

(Revival) Part 2 - Preparatory Stages

by Martyn-Lloyd Jones

The sermon emphasizes the importance of repentance and individual initiative in revival, highlighting the role of one person or a small group of people in taking action and seeking God's presence.

Duration: 44:12

Scripture: Exodus 33:7-23, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Revival"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the idea of being called to do something exceptional in the midst of challenging times. He emphasizes the importance of taking deliberate action that separates oneself from the crowd. The sermon focuses on the story of Moses and how he would go out to the Tabernacle to pray, and how the people would watch him until he entered. The speaker highlights three stages in the story, emphasizing the need for revival and the role of individuals in bringing about change. The sermon encourages listeners to feel the burden for the glory of God and to take action, as even an unknown church member can be used by God.

Transcript

The words to which I should like to call your attention this morning are to be found in that chapter which we read at the beginning in the book of Exodus, chapter 33, again looking particularly at verses 7 to 11, verses 7 to 11 in the 33rd chapter of the book of Exodus. And Moses took the tabernacle and pitched it without the camp, afar off from the camp, and called it the tabernacle of the congregation. And it came to pass that every one which sought the Lord went out into the tabernacle of the congregation which was without the camp.

And it came to pass when Moses went out into the tabernacle that all the people rose up and stood every man at his tent door and looked after Moses until he was gone into the tabernacle. And it came to pass as Moses entered into the tabernacle the cloudy pillar descended and stood at the door of the tabernacle and the Lord talked with Moses. And all the people saw the cloudy pillar stand at the tabernacle door and all the people rose up and worshipped every man in his tent door.

And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face as a man speaketh unto his friend and he turned again into the camp. But his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle. I call your attention once more to this chapter and its great and important incident in order that through it and by means of it we may continue our study of this great question of revival.

More and more it becomes evident that it is necessary that we should do this and spend some time in it because there is such misunderstanding concerning it as to what it is and what it achieves and is meant to achieve. Indeed there is such grievous misunderstanding with regard to the whole doctrine of the Holy Spirit that it seems to me the chief danger at the moment is that in our wisdom we should be guilty of the Spirit. And therefore we continue this study because here, as I was indicating in a preliminary consideration of the chapter last week, we are given some very special instruction with regard to the way in which a revival comes and also particularly the stages which are generally so evident in that process.

Now it is vital that we should all carry in our minds the background to this incident. It is for me to remind you of it very hurriedly. It is just this.

The children of Israel rebelled against God. Moses had been called upon to the mount to meet with God and to receive the tables of the law. He had been kept there a number of days and the foolish, restless people began to voice their dissatisfaction.

This man Moses, they said, we know not what has become of him. Why should we wait any longer for him? Why should we be tied to this God of ours when there are other gods worshipped by the other nations and they seem to be having some time? So they got hold of Aaron and persuaded him to make them a golden calf. Some of them plucked off their earrings and Aaron threw all these together and they were melted and he formed a golden calf.

And he was set up and they worshipped him. This, they said, is the God that has brought us out of the captivity of Egypt. And they stripped themselves and in their nakedness they danced before him and thus behaved in a thoroughly disgraceful and sinful manner.

One of the great apostasies in the story of the children of Israel. An apostasy which led in that way to grieve us and to open sin as it invariably does. Ungodliness always leads to unrighteousness.

And then you remember that God punished them severely. But above that he told them that he would no longer accompany them in their march up to Canaan. He gave instructions to Moses to go up.

He said he'd send an angel to help him and to guide the people and to conquer their enemies. But he would not accompany them. And that it was, you remember, which really began this process in the children of Israel and caused them to turn back to God.

They began to realize what they'd done and the enormity of the position. And that led, you remember, to repentance, to a godly sorrow. And what was so good about their repentance was that they were concerned above everything else about this fact that God had said that he was no longer going to accompany them.

They saw that that was infinitely more important even than possessing the land of Canaan, the presence of God. So they humbled themselves. They truly repented in this godly manner.

And they gave a practical demonstration of it, you remember, by stripping themselves of their ornaments. And we ended by emphasizing the importance of that. Repentance is not just a passing feeling.

