

How Revival Is Hindered - Don't Make the Same Mistake

by Michael L. Brown

Michael L. Brown's sermon discusses how revival is often hindered by our reluctance to embrace the necessary disruptions and changes that come with God's visitation.

Duration: 54:53

Scripture: Mark 5:1

Topics: "Revival", "Spiritual Hunger"

Description

Michael L. Brown emphasizes the necessity of welcoming God's disruptive presence for true revival, warning against the tendency to resist change and the discomfort that often accompanies divine visitation. He illustrates this through the story of the demon-possessed man in Mark 5, highlighting how the townspeople preferred their comfort over the miraculous transformation that Jesus brought. Brown challenges the audience to examine their hunger for God and their willingness to embrace the upheaval that revival can bring, urging them to seek a deeper relationship with the Holy Spirit. He concludes by stressing that true revival may not fit neatly into our expectations but is essential for spiritual awakening and transformation.

Transcript

It's a delight to be with you, and as I started reading some of Pastor Shane's articles some years ago, I thought, man, there's a man of like heart, preaching holiness, but with grace. Hard to see moral and cultural change. When he'd send me some clips, if he was on Fox and debating issues, I thought, praise God, there's someone doing it with grace, but holding to the truth and being clear.

Because a lot of times, you know, you watch TV and whoever the Christian representative is, you kind of wince, you know, so praise God, appreciate your heart and the congregation's heart for revival. Amen. So just a couple things before we get into the Word.

I normally preach for three or four hours, but in the first service, I had to condense it to 45 minutes, so you said I'm good for three or four hours. No, just messing with you. Don't worry about that.

In fact, I have it down to an exact science. The moment I start the message, I look at my watch, and the moment I'm finished, I stop. So there you go.

But just a couple quick things. We are leading a tour to Israel again in May, and we're probably down to maybe about our last 12 seats available, and we just take two buses. It's really an intimate, amazing time, but because I love to pour into people and be with folks, it's not just the amazing tour in the day, but at night we do special meetings, Q&A, teach, pray together, do live radio shows.

So if you want to find out about going, we're down, like I said, to about our last 12 seats. Grab one of these cards on our table on the way out, and we've got a couple of books that are here for you. The one that we have the most of, and we got amazing results, Jezebel's War with America.

It's one of my ministry mottos, to avoid controversy at all costs. I'm just kidding. Do they know New York sarcasm here in California? No? Okay, sorry.

You're just very nice and like, oh, praise the Lord. No, so that was sarcasm. That meant the opposite of what I was saying.

If you meet New Yorkers, if they like you, they insult you. That's just a sign of affections, just so you know some of the culture. Yeah, New York needs to be saved as well as California.

In any case, Jezebel's War with America is obviously intensely controversial, but a light went on for me, and I began to see the same demonic forces that operated through Queen Jezebel in the Bible, that are listed, that you see clearly. And then Jesus references a woman called Jezebel in the New Testament. These same demonic forces, which are very powerful and very dangerous, operating in a concerted way in America today.

And you connect the dots from idolatry, to morality, to the radical shout-your-abortion movement, to radical feminism, to the rise of witchcraft, to the emasculating of men, to the silencing of the church's prophetic voice. You connect the dots. And as God started to move on me to write this book, I wrote 70 percent of the core of this book in six days, just gripped day and night.

When the book came out a few months back, the first printing sold out the first week. And we hear from many readers, I've never done this, but the first day I got the book, I read it cover to cover. I couldn't put it down.

So grab one of those on the way out. I believe it will stir you and bless you. And because I was at Messianic congregation over the weekend, we had some materials left, so we brought them over.

So those of you that want to find out about reaching Jewish people, what are the Jewish objections to Jesus, how do you answer, what are more insights we can get from the Hebrew about Messianic prophecy, I've got a 22-hour course just on a flash drive, and this 300-page study guide, Countering the Counter-Missionaries. So that's at the back table as well. And by God's grace, we want to blanket the nation with the Line of Fire broadcast.

We do live streams on Facebook and YouTube every day. We're on a number of stations on the weekends, we're all over the country, but we really have a burden to get the broadcast out all over America, where we serve as your voice of moral, cultural, and spiritual revolution. So, you know, so many times you're frustrated by what's happening in society around you, and you're frustrated the way it's getting reported on the news, and you just wish someone would say what you feel.

Well, that's what we do every day. That's why we say we serve as your voice of moral, cultural, and spiritual revolution. And we realize if we get a certain number of people just helping us with a dollar a day, we can get on the stations where we have open door and expand our outreach.

So we have some cards on the way out, my assistant Dylan's happy to explain that, where you can become a Torchbearer, a monthly supporter, and then we pour back into you. You get hundreds of hours of exclusive resources, classes you can take, all kinds of benefits, discounts. So we pour back into you as our supporters, but stand with us if you can.

And if you do join us, you can take the Jezebel book for free as well. So pray about that. And we believe, honestly, deeply, when I say we, I mean all those close to me, I believe it's in your heart too.

It's not too late for America. As dire as things are, we can actually see the greatest outpouring in our nation's history. It could happen.

And we know being a voice that we have a role, a part in that, to stir hearts. So stand with us. Together, we can make a great difference.

