

Are You Afraid of Revival?

by Michael L. Brown

Michael L. Brown challenges believers to embrace the transformative power of revival, emphasizing holiness and the urgency of reaching the lost amidst potential fears and controversies.

Duration: 1:25:25

Scripture: Malachi 3:1, Matthew 6:33, Mark 3:14-15, Luke 2:8-14

Topics: "Revival", "Holiness"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the transformative power of God's visitation and revival. He shares anecdotes of individuals who experienced profound changes and deliverance through God's intervention. The preacher highlights the choice between having a comfortable and accepted church or experiencing an outpouring of God's power and seeing lives transformed. He also addresses the fear of holiness and the need for personal sacrifice in revival. The sermon concludes with a reference to the prophecy of Simeon in the Bible, highlighting the arrival of the Messiah and the hope for God's answer to prayers.

Transcript

Lord, I'm so encouraged in my heart, Lord, just by the sense of hunger and anticipation among your people this day and this week. Lord, you're doing awesome things around the world and we thank you that you haven't left America out. Lord, that we don't just have to hear about what's happening in other countries, in the jungles of Africa and India, Lord, and read about past history books, Lord, and go back to the Bible and say, where is the God of the Bible? We thank you, Father, that you're moving and acting and pouring out your Spirit in our midst today, in front of our eyes.

And we pray, living God, that you would give us a living word from heaven. That you would speak to us, that you would change us, that you would challenge us, that you would help us, that you would encourage us, that you would equip us. Thank you for it, Father, in Jesus' name.

Amen. You can be seated. I'm going to read several scriptures to you and ask you a question today.

Are you afraid of revival? We'll begin in Malachi, the third chapter, and then we will go to Mark, the third chapter, and Luke, the second chapter. Are you afraid of revival? As you're turning here, I want to say something very plainly and very clearly. Week in, week out, you can get multiplied dozens of messages from this revival.

Dozens and dozens and dozens and dozens of night messages, and then dozens and dozens and dozens of day messages. And then you can visit our school of ministry and get more dozens and dozens and dozens and dozens of hours of teaching if you're a student there. And you will know that we are absolutely emphatic on the purpose of revival.

We fully understand that revival is not about shaking, it is not about falling, that the emphasis is not manifestations, that the emphasis is not who felt what, the emphasis is change lives for the glory of God. That is our heartbeat, that is our passion. Everything we do ultimately is going to that goal, seeing lives changed for the glory of God.

Seeing Jesus exalted, seeing his people come alive and return from backsliding, seeing lost people reached. That's what we give ourselves for day in, day out. It is our joy to do it.

It is a wonderful sacrifice to make to pour yourself out at harvest time. It's awesome. The two great themes that you will hear over and over and over, everything flowing out of intimacy with Jesus and relationship with him, but the two themes you'll hear over and over and over, themes that have burned in my heart for years, themes that have burned in the hearts of the leaders here for years, holiness and harvest, holiness and harvest.

The recent renewal movement that has touched many also has stagnated and also has hurt many because it did not emphasize holiness and harvest. In some places it did and it continues to move on. In other places it just emphasized getting blessed and getting a fresh touch.

And because the emphasis was not on purity of heart and holiness to prepare the bride, and the emphasis was not the harvest reaching a lost and dying world, it just became some glorified bless me club. The waters began to stagnate. As I've often said, stagnating saints soon stink.

And many churches that began with a certain sense of renewal are now in worse shape than they were before because after the experience has waned, after the touch has lifted, after the blessings is gone, now what? Now what? We believe in the centrality of the preaching and teaching of the word of God. You may get through a week. God may sweep through in an unusual way.

He swept through in an awesome way last night. Steve just read some scripture and only preached part of the 21 pages of notes that he had and God spoke. You don't necessarily have to have an hour and a half of teaching and preaching of the word every single night.

But most nights, if you look at 700-something services in the revival, including prayer meetings and Sunday mornings, virtually every revival night and every Sunday morning, with rare exception, the word is clearly preached and declared in terms of a full message. And when it's not, a short message is given, always. A clear call to respond is given.

We believe in that. I want to say that up front because the things I want to talk about and emphasize today are going to be coming from a different angle. Some of it will overlap.

Some of it will be saying the same thing. But there are other issues I want to cover. When I wrote the booklet No One Deceive You, people said, oh, you're just defending yourself against critics.

Number one, you don't need to defend yourself. Number two, you certainly don't need to defend God. What people didn't realize was, hey, wait a second.

For years, I've been speaking to my own people. I've been speaking to those, in particular, in the charismatic Pentecostal movement. I've been saying we need to wake up.

I've been seeking to bring a word of constructive correction to speak to me, to speak to us, outlining areas of need, areas of problem. Listen, one of my books has a subtitle, *Is the Charismatic Church Slain in the Spirit or Down for the Count?* You know, another book is called *How Saved Are We?* I mean, that's going after it. That's saying, hey, we've got some problems here.

Speaking to us, speaking to me, challenging us. Now I turn and I address critics for the first time. I have a whole book primarily addressing issues of those coming against what God is doing.

And some people can't take it and go berserk. You know, easy to dish it out, hard to take it. I want you to understand that the major issues of revival are not issues of manifestations.

They are not issues of emotion. They are not issues of controversy, etc. However, you better understand that when God comes in revival, there's going to be controversy.

There are going to be different kinds of manifestations. There are going to be different kinds of things that come up. And that's some of what I want to talk to you about today.

Malachi 3. I say, why did he talk so long before he read the scripture? Well, one thing, I wanted to give an introduction. And number two, it was Malachi. It takes you a little while to find Malachi.

I got saved in an Italian Pentecostal church. I imagine some of the people before they knew the scriptures thought this was the Italian prophet Malachi. Some of you said, oh, that's why I couldn't find Malachi.

I was late. I was in the book of Malachi. Well, you're in the right place.

Hebrew, Malachi, my messenger. Malachi 3, see, I will send my messenger who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple.

The messenger of the covenant whom you desire will come, says the Lord Almighty. That's good news. God is going to come and visit his people.

Wonderful passage, fulfilled in particular with the coming of Jesus. To visit his people and to visit the temple almost 2,000 years ago. Wonderful news.

You're seeking him. You're praying. You're asking him to come.

But when he comes, ooh. But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver.

He will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the Lord will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness. And the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the Lord as in days gone by, as in former years.

Who can endure the day of his coming? It's one thing to pray for revival. It's one thing to pray for visitation. It's one thing to say, oh God would you come and power and touch us and visit us.

It is another thing entirely to welcome and embrace visitation when it does come. To welcome and embrace the presence of a holy God when he does come. Therefore I ask the question, are you afraid of

revival? Pastors, leaders, hungry believers, are you afraid of revival? Go with me to Mark the third chapter.

I'm going to speak of several key areas that cause people to be afraid of revival. Mark three. Then Jesus, verse twenty, then Jesus entered a house and again a crowd gathered so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat.

When his family heard about this they went to take charge of him for they said he is out of his mind. Hang on for a second. This is the Lord's own family.

We don't know who is involved. We know his brothers for a long time did not believe. We don't know who is involved.

But his own family they hear what's going on. It's out of hand. It's crazy.

Everybody coming from all over. Can't even sit and eat. This is insane.

Jesus you've got a life. You've got to eat. You've got to take care of yourself.

It's crazy. You lost him and you're out of your mind. His own family.