Repentance is something so profound that it immediately has an effect upon our conduct and our behavior. There is no value in remorse. It's repentance.

It's godly sorrow, not the sorrow of the world, that is of value in the sight of God. And that, I say, they demonstrated in this way by stripping themselves of all these ornaments which have led to their disgraceful conduct. Well, here they are.

Well, now, then, that is but the preliminary, as it were. And it enables us now to come to this next section of this matter which we are looking at together. And here, I say, we are reminded of something that is very important in connection with this whole matter.

There are definite steps and stages in this process of revival. You will never find, it doesn't matter which of the histories you read, that the church suddenly passes from gross sin or failure into mighty revival. No, there are intermediate steps.

And it is important that we should know about them in order that we should recognize them when they come, if it be God's gracious will to have pity upon us and to revive us again. Now, then, the next step we come to, you see, is this step of prayer and of intercession. But I am particularly anxious to emphasize this, that in many ways the lesson of this chapter is that there are steps and stages even in that.

Now, then, I have just read to you what I would call stage one in prayer. The first stage only. It runs from verse seven to verse eleven.

But then there is a second stage which goes from verse twelve to verse seventeen. And then there is a third stage, the highest stage of all. And that is from verse eighteen to the end of the chapter in verse twenty-three.

Now, I do commend the careful study of these sections to you and of these particular stages. Because here, I think, we really are brought to the very nerve and center of this whole question of revival and the confusion which is in the minds of so many people. It is because they have never realized the possibility of these three stages that they have excluded revival even out of their thinking altogether and out of their doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

They have left no room at all for an outpouring of the Spirit. Their misunderstanding of the doctrine of the baptism of the Spirit is such that they leave no room for revival. And for the exceptional, which is, of course, the great characteristic always of revival.

Very well. Now, then, let us look at this first stage this morning. These people have been arrested.

They have been apprehended. They have got this dawning realization of their sinfulness and they have repented. But that isn't enough.

Something happens beyond this. Now, then, let us look at this first stage of prayer. And you begin, of course, in the seventh verse where we are told, And Moses took the tabernacle and pitched it without the camp afar off from the camp and called it the tabernacle of the congregation.

And it came to pass that every one which sought the Lord went out into the tabernacle of the congregation which was without the camp. Here is profound teaching. Let's be clear about this tabernacle that is mentioned.

This was not the tabernacle that was ultimately made and constructed according to the specifications given by God to Moses on the mount. That comes later. This was a kind of tent which Moses had already

made and set up in the middle of the congregation, in the middle of the camp of Israel where he and others would pray.

So it's important that we should be clear about that. It isn't what is normally described as the tabernacle which was the precursor of the temple about which we read so much in the Old Testament books. But just this tent of meeting where people might go together to meet with God.

The tent of meeting. I pause for just a second over that because it's such a significant and such a wonderful term. You know the nonconformist fathers generally referred to their places of worship as meeting houses.

And it's a good old term. You see it's a place not so much where people meet with one another, that's included, but the essential meaning is this, the place where they meet with God. The meeting house.

God grant that this may become more and more a meeting house in our minds and in our thinking. That we as we come up here Sunday by Sunday shall say to ourselves we're going to meet with God. The meeting house.

The place of meeting. Very well. Well now the thing I'm emphasizing is this.

That Moses was clearly led here to take this peculiar action. He takes this tabernacle out of the center of the camp and puts it outside far off from the camp. Now there are many things here which must detain us.

The first is of course that this was an action taken by Moses. Moses himself. And I must pause with that.

Because you will find always as you read the history of these movements of the spirit in the long story of the Christian church. That generally the very first thing that happens which eventually leads to a great revival is that some one man or some group of men suddenly begin to feel this burden. And so feel the burden that they have led to do something about it.

That is what happened here you see. That is I say what has always happened. Look at the great history.

Look at the Protestant Reformation. That mighty movement. Where did it come from? How did it originate? Well I know that there were precursors even of that.

