

Preludes to Revival

by James A. Stewart

Revival begins with an awareness of God, a humiliation before God, and a holy wonder at the things of God.

Duration: 50:11

Scripture: Exodus 3:3, Isaiah 57:14-15, Acts 3:1-10, Acts 4:8

Topics: "Revival"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher reflects on the wonder of the death of Christ and the love that God has for humanity. He emphasizes the importance of understanding and meditating on Galatians 3:20, which speaks of the Son of God who loved and gave himself for us. The preacher then discusses the preludes to revival, which he identifies as an awareness of God, a sense of humility before God, and a deep reverence for the things of God. He encourages the congregation to seek a transformed church that is filled with the glory of God and actively engaged in evangelism.

Transcript

Now, tonight, being a Monday night, I never preach a sermon because I always like just to have a heart-to-heart talk with the Lord's people on Monday night. And I'm not preaching a sermon, but just having a little chat with you this evening. And I hope that at the end of the meeting we could have a few minutes of prayer together.

Now you know, if I were on my deathbed tonight, and if you were on your deathbed tonight, you know what your biggest regret would be? Need I tell you? What would your biggest regret be? Your biggest regret would be that you did not think up much time in prayer. Martin Luther says, I will be so busy today, I must pray two hours. But Luther, the opposite, I'll be so busy today, I can't even have five minutes before the Lord.

And I think that if you have any regrets in heaven, my brother, my sister, it would be that you are not a woman, not a man of praise. And if there's anything I cultivate, if there's anything I desire, more than anything else, I don't care whether I can preach, never bothers me if I never preach again. But one thing does bother me, I want to pray again.

And I'd rather pray than preach. And what a, how marvelous that we can talk to God. Isn't it amazing that you can talk to God? Wonderful.

And yet, we have the opportunity, and somehow we miss it. And so, tonight since we are, it's Monday night, maybe for a little short time before we separate, to pray for ourselves and pray for revival. Now, I'm reading tonight my scripture passage, or not the text, but my scripture passage in the next chapter three.

And I'm reading from verse one, Acts chapter three, verse one. A familiar passage. Now, Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, during the ninth hour.

And a certain man, lame from his mother's womb, was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple, which is called beautiful. Who asked alms of them that entered into the temple. He, seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked alms.

And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, look alms. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them. Then Peter said, silver and gold have I none, but such as I have, good I be.

In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk. And he took them by the right hand and lifted them up. And immediately he took an ankle, boldly seen strength.

And he, leaping up, stood and walked. And entered with them into the temple, walking and leaping and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God.

And they knew it was he which sat for alms at the beautiful gate of the temple. And they were all filled with wonder. I want you to remember this.

And they were all filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him. And as a lame man which was healed held Peter and John. All the people ran.

Oh, it would be wonderful if you could see people run, wouldn't it? All the people ran together unto them in the port that is called Solomon. Still greatly wondering. And when Peter saw it, he answered and said unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? Or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power of holiness we have made this man to walk? The God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his son Jesus, whom ye gave up the little duck, and hath denied him in the presence of Pilate, when ye were determined to let him go.

But ye denied the Holy One and the just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you. And told the Prince of Light, whom God hath raised from the dead, who are all your witnesses. And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong.

Whom ye see and know, yea, the faith which is by him, hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. And now, brethren, I want but through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. But those things which God before hath showed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.

Now I want you to come particularly with me into the 59th chapter, the 59th chapter of the prophecy of Isaiah, or rather the 57th chapter of the prophet Isaiah. Isaiah chapter 57, and I'm reading two verses as part of my text tonight, verses 14 and 15. Isaiah 57 verses 14-15.

For take of brevity, and shall say, Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take up the stumbling block out of the way of my people. For thus saith the High and Holy One that inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy. I

dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite of the broken one.

And then, you need not turn to it, a text that you all know, Ezekiel chapter, or rather Exodus chapter 3, and verses 3-4, and where Moses says, I will now turn aside to see this wonderful sight, the bush burning and not being consumed. Now, this evening, I want to speak to you on the preludes to revival. P-R-E-L-U-D-E-S, if you don't just get my accent.

