

A Prayer for Revival

by Mack Tomlinson

This sermon based on Psalms 85 focuses on the themes of past salvation, present need for revival, and God's promises of restoration. It emphasizes the importance of earnest prayer for restoration and revival in personal lives, churches, and nations. The sermon highlights historical revivals and encourages listeners to seek God for a fresh work of revival in their hearts and communities.

Scripture: Psalms 85:1, Psalms 85:4, Psalms 85:8, Psalms 85:10, Psalms 85:13

Topics: "Revival", "Restoration"

Description

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Transcript

Psalm 85 is our text, the 85th Psalm. It is a brief and a powerful, very applicable psalm. It is a prayer that applies to every one of us.

It applies to our city, our state, our nation, and the world. A prayer for revival. Psalm 85.

Lord, you were favorable to your land. You restored the fortunes of Jacob. You forgave the iniquity of your people.

You covered all their sin, Selah. You withdrew all your wrath. You turned from your hot anger.

Restore us again, O God of our salvation, and put away your indignation toward us. Will you be angry with us forever? Will you prolong your anger to all generations? Will you not revive us again that your people may rejoice in you? Show us your steadfast love, O Lord, and grant us your salvation. Let me hear what God the Lord will speak, for he will speak peace to his people, to his saints, but let them not turn back to folly.

Surely his salvation is near to those who fear him, that glory may dwell in our land. Steadfast love and faithfulness meet. Righteousness and peace kiss each other.

Faithfulness springs up from the ground, and righteousness looks down from the sky. Yes, the Lord will give what is good, and our land will yield its increase. Righteousness will go before him and make his footsteps away.

Now, verse 13, the last line, the ESV I'm reading from is not the best translation. In my opinion, it's not even good English. And makes his footsteps away.

I believe the authorized version is best at this point. It says righteousness will go before him and shall set us in the way of his steps. And that translation fits the context of this song of God reviving his people, his work, and setting them in the path of righteousness in new ways and shall set us in the way of his steps.

This is a prayer for revival at any level. It's a prayer to be revived on the personal level. And it comes with meaty, delicious, certain, wonderful promises of what God says at the end of this psalm he will do for those whose hearts are truly turned toward him.

Many psalms speak about national or personal renewal and revival. Psalm 85 is a primary one. There were at least six or seven periods of reformation and revival and spiritual awakening in the Old Testament where God turned his people back to himself after declension, after withdrawing, after obedience was waning, after first love was lost.

God would turn his people back again to freshness. In the Old Testament when God's people were obeying God's truth and then they depart from it, a reformation was needed. When there was love for the Lord and spiritual health and that declined and grew cold, a revival in the Spirit's coming was freshly needed.

Psalm 85 is a revival psalm. Now the historical setting, let's think about that before we get into the psalm. The historical setting, very likely, most commentators believe, is their Babylonian captivity deliverance.

They were brought back to the land. A return from Babylon to Jerusalem came as a result of Cyrus, the Persian king, ending their captivity. And they returned home.

And they returned home free, with great joy, with restoration to the land. And then between the years 520 and 515, the temple was rebuilt. And so restoration is real.

That's a picture of salvation, isn't it? We're going to look at that more, but we can find ourselves individually, and the church of Jesus Christ can find ourselves at times in Israel's history. They're not a perfect parallel, but there's truths there that were applicable to them and they're applicable to the church today and to the individual Christian. Great mercy was extended toward Israel.

As God turned them again and turned the captivity of Zion, they saw it, they knew it, they experienced it, and they had great joy. There was great joy in Zion and great rejoicing. This psalm is all about that.

The setting and the spiritual implications for Israel then and for the church today. So let's see this psalm. It's not long, 13 verses.

Be in it with me. Look through it with me. Study it this morning with me.

And let's allow God to speak to us. It's broken down really into three sections. Verses 1 through 3, true deliverance and salvation experience.