Amen? All right, let's pray. Abba, Father, we love you. We ask you to speak to us afresh, to see the hunger, the thirst in your people's hearts.

Take us deeper. Give us ears to hear. Give us a heart to respond.

Cause your word to come forth with power. Search our hearts and change us. So by your grace and power, we can go and change this world.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. Let's turn to Mark chapter 5. Mark chapter 5. I want to ask you a simple question.

I know your immediate answer will be yes, but I want you to think about it as I preach. Do you really want God? Do you really want revival? Do you really want visitation? Mark 5, a well-known account, Jesus and his disciples, they came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gerasenes. And when Jesus had stepped out of the boat, immediately there met him out of the tombs, a man with an unclean spirit.

He lived among the tombs and no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain. For he had often been bound with shackles and chains, but he wrenched the chains apart and he broke the shackles in pieces. No one had the strength to subdue him.

Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains, he was always crying out and cutting himself with stones. And when he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and fell down before him and crying out with a loud voice, he said, what have you to do with me, Jesus, son of the most high God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me. For he, Jesus, was saying to him, come out of the man, you unclean spirit.

And Jesus asked him, what is your name? He replied, my name is Legion, for we are many. And he begged him earnestly not to send them out of the country. Now a great herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, and they begged him saying, send us to the pigs, let us enter them.

So he gave them permission. And the unclean spirits came out and entered the pigs in the herd, numbering about 2,000, rushed down the steep bank into the sea and drowned in the sea. The herdsmen fled and told it in the city and the country, and the people came to see what it was that had happened.

And they came to Jesus, and they saw the demon-possessed man, the one who had had the Legion, sitting there clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid. And those who had seen it described to them what had happened to the demon-possessed man and to the pigs. And they began to beg Jesus to depart from their region.

What a shock. You would think the reaction would be, Jesus, there's a demonized man in my town. Jesus, my father is sick.

Can you stay here until I get him? We read some of the accounts in the gospels elsewhere. In the very next chapter of Mark, when Jesus enters the village, people come running. They're carrying the sick on their shoulder.

We just got to get there before he leaves. Because they know if Jesus would touch them, the blind eyes would be opened, and the sick would be healed, and the demonized would be set free. And in some cases, even the dead would be raised.

But in this case, they beg Jesus to leave. And friends, in my 48 years serving the Lord, and having been in the midst of true revival and outpouring, one case lasting for months, another case lasting for years, I can tell you that often when God comes, he's not welcome. That often the visitation of God is more than we asked for, and more intense than we were bargaining for, and too life-changing.

We just like a lovely blessing that adds to us and makes us happy and doesn't take from us. We just want a lovely little blessing, outpouring, anointing, revival. We can just flip it on and flip it off.

We don't want something that's going to come with shaking, and something that's going to come with disruption, and something that's going to come with upheaval. You know, when Jesus, as a baby, was dedicated at the temple, was brought there, and Simeon prophesied over him in Luke, the second chapter, he said, this child is destined for the falling and rising of many in Israel. Why not just the blessing of many in Israel? Why not just the encouragement of many in Israel? Why the falling and rising? Because that's what happens when God comes.

He shakes things up. That's what happens when God comes. He reveals the secrets of the heart.

That's what happens when the Holy Spirit visits, and it says that he will be a sign spoken against so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. I told Pastor Shane, you have no idea when the Holy Spirit comes, some of the most unlikely people, some of the most conservative and reticent and laid-back, when the Holy Spirit comes, they completely embrace what he's doing. And then the others that seem to be so hungry, so open, when the Holy Spirit comes, they reject because they like to be in control, because the pride of heart gets revealed.

I remember preaching in California, in San Diego, or Poway, actually, and there was one brother, whenever I'd preach, and he'd be in the service, he was one of the elders. Boy, did he have a prophetic word that seemed right on. I mean, I'm going to preach on that theme, and boy, he has a prophecy during the message, and right on, he kind of looked at me with a wink, like, man, you nailed it.

And I remember he was one of the ones that would always say, let go, let God, let God have his way. And there was one particular service, there were two Sunday morning services, and the first service, I preached a very intense message on hell. Not what you're expecting on a Sunday morning.

And it wasn't damning the people there, it was saying, this is a reality for the lost. How should we feel? How should we be burdened? And somehow, the second service comes, and of course, you're supposed to preach the same theme the second time. But this time, the whole theme changes, and I preach on the joy of the Lord.

So after the mourning and the crying, now we preach on the joy of the Lord. And when the service ended, I said, come on, we're just going to celebrate. And I'd been talking about David dancing before the Lord, and his wife Michal despising him, and so on.

And I said, we're just going to celebrate. I said, come on, let's just get up and dance before the Lord. And this was a Pentecostal charismatic church, and they were used to this kind of thing.

And I was just having fun. I said, hey, I'm going to sit down, play the drums, because I got saved as a rock drummer when I was 16. I said, I'm going to join the worship team.

I said, and if you won't dance, we're going to grab you in the aisle and make you dance. I was just having fun and smiling, and the place burst out in celebration. That elder walked out, never came back, and lit a split in the church.

He got offended. The mister let go, let God. He got offended.