The preludes to revival. Now, what are the preludes to revival? I want to mention three tonight, that I have known in my ministry during the past 45 years. First, an awareness of God.

Second, a humiliation before God. And third, a holy wonder at the things of God. First, an awareness of God.

Second, a humiliation before God. And third, a wonder, a holy wonder at the things of God. And so, I have these two verses for you tonight.

The one tonight is Isaiah 57-15, and Exodus 3-3. Now, may I say, first of all, three things about the word revival, or the experience of revival. Revival is, first of all, a wishful word.

A wishful word. Oh, how many believers have said, oh, at the tea table, maybe, or at the dining table, or in the prayer meeting in the church, oh, I wish we could see revival. Oh, if only revival could come to my house.

If only revival could come to my church. And many a godly pastor, and many a godly deacon has cried out, oh God, please send revival. And many believers have said, oh God, will I have to go to heaven without seeing mighty movements of the Holy Ghost here on earth? And do you know that tens of thousands of believers in America have been translated home to glory, and have never yet seen a mighty manifestation of the Spirit of God in their midst? How tragic.

How tragic. How disheartening. It's a wishful word.

I was introduced to the Central Baptist Church here by that blessed man of God, Dr. R.E. Naber. God gave me, he was giving me revival. That's why I went to Knoxville for two missionary meetings, and the Holy Ghost comes down in these missionary meetings, and I had to be there three weeks sitting in Knoxville.

And we had to turn hundreds of people away from all the churches, including the First Baptist Church. And I got a long-distance call from Dr. Naber, and he said, Jesus, I'm in Memphis at the Central Baptist Church, and this is the most wonderful church in the whole of Tennessee, and I want you to come and get to know these people. Now, Dr. Naber was a holy man of God.

And I can remember ministering at the Every Creature Conference with Brother Rhys Howells in Wales, in Swanston, Wales. He had the daughter Paul Rader, and R.E. Naber, and Mrs. Charlotte Talwin had been invited, as well as myself, by Rhys Howells. And when I told Rhys Howells, I said, James, tell these poor Americans, I'd not been to America yet, I wasn't even married, tell these poor Americans about what God is doing in the continent of Europe.

And Dr. Naber and Dr. Rader asked me questions, and I told them, and Dr. Naber, I could see the tears began to cry. That precious man of God, and he said, oh, he said, Brother Stuart, he said, could I come, could I come, could I come? He said, I would like to be in the midst of revival before I go to heaven. I said, Brother Naber, I said, I'll shine your shoes if you come, please come.

And do you know that when God blessed them in Budapest and Hungary, and he was in the midst of revival, never had anybody pray for revival, because you know, when revival comes, nobody prays for revival, you just pray for revival here. And I can remember him all shaken, trembling, and then he said to me, James, James, he said, I am the most fortunate evangelist and pastor in all the world. Now he said, I'm ready for heaven.

God has answered my prayer. I've been in the midst of a mighty movement of God the Holy Ghost. And you see, you know when God began to work in the outer Hebrides islands off my coast of Scotland some 15 or 16 years ago, partly through the ministry of my dear friend Duncan Campbell.

You know, the news spread like wildfire all over the earth. And hundreds and hundreds of people came from all over the earth and still New Zealand, thousands of miles away. And the reduction in these little islands, with only a thousand inhabitants in some of them, they came to see revival.

And, you know, Mr. Campbell was invited, Presbyterian minister, invited to go to almost every, I think he had to go to every part of Great Britain. Just now he's in India. And even though he's retired, he's got invitations of June to the Millennium.

I have enough invitations to do me, the older I am, the more invitations I seem to get. You know why? It's not because I can preach. Oh, no, no, no, I'm the greatest preacher you ever had.

It's not because I can preach, I'm invited to go places. No, I have invitations from all over the earth. Why? Just because I've been in revival.

And these dear pastors, these dear men of God, they're on for revival. The California's long distance, the writer's letters, from Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, from India, all over, all over the spirit. Tell us about revival.

What happens when revival comes? Well, we long to see revival. And I have seen hundreds and hundreds of men, strong men, deacons and elders and pastors and evangelical missionaries weeping with, Oh, God, would you send us revival. Oh, I say it's a wishful word.