Verses 4 through 7, present need and prayer for reviving mercy. And verses 8 through 13, divine promises of what God will speak and what He will do for His people. Showing us that, number one, past salvation can truly be experienced in our past.

Salvation comes to the country of Israel in those days. Deliverance comes in their need and God brings freedom and restoration. But suddenly the situation has changed.

They're not experiencing what they were before. Their freshness, their joys are short-lived and now the fruits of their deliverance are not present anymore. Present new reviving mercy is needed.

Verses 4 through 7. And then number 3, the divine promise of revival in the future. So let's look at this because it has such help for us. In this way particularly, every Christian has seasons of encouragement and living faith and assurance and great joy.

The Bible is alive. Christ is near and precious. God is at work in your heart.

Some of you are in that right now. And there are seasons where we can wane, where we begin to come down, come off, and those things lessen. And believers can come into what? Seasons of dryness.

Seasons of discouragement. Times of bewilderment. Times of not sensing God's presence at all.

Not knowing where He is. The Bible is not a delicacy, it's dry. And you don't seem to get much out of it.

And the Lord doesn't seem near. And you're discouraged. And you're just in a wilderness experience.

You've lost that freshness. And you're looking forward again. And you need what's said in verses 4 and 7 to be your experience.

And you need to experience what is in 8 through 13. So let's look at this. First, in verses 1 through 3, our past salvation as pictured in Israel's history.

There, it's past tense language. Lord, you were favorable. You restored.

You forgave. You covered. You withdrew.

You turned. All past tense language of experience from God for them as a nation that truly did happen. The psalmist is acknowledging and remembering and rehearsing Israel's former days and their past real condition of deliverance.

And so notice how he names four distinct things in those verses about what God did for them, what God gave to them. Notice these as we look at this. Verse number 1, Lord, you were favorable.

The first is favor. God showed favor. Was that earned? No.

What is divine favor? It's grace given. It's not something a person deserves. It's something that God gives.

He showed Israel favor. Has God personally toward you in a saving way, in a spiritual way, in your soul, in your life, shown you favor that you didn't deserve? He has. Israel's sin cost them and grace showed them favor in spite of that.

Israel's rebellion robbed them and mercy came and God showed favor again and again and again. Many times in Israel history, they departed from the covenant. They withdrew from obedience.

They became slack. They chased idols. They were given to the world and their hearts were not inclined to be steadfast in covenant with Jehovah.

They withdrew and over and over again God chose at the right time in the right way with the right means to extend favor, to show favor. He sent it. He was favorable to them in bringing them back to their land.

This is free grace. It's always been grace God functions with in Israel's history up to today. Grace upon grace upon grace.

God showed Israel favor, extending grace and mercy when they did not deserve it. And this word favor means gracious, free, unearned mercy from God. God, you were favorable to your land.

Everything begins and ends with God's gracious acts of favor and mercy. Always. Anytime you see God do something for Israel in the Old Testament and you think, why would God do that? Look how bad they were.

Look how evil they were. Why would God show mercy again? Why would God not hear the prayer of Moses, wipe them out, start over with him again because he was merciful? Why has God not wiped us out because he's merciful? So, Lord, you were favorable to your land. When Israel was given favor to be released from captivity and brought back to Jerusalem, it was a gracious act of God's mercy and kindness that he gave them.

And the psalmist is seeing that, acknowledging it, and saying, all this that you've done starts with your mercy and your favor, Lord. And then the second word, verse 1, second line, you restored the fortunes of Jacob. Restoration.

What does restored mean? It means to bring back into their situation what they had before. Restoration. He restored their inheritance, their fortunes.

He restored their standing as the people of God. He restored the land. He restored Jerusalem back to them.

He brought back to them what their sin had robbed them of and what it had caused them to lose. God restored Israel over and over again. Restoration, bringing back to a status of what they once had.

Word number 3, verse 2, you forgave the iniquity of your people. Forgiveness. God forgave their iniquities.

