

God's Way to Mass Revival

by John R. Rice

Revival always waits on God's people, who must be willing and fit to be used in revival, have evangelists, and unite on the main thing, soul-winning.

Topics: "Revival Prayer", "Holy Spirit"

Description

John R. Rice preaches about the importance of revival, emphasizing that God's mighty resources are sufficient for revival today, regardless of circumstances. He highlights the need for God's people to humble themselves, pray, seek His face, and turn from wicked ways to experience His forgiveness and healing. Rice stresses the significance of prevailing prayer, waiting on God for His power, and being willing to be filled with the Holy Spirit for soul-winning. He underscores the necessity of unity among believers, focusing on the main goal of soul-winning, and the need for evangelists who are anointed and dedicated to leading revivals with bold, convicting preaching against sin.

Transcript

THROUGHOUT these lectures we have insisted that we can have revival now. The Bible prophesies great revivals yet to come; this age is the age of revival, the age of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit for soul-winning, the age when "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." We have insisted that God's mighty resources are sufficient for revival today, and we have tried to show that in all ages the circumstances were more or less inconsequential and could not prevent mighty revivals when the people of God paid His price for His power and so were willing and fit to be used in winning souls. I trust we have showed that among lost sinners the ravages of sin, the disappointments of this world, the loss of loved ones, the burning of conscience, and the fear of death make sinners always ripe for revival. We can have revival now.

How, then, may we have revival? What are God's requirements for His people, that He may pour out upon us His mighty, conquering, soul-winning power to win the hardest sinners, to change hearts and lives and homes and cities?

What must men do to have the revival God wants to give?

I. Remember That Revival Always Waits on God's People

In Matthew 9:37,38, we find that Jesus said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest." God is not limited in the nature of the harvest, but in the laborers.

On sending the seventy, two and two before His face into cities and places where He Himself would later come, Jesus said to them, "The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest" (Luke 10:2). To the twelve He said, "The harvest truly is plenteous." To the seventy He said, "The harvest truly is great." To both alike He said that the laborers are few, and that they should pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers. God has a manpower shortage in the matter of soul-winning.

The same thing Jesus emphasized when the twelve disciples sat eating their lunch beside the well of Sychar in Samaria. "Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest?" Jesus told them. "Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest." And then He assured them that the reapers would receive wages and would gather fruit unto life eternal (John 4:34-36).

Please do not think the repetition of these three passages of Scripture either thoughtless or unnecessary. God does not wait for conditions to get right; He waits for men to get right! The harvest is not waiting because it is not ripe, but because the laborers are few. Jesus sent the seventy, new converts whom He could not call mature sheep, but only lambs, because He had no one else to send. And as they went they were to pray that God would send forth laborers into the ripe harvest.

This teaching that revival waits on men and is postponed only for lack of adequate workers is often found in the Bible. In II Chronicles 7:14 is the plain promise, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." It is God's own people, those called by His name, who must pay the price for revival. Bartenders cannot have a revival. Modernists cannot have a revival. Atheists and infidels cannot have a revival. But, thank God, they cannot stop one either! Conditions, including the hearts of sinful men, are already ripe for revival. And when God's people meet His requirements, revival always comes.

When the disciples asked Jesus, "Lord, teach us to pray," He said we need to come like a man who pounded on his neighbor's door at midnight and said, "Friend, lend me three loaves; For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him" (Luke 11:5,6). The trouble is not that there are no sinners who are hungry, but that we do not have the bread. Most of us would rather blame sinners for not eating than blame ourselves for not providing the bread; but Jesus said that the blame is with us! Lord, teach us also to pray!

In these lectures we have mentioned particularly certain great Bible revivals. In these revivals one easily sees that God did not give the revival until He found a man or men willing and fit to be used in the revival.

At Mount Carmel God could turn the whole nation back to Himself, to forsake their Baal worship and return to the Lord, when Elijah was ready to challenge the people and pray down the fire of God.

It appears that it took God longer to get Jonah ready to preach in the great revival at Nineveh than it took to turn nearly the whole city to Him in sincere repentance.

Jesus came to Sychar, a city of the Samaritans, and there He knew that the field was ripe to harvest. The twelve apostles were with Him, but not one of them seemed to have had the slightest interest in getting anybody in the town saved. Just as Jesus had finally revealed to the woman that He was the Messiah, the attitude of the disciples is revealed as follows: "And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?" (John 4:27).