And then, you know, it's, I call also an elusive word, or the experience may be elusive. It's an elusive word because, you know, many times we think we're on the brink of revival. Now, I was in the church not very long ago, and the pastor said to me, Brother James, we're going to have revival in that church.

Now, that church is on the brink of revival, and he's going to have revival. They're going to have revival in that church. I know they will.

But many times we come to the brink of revival. Not hard to lift it up and say, Hallelujah, we're going to have revival in our church. And then, suddenly, our hopes are dashed to the ground.

Nothing really happens. We can explain everything according to the natural. Now, when revival comes, you stand up and you say, It is the Lord's doing.

And it's marvelous, no doubt. We couldn't have done it. No evangelist would have done it.

Not even our pastor could do it. It's the Lord's doing. And it's marvelous, no doubt.

And then, many times, you know, we hear of a mighty, mighty outbreak of the Spirit of God, say, in some great city in America. And then we rush there, and then we discover it's a flash in the pan. It's not the real thing.

All that glitters is not gold. And they said it was revival. But when you arrive there and you go around the churches, you find the churches are just as cold and as different, even though they're evangelical and fundamental, they're just as cold and indifferent as they were before they had this special meeting.

And yet, it was all over the Christian magazine, revival has come to the city through a great evangelistic effort. I say it is also an elusive word. But, you know, it is also a much misunderstood word, this word revival.

You see, many a Christian will say, and maybe you would say tonight, whether you represent this church or another dear church in this city, you would say, oh, Brother Stewart, if only the sinners in Memphis would get excited about the gospel. If only we come rushing to our gospel meetings, oh, what a mighty revival we'd have in Memphis. Oh, no, that's wrong.

That's a wrong conception, you see. You see, revival can only begin with the family of God. And revival can only begin with the people of God.

You see, the unsaved, they don't need revival. You can't revive them. You know why? Because they're dead.

They need a resurrection. And you see, what is regeneration? What is salvation? Or we use the word conversion. What is that? It's a resurrection, a spiritual resurrection.

In John 5, 24, we read, Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that hears my word, and believeth on him that sent you, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but is fast present-day from death, from the state of death, unto the state of life. That's the unsaved. They need a resurrection.

They're dead and sane. You can't revive someone that is dead. But you see, you can only revive something that's living.

And the person that needs to be revived physically is a person that's half-dying. And may I say that it's kind of those half-dying Christians, or half-dead Christians. They're more dead than alive sometimes.

And they're the ones that need to be revived. And so, this is, revival is a much misunderstood word. Revival begins with the saints of God.

And so, here in Isaiah, in this chapter here, Isaiah 57, especially verse 15, we discover a sovereign God chooses to show us the pathway to revival. And he also, as a sovereign God, approaches us with a challenge of revival in this land. God is saying to us tonight, do you want revival? Do you really want revival in your heart and life? Are you willing to let me revive you tonight? Are you willing for revival to come to your church? Are you willing for revival to come to your city? Do you really want revival to come to your city? And do you know that God is serious about this question.

I've been disillusioned so, so many times in my down the years when I've discovered that many, many people who talk so much about revival and saying they want to see revival, when it came really down to the showdown, they didn't really want revival. You know, the thought they did, that when it came to the showdown, they didn't really want revival. And they turned back.

I don't really know what they did want. Maybe they did want themselves, but they didn't want God to step them through and through. And God is saying now, God is serious to me.

You can't mock God. God doesn't want you to mock Him. A person often prays in our meetings, Oh God, fill me with the Holy Ghost.

And then I go up afterwards and I say, Brother, did He fill you with the Holy Ghost? He said, What do you mean, Brother Church? I said, Are you not the man that prayed that God would fill you with the Holy Ghost tonight? He said, Did I? I said, You certainly did pray that prayer. Oh, He said, That's all God. Now that's blasphemy.

And when we say we want revival, we must be careful because we're treading on holy ground. We're coming face to face with the Holy God. And so, we see that, I want you to notice that revival begins with an awareness of God.

We see that here in Isaiah 57, in this verse. An awareness of God among the believers and among the unbelievers. Although revival begins with you, my brother, my sister.