He really did forgive them. He forgave their iniquities. As the psalmist says elsewhere, there is forgiveness with you that you might be feared.

God forgave them. And when he did, there was freshness. And the reality of that was experienced.

They experienced and knew the forgiveness of their transgressions and their iniquities. Have you have you personally known and experienced the joy, the freshness, the the cleanness of your soul when your sins were forgiven? Some of us can't say that. You don't know the forgiveness of your sins because they haven't been forgiven.

For every unbeliever, their sins are still upon them. The guilt of the sin, the condemnation of the sin, the punishment, the just punishment that the sin deserves is resting upon the sinner. The alienation from God.

When sins are forgiven, it's all removed and the sinner knows in his mind and in his heart, I'm forgiven. It's gone. I'm fresh.

I'm clean. Israel. God said to them.

You forgave. You're forgiven. And the psalmist says you forgave the iniquity of your people and you covered all their sin, removed it.

Everyone in this world is in two categories. People whose sins are forgiven and gone and everybody else not. That's the only that's the only reality before God, not race, not religion, not economic standing, not job position, not fame, not fortune, sins forgiven, sins not forgiven.

All men stand in one of two groups. So God showed favor. He restored and he forgave their sin.

But notice number four, verse three. You withdrew all your wrath. You withdrew all your favor, restoration, forgiveness and divine anger, divine wrath removed, gone.

You withdrew your wrath literally. That phrase in verse three, you withdrew all your wrath, you broke, you broke and stopped your anger toward us. Wrath was active.

It was working. It was coming and God broke it. Because of mercy and grace and forgiveness, wrath is stopped.

It ceases, stopped in its tracks. The force of God's wrath, the action of it is broken and suddenly it ceases because propitiation has occurred. The removal, the covering of divine wrath toward the sin and toward the sinner is gone.

Propitiation has occurred. These are all divine favors, divine mercy. All four of these things, the favor, the restoration, the forgiveness, the wrath removed, is all acts of God toward Israel when their captivity ended and they returned and possessed the land again and were restored.

And then they rebuilt the temple. That great deliverance from captivity made Israel truly have a good memory. They remembered and they rejoiced.

And Psalm 126, don't turn there, is a great commentary on their rejoicing. It says this, when the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream. I can't believe it.

Is this real? It's so wonderful. Then our own mouth was filled with laughter and our tongue with shouts of joy. Then they said among the nations, the Lord has done great things for them.

The Lord has done great things for us and we are glad. Psalm 126, a statement of great rejoicing over the mercies of God in Psalm 85, 1 through 3. Psalm 126, commentary on verses 1 through 3. Read it together lately. Past mercies in salvation known and remembered, verses 1 through 3. Now, Israel's history in that sense is a picture of every Christian life.

If you're a believer today in the Lord Jesus Christ, you're here. This is true of you. It doesn't matter how long you've known the Lord, a month or 60 years.

Regardless, it's the same for every Christian. All those Old Testament meanings in those first three verses of Psalm 85 are New Testament meanings also in the New Testament and in our experience. God has shown favor to every believer.

Has he not? He has. Mercy has been extended. For by grace you have been saved through faith and that's not of yourselves.

It's the gift of God, not of works, so no one can brag. That's the good news translation, so nobody can brag. Grace has been extended to every believer in their sin, in their captivity.

God brought them out and the first thing he did was extend delivering mercy, unearned, unexpected, undeserved. You got it from God in heaven by Christ and by the Holy Spirit. Through his mercy, he saved us and washed us unmerited favor, gracious mercy.

Anyone who wants to defend the free will of man and get mad about it being all of grace has got a real problem. A problem with their view of God, a problem with their view of Christ, a problem with their view of the cross, and a problem with their view of even how God relates to man, period. It's all of mercy and every Christian knows that.