I mean we want to be treated in a way that's better than the way Jesus was treated. In fact brother Archer in the back would you be kind enough to get me a copy of, no hang on it's up here. The Lord has already provided.

I just realized as I asked for it it was up here. We want to be treated better than Jesus. We somehow think that he takes all the flack even though he was perfect and we're not perfect.

Even though he was sinless and we're not sinless. Even though he was totally compassionate and totally righteous and we're not totally compassionate and totally righteous. Somehow we think that the world and the religious establishment that hated him will love us.

Strange isn't it? His own family thinks he's out of his mind. Now what happens next? This is great. And the teachers of the law who came down from Jerusalem said he is possessed by Beelzebub.

By the prince of demons he's driving out demons. So the respected religious leaders. These were not viewed by the people just as hypocrites.

The respected religious leaders say he's demon possessed. He's possessed by the devil himself. He's doing this by demonic power.

His family says he's out of his mind. Religious leaders say he's doing what he does by the power of the devil. I'm reminded of something I wrote at the beginning of It's Time to Rock the Boat.

God's people are called to rock the boat. We are not called to coexist with this sinful society. We are called to confront it.

We are not called to a life of comfort. We are called to a life of conflict. Following Jesus does not mean catering to our selfish desires.

It means crucifying them. Are we ready to walk in the Savior's footsteps? Remember, the world hated Jesus. He made people uncomfortable.

He exposed sin. He rebuked unrighteousness. He would not compromise.

He would not hold back. And he was nailed to a cross by a godless world. Why should it be any different for us? He was rejected.

We want to be respected. He was regarded as radical. We want to be recognized as reasonable.

He was accused of having demons. We are acclaimed for having degrees. He was put out.

We long to be taken in. He put no stock in the praise of man. We thrive on it.

Is it any wonder we make so little impact here for him? Hey, listen, I wrote that. I found that convicting to read. Jesus was considered to be totally radical by his society.

And he says, come follow me. And if this is how they treated me, if they call the master of the house Beelzebub, what are they going to call you? If they call the Messiah Satan himself, what are they going to call you, his followers? Luke, second chapter. This is one of those kind of feel-good sessions, isn't it? Kind of gives you goosebumps.

Nostalgia, just wow. I get that warm feeling all over when the man speaks. Simeon's words of prophecy over Jesus, little baby Yeshua brought to the temple by his mother and father, Joseph and Miriam, Joseph and Mary.

Simeon takes him, verse 28, takes him in his arms and he prays God saying, sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel. This is wonderful.

The Messiah has come. Yes, revival. Yes, God's visitation.

Yes, God's answer. Whatever the thing is you're praying for. Yes, at last, this is the hour.

It's going to be wonderful. It's going to be glorious. It's going to be awesome.

Good. But there's more to the story. The child's father and mother marveled at what was said about him.

And then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother, this child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel and to be a sign that will be spoken against so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed and a sword will pierce your own soul too. It's not just going to be wonderful. It's not just going to be blessing.

It's not just going to be glorious. It's not just going to be exciting. There's going to be some controversy.

There's going to be some opposition. There's going to be some resistance. Are you afraid of revival? Why would you be afraid of revival? We're not talking about a series of meetings called revival.

That's one of my hardships living here in the South. I'm from New York originally and lived in Maryland nine years and now live in the South in the Bible belt. I am not used to Southern terminology like holding a revival.

Oh, praise the Lord. We're holding a three-day revival next month. I'm not used to that.

I tell people week in, week out here, you can no more hold a revival than you can hold a hurricane. You can no more schedule a revival than you can schedule an earthquake. Revival is not something man works up.

Revival is something God sends down. I'm not talking about a revival meeting somewhere. I was going through a list of messages with my assistant, Scott.

He said, do you have a list of what you preached through the years? I said, actually I do. Just the way things are entered in my computer, it gets put into a folder and I can just look through the years and I've preached X number of times, 200 something times in a year and here are the messages and this was the date and the place. And I said, hey, remember here when I was at your dad's church a few years ago? I said, look at the way it's entered.

It's entered revival in quotes, revival meetings because that's how the church was designating it. But I wouldn't call it, even in my own personal notes, revival meetings. I had to put revival in quotes.

We'd normally say meetings for the purpose of revival. But we're talking about being afraid of revival. I mean when God visits a place, when you have an outpost like we've had here for two and three quarter years or it could be for a month.

Season of divine visitation. As it's often described, God stepping down from heaven. The spirit poured out from on high.

God rending the heavens and coming down to use some biblical terms and expressions. Are you afraid of that? What's there to be afraid of? Well, several things and I want you to honestly think it through. One thing that you can be afraid of is the intensity and power and suddenness of revival.

Intensity and power and suddenness. We are used to our little scheduled services. Even those of us who have longer services, pretty much they follow a set schedule.

Is it a sin to follow a schedule? Absolutely not. Does it make you more spiritual if you change things every week? No. This week we're going to start with the word and end with announcements.

Next week we're going to start with announcements and end with the word. This week we're going to have liturgy. Next week, black Pentecostal.

Next week, white Presbyterian. Now that doesn't make you spiritual to change things every week. However, we like to know, especially if you're in leadership, we like to have a sense of what's going to happen and how it's going to happen.

We like to have a sense of being in control. And while you have responsibility to the flock, and while you have responsibility to make sure that things do not get in the flesh, and while if you are a leader you have responsibility to keep the wolves out and to keep people from speaking out when it's not God, you do not have the responsibility to stop and start the moving of the Spirit. Your responsibility is to help create an environment where God is welcome to come and do whatever He wants to do, however He wants to do it, whatever the consequences.

Period. It was the wonderful Baptist preacher, Charles Spurgeon, who prayed for a season of glorious disorder. Didn't he believe in order? Absolutely.

Were his services like a Pentecostal or charismatic service? Absolutely not. But he knew people got stuck in a system. He called them iron clad brethren.

Somewhere, let no one deceive you, I have that prayer printed. And he prayed for God to knock people from stem to stern. Who says that church is supposed to be the way we're used to it? You show up on a Sunday, you have this, this, and this, and this.

You go home after an hour, two hours, whatever it is. Who says it's supposed to be like that? That's basically a glorified social club, a little spiritual tickle in the middle of it. I would be more direct, but I don't want to offend anyone.

I wrote a prayer that may express some of your hearts. See if I can find it. Here it is.

It precedes the chapter, a lot of fallout over a little falling out, and let no one deceive you. Which follows the chapter, now don't get too emotional, which follows the chapter, all shook up over a little shaking. See, John Wesley had prayed this prayer.

He heard it prayed by a Scottish believer, and he put it on his own lips. Lord, if it please thee, work the same work again without the blemishes. But if that may not be, though it be with all the blemishes, work the same work.

The book of Acts was not perfect in terms of the book is perfect, the word of God is perfect, but what happened in the time of the book of Acts was not perfect. There were some grumblings and some issues that had to be dealt with. There were splits between leaders.

There were doctrinal controversies that had to be dealt with. There was some junk and sin in the camp that had to be dealt with. It wasn't perfect.

So do you say, Lord, don't pour out your spirit like you did in the book of Acts, unless it can be without the problems, or say, Lord, pour it out, problems and all. You pour out your spirit, and if we have problems on our end, pour out your spirit anyway. That's where we get the quote from Wesley, send us a revival without defects, but if that's not possible, send a revival with defects and all.

But I composed a prayer. Some of these verses may reflect the sentiment of some of you here. Not too loud and not too long.