When revival comes, there's such awareness of God that even the unsaved people know God is around. I've been writing a lot on the revivals in Wales and studying about revivals in Wales. One of my books will be published in my CLC just now.

And I can think of a revival that took place in Wales 300 years ago. And there may have been 40,000 people out in the field. Now, you know, we think we are great when we get 40,000 people here in America now with organized evangelism spending tens of thousands of dollars to get these people together.

In the olden days, when the Holy Ghost worked, they had 80,000 in the open air without any advertising, not a dollar's thing. And the thousands gathered out in the open air. And one preacher said to a dear man of God, another preacher who had taken part that day, he said, Oh, Brother John, did you not see the crowd? Wasn't it exhilarating? Did you not see the crowd? And the blessed preacher, the blessed reviver said, No, he said, I didn't see the crowd.

I only saw God. And, you know, it's possible for you to be in a revival meeting and 10,000 people there and you be absolutely oblivious to everybody in that meeting, including your wife, including your husband, your children, or your loved ones sitting beside you. Why? Because there was awareness of God.

I can think of in 1904, the Welsh Revival, when I was speaking to the Evan Roberts family because, you know, it was a children's revival. It was a young people's revival. Evan Roberts was an old man.

He was 24. The rest were youngsters, 16, 17. And when I asked the dear Roberts about the revival times and the people who took part in these revivals, because we know hundreds of them and thousands of people who took part in these revivals are almost all going to heaven now.

And they said, Brother Stuart, the greatest thing that we can remember down the years is the awful sense of the presence of God. And, you know, I can remember quite easily in a European city, and when I was preaching every night for weeks, I felt as if every sentence I was uttering was like a sore, piercing the unsaved hearts and consciences. And I knew without a shadow of a doubt that hundreds were being saved.

And I can remember dealing with anxious souls far into midnight. Many, many anxious souls. And then when I leave that building, there will be crowds outside saying, Mr. Stuart, haven't you a word of grace for us? We say in broken English, haven't you a word of grace for us? Haven't you a word of mercy for us? Oh, tell me how I can be saved.

And many will come and say, we went home, but we come back. We can't sleep. Oh, please tell us how we can be saved.

And there's such an awareness of God. And, you know, you remember Jacob. When he awoke from his sleep, here I am.

Oh, he said, this is, none other than the house of God, of the very King of Heaven. This is God's place. And then you remember he said, this is a dreadful place to be in.

That's what he said. This is a dreadful place to be in. Why? Because Jacob had an awareness of the very presence of God.

And so, may I just say, notice with you in this verse, you have first of all the majesty of God. Then you have the holiness of God. Then you have the transcendence of God.

And then, of course, you have humiliation before God. Now, friend, I wonder, have you sensed this awareness of God? Think of it, the majesty of God. Then think of His holiness and His transcendence.

Think about God far above every one of us. And think how holy He is. And then think of how majestic He is.

You know, I was just saying to a theologian the other day, I said, if I were to teach in a theological family, if I were to teach in a Bible school, the first thing I would like to teach would be the attributes of Jehovah. The attributes of Jehovah. And if there's anything that we need to emphasize in our evangelical circles today, it is our majesty of God and the holiness of God.

And His transcendence far above everything. And then when we have this kind of gospel music today to arrest and amuse and entertain the unsaved young people, oh, my friend, how far away this is removed from revival. How far.

Oh, friend, to know the majesty and the holiness of God. And when there is awareness of God Himself, then, friend, the believer is broken down before Him. You'll notice there, in the previous verse 14, cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take up the stumbling block out of the way of my people.

And then God says there, I will dwell in the high and holy place with Him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit. That is thoroughly penitent. To revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite one of the broken one.

And then you say, God says, now when you're broken down before me, I'll come in and live with you and I'll revive you. But before God can do that, friend, before God can revive us, we must remove these stumbling blocks out of the way. Are you a stumbling block to another brother and sister? Are you a stumbling block to a weaker brother and a weaker sister? Are you a stumbling block to the unsaved coming to Christ? I wonder this evening, is there any doubtful indulgence in your life? Unholy compromise is some sin in your life? Maybe it's debt, money you haven't paid? You know, Mrs. Stewart and myself had a very strange experience this past winter.