And I remember the pastor said, Mike, we had no idea, but there was junk in his heart. And when that little thing happened, it exposed what was really going on. Isn't it amazing that when Jesus sets this man free, and it happens in such a disruptive way, come on, was that the only way to do it, Jesus? If we were there, we would have advised him, don't do the pig thing.

What's the purpose of that? I mean, just think of all the implications. That's people's livelihood. And even though they're unclean animals, you're still not supposed to hurt them.

So Jesus, when you come into town, it results in a demonized guy getting set free, and 2,000 pigs commit suicide. That's what happens, Jesus? That's the way you operate? Surely we have a better way to do it. Surely we counsel him.

You don't want the disruption. Look, why have the controversy? Because Jesus shakes things up. Because Jesus reveals our religious hypocrisy.

Because he does not leave us in our lovely little comfort zone. That's why we're praying for revival. If everything was great, if everything was wonderful, we wouldn't be crying out for revival.

If we were fully awake or fully woke these days, we wouldn't need awakening. Yeah, that's a good article, Awakening for Woke America. We'll see who writes it first this afternoon.

If you see him texting, just nudge him, okay? What was it that disturbed these people? Why did they beg Jesus to leave? Well, one thing, obviously, all the disruption is a bit much. Normal life, it's just normal life. Just leave things as is.

We don't need the disruption. We don't need the shaking. I mean, Jesus shows up at a synagogue, Mark 1, and they pray their prayers.

They read from the Scriptures. They worship the God of Israel. There's a certain order.

There's a certain liturgy. He comes in there, and next thing, a guy screaming falls to the ground. It's like, we don't like that.

But the man was demonized. He was in your midst for years, probably, demonized, and that was okay. You didn't have a problem with that, but now when he gets set free because it's a little too loud, a little disruptive, you get upset.

I'd rather the captive got set free. Let him scream out, drive the demon out, and then you got a whole person. Why? That's a little loud.

Well, tell that to the mother giving birth. Tell it to the baby coming out of the birth. It's a little loud.

I prefer the quiet of the cemetery. Go ahead. Trust me.

There's no disruption in the cemetery. Nothing out of order in the cemetery, but it's all dead there. Where there's life, there's going to be noise.

It's a little loud the way the people are weeping. They're getting set free from sin. You know, during the Brownsville Revival, we'd have baptisms every Friday night, and the power of God was just very intense during the water baptisms.

I can't tell you how many people, I mean, people I knew that were self-controlled and not emotional, they'd get in the water, they'd just begin to weep, and sometimes the power of God, they'd be sharing, and next thing, they're just out. I mean, they collapse in the water. The guys have to literally fish them out and carry them out.

I remember the first time I was there, I said to my friend Steve Hill, I said, they're coming out of the water dead. I mean, dead to sin, that's the whole thing. Died to sin, alive in God.

And when word got out what was happening, New York Times actually covered the revival, ended up front page of the New York Times with a very positive report. So we got a flood of media after that. And then they began to hear Friday night's the best night to come because they do the water baptisms.

And they'd be right there. I remember there's CNN cameras, they'd be right there standing. So here the men come down to be baptized, and this side the women come down to be baptized, and this side, and it's right back like that so you can see everything that's happening, right? So they'd be right over there.

They're positioned right there, and they're shooting. Sometimes the water would splash, come right on the camera. There they are.

I remember Steve and I would always think, well, surely it's 60 Minutes or it's CNN. God's going to tone things down tonight, make it more acceptable for the world. Surely we can say, the Lord really changed my life when I was a drug addict, alcoholic, beating my wife for 30 years.

And I came here six months ago and Jesus changed me. Praise the Lord. That's just good enough, right? We don't need all the emotion and the tears and the shaking and collapsing in the water or any of that.

And sure enough, it was like clockwork. Whenever the camera would be there, it was like something happened in the water, like everything got more intense, and the emotion is more intense, and the testimony is more dramatic, and the power of God coming down more intensely. I remember one woman,

she got in the water to be baptized.

She said, I was on crack cocaine for 30 years. I came to this revival six months ago. Jesus set me free.

And then she's out. You're just overwhelmed with emotion. She's out.

And carry her out of the water. So how does that get on CNN? What was the clip on CNN? That was it. No, Jesus set me free from 30 years.

They didn't hear the whole part, just the scream. We would have toned it down, done it differently. But listen, Acts, the third chapter, what happens to the lame man, right? He's been crippled all his life and he gets healed.

And what does it say? He goes into the temple walking, and leaping, and praising God. You don't do that in the temple. Reverence.

Why are you jumping, sir? You should be reverent. I've been crippled my whole life. I'm healed.

I'm healed. Just do this. Thank you, Lord, for healing me, for being crippled my whole life.

That's the way we want to do it. It's not the way it happens when God moves. And listen, it's not, please understand me.

You don't focus on the shouting, or the falling, or the shaking. You focus on the changed lives. But with changed lives, there's going to be a lot of upheaval.

There's something else in Mark 5. Another reason that the people begged Jesus to leave. This guy on the fringes, the really bad sinner. I mean, the really wicked guy.

He was out there really bad. And if his sin was like triple x rated, my r-rated sin is not so bad. As wicked as he is, it makes me look pretty good.