We want a nice revival. Nothing heavy, weird, or wild. Our first goal is survival.

Make our church grow big, dear Lord. Give us souls galore. And bless our new faith budget, God.

That's what revival's for. More people come in, more souls, more money for church budget. I love revival, Lord.

We're praying and we're fasting, Lord. Please send your spirit and power, and do whatever you see fit. Just keep it to an hour.

Send the river, send the flood, send your mighty rain, send your glory down, oh God, it will be to our gain. And now we close with this request. We pray with heart and soul.

Send a great revival, Lord. But leave us in control. God will say, okay, that's one church I'm not going to move in.

I'll look somewhere else where I'm welcome. I have a profound biblical and theological and historical question for the scholars in our midst. Why was Jesus born in a stable? This is a very deep, difficult question.

Even our most advanced students in our school of ministry are not ready for this. But I know we've got some here with gray hair that have been studying the word for decades and decades. Why was it that Jesus was born in the stable? Anyone like to venture a guess in front of what could be ultimately millions of people? Why don't you just shout it out if you know.

There is no room in the inn. Man, I'm impressed. I'm having fun with you, but you understand the point.

It's pretty simple. There was no room there, so he had to go somewhere else. Why did God pour out his spirit and bring the birth of a new Pentecost in Azusa Street? Weren't there good churches all over the Los Angeles area? Why was it with some one-eyed preacher, blind in one eye? A black man.

Why a black man? You know how many whites there were, how many religious racists there were that rejected Azusa Street because it came through a black man? Come on, what about all of our fine white churches? I mean, the worst thing of all wasn't, okay, God can use a black, they could accept that. Some of the whites could accept that, but that whites and blacks should mingle together. God forbid.

Do you know why they ended up on Azusa Street? You say, well, wasn't it that they were meeting in front of someone's house at Bonny Bray Street? Isn't that what happened at Bonny Bray Street? They were meeting on the porch and the porch collapsed because of all the people. Yeah, but why were they meeting at Bonny Bray Street? Why were they on the porch? Because the Holiness Church, where Brother Seymour was preaching, William Seymour, and it was a black holiness church, when he began to preach on the baptism of the Spirit with speaking in tongues, they bolted the door on him. So a mighty move of God, imperfect like every move because it comes through man, what God does is perfect, as it comes through us, it is not perfect.

A mighty move that has now swept around the world to the point that there are roughly one half billion, one half billion, the largest single identifiable group in the church, outside of those that would be Roman Catholic, I'm talking about the Protestant church around the world, the largest identifiable body of believers, calls them, identifies with what we would call Pentecostal or charismatic teaching or beliefs, believing in the gifts and power of the Spirit for today, a half billion people. But somebody bolted the door and other churches were too proper and too proud. They shut the thing out.

And God comes in some little ramshackle place through a bunch of nobodies and sends a move that goes around the world. Lord, make me a nobody. Let's see if I can find this here.

A local, here we go. How many of you have books at home by Reverend R.J. Burdett? How many of you have ever heard of Reverend R.J. Burdett? How many of you have heard of him? You know the name. Maybe one or two.

That would be by strange turn of events, if you know him. What was he best known for? Attacking the streets. So you forget the names of those who reject the move of God.

Tell me the names of the five top opponents of John Wesley. Three. Top.

One. Or as one pastor asked me, tell me the names of the ten spies that said let us not go into the promised land. See there's one record I care about.

That's heaven's record. I want to look at God and when he looks at me, I want him to say you were faithful to me and you weren't swayed by human opinion and you weren't swayed by public opinion and you didn't preach this because it was popular and avoid this because it was unpopular. You did what I told you to do.

What could be more wimpy, more inexcusable than to know the truth and to know what God wants us to do and not do it because of what people say, people think. How could we get any lower than that? Let me quote to you from Reverend R.J. Burdett. See, when I wrote from Holy Laughter to Holy Fire, when the earlier edition came out, I was able to put some additional material in with another publisher that I couldn't the first time.

But I wrote the bulk of this in 1994, sensing that we were on the verge of revival. That we were in the early stages of renewal and that we could be on the verge of revival. That something was ready to break and that there would be two things that would get in the way.

One would be a critical religious spirit that would attack every fresh and new thing God did on the one hand and on the other hand, there would be a superficial sensationalism that just got caught up with manifestations of the unusual and made that the whole thing. Either of those would be pitfalls that would steal the reality of revival and get us from experiencing the fullness of God. So we knew that criticism would come when God began to move.

Thankfully, revival broke here, Father's Day of 95, revival fires spreading out in all different parts of the country. But the same kind of opposition that came now is going to come then. You say, well, brother, are you a prophet? I just know history and I just have a sense of where we are.

And I know the word like many of you know history and know the word and have a sense of where we are. The handwriting's on the wall. Listen to what R.J. Burdett said.

This was published in the Los Angeles Times. As for new religions, beyond the numbering of a busy man, they come and go, especially in Los Angeles. Dear brother, you're the one that came and went.

They come with the blare of trumpets out of tune and harmony but lustily blown with all the power of human or inhuman lungs. They shine with phosphorescent gleams strangely like that of brimstone and with color more or less tainted. They distract the affrighted atmosphere with a bewildering jargon of babbling tongues of all grades, dried, boiled and soaked.

They rant and jump and dance and roll in a disgusting amalgamation of African voodoo superstition and Caucasian insanity and will pass away like the nightmares of hysteria that they are. God bless you, brother. I hope you're enjoying the presence of the Lord in heaven now and also looking down at a half a billion people.

Friends, God's going to move in ways beyond what we expect. He's going to come suddenly. Malachi 3, the Lord whom you are seeking will suddenly come to his temple.

Acts the second chapter, the end of the Feast of Weeks, the Feast of Shavuot, Pentecost, when that Feast or as the Feast arrives, the beginning of that Feast when it's fully calm as it says in the King James, suddenly there's a sound from heaven like a rushing violent wind. That can't be the Spirit. Peter, what's that? I don't know, John, but it can't be the Spirit.

Why? Because the Holy Spirit comes as a gentle dove and that is the sound of a blowing violent wind. Therefore, it cannot be the Holy Spirit. God may not come exactly in the way you think he's going to come.

Some people are afraid of that. You know, I travel around the world. I love to fly.

Sometimes you can be on a long flight and you can't sleep and you're squeezed in and you're uncomfortable and too tired to write or to read and you're, you know, sometimes flights can be a little bit annoying to the flesh, but for the most part I love to travel. I look forward. I tell you before God I'm looking forward to getting on, you know, nine and ten hour flights, you know, another nine and ten hour flight and just, you know, on our way to India.

I enjoy it. We were coming back from California where Scott, my assistant, and I had spent a whole day with a dear brother who in the past had been very critical of the revival. We become good friends and we just flew out just to spend the day with him, to fellowship, talk about the things of the Lord, discuss some issues relative to revival, deepen our relationship, and coming back there's this little commuter plane and Scott just wasn't keen on getting on this little commuter plane, you know, one of these little prop planes.

And, you know, I couldn't wait to get on and have the adventure of this next flight. You know, there was no fear that the thing was going to come down. Boy, this is cool.

I said, listen, man, if it was four seats, I've never been on a four seater. That would be a neat experience. I mean, except the little thing going over the Grand Canyon.

That was the one little four seater I guess I was in. That was actually a helicopter, now that I think of it. But, see, some of you, the idea of doing something a little different or doing something a little new or breaking out of your structure is terrifying to you.