The disciples really "marvelled" (a very strong word) that Jesus would even talk to the woman. They did not dare say so, but each one would have liked to have asked Jesus, "Why talkest thou with her?" Here was a ripe harvest and nobody to reap it.

But when Jesus got the woman saved, she left her waterpot and ran to the city. Her testimony was that of a new convert; yet God used it to bring all the people of the city out to see Jesus, and He stayed there two days and many were saved. Here is another striking example that God waits on Christians to have a revival. He waits on laborers to reap His harvest.

Before Pentecost the apostles and other disciples faced an almost impossible task. But Jesus plainly told them that they should wait, tarry in Jerusalem until they should be endued with power from on high. They continued steadfastly in prayer and supplication, the twelve, and some of the women, and other disciples, and the mighty power of God came upon the disciples and a blessed revival with about three thousand people saved.

Here again the problem was workers with the power of God! As soon as these Christians waited on God and were mightily filled with the power of the Holy Spirit, multitudes were converted in the hardest city in the world! It was another example that God waits on workers for revival.

II. So, for Great Revivals, We Must Have Evangelists

God had an Elijah for Mount Carmel. He had a Jonah for Nineveh. The Lord Jesus Himself was the evangelist at Sychar in Samaria, but a saved and Spirit-filled convert helped to collect the crowd and do personal work. At Pentecost God had Peter standing up with the eleven to preach, and others of the disciples, no doubt, preached. In the great revival by the River Jordan where such multitudes went to hear John the Baptist condemn sin and announce the Saviour who would save all who would repent and trust Him, we cannot ignore the preacher himself, the Spirit-filled evangelist, John the Baptist. God has always used evangelists, that is, men who are especially anointed and dedicated leaders in great revivals.

It has been so in modern times. You cannot have a Reformation without a Luther and a Calvin. You could never have had the great Wesleyan revival without a John and Charles Wesley and Whitefield. We would never have had Charles G. Finney revivals except for Finney himself, the Spirit-filled, mighty prophet of God who did the work of an evangelist. The Moody revivals are inseparable from Moody himself. And the Billy Sunday revivals cannot be imagined without Billy Sunday. Other great revivals have been led by mighty evangelists. They had their weaknesses, but they were called of God to the work of evangelism, and dedicated and anointed for that work.

God has given to the church men for different purposes. "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers" (Eph. 4:11). After apostles and prophets, and before pastors and teachers in importance, God gave evangelists. There are some who would like to do without evangelists, some who would scorn them, curb them, berate them. But all such sin against God and sin against His holy Word. He has set the work of an evangelist in the body of Christ.

These evangelists are not only called to give a gospel message to the unsaved, but, according to the Scripture they are "for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry," to the end that the body shall make increase (Eph. 4:12-16).

The church is a sick church when it does not have evangelists. People will not be taught personal soul-winning as they should be and edified and built up for the ministry God requires of every Christian without the work of Spirit-filled, full-time called and anointed evangelists. The churches will lose the revival flavor God intended them to have if they do not have evangelists. It is true that some pastors will win souls, but they will be fewer and fewer as we have fewer evangelists to set the pace. Without evangelists we may not expect the great revivals God wants us to have. All the efforts to put evangelists into a minor place, to rob them of influence, circumscribe their preaching, and keep them out of the churches is working against God's harvest, working against great revivals.

A widely-known prophetic teacher was called to a principal city, the capital of a state, to lead in a city-wide "revival campaign." His sermons on "The Mark of a Beast," on "The Coming Antichrist," "The Tribulation Period," etc., did not bring about a revival. They brought division and strife among pastors, and the result not only failed to be a revival, but it greatly hindered any future effort to get Christians united for a city-wide revival effort in that city.

A blessed preacher and Bible teacher has recently been invited to hold a city-wide revival campaign. Here in recent years a number of great revivals have been given by the Lord, and it was my privilege to lead in one such campaign with many hundreds of conversions and the city profoundly moved. The preacher now selected, a greatly-loved friend of mine, is not an evangelist. He has never claimed to be an evangelist. That is not his calling, not his anointing. He will preach good messages, but they will have no great revival unless his ministry is entirely transformed. God does not give great revivals without evangelists.