But now that this wicked, crazy, demonized guy is clothed and in his right mind, suddenly my sin doesn't look so good anymore. I remember there was a season a few years ago. My wife Nancy had volunteered at our school of ministry for many years and served there for free.

And then after time, just gave the responsibilities over to others. Our daughters, of course, long since out of the house, just had grandkids then. And she just had a season where she didn't have normal responsibilities, and just got deeply passionate about a breakthrough and seeking God.

I was never around anyone that sought God that earnestly, that long. It was basically all day and all night in the word and prayer. And there'd be, you know, a garbage basket next to her just filled with tissues.

She'd just be weeping and weeping for hours and hours. And she'd read the gospels, and the moment she'd read about Jesus, just overwhelmed with who he was and weeping and weeping. And in those days, I was doing radio at night.

So I'd come home from doing radio, maybe mid-evening, and we'd just sit down. And I'd come in, we'd just talk about the word, talk about the word, the latest insights she had, and we'd just interact. And maybe, you know, it's later in the night, I'm just going to chill a little bit, just unwind a little.

And you know what? I'm just going to get my laptop out, just do some writing, but put a basketball game on in the background. So I got the basketball game, and it's like, why are you asking basketball while your wife is meeting with God? It's like, okay, sorry, turn the thing off. She wasn't saying a word, but her seeking of God made me uncomfortable.

Other people have that, and they don't like it. You're just becoming a religious fanatic. You're going too extreme.

You're going too far. We had many testimonies during the revival of people dramatically saved, because what happened to their kids? I remember one father saying that when he heard his daughter up, you know, she'd be a teenager, get up last minute right before school, and kind of grouchy in the morning, and you know, just now she's like two hours up earlier, and she's seeking the face of God. And dad knows the girl, she was a party girl in all this.

Now he hears, he's just weeping, Jesus saved my school, saved my dad, he doesn't know you. And they get saved through the prayers of their kids. But there are other times where the parents were believers, and their kids weren't saved.

And maybe they live locally, so they'd be at the services pretty often in the Browns Revival, which was from 95 to 2000. And we had in the front of the building, there was a fishbowl, kind of big fishbowl thing, or you know, one of those containers, whatever. And people would just throw in this glass container, they'd throw pictures of loved ones that weren't saved.

And before every service, people would gather and pray over that, Lord, save the people represented there, Lord, have mercy. And we'd have many dramatic testimonies of God moving and acting wonderfully. Sometimes people would get baptized and say, I was in that fishbowl there, my picture was there.

And the most interesting thing would happen. There'd be a parent, or a couple, mom and dad, churchgoing people, believers. And their kid, maybe one of the girls, you know, 16 years old, maybe she's getting high and sleeping around, maybe the guy's 17, getting drunk in a gang.

And they put their pictures in there for prayer, and then the kids would get saved. I mean, dramatically, radically saved. They'd encounter the Lord, they'd give up all the sinful ways, they'd be in love with Jesus, they'd be in the Word, they'd be sharing the gospel in their schools.

And now they don't want to miss a single service, they're getting in there, they're coming night after night after night. Maybe they come home late at night, and mom and dad are watching TV. And the kid walks in, and there was some sex scene or something like that, or all kinds of profanity and violence.

Because like, mom, dad, I thought you were Christians. Why are you watching this? And like, we wanted you to get saved, not become a religious fanatic. We don't want you to go this far.

And suddenly the parents are coming under conviction now, because the kids that they wanted to see saved are more saved than they are. Oh, what happens when the holy presence of God comes into your home, and areas of compromise get exposed? What happens when conviction begins to come about the way you treat others, or about the unforgiveness in your heart, or the way you talk to your spouse and to your kids, or a little dishonesty here and there in the job, or, well, it wasn't that bad, you know, I'm not addicted to porn, just a little here and there. And suddenly you begin to see things differently.

It says in Malachi, the third chapter, that the Lord would come to his temple. It says, the Lord whom you seek, the messenger of the covenant whom you desire. So these are people praying, God, visit us.

God, come and visit your people. They're praying for visitation. But then it says, but who can stand when he comes? Who can endure his appearance? Because he will be like a refiner's fire, and like a fuller's soap.

You know, refiner's fire is this super heated fire, and you throw gold in there, and you throw silver in there. It looks pretty good. Hey, look, gold looks good, silver looks good.

You throw it in there, and suddenly all the impurities, all the junk begin coming up to the surface. You didn't see it before. Look, I would rather God looks at me and says, Mike, you are a true saint.

You're a real man of God. You have a pure heart. Your motives are excellent.

Your thought life is wonderful. Control your tongue exemplary. You are just a fine servant of God.

But I tell you, as much as I really seek to live God, and I can tell you, I'm not living a hypocritical double life by God's grace. When the fire comes, it brings all kinds of impurities to the surface. I remember in 88, on a 21-day water fast, I was preaching in the midst of this fast, and I was making a point, and I started to raise my voice for emphasis.

And as I'm preaching, the Holy Spirit says to me, why are you raising your voice? You're trying to sound anointed? I mean, I'm preaching this message, and I'm having this dialogue with God. I thought I was just flowing with your experience. Are you trying to sound anointed? And then another service, I feel to pray for the sick.