The Holy Ghost told me, I want you to go to Norway. Well, of course, we were already going to Denmark and Sweden. But the Holy Ghost said, I want you to go to Trondheim.

And Mrs. Stewart said, I said to my wife Ruth, I said, we're going to Trondheim. And of course, naturally she said, oh no, no, no, not in the wintertime. You see, that's beside the Arctic Circle.

And our last evangelistic campaign we had there, I almost dropped down dead, just because of the cold in my heart. Because you could hardly be half a minute outside that you wouldn't keel over. But I said, no, the Holy Ghost said we must go.

And my wife said, couldn't we wait till summertime? I said, we must go. And of course she said, if you believe God wants you to go, you must go. Now I said, what are you going for? I said, we've got to see our dear brother.

And I mentioned his name. And of course, naturally said, and go up all that way in the wintertime and risk your life just for seeing a dear brother. We can maybe wait till the summer and see him, in the spring at least.

But the Holy Ghost said, go now. But I'll tell you why I wanted to go. There were two young men, one a Norwegian and one a Russian, a Latvian, whom the Holy Ghost used to challenge me as a young boy preacher in Britain.

So there are millions in Europe without Christ and without hope. And this is a Norwegian. Young man then, my own age.

Young man about seven feet three. And he challenged me with evangelization all the way up in the land of the Midnight Sun. And you know, we had been friends for years, but through some little bit of misunderstanding, there was a coldness in my heart, a sudden coldness in my heart for this dear brother.

And I loved him. And God had used him rightly with me in the evangelistic meetings. We had preached to tens of thousands in Norway.

We had seen great revivals together. And when we would preach sometimes seven times a day, and the only time we could rest would be maybe three o'clock in the morning just to grab a sandwich in between the meetings. We had seen God work.

But a little bit of coldness in my heart. And you know, when we arrived at Trondheim, it was cold. It was just as if a big giant hand was crushing my head down.

And I could gasp for breath and I was going to die in this fire. Our dear brother met us at the train. And he said, Welcome, James and Ruth, back to Trondheim.

Well, you know, we had a holy fellowship. And we preached together. He was telling me again what the old revivals are.

And then we hugged and kissed goodbye. And we had no sooner left Norway than we got a word from his evangelist son saying, Dear daughter Stuart and Mrs. Stuart, My mother wants to go right to you and tell you that Dad has gone home to glory. He took a heart attack.

Now, you see, it wasn't that good of the Lord to me. We rounded off 14 years of Christian friendship. Because he challenged me at 20 years of age.

It wasn't that good of the Lord. Now, supposing I got that letter from his son. Oh, friend, I would have broken my heart.

I would have broken my heart. Broken my heart. Wept and wept.

And neither my wife nor children nor you could have comforted me. Do you have a cold heart to somebody? Do you have any jealousy to anybody? If you've got a cold heart to somebody, there's something wrong. That's a devil.

You should have a warm heart. Friend, I could tell you the astonishment, the terrible things that hinder God from reviving his people. The terrible things that hinder God from blessing his people.

Here's the condescension of God. I would come in and dwell with you in the hymns of our Lord in contrite broken hearts. Think of the condescension of God as well as the holiness of God and his transcendence.

But you know what? I could tell you the most awful stories. The terrible, ugly things in the heart and life of God's people that have hindered the revival coming. But yet I could tell you just the most sinful things that have hindered the revival from coming to a chance.

And when I was praying all of this message this day, because we're very careful that we have God's message for every meeting, whether it's an old one or a new one. And God said to me, the biggest hindrance to revival may be in Memphis. It's just Christians with cold hearts.

I've known churches with no immorality, no jealousies, no backbiting, no squabbling, delightful, lovely Christians. But they have cold hearts. And their cold hearts was hindering revival.

So the path to revival is an awareness of God and then a humiliation before God. You're broken down and you cry, Oh God, forgive me in repentance. Oh God, for Christ's sake, forgive me.

And you seek to get right with God first. And then you seek to get right with your drubbing Savior. You know, we have a group of believers in Eastern Europe and they have a delightful custom.