In another city known to me, good pastors got together to have a "revival campaign." But so there would be no hard preaching against sin, no issue raised about movies, dances, lodges and other worldliness, they asked a good pastor to lead in the "revival campaign." He preached good sermons. But he did not take the time for preparation of Christians, preaching against sin, getting them to pray and win souls, as Moody and Torrey and Billy Sunday and other blessed evangelists have always done. He simply preached sermons to the unsaved, good, sound sermons on the blood of Christ. But not many unsaved attended the services, there was a notable lack of real conviction, and pastors were disappointed because there was no genuine revival. There are a lot of good preachers, sound preachers, devoted preachers who are not evangelists. They are not called to be evangelists, not anointed to be evangelists.

It would be foolish for anybody to suppose that a group of men could select some man more to their liking than D.L. Moody, and put him in Moody's place in the Moody revivals and still have the same results. God chooses evangelists and anoints them. And the best of them have learned by much waiting on God and in much experience how to promote a revival, how to get Christians to forsake their sins and pray and win souls, how to get sinners to attend the meeting, how to get them convicted and how to get them saved.

It would be as foolish to set out to change the whole plan of Christian churches and say that we would do away with the local congregations called churches and the office of a pastor, as it is to try to do away with the office of an evangelist. The evangelist is named before the pastor, has a more important role in carrying out the Great Commission. It is sin, it is rebellion against the New Testament plan, it is substituting human wisdom for the divine order when we try to get along without full-time, anointed,

dedicated, Spirit-filled evangelists. If we want revivals, we must pray God to send the laborers and particularly that He will fit each one for the task God has for him to do. If we want to have a great time of revival so that every principal city and town in America will be shaken, then we must pray that God will raise up evangelists fit for the job and with the holy oil of God upon them, the breath of Heaven, the fullness of the Spirit.

III. For the Greatest Revivals, God's People Must Unite on the Main Thing, Soul-winning

In the Bible account of the great revival at Pentecost, and before and after it, one simple phrase is repeated again and again. That phrase is, "with one accord."

As they waited in the ten-day prayer meeting, we are told, "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren" (Acts 1:14). They prayed with one accord.

Jesus had previously taught these disciples, "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 18:19). And He said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20).

Evidently the blessed power there is in believing prayer increases in geometric ratio with the number of those really united in prayer. Two can agree and get anything. And it becomes clear that the more Christians we can get to unite, really be of one accord in prayer, the more certain will be the great revival, and the more fruitful its results.

There were only one hundred and twenty of the disciples united in heart at the end of the ten days' prayer meeting, when the day of Pentecost was fully come. They had started with much less than that--just the disciples, and the half brothers of Jesus, and His mother and a few other women (Acts 1:14). But that handful of Christians were really united in heart. They could really ask "with one accord" for the pouring out of God's power.

Again we see the same beautiful phrase used in Acts 2:1, "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place." They were all with one accord as they prayed through the ten days. They were all with one accord and also "in one place" when the power of God came. Unity of heart, and even the gathering in one place, were important for the great revival.

Of course all of us are glad for single churches to win souls in their regular services, and to have special revival services whenever that seems wise and God leads. The local congregation is a divinely-instituted unit. Yet there is great lack of blessing oftentimes because people are more absorbed in their own local church plans than they are in the much larger and more important issue of great revivals, and in seeing multitudes saved. It is well, then, for God's people, all who believe the same Book, all who are saved by the same blood, all who have been given the same Great Commission and are of like precious faith in these essentials, to unite in saving souls.

I do not ask that people throw away convictions. But people can honestly differ on the matter of baptism and be sincerely united in pleading before God for a great revival. People may honestly differ as to whether a church government should be local and democratic congregational form, or the rule by an episcopacy, and yet they can unite if they love the Lord as they ought and believe the Bible and accept responsibility for the Great Commission as they ought, in great city-wide revivals. On the day of Pentecost

"they were all with one accord in one place." May God bring the same blessed state to pass in cities and towns all over America! A certain unity of heart on the main thing--soul-winning--is essential if we are to have the greatest revivals.

Even the great rejoicing and blessing of the continuing revival were enjoyed with the same unity of heart after Pentecost, for Acts 2:46 says, "And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart." Thank God for the unity of heart among God's people!

We can have denominations without having a sectarian spirit and wicked isolation among believers. Christians ought to work together to get people saved and ought to rejoice together when sinners are saved. God had in mind great citywide movements, and when among the choicest of God's people, groups can be gathered and centered on this blessed end and purpose, then God can give the revivals.