But this time, we're only going to pray for those who are chronically ill or incurably ill. So either what you have is supposed to be fatal, or it can't be cured, and it's an ongoing condition. So this is really serious stuff now.

So we call the people up. I'm about to lay hands on them, and I hear that voice. Do you want to look anointed like some big man of God? I just want to pray.

Oh, is that it? Or are you trying to look like somebody? Suddenly, motives begin to come to, that makes me uncomfortable. Many people would rather just enjoy their sin, have kind of a nominal walk with the Lord, and a nice little church life, than have an encounter with God, where all the impurities come up to the surface. Some of you have read my book, Breaking the Stronghold of Food, written with my wife, Nancy.

And if you read it, yes, her part of the book is the best part. So I was a lifelong unhealthy eater. Not so much a glutton, but an unhealthy eater.

I was a lifelong chocoholic. When I was a boy, I used to have Oreos for breakfast. When I taught at a Bible school on Long Island from 1983 to 1987, we estimated, because there was a phenomenal New York pizzeria right nearby, we estimated that I had 3,000 slices of pizza in four years.

Every so often, I'd give something up for a little while, but then fall back. So God really dealt with me. Nancy was really pouring out her heart, praying to God.

I didn't know how earnestly she was praying. I knew I had high blood pressure and other issues, and 275 pounds. And with the way I pushed and crazy schedule, she just said, you're playing with fire.

Then on my end, I just felt I shouldn't be overweight like this. It's not right. I shouldn't have these food addictions.

So I was crying, and it was August, August 23rd of 2014, I said to her, my plan is not working. I was kind of code from years back of discussion we had. My plan is not working.

In other words, cutting a little of this out a little, it's not working. I'm going to have to make a radical change. The problem was I was a food wimp.

I had often said I would rather face a hostile, potentially dangerous crowd than eat new foods. And I did that. Trust me.

Overseas, did things that were literally life-threatening. I mean, to the point of Hindu radicals taking over stage with knives and razor blades in their hands. I would rather do that than taste a new food.

That's where I lived for years. Plus I travel all the time, all the excuses. So how am I just going to eat all the stuff I've eaten all my life? I can't eat all the stuff I don't like to eat.

I'm going to eat. I mean, I prayed many times that God would give me a love for broccoli the way I had for chocolate, but it never happened. One other reason it never because I never ate the broccoli.

I just ate the chocolate, but I knew I had to make a change. So she said, all right, you just eat what I give you. Nothing passes through your lips without my permission.

Okay. So that led to three miserable days of withdrawal. I mean, miserable.

I had a minor cold at the same time. I remember doing radio with this minor cold and withdrawals like this is miserable. And when God saved me in 1971, I was known as drug bear Iron Man.

I was 16 years old. I started getting high at 14 shooting heroin at 15 and became the heaviest drug user in my school. Somehow I had a, my body was wired a certain way that I could take massive doses of drugs and survive.

And that made me proud. I thought that was some great thing. Look at this.

So when God set me free, December 17th of 71, I was shooting heroin and other drugs and I was instantly delivered. I got instantly delivered. Months of God convicted me and dealing with me, but I got instantly set free.

It was much harder to go up chocolate, much harder to give up chocolate than to give up shooting heroin and using LSD and speed and other drugs. Three days of misery. I remember on the third night crying out to God, said surely the power of your spirit is greater than the power of donuts and peanut M&Ms.

And the same Jesus that set me free from drugs. You can set me free from food addictions, but see, I hadn't read a lot about nutrition. Nancy had studied and knew all this, but I'd read a little bit about fasting and I realized that, that what was happening was all the toxins were all the poisons, all the junk was leaving my body.

So I felt miserable because the bad stuff was coming out. But the reality was the bad stuff was always there. So the good thing was the bad stuff coming out and making me feel bad.

It was actually a good thing. It's the same with the conviction of the spirit. Yes, it'll make you uncomfortable.

Yes, you may end up standing up in public and confessing sin. I've been living a double life, but you get free. The poisons come out, the toxins come out.

I've been in many meetings over the years around the world, many meetings where the Holy Spirit would just fall and there'd be a deep encounter with God and an outpouring of repentance. And next thing, I just had this sense, there are people that are so burdened, they need to get up and make public confession. I mean, I've heard all kinds of crazy things.

They need to get up and make public confession. And next thing, there's a line of people, they're just crying and shaking and just, they're overwhelmed. And I said, look, don't say anything publicly that shouldn't be shared publicly.

But many would just feel like I've been living a double life, or you think I'm a certain person, I'm not. And I've seen them get up and take the mic and just share with tears and sobbing. What makes that happen? The Holy Spirit's there, bringing the impurities, the junk, the uncleanness up to the surface, to skim it away so we can be whole, so we can be healed, so we can be free.

And I've seen them just get so beautifully, wonderfully free, and everybody just hugging each other and loving each other. Restoration and healing come. We'd have times in the Brownsville Revival because over a period of four and a half years, several million people cumulatively came through the doors, and more than 300,000 people, different people, responded to the altar calls.

And we'd have it where here's a guy on this side, repenting, weeping, getting right with God. And here's a woman on this side, repenting, weeping, getting right with God. And they stand up and see each other, and they're shocked.

And then we find out sometime later, they were both there, they were in the midst of a divorce. And they were just trying to get hold of God, their own lives, because their own lives were falling apart. They had no idea their spouse had come.