What if God starts sweeping through in revival and it affects your daily routine? I normally don't talk about this, but I feel like I need to meddle here for a minute. What if the spirit moves in such a way? Listen, Steve has been an early morning person since he's been saved. He would get up between three and four in the morning to seek God in prayer and spend the first few hours of the day with the Lord.

He did that for years. When the revival broke, he was getting home at three or four or five in the morning. He was getting home as the sun rose to the place where they were staying because he lived back in Texas at that point.

It changed his schedule. It worked out a little better for me because I normally do all my writing and studying and praying the bulk of the time up until about four in the morning. I stay up late.

I'm a late night person. Of course, you still have to get up fairly early. But what if you got your routine? Sir, what if you've had your routine for thirty years? Ma'am, what if you've had your routine for two decades? What if God messes up your routine? You know, you come up to me and kind of say, hey, man, how you doing? And it won't faze me.

You know, just for the video camera, let's try to get this a little better. But it won't faze me. But there are other people who go lay hands on them, and no sooner do you pray for them, they've got to fix their hair.

It's probably why God lays so many people out, so they can't mess with their hair and try to fix it. Yeah, there you go. Get over the vanity, honey.

Sir, now I'm not saying you should be out of control. I'm not saying that you should be slovenly. I'm not saying that you should be irresponsible.

But I'm saying that we make idols out of things. Some of you, your idol is Sunday afternoon lunch. That's your idol.

Some of you, your idol is coming home on a Sunday and resting, doing this and that. And God may just want to smash that idol. So you can have that.

You can have a lovely religious service in your routine, or you can have me. Which do you choose? Which do you choose? Are you afraid of revival? Are you afraid of... Listen, we never had a service quite like last night. We've had many, many, many different services in the revival, but last night was unique in different ways.

I've never seen Steve get hit by the power of God exactly the way he did last night. We were being touched. We were rejoicing.

We were also smiling because we'd never seen Steve get hit by the power of God. You might say, man, I went to Brownsville. It was awesome.

The Lord says, how would you like me to do that in your church? Oh, well, that was awesome at Brownsville, Lord. Lord, I just blessed that work. Keep them all, Lord.

They're making a great sacrifice. Really use them, Lord. Keep working there, Lord.

See, I joke about this, but it's really true. And when I wrote Holy Fire, I have a hypocrite's checklist in there. Two chapters.

You check your own life to see if you're a religious hypocrite or where you have characteristics of religious hypocrisy. And, you know, we're a lot more man-pleasing, man-fearing than we'd like to admit. We like to have our hands completely on the control.

I remember, and remember I said, I'm not saying abdicate your leadership responsibility. I'm not saying that. I'm not saying let anything happen to anybody.

Whatever happens, just let it go. No, you're responsible to pastor and shepherd things. You know, we, Wednesday night in worship, God began moving a certain way.

There was just a wonderful singing in the spirit and somebody just began to laugh loudly. They may have been touched. I don't know, but it was definitely out of order for what was happening with the rest of us.

I was on my knees. Pastor was on his knees. We each caught eyes looking up at it.

And, you know, both at the same time, we're looking at the usher to see is he running out to just tell that person not now. It's inappropriate. There is a place to shepherd and pastor things.

There is a place to oversee. We're very careful about prophetic word. Why do we have so many rules for our prayer team? They pray in Jesus name.

They ask God to touch more Lord. Why? Because we are very sensitive to the fact that many people come in and it's very easy for people to just start giving out prophetic words without supervision, without oversight, start telling people this, this, this and mess up their whole lives. And we feel a responsibility before God for over 2 million people that God's brought through these doors.

We feel a responsibility. That's why we only let people on the prayer team pray. Are there other people who are not anointed? Of course, there are many here who are anointed, but we know these people and we don't know everybody else.

So we have to be safe in what we do. And in the midst of that, the Holy Spirit is free to do whatever he wants to do. If you've been here these last few weeks, they've been unbelievable with God, just breaking through in all kinds of ways and taking over services.

But some of you are afraid of God sweeping through. You're afraid of the moving of God. I love, I love being in meetings where it gets so thick and heavy.

I've been in meetings like this for years, especially in times of prayer when we're calling people to pray and cry out to God. And it gets so overwhelming. I've been in major meetings in major settings and all I can do is lay on my face before God.

I'm the one supposed to be leading the thing. All I do is lay on my face before God. And you just, God, just move.

God, just come down. God, just sweep through. The burden's so overwhelming.

The presence of God is so thick. Wednesday night, Steve, you know, just got up, ready to preach. We began to sing in the spirit, worship God.

I was praying behind his chair there. Next thing I felt something, you know, leaning on me. He was coming to sit down in his chair.

So I just turned to be on my knees the other way. He, you know, who was leading it? God. He sat down.

Linda was not formally leading things. He was probably over at the keyboard, but I didn't see. We let God have his way.

There is oversight, but there is the heart attitude. God, you sweep through however you want to sweep through. Here's the problem.

We think we know what people need and we're not always right. How many times has someone come into a service? Come on, pastors, be honest or people you brought friends, be honest. Somebody comes into one of your services at your church.

You've been praying for this person to get saved for a while. It's like, oh no, not tonight. Why did sister Susie have to start shaking and speaking in tongues tonight? She's sitting right behind this guy.

Oh no. And oh, why does, you know, brother so-and-so just have to suddenly start weeping right before the offering, you know, and it just sounds so immature. He's just sobbing and blubbing and he didn't bring a handkerchief.

It's a mess. Oh God, why? You're thinking all this stuff. I'm just, I'm just trying to make it real.

Something you can relate to. Is this helping? I mean, am I, it's the world we live in. Okay.

And then afterwards you talk to that person. I said, man, I've never been in a meeting like this. God's all I just want Jesus to take control of my life.

I don't know where I don't make the connection that I would have. The way I read you, this would have offended you. This would have bothered you.

Why don't you step back and let God be God. Amen. And if, if you had your service just the way you want it and introduce this person just the way you want it to.

I'm not saying try to be wild. I'm not saying try to be crazy. I'm not saying try to stage anything.

God forbid that is immaturity and foolishness. That's the flesh, but you may get things just the way you want with this person, but are you going to protect them the rest of their lives? Are you going to shadow them the rest of the life? What happens when they meet the rest of the body of Christ? I've shared this illustration a few times. I'm going to move on to another point, but I just want to say this last thing about being in control.

Several years ago, we went on a vacation. Every time I say the word, I have to remind myself of what it means. Revival does cut into your schedule friends, but our family has been the type to just spend, you know, all types of random times together, you know, grab a couple of days this week, do this together, do that together.

And every so often, you know, go away for an extended time, but otherwise just get all kinds of different times together. Sometimes during school, we'd pull them out a little bit and do something together. Cause I was, I was around and I, and I, and, and summertime was just too busy with people being everywhere and tourist stuff.

This is one of the rare times we just went away for an extended time on vacation. And, uh, I went with my daughters. My wife doesn't really like to go on the rollercoaster and crazy kind of rides, but I went with them just about every ride.

And, uh, you know, I'm, I'm, I'm big. So some of the rides, when you get, you know, the seatbelt thing comes down, so, you know, I'm, I'm in there pretty snug and I, you know, I enjoy the things they get to, I'm a little older now than I was before. They start to get you a little bit more as you get older, feel the effects of it a little bit more, but I was enjoying the rides some years back.