Let me say here that this is one reason why I feel a cooperative or union campaign, when churches and pastors officially set out to work together in soul-winning efforts, is much, much better than an independent revival campaign where an evangelist comes in and makes independent plans and preaches the gospel. Better independent campaigns than none at all, of course, and better a few saved than none. But the greatest revival results have always depended somewhat on how many people of God, the born-again, Bible believers, one could enlist in the same prayer and effort.

In Acts 4:24 we find this beautiful phrase again. There again the people of God were "with one accord." That verse says, "And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is." When persecution and trouble came, the people of God were still with one accord and prayed with one voice and heart! How could such a revival close! How could God quit giving His blessing! The revival did not close, but continued, and multitudes of people were saved, including chief priests and others, thousands of them.

Soul-winning is the main thing for any Bible-believing Christian who is really surrendered to the will of God. The foolish talk of infidels that there are some three hundred denominations and that every one of them understands the Bible differently is not really true. There are minor matters in which there is very great variety of opinion, in Christian doctrine and in Bible interpretation. But there is no room for much difference among sincere Bible believers on the great principal doctrines: that all men are sinners, that Christ died to save sinners, that the blood of Christ atones for sin, that men need to be born again, that there is a Heaven for those who, trusting in Christ, are born again, and a Hell for those who will not repent and trust Christ. There is no room for difference of opinion about the fact that God has given to His people the Great Commission and that we are to get the gospel to every creature. I have been for many years working with Bible-believing Christians of many, many denominations and, thank God, I have found that Baptists, Presbyterians, Methodists, Mennonites, Christian and Missionary Alliance, Assemblies of God, Salvation Army, Nazarenes, Reformed Church people, Christian Church people, Lutherans, Evangelicals, Congregationalists and many others, when they truly believe the Bible and have been born again, can unite happily in the soul-saving business. And the isolation of sectarian pride and denominational prejudice, often promoted by self-seeking denominational leaders so that people are discouraged from uniting in soul-winning work, greatly hinders revival. Let every local church and every denomination do all it can to win souls. But God still wants His people, His born-again, Bible-believing people, to work together wherever possible to the saving of multitudes of sinners. That was His plan at Pentecost; it is His plan now.

I do not say that Christians should yoke up with modern infidels who deny the Bible and the deity of Christ, who themselves are not converted and do not seek to convert others. To yoke up with unbelievers is a sin. I do not ask that Christians anywhere compromise on essential doctrines and convictions. I simply ask what God asks--that Christians put soul-winning first and do everything possible to reach the unsaved. That involves being "with one accord" with other Christians who have the same motives and purposes, and it often will involve uniting with other such Christians in great city-wide or area-wide campaigns.

It is well to remember that down through the centuries the great revivals were never confined to one denomination, and in given cities were not confined to any particular local church. The Wesleyan revivals permeated England. Wesley, whenever possible, preached in the Church of England church houses, while he fellowshipped also with independent groups like the Moravians. Only near his death did Wesley consent to the organization of a denomination as such, separate from the Anglican Church. Although Spurgeon was a Baptist and pastor of a Baptist church, his work was largely interdenominational, city-wide, nation-wide, world-wide. In Marion, Ohio, an old saintly pastor who had been converted under Spurgeon's ministry and trained in Spurgeon's Pastors' College heard me preach. After saying some things which burn in my heart today but which I shall not repeat here, this Rev. Robert Hughes told me that the union campaign we were then in reminded him of the time when Spurgeon and an Anglican bishop or two, and others, were on the same platform in a united, soul-winning campaign in England.

Everybody knows that the work of Moody and Torrey, and Charles G. Finney, and Billy Sunday cut across all sectarian lines. They called for the people who believed the Bible, people who were born again, who wanted to obey Christ in soul-winning, to get together for revival. Moody and Sunday alike insisted that when they were called to a city for a revival campaign, the pastors should unite in the invitation, and they generally did. The blessed results in a number of recent great revival campaigns held by Dr. Billy Graham can be largely traced to a certain unity of heart among Bible-believing pastors in the area. In Los Angeles that unity had been built up through five years of labor by a central committee. In Columbia, South Carolina, the cooperation among Bible believing Protestants was almost universal, and I am told that some three hundred prayer meetings among people of all faiths preceded the campaign. God's people, united, can pray down the fire of God and have fresh Pentecosts!