Whitliffe, John Hus and others. But you see the real thing happened when just one man Martin Luther a very ordinary kind of monk suddenly became aware of this burden. And it so burdened him that he was led to do something about it.

Just one man. And through that one man God sent that mighty movement into the church. I could illustrate the same thing abundantly from the stories of other revivals.

I have already reminded you many Sundays ago that if you read the story of the revival in Northern Ireland a hundred years ago that great movement which led not only to so many conversions but which quickened the whole life of the Presbyterian church and the other churches in Northern Ireland and transformed the whole situation as it did in Wales also and as it did in the United States of America at the same time. Now you will find that in all these instances it was just one man. Take that man who began those prayer meetings in Fulton Street in New York City in 1857.

I find that I cannot even remember his name how significant that is. A most ordinary man but he felt this burden and did something about it. One man in Northern Ireland, James McQuilkin.

It just started with that one man. Likewise in Wales with one man only called Humphrey Jones who feeling the power of revival in America felt a burden for his own country and crossed the Atlantic and went back and began to tell people about it. Now I'm staying with this and emphasizing it for one reason only that this is what I like to call the romantic element of the Christian life and of the history of the church.

That is to me what is so glorious about it. I dare not rush over a point like this for this reason. It may be somebody in this congregation whom I don't know and whom the vast majority of you have never heard of but such may be the person that God is going to use.

Now that sort of thing can only happen, you see, in the Christian church. That sort of thing doesn't happen in the world. The world looks to the leaders and to the great people but God, as the apostle Paul reminds the Corinthians in his first epistle, first chapter, at the end God is constantly doing this thing.

He confounds the wise by taking hold of the foolish. He brings to naught the things that are by using the things that are not. And therefore I say I dare not pass lightly over a point like this.

It may be anybody. There are no rules about this matter. It isn't of necessity a great leader as it happened to be Moses on this occasion.

You will find that insignificant prophets were taken up mount again by God and used and so it is continued in the long history of the Christian church. Whoever would expect a saviour to come out of Nazareth? No good, said the proverb, ever comes out of Nazareth. That's the world's way of thinking.

But it was out of Nazareth that the saviour of the world came. And so, my dear friends, let us realize this. Let us get out of this deplorable modern habit which seems to have possessed the Christian church and which makes the ordinary church member think that he or she can do nothing at all, that they've just got to sit back in crowds in large meetings and that some two or three people are going to do everything.

No, no, the teaching of the Bible is the exact opposite. It may be you that God's going to use. You're an unknown church member.

It doesn't matter. In the hands of God you may be the channel. Very well, then.

One man or a little group of men begin to feel the burden. And therefore I'm entitled to ask this question. Have you felt the burden? And if you haven't, why haven't you? Are you concerned about the situation? Have you got a zeal for the glory of God? Does it grieve you to see His church as she is? If not, why not? If this is a burden that can come to anybody, why hasn't it come to you? Very well, I leave it at that.

The action of just one man. And then let's observe his action because it's very significant. Moses took this tabernacle which had been formerly in the midst of the camp and he pitched it without the camper, far off from the camp.

Now here is something again which we must underline and emphasize particularly. Because it is again one of those points that you get invariably in the history of revivals. It's a point I know that can be misunderstood as most Christian truth can be misunderstood.

But the fact that certain foolish people can misunderstand it doesn't mean that it's true. And doesn't mean that it shouldn't be emphasized. Very well, then what is it? Well now then I say, here Moses takes this action of setting up this place of prayer and of intercession.

He was glad that the people had repented. But oh, that wasn't enough. The presence of God had gone.

The cloudy pillar had disappeared. And God had made this statement that He was not going to accompany them. Oh yes, we must repent, but we don't stop at repentance.

Moses was anxious that the presence of God should return. So he sets up this place of prayer and of intercession. Now you notice the way in which it was done.

He didn't seem to be an elaborate organization. He didn't make any statement. He made no speech about it.

He didn't address the people. Feeling the burden, he felt that he couldn't intercede as he was there in the midst of the camp. So he puts it right outside the camp.