But, you know, strapped in didn't matter what the thing did, how many loops it did or anything. There's no problem because you're strapped in, you're fine. But my wife had a horse when she was a teenager.

Both of our daughters ride. Our daughters now are going on 21 and the other is 19. They ride well.

So we were in West Virginia and we finally found this place where they had some stables and they take you on these trail rides and so on. And dad, you want to go? Well, I knew we had to go riding as a family. Got healed years ago of hay fever, but somehow horse, whatever horse hair, horse stuff, and I don't agree.

But I couldn't let that stop me. We got to go out and have some fun on the horse. And I tell you before God, I distinctly remember as I got on top of this horse and my daughter's jumping.

And, you know, I thought that's great, but it never struck me as tremendously courageous to jump. You know, I'd watch the videos my wife would take of their jump. It's like, well, that's okay.

That's a few, several feet high. Yes, that's great. But it didn't really strike me.

I sat on this horse and my first, I tell you before God, my first reaction was where's the belt? Where's the, oh my God, there's no, I reach for it because we've been on all these rides. There's no belt. And of course they got to get the biggest horse in the whole stable for me because I'm a big guy, tall guy.

I remember we're going on this, on this horse. They were going, thankfully it was all up and down these hills and through the woods. So you really couldn't go too fast.

But then we had this little opening and he said, you want to trot? Now I was right behind the guy. Well, I mean, how can I say we don't want to trot when it's got to be totally boring for the rest of my family otherwise. Just at least a trot.

So I said, sure. And they were hysterical watching from the, you know, they were all behind me. They were having the time of their lives watching me bounce on this horse.

I'm just trying to figure if my glasses fall, if I fall this way, how do I avoid getting hit? That's the only thing I'm thinking about. And suddenly I'm struck. I can't believe they jump.

They jump with several feet. Yikes. You know, anyone that rides horse a lot, you get bumped up and bruised and broken fingers or bones or get kicked in the head.

You know, you got your helmet on, thankfully. That gave me a totally different perspective. Man, no seatbelt.

Listen, friends, you can mark it down. I don't know that I've ever made this statement before, but mark it down. There are no seatbelts in Revival.

You got to say, Lord, come move however you want. And the Lord smiles. He said, do you really mean that? Last week I spoke on the urgent need of Revival, why we must have Revival.

You may want to get that tape. I talked about why it's so critically important. It's not just a fun and games thing.

It's life and death. Life and death. We're in such a state.

The moral decline has been so great in America. Things are in such pitiful condition. The family has been so destroyed.

We heard from a speaker at the school this week. I haven't gotten the statistics myself, but he said that he's heard, verified it in a couple of places, that of the teen generation today, one third nationally, one third of the kids born are born illegitimately. In the inner cities, statistics of children being raised by just one parent, it's easily 60, 80%.

Many don't even know ultimately who their biological father is. Some don't know who their biological mother is. Terrible problems.

I was on the internet briefly last night, just checking a news item and some weather items and getting ready to go out of the country. And there was this poll, you know, several questions about the president. Do you believe he's guilty of having an affair? And I said, yes, I do.

Just my opinion. I do believe. And I was with the majority.

The majority also believed. Next question, should he resign if in fact he had this affair? Yes, was my answer. I look at the response to the poll.

61% of Americans said even if he's guilty, he shouldn't resign. Now that's in keeping with most of the polls that you hear out there. I mean, we are in sad, sad shape.

The church is known for moral scandals. The church, listen, there's incest in our pews and adultery in our pulpits. We've lost the bulk of this last generation of teens.

God's just sweeping so many in now. It's been horrible. The only way the Great Commission is going to be fulfilled is with great revival, continuing to sweep the earth.

The only way society is going to be reformed is through revival. But friends, that means there's got to be upheaval. That means there's got to be shaking.

God said in Haggai 2 and repeat at the end of Hebrews 12, he will shake everything. He will shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. For years, it was my custom when I'd go up in the plane and I'd look out and I could see the world and it was smaller.

I would quote those words from Haggai 2. Yet once, once more, it's just a little, little while. I'll shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. I'd say, Lord, do it, do it.

As I'd be landing, looking down, Lord, do it, shake this place. God's shaking everything. And when God's spirit comes in power, he may come in ways that are unusual and different to us.

There may be people shaking and falling to the ground. Does everyone who shakes necessarily do so because the spirit's on? Not necessarily. Does everyone who falls to the ground fall because they're overcome by the spirit? Not necessarily.

Is it logical that people may shake, may be overcome if the spirit moves upon them? Certainly is. Listen to what D. Martin Lloyd-Jones said, one of the most respected preachers in the world, in England in particular, last generation. A medical doctor before he gave himself only to preaching.

Listen to what he says. It comes near to the rule that in revival, phenomena begin to manifest themselves. Sometimes people feel the power of the spirit to the extent that they faint and fall to the ground.

Sometimes there are even convulsions, physical convulsions. And sometimes people fall into a state of unconsciousness, into a kind of trance. And many remain in that kind of state for hours.

These phenomena are not essential to revival. Yet it is true to say, on the whole, they do tend to present, to be present where there is revival. You read about revival in the past.

Why do these things happen? Because people are overcome. They're overcome with a sense of their sin. They cry out under conviction.

They weep under conviction. They weep for joy. They may laugh for joy when their sins are forgiven and the bondage is done.

They've repented. Refreshing comes and touches them. They may shake because the presence of God is overwhelming them.

They may be crying out because demons are leaving. These kind of things happen. Jesus goes into a synagogue on the Sabbath, and there a demon-possessed man cries out.

Man, he may have been in that synagogue for years, and people may have gone there for years, but when the Messiah came full of the spirit, get out of here, Jesus. You're disrupting things. No, he's setting captives free.

That's what God's house should be about. Lord Jones said, we must never forget that the spirit affects the whole person. You see, man is body, soul, and spirit, and you cannot divide these.

Man reacts as a whole. Something is happening which is so powerful that the very physical frame is involved. It makes sense.

Do you look for those manifestations? No. Are those manifestations proof of the presence of God? No. Do you major on the manifestations? No.

Do you try to cut them off? No. You have to step back and have the wisdom of God. I've got some things I printed up from the journal of John Wesley.

Let me read this to you. He's ministering at a place called Everton. He says, being with Mr. B at Everton, I was much fatigued and did not rise, but Mr. B did and observed several fainting and crying out while Mr. B, another Mr. B, was preaching.

Afterward at church, I heard many cry out, especially children, whose agonies were amazing. One of the eldest, a girl 10 or 12 years old, was full, in my view, in violent contortions of body and weeping aloud, I think incessantly during the whole service. The whole service while John Wesley is preaching and teaching.

Wesley was a brilliant man. Wesley is a genius. Wesley was not, you know, get up and have Holy Ghost twitches and call that revival, you know, and everybody shake and call that revival.

But he recognized when the Holy Spirit moved. He recognized when people were getting set free. He recognized when there were human responses.

We're going to read more in a moment, talking about being afraid of revival, why people often draw back. Can God come in revival without unusual manifestations? But it would be very rare to see a real moving of God without emotion. When the layman was healed in Acts chapter 3, he went into the temple, leaping and walking and praising God.

I've often said you didn't have to ask, who was the one that was healed? Which man? We understand there's someone crippled from birth, 40 years old. We understand someone was healed. He just went into the temple.

Where is he? He's that one there. Sir, sir, excuse me. I'm here from World News reporting on this miracle.