Great revivals have everywhere called together mighty crowds of people. That means that in the nature of the case the best revivals will not be held in church houses, but in much larger neutral auditoriums. No synagogues could hold the crowds that attended the ministry of Jesus. The crowds that heard John the Baptist by the Jordan River could not have collected in any porch of the temple. The revivals under the leadership of Moody, Torrey, J. Wilbur Chapman and Billy Sunday would have been impossible had men insisted that the services be conducted in their own church houses. The enormous crowds that gathered in the fields to hear Whitefield and Wesley could not have been accommodated in any cathedral of England.

Let us learn God's lesson, then, that His people ought to get together and make large enough plans to reach every creature with the gospel. That means mass evangelism, with anointed and specially called and experienced evangelists. It means that Christians who hold to the simple fundamentals will cooperate. It means that countless multitudes can be gathered to hear the gospel in city auditoriums, under great tents, and in other large public places, when such people would never attend a church and would go to Hell if their only chance to be saved were in local church services.

In a blessed union revival campaign held in Kleinhan's Music Hall, Buffalo, seating 2,800, where I was the preacher, a few years ago, there were 997 public professions of faith. What a blessed time we had! The

converts were all dealt with very carefully in an inquiry room, and it was discovered that over three hundred of the converts had no church preference whatever! That meant that more than one-third of these converts would never have attended a revival in a local church. Neither they nor their parents nor anybody near and dear to them attended a church so that they could have a preference. If we expect to reach the drunkards, the harlots, the atheists, the Jews, the Catholics, we must make provision in great central and neutral places where God's Bible-believing Christians will unite in getting the gospel to sinners, to whole cities full of sinners, and so winning thousands who would otherwise never be won.

Oh, for a oneness of heart among the people of God on the main business of soul-winning!

IV. For Great Revivals We Must Have Evangelistic Preaching, Preaching of a Special Flavor and Power Suited to the Crowds and the Occasion

A certain kind of preaching marks God's anointed evangelist. It is a mistake to think that simply preaching on the plan of salvation will bring a revival. Such preaching alone will neither revive the people of God to get them on praying ground and endued with soul-winning power, nor will it convict and convert hardened sinners.

Elijah could have a mighty revival at Mount Carmel, but it would be shortsighted to ignore the kind of preaching and warning Elijah had done that preceded the falling of the fire. The boldness of Elijah in condemning sin was so proverbial that when the widow's son died in whose house Elijah lived, she said unto Elijah, "What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?" (I Kings 17:18). And just before the marvelous demonstration of God's power on Mount Carmel, Elijah said to wicked King Ahab, "I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim" (I Kings 18:18). And it is astonishing to see the man of God whom Ahab has sought three years to slay, now giving the orders, and Ahab running quickly to call the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, four hundred prophets of the groves which ate at Jezebel's table, and all the people of Israel to Mount Carmel at Elijah's word!

Elijah could pray down the fire of God from Heaven, for God knew that immediately Elijah would command the people, "Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape," and would bring these prophets of Baal and kill them at the brook Kishon (I Kings 18:40). There is a distinctive character to the evangelist's message, and it involves particularly a boldness in condemning sin and calling men to repentance.

Obadiah was a good man, a believer in Elijah's time, the governor of the palace. He hid out one hundred prophets of God by fifty in a cave, and fed them on bread and water to deliver them from wicked Jezebel. But he did not have the heart to condemn sin and could not bring a revival.

Jonah preached to Nineveh; and his message, given of God, was, "Forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown" (Jonah 3:4). All the silly talk that preachers should give "a positive message" by which modernists and pussyfooters mean a soft message that pats sin on the back and doesn't hurt anybody's feelings, and never names a sin, nor calls a sinner to repentance--that kind of talk ignores the clear teaching of the Word of God. And this so-called "positive preaching" which never names a sin, nor condemns it, nor calls Christians to forsake their backsliding, nor sinners to repent, never did bring a revival and never will.

Jesus won the woman at the well of Sychar in Samaria, but the sword point that reached the woman's heart was Christ's plain revelation that He knew she was living in adultery with another man to whom she was not married, though she had been married five times! And the evidence that the woman gave to the men of Sychar was, "He told me all that ever I did."

There was iron in the preaching of John the Baptist. To men who were outwardly the best churchmen of his day, John the Baptist said, "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance." He said, "And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." He preached that God's fan is in His hand, "and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (Matt. 3:7-12). That is evangelistic preaching, by a Spirit-filled preacher, a typical evangelist.

John the Baptist faced Herod and said plainly that he sinned in taking his brother's wife.