And enough people there, you're not even going to see each other. They spot each other at the altar, they get right with God, they get right with another, and God blesses their marriage. Praise God.

You know, here's the other part of the story. The unclean, the toxins, the poisons came out of my body. And by God's grace, just five and a half plus years now, just eating healthily only, all the time, without exception.

And trust me, if it could happen to me, it could happen to anyone, because I was the poster boy for unhealthy eating my whole life. But listen, I used to have like three, four headaches a week. I've not had a single headache in five and a half years.

And I give you a whole list of things like that. Here's the point. It may be uncomfortable.

You may go through all kinds of withdrawal, spiritually speaking. It may really be a difficult season. But when the repentance is done, you're free.

You're clean. You can look people in the eye. You don't have to hide things.

You don't have skeletons in the closet. You don't have to worry, oh, if this comes out, if that comes out. What's written in Proverbs 28.3? He who confesses his sins will find mercy, but he who covers them, he who covers them will not.

The one who covers his sins will not succeed, but the one who confesses and forsakes them will find mercy. I wonder how hungry you are for God in his presence. We were driving yesterday, the endless drive to get here.

The constant refrain from Shane was, over those mountains is Palmdale. It's like, haven't we gone over those mountains several times already? Over those mountains. The only word you didn't use was yonder.

That's what I was waiting to hear. Yonder, over those mountains. I thought we've been to yonder already.

We've gotten there already. But he was asking me the services in Brownsville during the revival, how long were they? Three hours or something? I said, no, five, six hours on average. Night after night, after night, after night.

And picture this, people would get online at six in the morning for the service that started at seven at night. And the reason they got online at six was the church made an announcement, do not get online before six. Because the pastor felt obligated to have some kind of security there and said, right, we'll have guard security there beginning at six in the morning.

Because what would happen before that was people would be in the meeting, say, from seven to maybe one at night. They'd go out, get something to eat, and then begin camping out in the parking lot in sleeping bags at 2.30 or three in the morning. Just to get into a religious service.

To get into a service where the preacher is going to get in your face and tell you to get the sin out of your life. So the lines would form at six in the morning. And I remember in the height of the meetings that one pastor drove down with a whole bunch of folks from Chicago and said, we're getting there at six so we can get good seats.

And when he got there at six, the line was already a block and a half long. People were that hungry. They'd stay online for 12 hours.

There were unsaved people who would stay online for 12 hours because somebody got them to come or they were desperate. And then the doors would open at six and the service would start at seven and would go to midnight or one in the morning. Listen, there's nothing worse than a long religious service if God's not there.

It's boring. Worship for a couple hours? Boring. Sermon for an hour? Boring.

Long altar calls? Boring. Everyone getting prayed for? Boring. But if God's there, man, you can't wait to get in.

And for years, for years, we could not wait to get to the service. I could not wait. I remember going to Australia to minister.

And I remember my round trip, because of some delays, was 30 hours each way to get there. And I was in Australia for 48 hours. I think we did seven meetings in 48 hours.

And then I flew back. I arrived at the airport mid-evening. One of our daughters picked me up at the airport, had a fresh shirt for me to put on.

And I went into the meeting, got into the meeting at 11 at night, straight from the airport, so I could pray for people at the Revival House. We could not wait to get there and see what God was doing. But I wonder, would you really welcome God if He came? What if He comes with some unasked-for additions? Like at Pentecost in Acts 2, suddenly the sound of a blowing, violent wind came.

Why not a quiet breeze? Lord, the Holy Spirit's like a dove. Why not just like a dove? Because when you're asleep in church, the quiet breeze doesn't get your attention. And when you're in a confused world, the quiet breeze doesn't get your attention.

Sure, we have that quiet, peaceful relationship with God, and Jesus has come to me in rest. Yes, absolutely. But God also comes to shake.

Why does He come like a refiner's fire? Why does He come suddenly, like the sound of a blowing, violent wind? Why the tongues of fire? A little dramatic, Lord? Isn't that a little, like, Hollywood-style? I don't see that in our hymn book, in our book of religious tradition, our book of common prayer. I don't see that in our church order. That's the whole problem.

We've gotten so into our order, we're out of His order. And when He puts us in His order, He's going to shake us out of our order. I remember one pastor shared his testimony with us.

He had visited the Revival, lived in Florida. Pensacola was so far west, it's actually Central Standard Time. So you can drive 11 hours within Florida, Pensacola's some other place.

So he's there, his church knows, pastor's going to the Brownsville Revival. So he's going to come back with revival. He's going to come back on fire, and the church is going to get revived.

So he's there through Saturday, and he's blessed, and he's touched, but he was expecting more. He gets in his car, he's got to drive hours back Saturday, and he's going to preach Sunday. Not only has he not experienced any type of personal revival in his own life, but he doesn't even have a message for Sunday.

He is completely blank. He's thinking, church is going to expect me to walk into the service with revival in my back pocket. I don't even have a message.

So he's kind of frantic. He gets up early in the morning, still no message. He gets to the church building early in the morning.

There's choir practice, Sunday school. He's in a back room praying, trying to get a message, and his wife says, honey, I think you need to see what's happening. The Holy Spirit had fallen in the building, and spontaneous confession of sin was breaking out.