And it's open to anybody who may feel the burden to go out also. You notice how that is emphasized. It came to pass that everyone which sought the Lord went out into the tabernacle of the congregation, which was without the camp.

An apparently unobtrusive action. It was done quite quietly. No fanfare of trumpets.

No great declaration. But just taking this action, feeling the need of this intercession, feeling the need for some unusual action. He wants to do this himself.

And he leaves it open for anybody who feels the same thing to join him in that action. That's all we are told about it. And in exactly the same way you find this in the history of all these revivals that man James McQuilkin began to talk to two others.

And they saw the whole situation. And these three men alone met together in a little schoolroom on just a little narrow lane almost. I had the privilege of visiting it when I was in Northern Ireland some three weeks ago.

I went out of my way to do so. I like to look at a place like that. You see, they didn't meet even in their village of Connor or of Kells.

They went to this lonely little schoolroom outside even the village, where in peace and quietness they could pray to God and intercede on behalf of the people who lived with them in the villages and the people who lived in the whole of the surrounding area. They felt this call to prayer. Now then, that is the thing I say which is emphasized at this point.

I rather like the way it is put. It came to pass that every one which sought the Lord. They didn't all go, but you see, there were individuals in the camp who began to feel the very thing that Moses had been feeling.

And they said, Moses is going out there to pray on his own. Well, let's go out. We'll go in and we'll join him.

And just thus they came one by one. No, no, it wasn't a great organized thing. No big announcements were made that this was going to happen and it happened at a certain time and in a certain way.

You know, it's never happened like that. And that is what almost alarms me about the state of the Christian church at the present time. We must start with our organization.

Our first move is to set up a committee. And then our organization, and then our judicious advertising, all done in a big and organized manner. It's the exact opposite always in the Scripture.

And it's always been the exact opposite in the long history of the Christian church and revivals in the church. Believe me, my friends, when the next revival comes, it'll come as a surprise to everybody and especially to the organizers. It'll have happened in this unobtrusive manner.

Men and women, as it were, just slipping out quietly because they're burdened. Because they can't help themselves. Because they can't go on living without it.

And they want to join with the others who are feeling the same thing and are crying out unto God. They set up the tabernacle. And then I come to this next point, which is this one.

That Moses set it up outside the camp. Far off from the camp. Now here is the point at which I'm most liable to be misunderstood.

But here it is. It's a part of the teaching. There is invariably in the history of every revival that has ever been this drawing aside.

Now let us not forget that the camp of Israel was the then church of God. The nation of Israel was the church in the wilderness in the Old Testament. This is the church we're talking about.

And yet you see what Moses did. He, as it were, took his tabernacle from the midst of the church and put it up outside, far off from the camp. No revival that has ever been experienced in the long history of the church has ever been an official movement in the church.

That's a strong statement, isn't it? I repeat it. No revival that the church has ever known has ever been an official movement. You read of the great precursors of the Protestant Reformation, the people I've referred to already.

Your Wycliffe's, John Hus' and others. Always unofficial. And the officials didn't like it.

Same with Martin Luther. Nothing happened in Rome. No, no, it happened in this cell with just this monk.

And so, my dear friends, it has continued to happen. Even after the reformation of the Church of England in this country, there were men who began to feel dissatisfied and they began to do themselves the same thing. That's the origin of Puritanism.

You're all familiar, probably, with the story of Methodism in its various branches two hundred years ago. How did that begin? Well, that began, you see, in exactly the same way. The two Wesley brothers and Whitfield and others who were members of the Church of England.

They didn't begin to do something in the Church of England, no. They formed what they called their Holy Club outside the camp. They met privately on their own, just a handful of people.

Nobody knew that it was happening for some time. But they just met together because they were drawn together by the same thing. It was unofficial.

It was outside, as it were. That's the beginning of Methodism, both Calvinistic and Arminian. And the same thing precisely is true in the early story of the early brethren.

The early Plymouth brethren, as they came to be called. But in the first stages, it was just this. Now this, therefore, I say, is something which we must surely note carefully.

Are you proposing, says someone, to set up a new denomination? That's the very last thing that this teaching suggests. That makes it official. That makes it a movement.

