon has come to realize the great privilege, the great honor of knowing

Jesus Christ as his sin bearer.

There's a young boy in prison back home, he's 19. His name is Tim. I mentioned him perhaps on Thursday.

Tim is expecting to get the death penalty. If he's fortunate, he'll get life without parole. Maybe some of us will say, good, he gets what he deserves.

But you know, I've never heard heaven ever say that. I've never heard heaven ever say about any sinner, never one, I'm going to give them what they deserve. As a matter of fact, I stand here before you today as one who can personally tell you, I did not get what I deserved.

As a matter of fact, God graced me with a godly home, godly grandparents, spirit-filled pastors. And it wasn't until just these last years of my life, I grow to more and more appreciate the responsibility of grace, the responsibility of grace. To whom much is given, much is required.

He that's been forgiven much will love much. Let me ask you this week, did you get a glimpse of Calvary? You know, the apostle Paul did. Paul says, you know, as brother Sussex said last night, Paul says, I am dead to the world.

But he went another step further. Paul said, the world is crucified unto me. Let no man bother me anymore, says Paul, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And he set his chin for glory. And Paul was a firebrand for Christ because he came to love the precious blood shed for him. You know what? The greatest fear I have in my life, and this is not a criticism, it's an observation, I fear that God's people don't appreciate Calvary enough to take its wonderful claims to those who have never, ever heard about it.

The last step in the Suteric Crusade vision is outreach. Let me ask you, when I go back to prison tomorrow morning and I don't like to do it, I hate going to jail. After 22 years, you'd think I'd get tired of hearing the bars, you'd think I'd get used to it.

I never get used to it. It's in the lobbies of churches I hear people saying things like, well, today's prisons are hotels anyway. You know, they get TVs and all that stuff.

Let me tell you something. I work for one of the nicest prisons in Pennsylvania. And if I had to live there tonight, let me tell you a few things that would happen.

Number one, my wife would suffer the public shame of my sin. Number two, I've got three precious sons, 18, 14, 10, and they'd bear the shame too. Also, I'd live in a nine foot by 11 foot cinderblock room.

I'd wear clothing I never owned before. I'd live in a noisy place which has caught the refuse of society. And I would just hope inside my cell that someone out there in the world really understood the cross.

Because if they did, they would love me. They'd restore me. They'd visit me.

And I don't know about you, but that's what this book is all about. God who left the beauty of heaven and came and tabernacled among the refuse of society and spent his life, you who have tasted and seen that the Lord is good, let me ask you honestly, do you have a burden for souls? If you don't, I don't think we've seen the fullness of revival. Father, I ask that we who have tasted grace, we who understand words like

forgiveness, we who understand words like pardon, we who understand words like grace, mercy, we who understand Calvary, ought to be the most merciful, burdened people with an urgency on the face of the earth.

Lord, I pray that revival will yield forth not only in prison ministry, but in missions. Lord, may we who have tasted the Holy Spirit evidence it for Christ's sake and that of Calvary. Amen.

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