What kind of preaching was that which Peter did at Pentecost? It was Bible preaching, of course, preaching that told how to be saved, but it had the sharpness of the Roman short sword, and the crushing power of a battle-ax! He said, "Him . . . ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." Again he said, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:23,36). In the next sermon Peter accused the people as follows: "But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses (Acts 3:14,15). And in the first sermon at Pentecost, the application was, "Repent" (Acts 2:38). In the second sermon it was likewise, "Repent ye therefore" (Acts 3:19). They were to repent in order that their sins might be blotted out.

Spirit-filled Stephen preached like an evangelist; this is the way he preached: "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it."--Acts 7:51-53.

I do not wonder that they were cut to the heart, that they hated Stephen and killed him; but that gospel cut Saul of Tarsus to the heart too deep for him to ever be cured, and he turned to God.

Every evangelist who has been mightily used of God in soul-winning has been sharp in his denunciation of sin, and explicit and plain in naming it. Gamaliel Bradford, biographer of D.L. Moody, acknowledges that Moody preached much on the love of God, but he reminds us also that D.L. Moody was sharp and powerful in his preaching against sin and says that Hell was always in the background of Moody's preaching. All the biographers of Moody agree that he was unrelenting in his demand that people make restitution for wrongs done, that he condemned the theater roundly, that he preached on drunkenness many times, and that his sermons on sowing and reaping were convicting and almost terrifying. Moody clearly condemned even Sunday newspapers, condemned membership in secret orders.

Charles G. Finney was relentless in preaching against sin, and his preaching was often terrifying so that people fell from the pews to their knees and cried out to God for mercy.

Most people remember the sharp preaching of Billy Sunday against sin. Those who heard Gipsy Smith after he was eighty may have forgotten that when he was in his prime, when he had great revivals, his preaching on repentance, his preaching on restitution was bold and specific and powerful in condemning sin. One of the most moving messages I ever read was a sermon preached by Gipsy Smith in a city-wide campaign in Kansas City, Missouri, on "Washing Stripes," or "Making Wrongs Right."

Dr. R.A. Torrey was so specific and bold in his preaching against the dance that society people in an Australian city took it up, and for a joke invited Torrey to visit one of their dances. He went and prayed in public, then preached powerfully. Torrey was equally plain in preaching against the theater, against the lodges and other sins and hindrances.

Evangelistic preaching must be the kind of preaching that gets Christians to turn from their worldliness and waywardness so they will have power with God and influence with men, and must be the kind that will cause sinners to repent.

I have just read again one of the biographies of D.L. Moody, *The Wonderful Career of Moody and Sankey in Great Britain and America*. The author is rather amazed that for the first eight or nine days of the revival, Moody preached to Christians, showed them their sins, laid on their hearts a burden for soul-winning, taught them to pray. No one can be much of an evangelist who does not learn to prepare Christians for revival.

An evangelist in the nature of the case must learn certain methods. Certain methods go with a revival.

We well understand that God could have saved men without using human instruments, if He had chosen to do so. He could have had the angel show Cornelius and his household how to be saved without sending all the way to Joppa for Simon Peter, who was temporarily at the house of Simon a tanner. But God chose to use human beings as instruments and human methods. God could have saved sinners without the instrumentality of preaching, yet "it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (I Cor. 1:21). God has ordained that people should be gathered in crowds to hear the gospel, that some man of God should preach to them with boldness and power. It is the plan of God that lost people should be urged to trust Christ, then to make an open confession of Christ before men (Matt. 10:32, Rom. 10:9,10). It is God's plan that Christians should do personal work. Nothing can be clearer than that one who hears the gospel is to tell it to others. "Let him that heareth say, Come" (Rev. 22:17). Every Christian is to take part in the carrying out of the Great Commission as given by the Saviour in Matthew 28:19,20. That means that the man who does not try to run sinners down and get the gospel to sinners could not be much of an evangelist. An evangelist must seek to get the Christian people together to pray and prepare for revival. He must seek to teach Christian people to go out and compel sinners to come in to hear the gospel. He must, one way or another, try to get the gospel to everyone in a community. That involves promotion and enlistment and propaganda or advertising. No man is a good evangelist who is content to preach to small crowds, or content to preach to Christians only when there are sinners to be reached.