The first experience in our dawning, our spiritual awakening, our first conscious reality can be a sense of unworthiness and a sense of our guilt, but along with that comes the light breaking through, the shots of revelation coming to your heart that are like sweet bites of heaven and you realize, God has shown mercy to me. I'm experiencing his mercy. This is real.

This is wonderful. Unmerited favor. You were favorable to your landlord and you were favorable to me when I didn't deserve it, when I didn't seek it, when I least expected.

You showed favor and mercy to me in my sin and you came to me and you poured out mercy. The second one is a New Testament reality for the Christian also. You restored us.

That's the New Testament idea of reconciliation. We were alienated from God, couldn't find him, separated far from him, and what did God do? In Christ, in the cross, he reconciled sinners to himself. He brought us from a far land and brought us home.

He made us, took us from being strangers and aliens from God and brought us back to himself and we were reconciled when we were enemies. God made us reconciled to himself in the Lord Jesus Christ. Reconciliation happened.

In the cross, God reconciles sinners who are enemies and alienated. He brings them back into right relationship and reconciliation happens. Everyone should ask themselves the question, have I personally been reconciled to God through Jesus Christ? You either have or you have not.

There's no gradual mysterious searching for God. There's no looking for him in all things. There's no looking within to try to see how we're doing or how we can improve.

No, God has reconciled the sinner to himself in Jesus Christ. You're either reconciled or you're not and that's a New Testament reality pictured here. The third one is verse 2, you forgave the iniquity, forgiveness of sins.

Israel had it here. The Christian has it permanently. The forgiveness of sins.

What is this truth? Justification. That when the sinner sees that Jesus Christ is a savior of the world and they feel their need of him and their heart goes to him, they hear the gospel and their heart says this is true. I want him.

I need him. And you turn in repentance in faith toward him and you believe upon him from your heart by looking away to him. God does something that's amazing.

He declares you righteous perfectly and he puts upon the sinner the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ. Declaration of justification and forgiveness. You're forgiven fully.

That's the Christian's experience. Declared righteous when we were not. And then fourthly, verse 3, wrath removed.

Every non-Christian, presently John 3 36 says every non-Christian presently is under God's wrath. Every sinner, the four-year-old who knows they're sinful, every child, the teenager, the elderly person, the good neighbor, the convict, the politician, the publican, the impressive successful person who does everything good outwardly, and the skid row homeless person whose life has been wrecked. Every single person outside of Christ has God's wrath upon them.

Presently it's not been removed. And for the Christian, the one who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, the moment he believes the wrath is gone. Propitiation has satisfied the wrath of God because of the cross.

Does not every Christian feel what Psalm 126 expresses? The Lord brought me out of sin's bondage. I once was blind but now I see. I can't believe it.

I'm free. I'm forgiven. My sins are gone.

It just seems too good to be true. But it is true. I remember sitting in my living room in West Texas.

I was 19 years old. It was Christmas Eve 1973. I was a Christian, had been a Christian about three months.

The Lord came to me and saved me that summer and everything was new. I had a new heart. I had a new spirit.

I had new desires. Everything, all things passed away. All had become new and it was fresh and real.

And I was home from college, Christmas week. And I remember going into our living room. My stepmother had her Christmas tree up and there was a big glass window and I was looking outside.

It was a cold winter night and I sat on the couch and I had this moment. It just hit me. Jesus really was born.

He really did come. He became a baby. He became a savior of the world.

He came for me. It's all true. My sins are gone.

I know Him. Months ago I was in darkness and in bondage to sin and tonight I'm sitting here brand new. God has done this for me and it's real.

My heart was rejoicing. Tears were coming down my cheeks because I knew Christ was real and precious and I was free from all the past. He has done great things for me and I'm so glad.

Past salvation remembered and experienced. Is this true of you? Our first days of grace when we were saved. There was first love.

There was intimacy. There was childlike excitement. There was gratitude.

There was closeness. There was wonder, love, and praise in our hearts. There was this sense of I'm saved.