Are you the one that was just healed? Yes, it is. It is true. Is it true that you were born lame? Yes.

This is the first time you've ever walked in 40 years. Quite true. 40 years or more.

How would you describe this? Fascinating, really fascinating. I don't think so. I don't think so.

I know. So it says he went in walking and leaping and praising God. This is God.

I'm healed. Who is the God of that God? Leaping up and down. You say, oh, but brother, we don't major on physical healing.

We major on salvation of soul. Oh, so if somebody was physically healed, which is not as important, and they leap for joy in the temple, is it wrong for someone whose sins are forgiven, who's redeemed from the judgment and wrath of God, redeemed from eternal fire? Is it wrong for that person to jump and shout and praise God and get excited? Come on. I was in Finland preaching one time.

Been there a good number of times. Love the Finnish church. And I was preaching and started hitting a wall in one place, hitting a wall.

And I was talking to my interpreter. You know, God was moving, but I was talking to my interpreter and he said, you know, the Finns are very conservative. And, you know, one brother was one of the Finnish Pentecostal leaders was joking with me.

You know, he said the way the Finnish churches, you know, he said, we're like the weather, you know, we saw a little bit during the year. And he said, you know, we'll he said, if we like what the preacher says on Sunday, we'll say amen by Wednesday. Now, I love all different types of music in the church, many different varieties.

I've been in Messianic Jewish circles that have a lot of minor key worship. I've been in black Pentecostal church. I've been in I haven't been much in liturgical churches, but, you know, wide ranges of churches, you know, love to worship with the saints in India and different cultures and so on.

So I don't have a problem with hymns. I love some of the great hymns. I don't have a problem with minor key music.

A lot of the Finnish hymns are these minor key hymns. I don't understand the words unless someone translates them for me. And my translator said to me, you know, the hymns may sound kind of down, but as the people sing them, they have great joy.

So I'm looking around the congregation as they're singing a couple of these hymns. I said, man, I see more joy at a funeral. And he looked around.

He said, you know, it's true what you're saying. And he assessed the situation as well. Someone's explaining that the Finns are very conservative people.

That's why they don't get excited in church. And that's why they, you know, you don't see much emotional display in church. I said, oh, no, I got it.

So I got up and I was preaching that next night. I said, now, I understand the reason you don't shout in church and jump for joy or weep at the altar. I understand.

I'm not saying all Finns are like this, but this is my experience. Okay. I said, I understand.

And believe me, when I go out, I do not preach that I'm the big American with all the wisdom. Okay. You have no idea the reproach that the Church of America has left around the world.

Awesome work, awesome labor sent out, but a whole lot of junk we're responsible for. Whole lot of places in the world, American believers are not welcome. I go in to serve, but I'm going to tell the truth no matter what.

And I said to these folks, I understand that you're very conservative. That's why there's so little display of emotion in church. I understand.

I said, so when it's World Cup hockey and the Finnish national team is playing the Swedish national team and with two seconds left in overtime, the Finnish star just at the end of a breakaway pulls a stick back, dekes the goal and scores. And the Finns win the gold medal. I understand.

You say to one another, what an extraordinary demonstration of hockey skill. Did you see that fake he put on the goal? That's one of the most amazing fakes I've ever seen. I just feel proud to be a Finn at this moment.

Oh no, you're jumping up and down. You're screaming. Men are crying like babies because somebody put some hard piece of rubber behind the guy with a mask into a cage.

They're jumping on there, hugging strangers. Finland, Finland. Yeah, yeah.

Marching down the street singing. In church, we're very conservative. I said, I understand.

You know, you're having a domestic dispute, husband and wife. You're on the verge of divorce. Man looks across the table.

Honey, I must tell you that I registered some disappointment with your behavior as of late, and I'm sadly troubled by your verbal attacks on me and somehow feel offended that you've called me a stupid slob. And she in turn says, my feeling of disdain for you is mutual. And I too am not flattered by the description of hag.

It does seem that we have some problems that we need to address. I don't think so. You stupid stupid.

I must be stupid to marry you. Throw things at each other. That's what happens.

Oh, but in church. Oh God, most high God. You know why we act like that in a domestic dispute? You know why we act like that? Some sports event? Because that stuff is real to us.

We come into the house of God. We come in to worship God. We come in to meet with God.

Talk about sins forgiven. Talk about heaven and hell. Talk about being redeemed.

Somehow that's just religious terminology. Now I'm not justifying the other behavior. I'm just saying that's what human beings do.

I have a friend that was here recently. Loved the revivals. Hungry for revival.

His wife gets zapped by the spirit when she gets touched. If I didn't know him, I would look out at that man during the service and say, that man is absolutely irresponsible to the spirit. He just kind of stood.

That's the kind of guy he is. He loves God. I don't judge every individual.

I'm not saying everybody has to be jumping and shouting and hooting and hollering and running around the building. All I'm saying is, if you're the type that jumps and shouts and hoots and hollers over anything else, don't pack your emotion and your heart and your desire at the door when you come into church. Give God everything.

Give God everything. Revival may be a little heavy. It may be a little heavy.

And some people may get in the flesh. And here's the problem with revival. Let me try to make this as plain as I can.

Pentecostal flesh is louder than Baptist flesh. In other words, in a Baptist church, if you're in the flesh, you know, you sing the hymns even though you don't believe them. Or maybe you fall asleep during the sermon.

That, you know, you're in the flesh. Pentecostal church, you're in the flesh, you know, you jump up and start to prophesy and it's not God. Or you're, hallelujah, hallelujah, and it's, you know, you're just fleshly display and Pentecostal flesh is louder than Baptist flesh.

And revival flesh is louder than Pentecostal flesh. Because, you know, people are really, a lot of stuff can be happening in a meeting. And a lot of it doesn't happen in here, it happens out of here.

And the things are more unusual. Thank God, Pensacola, that, you know, that tourism went up 19 percent since the revival. The local economy has been blessed by you folks coming in, staying at the hotels, going to the restaurants, flying in, renting cars.

It's been a great blessing to the community. But, you know, thankfully the restaurants around here are used to things that are sometimes a little unusual. Somebody may want to take this little snippet and quote it and put it around the world and say, this is the emphasis of the revival.

Hey, God knows the truth, do what you like, friend. But you can, you can go into like a Shoney's around here and walk in, you know, three of you and the fourth is on the shoulder. We've actually seen this.

I've been in restaurants and seeing them walk in with one person and they just ask, you know, how many seats do you need? That's a table for how many? Or do you need a table and floor space? You know, I

don't know how they, they figure it. Let me just read a little bit more of Wesley. The church was, oh, here's the one girl weeping aloud incessantly during the whole service and several much younger children were in Mr. B's view, agonizing as this did.

The church was equally crowded in the afternoon, the windows being filled with in and without, and even the outside of the pulpit to the very top so that Mr. B seemed almost stifled by their breath. Yet feeble and sickly as he is, he was continually strengthened in his voice for the most part distinguishable in the midst of all the outcries. I believe there were present three times more men than women, a great part of whom came from far, 30 of them having set out at two in the morning from a place 13 miles off.

The text was having a form of gobbling this, but denying the power thereof. When the power of religion began to be spoke of the presence of God really filled the place. And while poor sinners felt the sense of death in their souls, what sounds of distress did I hear? The greatest number of them who cried or fell were men, but some women and several children felt the power of the same almighty spirit and seemed just sinking into hell.