That means you've brought in your organization. That's the very thing I'm not saying. But what I am saying is this.

That when God begins to move in this Church and when he's preparing the way for revival, this is how he always seems to do it. He puts this burden upon certain people who are called apart, as it were, and who meet together quietly, unknown, and unobtrusively because they're conscious of this burden. Now here again is something that seems to me to be very grievous at the present time.

Because the great word of today is sponsorship. Sponsorship. Even evangelical, Christian, spiritually minded people, when they feel led of God to do something, they want a great sponsorship.

And they don't care very much who's the sponsor. They want the sponsorship of the official Church. They want the sponsorship of men who are not evangelical at all.

They want to go to the great cathedrals. Sponsorship. There was no sponsorship here.

There's never been sponsorship. In times of true spiritual awakening and revival, these men, you see, are not concerned about sponsorship. Their eye is on the living God.

Of course, if you want to do things in a worldly way, you've got to advertise and you want to use great names. You want to have sponsorship. So if you go and hold a meeting in a town, you want the Lord Mayor of the town, though he may not be a Christian, a professing Christian at all, the governor of a state, doesn't matter whether he's Christian or not, you must have it sponsored.

And then the people will be attracted and it will become a great thing. It's the exact opposite of this. Because, you see, when you are calling upon the living God and his illimitable power, you don't need the sponsorship of men.

The sponsorship you're interested in is the sponsorship of the Holy Spirit. The Apostle Paul goes into Corinth, and what does he do? He doesn't send in his preliminary agents to prepare and get everybody ready and have a great public meeting. No, no, in weakness, fear, and much trembling, my speech and my wisdom were not with enticing words of men's wisdom.

What's he concerned about? Oh, the demonstration of the Spirit and of power. He dare not go without the Spirit. He must have the Spirit.

But having the Spirit, who are men and what do they matter and what do they count? Sponsorship! There's no such sponsorship in the Bible, nor in the history of the church, in her mightiest periods, in all reformation and revival. No, no. They just went out.

Individuals gathered together because of the same burden. And then there's another element in this that I must emphasize. It is this.

Clearly, in putting this tabernacle outside the camp, Moses had another motive and a very important one. It was this. It's the whole idea of consecration.

Moses felt that this couldn't be done in the midst of the camp. The camp had become unclean. And he deliberately takes it out afar off from the camp.

It was a very deliberate action. He says we must do this thing in God's way. We must get right out of this impurity and this sinful atmosphere.

We must gather together here thus. Yes, that's consecration. That is, if you like, the call to holiness.

And again, I am suggesting to you that the history of every revival brings out this same factor in exactly the same way. What is it that has happened to these men whom God has used? Take any one of them you like. It doesn't matter which.

Well, you will find almost invariably that their first concern has not even been the state of the church. It's been the state of their own souls. It has been the holiness of God.

I've already referred to that little movement which began there in Oxford two hundred years ago. And you notice the name they gave it. They called it the Holy Club.

What happened to them? Well, what happened to the Westleys and Whitfield and the others who met with them was just this. They said yes, the Christian church is still the Christian church. But she's very unworthy and she's very sinful.

People are riding very loose to the commandments of God and to the whole of the Christian life as depicted in the New Testament. They said this is wrong. We must give ourselves to holiness.

We must purify ourselves. So they probably went too far and became a little bit legalistic. But they drew up rules and regulations as to how they should live.

Hence they were called Methodists. They said we must live methodically. We must do this thing methodically.

We must meet to study the scriptures together. We must meet to pray together. The whole thing must be done methodically.

Methodists. Yes, but what they were searching for was for holiness. And that has always been God's way.

One man or a number of men suddenly become awakened to their distance from God. To the fact that they're in the far country. And their first concern is to be holy as God is holy and to come into His presence and to know His glory.

So inevitably there is a kind of separation. Ask someone, are you going to divide up the Christian church? I'm not dividing. What I'm saying is this.

That when the Holy Spirit of God begins to deal with any one of us there will be this separation. It won't be paraded. It won't be the Pharisee.