This now spills over into the main services. People are coming in, and the Holy Spirit's being poured out. So he decides, he thinks, I need to do something clerical.

His words are, I'm the pastor. I need to kind of officiate what the Holy Spirit's doing. He stands up to speak and falls flat on his face.

Just as often happened with people when they encountered God in the Bible. Overwhelming. They just fell on their face like dead people.

Here he's going to be the pastor and officiate over what the Holy Spirit's doing. Boom on his face. And he said, you know, we have not had yet a great harvest of souls, because this is a few months later.

He said, but we've been going through a deep cleansing and purging. Do you really want the fire to come and bring the uncleanness up to the surface? Do you really want the light to shine on the darkness? God doesn't do us to hurt us, but to help us. He doesn't do that to curse us, but to bless us.

So you get to this point, you get desperate. You say, God, I don't care what, I just have to have your spirit. I don't care about what people think.

When I was finishing my grad school work at New York University in 1982, God began to convict me that I'd left my first love. Even though I was known in my school as a strong Christian witness, even though we took in the poor and refugees in our home, and we lived a consistent Christian life in many ways, I was distant from where I'd been in my early days. I was spending hours and hours in the presence of God and just loving to worship and be in the Word and pray.

I was just more kind of theologically correct and exegetically proper, and my faith was much more acceptable in the eyes of the professors and things like that. This is what I thought. God had saved the Pentecostal church.

That's like backwoods, unsophisticated. They don't know the Hebrew or the Greek. They don't know what the word exegesis means.

Ha, look at me. God began to humble me and God began to show me the pride and how I'd forsaken my first love. And then he got hold of me and through me sent a revival to our church.

I was asked to fall. And I mean, we had dramatic outpouring. I mean, people radically touched and getting right with God.

And I was over at someone's house praying. And as we get to pray for people, pray for the wife, and she's filled with the Spirit, begins to speak in tongues, like just passionately and fervently caught me off guard. I'm like, that's a little intense.

Then pray for a husband. And he falls, he's slain in the Spirit. It's like, oh, not that again.

I don't like that. I had a five-point teaching why being slain in the Spirit was not from God. And I had all these reasons against it.

And here I pray for him. He'd never seen this, never had. He falls to his back, hands raised, and he starts confessing secret sin.

It's like, in front of us with your wife here? But it's just the Holy Spirit. And next thing, he starts speaking in tongues. What on earth? And then another guy dramatically touched.

Another overcome by the Spirit, laying on his face, just trembling from head to foot. He had been transformed. The Holy Spirit was working in him.

And I remember thinking, oh, I don't like this stuff. It's humiliating. It's not sophisticated.

And there was another guy. He was an old-time Pentecostal, much too Pentecostal for me in those days. I remember he preached one message in our church.

And so he quoted from the end of Mark 16 without saying there's a dispute about the passage there. I mean, it was so unsophisticated. I remember his message, much prayer, much power, little prayer, little power, no prayer, no power.

It's too simple. Of course, we were all convicted because we were prayerless. But God had spoken to him that there's going to be an outpouring of the Spirit in our church.

I was in another church then. We were barely charismatic. And he's been waiting.

And he's welcoming the Holy Spirit. I remember he just kind of marching around the room. It sounded to me like he was like some Indian, American Indian.

And I'm thinking he's marching around the room. The other guy's laying on his face. The other guy's laying on his back.

The wife's shouting in tongues. I thought I gave all this up years ago. I thought I was much more sophisticated.

I had a faith that was much more acceptable in the eyes of the world. And right then I said, God, if this is what happens when your Holy Spirit comes, I embrace it because I have to have your Spirit. That doesn't mean we accept or sanction everything.

People can get emotional. People can get in the flesh. There can be demonic manifestations.

I understand that. But we just have to say, God, I can't live without your Spirit. I can't live without your anointing.

And often God will come with something extra, something unwanted, like the tongues at Pentecost. Remember, the moment the Spirit falls there, Acts the second chapter, what happens? There's a split. Half the people say, we hear God.

They're praising God in our language. The other say they're drunk. Why didn't the Holy Spirit move in such a way that no one could make that accusation? Because he's not concerned.

God is not concerned about human opinion. God's not concerned about what the polls say. And I've watched this.

I've watched this happen in Pensacola, but I've watched this with other churches. When the Holy Spirit really begins to move and they embrace it, a number of people will leave, but far more will come. Far more will come.

Let me close, just speak to you briefly about spiritual hunger. Because when you're really hungry, when you're really thirsty, then you don't really care about a lot of the other things that seem to matter. And I remember when I did that 21-day water fast in 88, that, you know, first you just have a little juice, and then maybe a little, it's little by little, you get back to eating normally.

And then I was at the point where I was going to have a salad, and Burger King had just had a little salad bar open up. I remember I went in there, and I got salad and had it. I thought, I cannot believe it.

It's like gourmet salad bar at Burger King. Some weeks later, I went and had it. It's like, what happened to the salad? Well, one thing was I'd just come off a 21-day fast, and I was hungry, and I wasn't so picky.

And it's the same with us. When you get to that point of desperation, when you have to see the breakthrough, you're not going to be so picky. You're going to welcome God.