I'm really saved. I was lost so long. I'm saved.

I've been rescued. I've been brought home. I know God.

He delivered me from a deep pit. First love, love is real. First love, joy, and newness.

Then your heart needs no revival because you've got Bible. You've got life. You don't need revival.

You've got it and it's wonderful all because of experiencing true salvation like Israel that's real and your past salvation is real to you and it's alive. That's verses 1 through 3. Lord, you were favorable. You restored.

You forgave and you withdrew your wrath. That's salvation. But our experience, Israel's was, and many Christians experience over time as you grow, as you learn in the months past, in the years past, our experience can change and is different later at different times which brings us to 4 through 7. Our present need.

The psalmist switches from remembering the great days of early deliverance to their present need. The good period of verses 1 through 3 for Israel was past here. It was a great memory but still only a memory now.

Spurgeon said, verses 4 through 7, is the prayer of a patriot for his afflicted country in which he pleads God's past mercies and through faith sees broader days coming. Israel's experience before presently wasn't maintained. Days of reviving are now needed when presently apparently none are in sight.

New revival is needed in the present experience of Israel. The psalmist moves and we move here from the freshness of salvation experienced to a lesser joyful condition. And every Christian goes through this at times.

Verses 4 through 7 is a prayer. Look at it again. Restore us again, O God of our salvation.

Put away your indignation toward us. Will you be angry with us forever? Will you prolong your anger to all generations? Will you not revive us again? Notice the word again in verse 4 and in verse 6 again, that your people may rejoice in you. Israel's joy was brief and short-lived.

All the joys of that past experience soon deteriorated because the reformation Israel had, even after the temple being rebuilt by 515, the good condition changed. They lost their first love. They departed.

Their obedience weakened and ceased and all of that revival was stalled and Israel finds themselves presently very needy. Was Israel at times flourishing and knew God's blessing immensely? Yes. And did

they ever decline, disobey, lose ground, cool off, settle in, start coasting, moving away from tenderness? Not fresh, not pursuing, not walking in first love faith.

The psalmist turns here in verse 4 to earnest prayer. His prayer for revival again. And he prays three things in these verses.

Verse 4, restore us again. Verse 6, revive us again. And verse 7, show us your steadfast love.

When God revives His people, revives His work, revives a church, and revives even sometimes one person who's grown cold. And they're His child, but they're cold. They're needy.

They've lost what they once had. They don't experience anymore what they once did by God's grace. And they need fresh restoration.

Is that you? Some of you were there and some of you recently, I believe, have had a new fresh restoration. Some of you this morning are struggling and you need fresh soul revival and restoration in your heart. You're a candidate if you see that about yourself.

Restore here in verse 4 is the idea of bringing someone back to where they once were. Being brought back in the present to where you were previously. If you were doing well, doing better one day than you are now, being brought back there.

If you were more freshly in love with Christ one day back then, that can be restored again. Being brought back to where you need to be. Restoration.

Christ said to the Ephesians in Revelation 2, remember therefore from where you have fallen. When we become needy spiritually, it means that we've fallen away from, we've lost ground. We've fallen from where we once were.

What ground have I lost? What decline do we have? Am I in? What ground have you lost that must be regained? Am I serious about regaining it? Am I seeing? Do my eyes see I'm not where I once was? Only the soul that has that attitude can be revived back to where they need to be restored. What area have we yielded to the world, the flesh, and the devil? What needs real restoration in my spiritual life? Let's examine ourselves. What has waned, weakened, slowed down, or seems gone? No Christian should go from first love devotion and radical discipleship and obedience in all things.

No Christian has to lose first love realities. Have you lost first love reality with Christ? No Christian has to. No Christian has to go backward, but often we do, and we're to blame.

We do, and when we do, we need to have our eyes open. We need to see. We need to stop.

We need to do inventory. We need to be honest with ourselves. We need to acknowledge our condition, and we need to see and wake up.