I am holier than thou, thou attitude. No, no. But once again begins to be burdened for the glory of God and the state of the church.

He immediately feels this call to consecration. He goes out as it were. Don't overemphasize the physical aspect.

It had to be physical there, but it's the principle that matters. What I'm trying to say is this. In a day of grievous immorality and godlessness and irreligion such as this.

In a day when vice is not only shouting at us, but is arrogant and is boasting. When it's being thrown at the people everywhere. All I'm asking is this.

Do we know anything about the call to a separation from that kind of thing? We are living in days when as Christians we are called to go the second mile. Ordinary Christianity is not enough. More is demanded.

Are we not beginning to feel that nothing can deal with this situation but a manifestation of true life and living. Holy living as it is under God. That's what these men felt.

So he puts his tabernacle outside the camp and a long way from the camp. It's got to be separate. He says it's got to be holy.

And another emphasis I would put upon this action is this. That he is showing clearly the need of some unusual action and of some extra effort. Now then there are two things that always happen in this early stage of revival.

You see the people who are concerned about revival in a true sense are not just people who are out for a little bit of excitement or interest or some happiness or phenomena or something marvelous is going to happen and we're going to have a great good time. That isn't how they think about it at all. And if you my dear friends are simply thinking of meetings and of excitement and of something wonderful you haven't begun to understand this matter.

Now the first indication of a true and a genuine concern is that we are aware of our unworthiness and uncleanness. We've got to separate ourselves from ourselves. We've got to set up this tabernacle somehow somewhere outside the ordinary.

It's got to be exceptional. It's got to be unusual. We've got to go out of our way.

Now that's the question that I want to impress upon your minds and to leave with you this morning. Are you in these days of exceptional evil, are you doing something exceptional? Or are you just content with coming to the services in the house of God and doing some routine things? You see in the time when the church is being blessed and all is well people came to the house of God. They worked in the mission societies.

They taught in the Sunday school and did all this. That's the ordinary work of the church. I'm not talking about that.

All I'm asking is this. Have you felt that because of the times through which we are passing that you were called to do something exceptional? To go out as it were. To take some deliberate action that in a way separates you.

That's the great lesson here. And then for me to complete this review this morning. I'm rather interested in what we are told about the remainder of the people.

Moses and certain odd individuals used to go out to the camp, out to the tabernacle to pray. Listen to verse 8. And it came to pass when Moses went out into the tabernacle that all the people rose up and stood every man at his tent door and looked after Moses until he was gone into the tabernacle. There's something very wonderful about this.

You see, all they did was to look on with interest. They were aware that something was happening. They didn't know what it was.

They didn't understand it. They didn't go out of the camp into the tent of meeting with God and pray and intercede. No, all they knew was, well, somebody said, you know, Moses has taken the tent outside and he goes out periodically and there are certain others who are going out and they, as you see the mass of the people, the bulk of church members ever will, they just talked about him and said, what's this? And they said, oh, this is interesting, something's happened.

So they stood by the tent door and watched Moses as he went. They said, what's going to happen? What's he doing? What's taking place here? It's an appalling thing, this, isn't it? You see, this all ought to have been happening in the midst of the camp. That's the right place for it to happen, but it didn't.

It had to happen there. And as you read the history of the church, you always find this repeated. Just a few people at first feel the call and are separate and the others begin to say, what's happening to so and so? Have you heard about this man or that woman? They stand at their tent doors and they look on.

They've got a feeling that something is happening. They are doing nothing at all. Oh, if we are to wait until the whole church moves, it will never happen.

It will never move. Don't worry about that. God's way is to take hold of individuals and to use them.

And then eventually the majority will be affected. But at this stage, they simply have this vague general awareness that something is happening. And they begin to look on wistfully at the action of Moses and his few companions.

I shall be very happy to think that that is the position in the Christian church today. I believe it is. I believe it is.

I believe, and I thank God I can say this, I believe that we have turned a corner. I'm not talking about this local church only. This is included.