I wish we had it in America. Every time any of these members cannot attend the usual services of the church, they telephone and write the pastor apologizing. And giving the reason why they're not there.

Isn't that a delightful custom? Oh brother, if that happened in America, we would really get the post office out of bankruptcy in the U.S. Oh yes. Oh yes. Just cold.

Oh yes. I'm indifferent to the things of God. Now, that brings me that brings me to the other prelude and that is a sense of wonder at the things of God.

As Moses said, now I'll turn aside and see this wonderful sight, this supernatural sight, this bush burning and burning and burning and never being consumed. Now, there is nothing about us to suggest that we've seen something wonderful and glorious and overwhelming. There's nothing to arrest the unsaved.

Nothing to challenge the unsaved in our lives. They don't see the arresting marvel of a New Testament church today. Because we are still mediocre.

Our Christian life is so tepid and cold and miserable. Our Christianity is so mechanical. Why we're just so weak and sophisticated.

Do you know that you're a ask any of the missionaries that you support from this group and I'm really included in that number. Ask any of the missionaries this question. They'll back you.

They'll back me up. You know, you do not know how you look in America. You are the most bored, sophisticated Christians in the entire world.

I'll put you I'll put Britain before you the greatest Christians for a few seconds. Now, you ask any missionary. You go to the mission field.

Go to Philippines. Go to Korea. Go to Russia.

Where we don't have any of the wealth we have. Where we don't have any of the visited buildings we have. And where we don't even have the great evangelical background that we have.

And yet you can see the arresting marvel of a transformed church. These sinful ordinary peasant believers filled with the glory of God and filled with wonder at the things of God. Standing on wonder.

And when the missionary comes home it's like a bucket of icy cold water and he says you have to pray for grace to take it. Because there's a sophistication and a coldness and a deadness and Christians look so bored. Bored.

Absolutely bored. You know I was in the church not very long ago and I slipped in into the Sunday school and they were just closing the Sunday school down and the pastor said now he said don't forget we have got a steward with us this morning service. And he started blowing me up and I didn't like that.

And then he kept on pleading with them to please remain for the morning service. Now he didn't know I was in. But I thought oh God.

I said they come to so low a place. There were maybe 500 there. But here was a man of God and they're all supposed to be evangelicals born again and here's the dear man of God has to plead with his own people to stay behind for the morning service.

And then my mind went away to Czechoslovakia and Poland and Russia and Bulgaria and all these countries I know. And I thought of my brothers and my sisters meeting secretly in a school in England where a missionary school for missionary children. She was witnessing to an unsaved little girl you know not in it was a day school young lady not one of the missionary cities but one who came to the grammar school during the day.

And she was witnessing to her about 10 years of age. And all she said Sharon I don't want to be a Christian. It's an awful dull thing to be a Christian.

And so she was telling her English auntie that she was staying with his family for a few years. Mrs. Sharon and myself had the joy of letting her stay in that home for two or three years. And she said to her so called English auntie you know what that girl said to me.

She said you know that Christian life is such a dull affair. I don't want to become a Christian. And her English auntie said well Sharon why didn't you tell us a glorious thing to be a Christian.

And then Sharon said oh auntie sometimes I think it's dull myself. Well she was 10 years of age and sometimes I think it's dull myself. Or you know I saw a lot of older people.

They're bored. They're sophisticated. The Bible's a dull book to them.

They don't say hallelujah where's my Bible. You know. Oh yeah.

The prayer meeting is a dull affair to them. Absolutely dull. It bores them to death to be in a many Christian men would rather go playing golf than go to a prayer meeting.

Many would rather go hunting fish than go out fishing for souls. They have more enthusiasm catching salmon and certainly have catching fish for Jesus Christ. I know what I'm talking about.

You know I was invited for a week's prayer meetings in a church in another state some years ago. A very very godly pastor. And I was broken down before God before I went crying to God for revival in that church.

A wonderful independent fundamental evangelical church. But you know we had arranged the meetings the wrong week. You know why? Because the World Series was on that week.

And Jesus Christ and the New York Yankees couldn't compete together. The New York Yankees won. There wasn't a man in that church that got excited about me.

All they got excited was about who was going to win the World Series. Now friend, I was a sportsman. I don't mind a man getting excited about sports or excited about playing golf or fishing.