Many times Israel drew back and fell off from obedience, and many times Christians can take this gradual decline backward rather than staying the course spiritually and staying fresh. We need to do then what verses four through seven speak of. Earnest prayer to God for restoration.

Earnest prayer to God for restoration. Any one of us today or this week to take verses four through seven and get along and begin to pray it with reality. Lord, restore me back from where I've lost.

Lord, restore my love for you. Lord, I once was more zealous than I am today. I once was more courageous than I am today.

I once loved your word more than I do today. I once loved worship more. I was engaged and full of reality.

I was in tune much more in the past than I see I am today. Lord, restore me, and all that it means, here I am. Restore me again.

Could a church use that? Are we where we should be? Are you where you should be spiritually? Restore me again. Lord, revive me again. Quicken me where there's not life.

Pour your Spirit out upon me. Saturate me. Fill me.

Overwhelm me. Send your Spirit in the breezes of your reviving grace. Send them to my soul again, for I've lost them.

Once I knew them with more intimacy and more freshness and more power than I have in a long time. Lord, revive me again. The old spiritual said, it's not the preacher or the deacon, but it's me, O Lord, standing in the need of prayer.

Well, the preacher and the deacons stand in need of prayer too. But every one of us must start with ourselves. Lord, where am I? What do I need to see that I'm not seeing? What do I need to know that I'm not knowing? Open my eyes to see.

Show me where I am. Have mercy on me. I want to be restored, and I want revival in my soul.

Restore me again. Revive me again. That's the earnest prayer of the psalmist, the quickening and empowering of the Spirit to bring back what we lost and give us what we presently need.

No Christian is not a candidate for some kind of reviving. And this is the Spirit's present work in sanctification. Part of it is His reviving us again.

The joys and the freshness of Israel's national restoration has a consistent parallel with God's people and for every Christian because they're slowing down spiritually at times. We come into being needy at times. There's struggle.

There's spiritual sluggishness. There's spiritual laziness when we didn't used to be that lazy spiritually, and it brings us to see. And we make this confession.

Lord, I have lost ground. Are you too proud to say that? Lord, I have lost ground. Restore, revive me.

I've lost ground. To walk in the realities as a new Christian that we've lost and to say, I need reviving. I don't know about anybody else, but as for me, I need the Spirit of God to do a reviving work in my soul.

Which then leads us to verses 8 through 13. Past salvation remembered, present need, verses 4 through 7, a prayer for restoration and revival. And then verse 8 through 13 is God's promise to restore, to answer, to give.

And it starts out wonderfully in verse 8. Let's hear what God says about this. Let's hear what God the Lord will speak. What's His perspective on this? How does He view Israel declining and departing from great past deliverance and the soul of every Christian declining and needing revival? What does God have to

say about this? What does He promise any soul who says, I'm in need of renewing? Verse 8. Let me hear what God the Lord will speak, for He will speak peace to His people, to His saints.

Certain promises for such a person. The first is peace with God. You're mine.

I have made peace with you through the blood of the cross. You're in right standing. God comes in our neediness, and He will remind us of who we are in Christ.

He's exposing our need, and He's drawing our hearts to Him. But the first thing that comes is the peace of the cross, the peace of God that we have with Him in relationship. He restores us there first to see our sons healed.

Peace. He will speak peace to His people and to His saints, but let them what? Not turn back again to folly, to foolishness, to sinful ways. With peace, He also speaks holiness and seriousness about the problem that got us in the bad place in the first place.

Peace with God and holiness of heart to pursue Him. That verse earlier. He forgives.

There's forgiveness with you that you might be feared. When the Holy Spirit turns our heart in repentance and draws us back again to the Lord, there will come with it a holy attitude about sin and the folly of drifting, the folly of coldness, the folly of compromise, the folly of spiritual sluggishness, the foolishness that ever got us bogged down into a needy spiritual situation. We will see it rightly, and we won't ever want to turn back again.