I'm speaking generally. I believe that at long last there are just certain few individuals here and there who are beginning to see that nothing but the intervention of the living God can suffice. And who are metaphorically going to this tabernacle that is set up outside far off from the camp and are waiting upon God.

And I believe I discern some dawning vague interest in the bulk of the church as it looks on at what is taking place. Very well, what is the result of this action? Well, no, the answer is in verses 9 to 11. I just summarized them for you.

God recognizes this action and He begins to grant encouragement to it. He gives tokens of the fact that He is well pleased with it. And it came to pass as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended and stood at the door of the tabernacle.

It hadn't been doing that. God had withdrawn it. He had taken it back.

The visible sign of His presence had been withdrawn. But as a result of this, there comes the cloudy pillar. As before, God gave a manifestation of His presence.

What does this mean to us as someone? It means this. It means that the first indication is always that something seems to begin to happen to the life of the church. There seems to be a new quickening.

The worship of the church becomes warmer. Something comes back which had gone. A warmth and a tenderness.

There is an encouragement. There is a new wistfulness. A new sense of expectation.

A new freedom given in the prayers of the people. That's the return of the cloudy pillar. We must be on the alert to discern this.

We must be looking for tokens of encouragement from God. A new tenderness. Less of the hardness and the glibness, but a new tenderness.

A new concern. A new note of agony. Some old people, I remember, used to say this.

That the thing that they were looking for in the prayer meetings in the church was the element of O. The O. The longing. The groaning. The waiting.

The O. And when that comes, it is a sign that the cloudy pillar has come back. Well, then God, you remember, gave Moses some very definite indications that he was well pleased with him. He looked upon him and he spoke unto him.

He spoke unto him face to face as a man speaks to his friend. In other words, the man who felt the burden first of all is given an intimation by God that God has heard him and that he is going to answer. Now that's invariable once more in all the histories of revival.

These men go through a period of agony. Then they come to a point when they feel it's all right. God has heard us.

Something is going to happen. God did that with Moses. He gave him an assurance that his prayers were heard and that he was going to be answered.

And then you notice the significant thing in these people who are simply standing by their tent doors and watching Moses and the others as they went. They saw the cloudy pillar. And they began to worship God even at their tent doors.

Now then, you see, the whole church is beginning to be affected and involved. It may take a long time, this, but that's the next thing. They began to worship God at their tent doors.

And lastly, and indeed very marvelous, verse 11. And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face as a man speaketh unto his friend. There is all the encouragement.

Then listen. And he, Moses, turned again into the camp. But his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle.

That's the wonderful thing. You see, what it all means is this. Moses having had this intimation from God that he was heard and that God was going to answer.

He went back to the camp to report to the people, to tell them what had happened. To say that the meaning of the descent of the cloudy pillar was that God was favorably disposed once more. Was turning his face towards them instead of away from them.

And that he had spoken to him face to face. He went back to encourage them. But you notice what a spiritually minded man Moses was.

And how well versed he was in the ways of God. He went back to report to the camp. But he left his servant Joshua remaining in the tabernacle until he got back again.

Why? Ah, Moses was expecting more to come. He didn't want any of it to be missed. So while he himself goes back to report to the camp, he leaves Joshua in the tent of meeting.

What if God will do something further? Very well. They're expecting more. This is only the beginning.

This is the early stage. Indeed, I wouldn't hesitate to say this. That as far as we've gone this morning, we really haven't begun with revival.

This is the preliminary, the preparation. But you notice the spirit of expectation. Joshua left behind in the tent.

Lest while Moses is reporting to the people, God might grant a further revelation. He knows that there is more to come. He's taking no risks.

He's holding on. He remains in the presence of God through his deputy, his servant. And when the day dawns that you and I, we shall be on the tiptoe of expectation, we can be sure that God is moving and that something unusual is about to take place.

Very well, my friends, we leave it at that stage one. Have we arrived at stage one? Do we know anything about that tabernacle? This call to separation and to urgent intercession. Those are the two things.

Holiness, intercession on behalf of the mass of the people, the bulk of the church. And waiting in the presence of God. Expecting, expecting more and more.

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