But my dear friend, if I get more excited playing football than winning goals for Jesus Christ, there's something wrong with me. Somebody say amen. Of course there's something wrong.

We were in a meeting not very long ago up north. And a dear, dear man in the church. And I never met a man that was so enthusiastic about golf.

And, you know, golf started in my country almost three hundred years ago. And almost every village has two or three golf courses. So naturally I know about golf and we talked about golf.

But that man was more excited about golf than he was about the Lord Jesus Christ. And yet he was our leader in that church. But if it was a golf engagement or a praying engagement, there's no chance for the Lord to get in.

He would be up there golfing, not there praying. I went, what's wrong? We've lost the holy wonder of the things of God. You know, friend, the church began with the holy wonder.

That's why I read in the book of Acts, the church began with the holy wonder. When the church began filled with the Holy Ghost, filled with the love of Christ, filled with the joy of the Lord, filled with the glory of

being saved. And there come the Roman Empire upside down.

There were even saints in Caesar's household. And the gospel of Jesus Christ penetrated everywhere. And always in the book of Acts, there's something happening every moment.

The book is full of action, full of excitement, and even you go right to the very last verse, there's still excitement, and the church is filled with the holy wonder. And it continued that way. The first record we have of a group of believers after the Apostle Paul's group, is a group of believers we call the Bogomils.

A Russian name, a Slavic name, B-O-G-O-M-I-L-S. Meaning in our Slavic language, the friends of God, the Bogomils. But the Bogomils were the converts of the Apostle Paul.

In other words, those that Paul led to Christ, they in turn led others to Christ. And the ones that they led to Christ were the Bogomils, the friends of God. And they were so filled with the holy wonder of being saved, that almost 90% of the church of the Bogomils died violently for Christ's sake.

They were killed and killed again and again in Turkey, in Asia Minor. And then they fled into refuge in Herzegovina, and the great mountains of Yugoslavia. And again they were invaded, and crossed from these high tribes.

And almost 90% of the church died a martyr's death. And I think about the Huguenots and the Borgandians. We think of the Hussites and the Arabian Brethrens, the Covenanters of my country of Scotland, the early Methodists.

They were all filled with the glory and the wonder of the things of God. You read the hymnology. That's why I love hymns so much.

When I'm called, I read hymns. I don't read sermons. I read hymns, and I get my heart warmed.

And read all these things. Charles Wesley and Isaac Watson. Read them all.

They were lost and amazed at the wonder of the things of God. Oh, yes. What about the wonder of the love of God? I'm not preaching a sermon.

I'm just talking about my heart tonight. Could I ever think the ocean filled? You know, you sing that again and again. Could I ever think the ocean filled with the whole earth of parchment made, and every blade of grass a quill, and every man a scribe by trade? Nor could the love of God be dreamed that ocean dry.

Nor could the scroll contain the whole of those threats from sky to sky. Oh, the wonder, the wonder of all that God loved me. The wonder of all that God loved me.

The wonder of God's love. Think of the wonder of the death of Christ. One day I was speaking in the expound Galatians 2 20.

The son of God who loved me and gave himself to me. And I thought, I'll see what Mark and Luther said and I'll go and see what John Calvin said. I think John Calvin was safer, expositive than Luther.

So I went to see what John Calvin said. And the prince of Geneva said nothing at all. And I thought, well, why is he not giving me page after page in this glorious verse, Galatians 2 20.

The son of God who loved me and gave himself to me. And then I went dreaming and I could see him in his study in Geneva, trying to write down this glorious founders verse and he breaks down an uncontrollable waiting and he keeps on reiterating with the apostle Paul, yes, oh, wonder of wonders, the son of God, the son of God, he loved me and gave himself to me. He was overcome and so he couldn't expound to that.

And then I think of the wonder, yes, you can think of the wonder of conversion. The wonder of conversion, by the grace of God, I am what I am, a hell-deserving sinner bound for glory. Oh, friend, it was almost 46 years ago when the Lord saved me, apprehended me and my master's order held and I've never gotten over the wonder yet, never gotten over the wonder yet, the wonder that God would save a poor miserable guilty sinner like me.