Ultradispensational friends scorn the public invitation to accept Christ and confess Him openly before men. But this method of D.L. Moody, R.A. Torrey, J. Wilbur Chapman, and all the great evangelists is ordained of God. A great deal of leeway is allowed, so each one may follow the leading of the Spirit, but no one could do the work of an evangelist to advantage who does not somehow get sinners to decide in their hearts and to claim Christ openly before men. That was done at Pentecost, and has been done

everywhere else in great revivals--in Bible times and in modern times. One, to be an evangelist, must learn the methods of evangelism, methods which God has blessed and which inherently go with the evangelistic message and urgency and boldness.

In the nature of the case, evangelistic preaching is not formal preaching. There should be a brightness, a sincerity, a forthrightness, an urgency about the preaching of a man who has set out to keep people out of Hell, and bring them to trust Christ and claim Him openly as Lord and Saviour. There should be a holy boldness. There should be tears and compassion, and as a result, the preaching will be all the more personal and direct and powerful. O God, raise up evangelists and teach all preachers to "do the work of an evangelist," as Timothy was commanded to do (II Tim. 4:5).

V. Revivals Wait for People to Have the Mighty Power of the Holy Spirit for Soul-winning

A man wrote me the other day, "I have heard Dr. Torrey preach many times on his favorite theme, 'The Baptism of the Holy Ghost.'" Torrey's favorite theme was the mighty power of the Holy Spirit, to come upon a Christian as a special enduement, subsequent to conversion, to enable him to win souls! If that were the favorite topic of preachers today, we would have more revivals.

"The Baptism of the Holy Ghost" was the favorite theme of D.L. Moody also. He himself definitely knew that he had been endued with power from on high. He could name the day when, long after his conversion and after two years of waiting and pleading with God, he received such a mighty, overwhelming visitation of the power of God that he was compelled to say, "Lord, that is enough; if I have any more it will kill me!" And Moody knew that his power was a special miraculous enduement of the Holy Spirit.

Charles G. Finney uses similar terminology about the baptism of the Holy Spirit and tells us that again and again he would set apart a day for fasting and prayer, "for a new baptism of the Holy Ghost."

I have deliberately used the term, "the baptism of the Holy Ghost," which is offensive to many. I personally prefer the term more often used in the Bible, "filled with the Spirit," or, "filled with the Holy Ghost," but we had as well face the plain fact that the people to whom the term, "the baptism of the Holy Ghost," is offensive as a name for a special enduement of power from on high, find the blessing as offensive as the name. I am not speaking about talking in tongues. I am not speaking of any so-called eradication of the carnal nature. I am speaking about an enduement of power which can be had by Christians as a special blessing to be sought and had after conversion, or perhaps occasionally at conversion, but certainly separate from it. What happened to the disciples at Pentecost was, Jesus promised, "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." The Scriptures seem to teach that the baptism of the Holy Ghost, the fullness of the Spirit, the pouring out of the Holy Ghost, the gift of the Spirit, and the enduement of power from on high are all one and the same thing. For fuller discussion, I should like for you to see my large book, *The Power of Pentecost*. But I am not here arguing for terminology. I do not care whether you say you are baptized with the Holy Spirit, or full of the Spirit, or say that you are endued with power from on high. But I am desperately anxious that those who set out to win souls have a supernatural enabling and empowering from Heaven for the task.

The promise of Jesus in Acts 1:8 comes as powerfully to us as to the disciples to whom He first addressed it: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." How presumptuous we are to suppose that New Testament Christians needed a special enduement of power, but that for us college degrees and seminary training are sufficient! How foolish to suppose that the

Galilean fishermen needed the power of the Holy Ghost, but we need only personal magnetism and culture and personality! When the Word of God, for these preachers, was not enough unless it should be preached in the power of God, who can honestly believe that orthodoxy is all that God requires of us?

No Christian can be a personal soul-winner except he have power from God, the power of the Holy Spirit. And no evangelist can lead in blessed revivals with power except he be endued with power from on high.

VI. Great Revivals Wait on People Who Are Willing to Prevail in Prayer

The classic revival text, II Chronicles 7:14, says, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." Actually that whole verse speaks of prayer. If God's people shall first "humble themselves," they simply get on praying ground. Then when they pray, they ask for specific things. Then when they 'seek God's face' they simply keep on pleading with God, begging God, waiting on God in prayer. And when 'they turn from their wicked ways' they are simply removing the hindrances to prayer. Prevailing prayer is the secret of revival.

Necessarily I put this to follow the need for the power of the Holy Spirit, because after one knows that he needs the mighty power of God from on high to make him a soul winner, he must be willing to wait on God for that power.