This occasion a mixture of various sounds, some shrieking, some roaring aloud. The most general was a loud breathing like that of people half strangled and gasping for life, and indeed almost all the cries were like those of human creatures dying in bitter anguish. Great numbers wept without any noise, others fell down as dead, some sinking in silence, some with extreme noise and violent agitation.

I stood on the pew seat as did a young man in the opposite pew, an able-bodied, fresh, healthy countryman. But in a moment, while he seemed to think of nothing less, down he dropped with a violence inconceivable. The adjoining pew seemed shook with his fall.

I heard afterward the stamping of his feet, ready to break the boards as he lay in strong convulsions at the bottom of the pew. Among several that were struck down in the next pew was a girl who was as violently seized as him. When he fell, another brother and I felt our souls thrilled with a momentary dread as when one man is killed by a cannonball, another often feels the wind of it.

Now, I know what some are thinking. Brother, you're comparing apples with oranges. These are people who are sinners being overcome with a sense of dread and conviction, and screaming and falling to the ground and kicking with their feet and having convulsions because they are undone as if in the presence of a holy God who is about to damn their souls.

Whereas in most of your revival services, it is believers who are falling to the ground and shaking and so on. Do you mean to tell me, dear brother, dear sister, that you would be at home with a service like that in your church if it was sinners acting like that? Trust me, friend, it doesn't matter who acts like that. It makes your skin crawl if you don't know what's happening.

Oh, so that wouldn't be disruptive when the local banker comes in to consider giving your church a home. Nominal Christian man. And he happens to come in on that Sunday.

And it's not believers, it's sinners. It's 20 local sinners. And while you were teaching through the whole building, but it's sinners, you'd be at home with that.

Come on, man, be honest with yourself. You wouldn't care if it was believers or sinners or. And how do you know how most people are getting touched and what's happening? So many people come in here with sin in their lives and junk and compromise, and God gets home.

They repent that these alters get right with him and the power of God hits him. He makes himself real. They leave here changed.

Take your hands off her friend. Let God be God. Among the children who felt the arrows of the Almighty, I saw a sturdy boy about eight years old who roared above his fellows and seemed in his agony to struggle with the strength of a grown man.

His face was red as scarlet, almost all on whom God laid his hand turned either very red or almost black. And one girl as a woman come 13 miles. She dreamed that this brother would come to her village on that very day.

Ronnie did come, though, without either knowing the place or the way to it. She just ends up there. She was convinced at that time, just as we heard of her deliverance, the girl on the floor began to stir.

She was then set in the chair and after sighing a while, suddenly rose up rejoicing in God. Her face was covered with the most beautiful smile I ever saw. She frequently fell on her knees, but was generally running to and fro, speaking these and the like words.

Oh, what can Jesus do for lost sinners? He has forgiven all my sins. I am in heaven. I am in heaven.

How he loves me and how I love him. He goes on and on with all kinds of descriptions. Here's another immediately after a stranger well-dressed who stood facing me, fell backward to the wall, then forward to his knees, wringing his hands and roaring like a bull.

The agony. Oh, the agony. His face at first turned quite red, then almost black.

He rose and ran against the wall to Mr. Keeling and another holding him. He screamed out, Oh, what shall I do? What shall I do? Oh, for one drop of the blood of Christ. As he spoke, God set his soul at liberty.

He knew his sins were blotted out. The rapture he was in seemed too great for human nature to bear. He had come 40 miles to hear Mr. B and was to leave him the next morning, which he did with a glad heart, telling all who came in his way what God had done for his soul.

You know, it's interesting. Wesley comes back. Oh, one other quote.

I hadn't noticed this before this morning. The violent struggling of many in the above mentioned churches has broke several pews and benches. This is John Wesley.

He talked about a meeting where everyone started laughing and it was the devil and it was a disruption and, you know, gave practical guidelines and concerns about people getting caught up with this stuff. This is Wesley's just reporting. God was working.

The violent struggling of many in the above mentioned churches has broke several pews and benches. Yet it is common for people to remain unaffected there and afterward drop down on their way home. Some have been found lying as dead in the road.

Friends, there's nothing new under the sun. Others in Mr. B's garden, not being able to walk from the church to his house, though it is not 200 yards, they made it just about there and boom, they're out. Oh, did they fall forward or backward to see if they've he comes back a year later.

And by the way, other observations. Another also was miserably torn by Satan, but said at Liberty before I had done prayer, he comes back a year later and he noticed most all the manifestations have subsided. Interesting, huh? I observed a remarkable difference since I was here before he said God was eminently present with us, though rather the comfort than convince people have been so shaken up, convicted.

Now, God was encouraging a year later. I observed a remarkable difference since I was here before as to the matter of the work. None now we're in trances.

None tried out. None fell down or were convulsed. Only some trembled exceedingly.

A little murmur was heard and many were refreshed with the multitude of peace. At the beginning of the revival, as God got hold of a lot of local people, a lot of teens that were back, said he shook them. And some of them, you know, if they're prayed for the spirit of God really moves on, they may shake.

But otherwise you would think these are the most quiet, reserved people. They love God. They worship God.

But God literally shook them, transformed them. And after a few days or a few weeks, they were different. They've gone on since Many, many, many will testify to it.

The schools have been the same way. Hundreds of kids were powerfully touched by God in this community. Transformed, converted, set free from sin, delivered.

Many of them shook. Some of them shook in school. I met with the superintendent of schools here last October, October of 97, and asked what about instances with shaking.

He said, what do you mean? I said, well, a class is disrupted because somebody's shaking. He said, what are you talking about? He said, there are none. None? No, none.

And I said, do you know? He said, I don't know anything like that happening in a school. It's been a principal in different schools, superintendent, and so on. I talked to the youth pastor here.

He said that really happened in the first year of revival. May happen again. But certainly, initially, God touched these young people, made them know he was real.

Sex was real to them. Drugs was real. Drinking was real.

The party life, MTV, the world, Satanism was real. God said, no, no, no, that stuff is junk. I'm real.

Got hold of them. The word spoke to them. The spirit touched them.

Now they're steadily in the word. They're steadily praying. They're growing.

They're disciples, all that. They may never shake again. Some of our most on-fire young people in the church never fall under the power.

My wife's never fallen under the power of shaking in 23 years in the Lord. Others, the moment you get near them, they go flying. Don't judge spirituality by that.

So Wesley made some observations. Listen. He said the danger was to regard extraordinary circumstances too much, such as outcries, convulsions, visions, trances, as if these were essential to the

inward work so it could not go on without them.

That was the danger. See, one danger is to reject everything. Wesley didn't do that.

He said the other danger is to put too much in that as if you can't have spirituality without those things. And we have taught against that and preached against that. Consistently.

Hundreds of hours teaching, preaching, messages, sharing has hit on that very subject through the revival. But look at the other side. Perhaps the danger is to regard them too little, to condemn them altogether, to imagine they had nothing of God in them and were in hindrance to his work.

You see that? So that's the danger on the other side. That's the real danger. Whereas the truth is, one, God suddenly and strongly convinced many that they were lost sinners.

The natural consequences were sudden outcries and strong bodily convulsions. Two, to strengthen and encourage them that believed and to make his work more apparent, he favored several of them with divine dreams, others with trances and visions. Three, in some of these instances, after a time, nature mixed with grace, so people got in the flesh.

Four, Satan likewise mimicked this work of God in order to discredit the whole work, and yet it is not wise to give up this part any more than to give up the whole. Man, that is wisdom. At first it was doubtless, holy from God.