Lord, how did I get here? Don't ever let me go back. How did I grow cold? Lord, kindle the fire of love in my heart, and don't ever let me grow cold again. Peace and holiness, He speaks.

And then He goes on, and He speaks of these great realities that are here, these promises that are of reviving grace, restoration. The Holy Spirit has often revived a nation, an area, an island like John G. Paton. He was among the cannibals.

Nothing happened in one island, and he moved to another one, and history shows the pure paganism of all those cannibals. Every person on the island, the Spirit of God converted, and they became a thriving, beautiful, joyful bunch of believers. Read John G. Paton, and you'll see that account.

An island, a church, can be visited by God for restoration, and taken beyond where it's never been before by a visitation of the Spirit, by a reviving work. An individual Christian can be taken from where they are in their weakness, in their neediness, in their defeat, and by the Spirit's work, restored and taken higher, to higher ground, to greater strength, to new usefulness, to new fruitfulness, he can restore the years that the locust has eaten. Do you see this divine activity promised in verses 8 through 13? What does God say about the needy condition? He speaks peace and holiness to the one turning, to the one who's in need.

And then verse 9, notice this, 9 through 13. It says, surely his salvation is near to those who fear him. Well, this is experiential language.

In the Old Testament, the word salvation is often means deliverances, his present help coming, deliverances in your needy situation. Surely his present deliverances are near. This is a near salvation.

This is present deliverances and changes that God brings. They're near to the believer who's seeking him. You might feel like you can't change anything, but deliverance may be near because God can change it.

He can change everything and make it all new. Love and faithfulness on down. Verse 10, love and faithfulness meet.

Now notice this divine action, love and faithfulness. They're pictures of the divine activity of God's grace working. Love and faithfulness, suddenly they meet.

They come together. God's at work. Righteousness and peace, the righteousness of God and the peace of God kiss one another.

They become intimate suddenly when God is doing this work. Faithfulness suddenly, divine faithfulness, God delivers, suddenly springs up from the ground when you didn't even see it coming. And his righteousness suddenly looks down, comes down from heaven all around us, below, beneath, all around us is the working of his love, is the springing forth of the activity of God.

God is at work. The spirit is at work. And that's what those word pictures mean.

God revives. He moves. And he's always brought revivals throughout history.

Thousands of times in church history, God has revived a dead work, just a work that's just almost gone and nonexistent. He's revived nations and churches and missionary work and history shows this. The first great awakening in the 18th century, 1730 to 1780 in Britain and in America.

Britain was almost gone with its degradation and its evil and God raised up three men and more, George Whitefield, John and Charles Wesley, and they began to preach. And the only explanation what happens is miraculous. The spirit of God chose to come in great power, in great measures, and save thousands.

Just preaching the clear gospel, the simple gospel with power, the spirit came down like rain upon a dry, parched country. Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales, England, all over Great Britain, powerful revivals began to happen. And it came to America.

Whitefield came 13 times. The Wesleys came early before they were even converted. Whitefield preached.

In Boston, when the population was 12,000, Whitefield preached to a crowd of 14,000. They came from everywhere. And New England was transformed.

When you fast forward, Lee referred to this last week in his teaching on Habakkuk, the 1857 prayer revival in New York City. 50,000 additions to churches with true testimonies of salvation in six months. 50,000 recorded true conversions in six months in New York and heading up toward New England.

Those, read about that prayer revival. It was astounding what God did. Fast forward about 50 years, 1904-05 in Wales.

Wales had grown cold. Liberalism was coming in. And a young man named Evan Roberts had a burden.

He began to pray, Lord, bend Wales, break Wales and come again. And he began to go forth preaching. And by the end of the year, 1905, 100,000 people who hadn't been church members were added to the churches of Wales.

100,000 in about 24 months. God had come to Wales. There's been 18 major revivals in the history of Wales alone.