I have no sympathy with those who say that at Pentecost the disciples needed to wait ten days in fasting, prayer and pleading, but that now we can have the same kind of power without any heart-searching, any penitence, any self-denial; without any long period of heartbroken prayer. I do not believe it! It does not seem sensible, and certainly historically that theory has proven incorrect. I have never known of any great revival in which there was not mighty, prevailing prayer. God does not give the mighty power of the Holy Spirit except to such people as have hungered and thirsted for God's power, have waited patiently before Him until in His mercy He saw them fit to be filled with power.

Recently I had occasion to recommend a young preacher to hold a revival campaign. I had confidence in him because, in a conference on evangelism when all of us were on our face in prayer, I happened to be near this young preacher. I heard him begging God for forgiveness for his coldness, his powerlessness. I heard him promising God that he would never, never give up without having the power of God upon his ministry. When he went to the revival effort to which I had recommended him, he found most discouraging circumstances. He called the people to prayer, and hours were spent in waiting on God. With plain preaching and with day and night praying, the opposition melted away; God's blessings came mightily upon the people. Souls were saved, and a church was saved from division and strife.

I recommended this same young man for another revival effort, and the pastor wrote to tell how in the midst of most difficult circumstances he had called the people to prayer and had waited on God until power came, and wisdom came, and unity came. Souls were saved and the work built up.

Too long we have been afraid of fanaticism. God give us some fanatics! Too long we have been afraid of wild fire when in truth we had no fire at all. Too long we have been on the defensive.

Many of us have been so afraid that someone would think we talked in tongues, that we did not fret because all around us people were going to Hell. Some of us were so anxious that no one would think we claimed sinless perfection, that we ignored the power of the Holy Spirit, and did not seek His power, and

did not have it. Many of us would rather be respectable than powerful. Many of us would rather please men in this matter than please God and win souls. I say, we have been on the defensive too long.

I know some have misused this doctrine of the fullness of the Spirit. But that only illustrates how vital the doctrine is. Men cannot win souls without the power of God. Men cannot have revival without an endowment of power from on high. And this power comes in answer to prevailing prayer.

Dr. R.A. Torrey tells how a few young men met night after night and prayed until the revival of 1905 came in Wales, with Dr. Torrey leading. In that revival about one hundred thousand souls were won to Christ. Others will remember the haystack prayer meeting where some college students prayed in the lee of a haystack in the rain and started much of the missionary movement.

In England a bed-ridden saint of God prayed until God brought Moody from America to England, then prayed until hundreds of souls were saved in her church.

Charles G. Finney tells how Abel Clary followed him in revival meetings and prayed, often not attending the services but waiting and weeping before God for His power. Father Nash also was moved to pray mightily for the Finney revivals, and Finney himself ascribed the power of God which came upon him largely to the prayers of men such as these, as well as his own prayers.

If we are to have revivals, we must prevail with God in prayer.

Let us sum up the truth of this chapter. God waits on men for revivals. God is ready to do His part. The harvest is white, but the laborers are few. We should continually pray that God will send laborers into His harvest.

And His requirements I think we might sum up very simply. In Jeremiah 29:12,13 we are told: "Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." We can find God's power, His might, His miraculous manifestation in revival if we simply seek God with all our hearts.

God wants His people to seek revival with a holy abandon. Paul suffered the loss of all things and counted them but dung. No wonder God could use him to save souls! Paul went "night and day with tears," both "publicly, and from house to house" in his preaching at Ephesus (Acts 20:20,31). Paul could wish himself accursed from Christ to win the Jews! (Rom. 9:3).

The disciples in Bible times set out facing martyrdom with holy joy. What did it matter to them that their goods were destroyed? What did it matter to them that they were hounded and persecuted, were thrown into dungeons, that they could have none of the comforts of home and family which other men have? They went as gladly to the soul-winning task as a bride to the wedding altar, or as a soldier returning home!

This holy abandon which God requires of those who would be His laborers, would make it so that human love would seem incidental. A man for love of Christ would appear to hate father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brothers, and sisters, and houses and lands, yea, and his own life also!

(Luke 14:26). Oh, this holy business of winning souls ought to get such a hold on a Christian's heart that nothing else in this world could much matter! This is the one business that makes Heaven rejoice, that adds stars to the crown of the Lord Jesus, that brings eternal glory to the soul-winner.

So in Christ's dear name, let us offer ourselves living sacrifices to be the laborers God can use to win souls and bring about revival in America.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/john-r-rice/gods-way-to-mass-revival/>

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