It is partly so at this day, and he will enable us to discern how far in every case the work is pure and where it mixes or degenerates. Let me just read this a little bit more because it's so important. Let us even suppose that in some few cases there was a mixture of dissimulation, that persons pretended to see or feel what they did not, and imitated the cries or convulsive motions of those who were really overpowered by the Spirit of God.

Yet even this should not make us either deny or undervalue the real work of the Spirit. The shadow is no disparagement of the substance nor the counterfeit of the real diamond. We may further suppose that Satan will make these visions an occasion of pride, but what can be inferred from hence? Nothing but that we should guard against it, that we should diligently exhort all to be little in their own eyes, knowing that nothing avails with God but humble love, but still to slight or censure visions in general would be both irrational and unchristian.

You might as well throw out the Bible because cults have used the Bible to form their own religions, and people have used the Bible to justify every abhorrent act. Might as well throw the Bible out, God forbid. The Holy Spirit moves in such ways, maybe somebody mimics it, maybe flesh gets it, maybe pride gets it, maybe, but you don't stop what the Spirit's doing.

Now because of all the things that happen in revival, there is often criticism and controversy. Yesterday, maybe today too, I didn't see it, but yesterday there was this article that the local paper put out, and they did a better job this time than last time, which was a real hatchet job. I don't mean miss the point on things and misrepresented some things, but that's okay.

But back in November, the local paper, which had written over 40 positive articles on the revival, and we only know some of the motivation behind what happened, God knows the rest, but they wrote a series of articles. This is a local paper, you know, most people in the community see it or exposed to it. Sunday

morning, front page coverage attacking the revival, you know, the money in the myths, you know, no secret, that was it, secrets inside the revival.

And they had this whole thing, front page coverage, and then about four or five articles on the inside, mainly attacking Pastor and Steve, but Lendl's picture in there, my picture in there, others involved. And then front page coverage, Monday front page coverage, Tuesday front page coverage, Wednesday front page coverage, Thursday. I mean, this was the talk of the town.

We were at least pleased we were doing something right, you know, that's like a crown that you wear. You know, we had awesome articles written on the revival by the New York Times and the Washington Post and very positive coverage from the major media, Today Show in 2020, and, you know, good reports by CNN and all this kind of stuff. I said to Steve, this is the one newspaper you want to keep, this is the crown, this is the treasure.

Because Jesus got treated a whole lot worse than this. And the first Sunday that the newspaper came out was the Sunday that there was asked to be special prayer for the persecuted church around the world. And I thought, you know, man, we don't deserve to be included with that.

In two weeks, the week of March 17th, on a Tuesday through Friday, we're having a special missions week at our school of ministry with the emphasis on the persecuted church. People can register and come just for that week to a week and a half from now. I mean, here are people being tortured and killed for their faith and families having their father ripped away from and the mother left a widow because the father's martyred.

People in unspeakable suffering for their faith. We go through virtually nothing in America, most of the Western world, much of the Western world, Europe, so on. I said, at least we get to be included, just a tiny little drop with those who are being persecuted for their faith.

And you know what happened to the crowds? The crowds have increased since the attack. And not only that, not only that, the visitation of God has gotten much, much, much heavier. And I thought, man, if that's the way it works, let it come, let it come, let it come.

You may have built a certain reputation for years and some of it was God and some of it was just being a good politician. No one had to cater to everybody. Now God comes down.

You may lose some friends, bless them, love them, pray for them, reach out to them, but don't stop, don't compromise. When I wrote Let No One Deceive You, the last chapter was called Let No One Seize Your Crown, you know, I got to the end of that book and I've been pushing hard to write it right until three, four in the morning and just wiped out trying to get it done. I had this urgency in my soul to get it out.

And I finished writing the last words and just began to cry, just broke down crying because I said at last, after writing about revival for years and calling people to repentance and revival for years to finally be writing about criticism of the revival we're in, I was overwhelmed, overwhelmed. And I wrote that last chapter to tell people, listen, don't let anybody stop you, man. Don't listen.

You're going to stand before God. Every major move that has ever come from God has been hotly opposed, misunderstood and rejected. Evan Roberts was hotly opposed, misunderstood and rejected.

Leading pastors attacked him. Psychologists attacked him and said he should be institutionalized. John Wesley put out of the church.

Why do you think Whitefield preached in the open field? Because they were kicked out of the churches. That's why they weren't welcome in the churches. Wesley would preach in his clerical outfit on the street.

He would have loved to preach in the church, but he got put out. Why? For preaching a new birth, preaching repentance and faith. Everyone you read about today, every prophet of God, everyone that's made any impact for the kingdom, every single one of them was rejected, misunderstood, hotly opposed.

You must examine your own heart to make sure you're not proud, thinking that you're the big shot. You must examine your own heart to make sure that you are not being rejected, misunderstood because of flesh, because of foolishness. Some people are just so obnoxious with talk of renewal and just so silly about manifestations.

They deserve to be rejected, misunderstood in terms of people saying, I question whether that's really God or not. Or I question whether your behavior really fits in with the moving of God. And if you see flesh, be quick to repent of it.

But friends, it's going to cost you. Are you afraid of the criticism that's going to come? You're afraid of the controversy that's going to come? We talked about the suddenness, the power, the intensity, the unusual that can happen. What about the controversy? What about the criticism? Here's what it comes down to.

Here's what it comes down to. You can have a nice, lovely, acceptable church, denomination, group, life, and everybody likes you. And watch the world die and go to hell around you.

Or you can have an outpouring. See people saved, delivered, set free by the hundreds, by the thousands. See society shaken and have some opposition and misunderstanding along the way.

I take choice B myself. I take choice B. One thing I was going to spend a lot of time on, but I feel the Lord wanted us to emphasize these things. But this is a constant theme we hammer here.

This may not even make it onto the audio tape. It'll be on the video though. Some people are afraid of the holiness of revival.

You realize if God really visits your church, you're going to have to change the way you live. There may be some sacrifice called for, total upheaval, reevaluation. Nice to talk about it.

Another thing to have a face-to-face encounter with a holy God. By face-to-face, I mean intimate, personal, and deep. But what else can we have? Do we want our sin or do we want the Savior? Do we want our life or do we want His life working in us? Do we want our will or His will? Friends, there's only one choice.

Your will be done in power. Start the work in me. You know how you pray for revival the best way? You draw a circle.

You may have heard this said before. You draw a circle. You stand in the circle and say, Lord, revive everything in this circle.

You can be a walking revival. Revival is just to get us to the norm so that the fire falls, fruits produce, the kingdom comes wherever we go. That's the heart, the will, the mind of God.

If you're willing to say, Lord, move however you see fit, not what people put on you, not what human beings call revival, but whatever God sees fit. If you are willing to say, God, move however you want to move in me, through me. Whatever the consequences, whatever the cost, your will be done in power.

I want you to stand to your feet. We're going to pray together. Extend your hands to heaven with me.

Pray this out loud. Heavenly Father, your will be done in me, to me, through me, whatever the cost, whatever the consequences. I hold back nothing from you.

I am yours, spirit, soul, body. I hold back nothing. I ask you, Father, to hold back nothing from me.

Revive me. Change me. Transform me.

Anoint me. Empower me. Let your glory flood my soul.

Visit me. Visit my family. Visit my church.

Visit my community. Visit my nation. Do a greater work in our day than that which you have ever done.

May Jesus be exalted. May your kingdom come with power in my day, in my life, for your glory. In Jesus' name, amen.

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