Fast forward, 1949-52, the Hebrides Islands in Scotland. God came down with Duncan Campbell and moved across those islands in a powerful way. Teenagers, drunkards, adults that were not in church, God saved them.

Fast forward, 1971, Bill McLeod, Western Canada, a pastor, had two twin brothers, the Souterra twins, come in to preach a series of meetings. They were coming for two weeks to preach. And they were preaching.

And then one night, the Spirit of God came with conviction. And deacons and church leaders and professing Christians who had been in church for years came under the conviction of deep sin. They realized they weren't Christians at all.

They had never been born again. They didn't really know Christ. And the Spirit of God moved from Saskatoon, Western Canada, across Western Canada, and thousands upon thousands of people in Western Canada were saved in the next three years.

When the Holy Spirit comes, it can be like a snowball rolling down a snow-covered hill. What does it do? It gets bigger and bigger and bigger. It's like a gentle light rain increasing and more comes until there's a downpour and everything gets soaked.

It's like a gentle breeze starting. It grows 20 miles an hour, 40, 60, and then it can keep growing and it can become hurricane force. When the Holy Spirit is moving, you can say this, the wind is blowing and we sense it.

This is what to pray for in your own heart, in your church, in your country. He can come more than He's present now. The presence of God is with us and among us and we're always in His presence, but His manifested presence can be poured out and increased in answer to revival prayer, even for your own soul.

The hymn writer said, the Lord can clear the darkest skies, can give us day for night, make drops of sacred sorrow rise to rivers of delight. Is your soul today sad and feel distant from the Lord? Is your soul cast down, discouraged, weary, and worn? Let the cry of your heart be, Lord, restore me again, revive me again, visit me again, restore my first love, come again to me, pour out your grace upon me. And the last verse in the psalm says, the unrighteousness will go before Him.

God will set our steps, put us afresh on the path that we will be in the way of His steps, following Christ on the path of righteousness, on the highway of holiness as a revived soul. Revival is available to any soul who's serious and seeks and cries out to God. The bigger revival on a church, a town, a nation, lies in the hands of a gracious, sovereign God to choose to do it.

But He's done it many times. He'd done it in many nations. He'd done it in America many times.

So pray for revival for your nation, for the body of Christ, for your church, and for yourself. Let's pray right now. I want to encourage you to, in this quiet moment, as you're there alone before the Lord, respond to Him.

Tell Him where you are. Bring with your words to Him. Tell Him where you are.

Tell Him what you desire. Tell Him what you need. Respond in these moments to God's voice.

Pray back to Him what He's spoken to you. Father, we bow in your presence. We bow in the stillness to acknowledge that you are here.

Search our hearts. Work deeply within us. Draw us, and we will run after you.

Quicken us, and we will call upon your name. Deal with us, and we will respond. Draw us with cords of love.

Let your goodness in a new way lead us to repentance. Search us, O God, and let us search our heart, search our ways, and turn again to the Lord. Father, we do pray for revival in our own hearts, those of us who are believers.

We confess we're not where we should be or could be, and we know there's no condemnation in Christ, but there's a drawing. There's a calling to come onward, upward, higher, deeper. So take us there, and Lord, may everyone here who's not a true believer hear the call of your Spirit saying, come, come to me just as you are.

Come. Lord, may that call be yielded to. Lord, we pray for our church that you would grant us seasons of refreshing from your presence in the days ahead.

Lord, we pray for our city. We pray for our state. We pray for our nation.

Lord, we know only a God-given revival can turn society in any real way, can reach multitudes, can spare our nation from destruction. Lord, we do pray you'd have mercy. In wrath, remember mercy.

We bless your name for this song that speaks volumes to us about the realities of God's grace working, the realities of your people being needy, and the realities of promises of grace that you will hear and answer. Praise you, Lord. Receive our thanks.

In Christ's name, amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/TuGgqCs2Gms.mp4>
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