And I stand in holy awe tonight to think that God could love me, save me, redeem me, see me by the Holy Spirit and call me up to glory. And then I think also the holy wonder of the fellowship of the Lord's people. Now this is your greatest need, your greatest sin in America.

You've lost the holy wonder of the fellowship of the Lord's people. You ask any missionaries, you say to them, brother, sister, what is the greatest sacrifice you have made by becoming a foreign missionary? And you think, oh, leaving father and mother behind, leaving comfort behind, leaving our beloved America behind and breaking up the family life, maybe exposing yourself to danger? No. If he's a true man of God, a true woman of God, he'll tell you everyone, the greatest sacrifice he made is the loss of their own church back home in America.

The fellowship of this church, the fellowship of their own home church is a fundamental evangelical sacrifice. My brother, my sister, there's nothing so sweet on the face of God's effort as the fellowship of the saints. After knowing Christ as the Savior, there's nothing so much as children.

Many were married. And this is what's happening in Russia today. This is what's happening in Czechoslovakia, Poland, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Bulgaria.

This is what's happening today. Brothers and sisters bidding one another's burdens and so pursuing the law of Christ. Have you got over the wonder of holy fellowship? Do you appreciate Pastor Thompson? Do you appreciate your deacons? Do you appreciate your artists, your pianists, your singers, the choir, your Sunday school teachers? Do you appreciate every brother and sister in this assembly? Then actually, let's not give bouquets of flowers to people when they're home to glory.

Let's not just place the flowers on the tombstone. Or no. Or beside the coffin.

Why don't you say to the brother and sister, I appreciate you now. Why not? Say it from the depth of your heart. Show your love to a brother now.

Show your love to your sister now. And say, oh God, I want to thank you from the very depths of my heart for the Holy Fellowship of the Saints. And every time we have left our people in Europe from country to country, city to city, they sing with tears rolling down their cheeks.

Even the Germans who are usually cold people, perhaps be the child that binds the old hands together, might be 300 or 500 or 1,000 or 2,000, even down the railway station to say goodbye, and we sing together in the various languages, bless me the child that binds our hearts in Christian love. Oh, bless me God. I'm glad I'm saved, and I'm glad you're my brother, and I'm glad you're my sister.

Let us pray. Oh God, I thank thee for the message tonight and the preludes to revival which thou hast shown us in thy word. And oh God, we feel so ashamed of ourselves.

Oh God, who are we that we should tread in such holy ground? Who are we that we should talk about thee and represent thee? And yet Lord, you've given us the authority. You've saved us by sovereign grace and called us into a holy fellowship with thyself. And then thou hast called us into a partnership with thee for the completion of the body of Christ by evangelizing.

And we thank thee for the missionary activity of this church. We thank thee for the missionary activity of Willow Park and the other churches in this city. We thank thee for the evangelistic outreach of this church to this district.

Oh God, will you forgive us? Give us another opportunity, another chance. I want my life to tell for Jesus. I want my life to tell for Jesus that wherever I may go, men may his fullness know.

I want my life to tell for Jesus. Oh Father, maybe some of thy dear ones will be translated home to glory this week. They've been in the services this week and yet at the end of the week they may be in thy presence.

Oh God, we know of the brevity of time and the shortness of time. Oh God, you know our need, the need of our great nation. Oh God, our nation.

Oh God, in the crisis and catastrophe of the hour, God help us. Bless our presence and all in authority. Oh Father, we know revival begins with us.

An awareness of thy holiness and majesty. Oh God, how wonderful you condescend to come in and dwell with us of a broken and contrite spirit to revive us. Blessed be thy holy name.

We thank thee. Oh, come the searchlight. Oh, thy word upon us tonight.

Into the deepest senses of our heart and conscious and our mind. Even our subconscious mind. Oh God, may these impure thoughts go.

These doubtful indulgences go. These compromises. Oh, Father, above all, take away the coldness of heart and give us a real deep, deep love for thyself with each of these in the Savior's name.

As we're bowing in prayer, could we just have one or two short prayers before we have a closing hymn? This message was preserved and made available by Revival Literature in Nashville, North Carolina. For more information, you can visit them online at revivalit.org.

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