Okay, so people are going to mock me, or people are going to misunderstand, but I have to have God. I was at a luncheon with one pastor, and he was saying, you know, when the Holy Spirit was poured out in his church, that a number of people left. And he asked this other pastor, he said, when the Holy Spirit visited your church, did people leave? He said, yeah, they did.

Now, of course, probably 10 people for everyone that left ended up coming, and the ministry grew dramatically. But I remember what this pastor said. He said, did it bother you when the people left? And he said with tears in his eyes, he says, I was just so glad that God came.

I didn't really think about it. Listen to what John G. Lake said. I'm going to close here.

Lake was a pioneer in divine healing, lived from 1870 to 1935, five years of extraordinary missions work in South Africa, and then his wife died, basically malnutrition, giving away everything they had to help others, and ran herself down, came back to the States, and established these healing rooms where they would pray for the sick on a regular basis. And he said, no matter what it may be, your soul is coveting or desiring. If it becomes in your life the supreme cry, not the secondary matter, or the third, or the fourth, or fifth, or tenth, but the first thing, the supreme desire of your soul, the paramount issue, all the powers and energies of your spirit, of your soul, of your body are reaching out and crying to God for the answer.

It is going to come. It is going to come. It is going to come.

And he said this, I lived in a family where for 32 years they never were without an invalid in the home. Before I was 24 years of age, we had buried four brothers and four sisters, and four other members of our family were dying, hopeless, helpless, invalids. I set up my own home, married a beautiful woman.

Our first son was born. It was only a short time until I saw that same devilish train of sickness that had followed. Father's family had come into my mind, come into mind.

My wife became an invalid. My son was a sickly child. Out of all of it, one thing developed in my nature, a cry for deliverance.

I did not know anything about the subject of healing, notwithstanding I was a Methodist evangelist. But my heart was crying for deliverance. My soul had come to the place where I had vomited up dependence on man.

My father had spent a fortune on the family to no avail, as if there was no stoppage to the train of hell. And let me tell you, there is no human stoppage, because the thing is settled deep in the nature of man, too deep for any material remedy to get at it. It takes the Almighty God and the Holy Spirit and the Lord Jesus Christ to get down into the depths of man's nature, and find the real difficulty that is there, and destroy it.

And he said this, my brother, I want to tell you, if you're a sinner tonight or away from God, and your heart is longing, and your spirit asking, your soul crying for God's deliverance, he will be on hand to deliver. And he gets to his own story, I finally got to that place where my supreme cry was for deliverance. Tears were shed for deliverance for three years before the healing of God came to us.

I could hear the cries and groans and sobs, and feel the wretchedness of our family's soul. And he cried out and sought God, and when the breakthrough came, miracle after miracle in the family, and then miracles that touched hundreds of thousands and millions after that. Friends, it's not a matter of working to receive from God.

It's not a matter of proving it to God, I'm going to fast more, I'm going to beat myself more. It's a matter of the hunger gets to that point where it can't be denied. And all the time, God is shaping a place in our hearts for him.

As Finney said, when you pray for the lost, and pray for the lost, and pray for the lost, and then the worst of sinners start coming in, you welcome them, we've been waiting for you. So I want to encourage you, God's doing something in your midst. There are many, many churches in America where I couldn't go near preaching this message because it just wouldn't be understood.

I'd have to just plant the first seeds about revival or hunger for God. But your pastor and leaders have been leading you in this direction, and putting before you a cry for revival. And I believe that God will answer that cry, and there's no reason why this can't be a place where the Holy Spirit is mightily poured out.

But I ask in advance, when God comes, let it be, when God comes, will you welcome him? When the Spirit comes, when the fire falls, will you embrace it? I tell you, it is life, it is health, it is blessing, it is joy, it is grace, it is unforgettable to embrace God when he comes, and it is death and deception to reject. Many of you don't know this, I've written about it before, some of you have seen this before, but I lean obviously towards the conservative side. And you'll be amazed at, you know, once we post this on Facebook, the heresy hunters are going to come out of the woodworks.

He's got a target on his head, I've got a target on mine, and they just don't like any type of talk of revival. It's a religious spirit, is what it is. And I prayed for revival about five years.

I mean, why wouldn't we want God reviving his people? How can that be a bad thing? It can't be a bad thing. And I remember the chair I was sitting on, I remember, I think it was 2010, 11, right in there, and I felt God impress me with these words. I said, Lord, bring revival to our church.

And I was not ready for the response that followed. I was impressed with these words. You don't want revival.

It will ruin your schedule, your dignity, your image, and your reputation as a person who is well balanced. Men will weep throughout the congregation, women will wail because of the travail of their own souls, young adults will cry like children at the magnitude of their sin. With the strength of my presence, the

worship team will cease playing.

Time will seem to stand still. You won't be able to preach because of the emotions flooding your own soul. You'll struggle to find words, but only find tears.

Even the most dignified and reserved among you will be broken and humbled as little children. The proud and self-righteous will not be able to stand in my presence. The doubter and unbeliever will either run for fear or fall on their knees and worship me.

There can be no middle ground. The church will never be the same again. Do you really want revival? And, you know, for many years I hid from that.

I want to just obviously publicly declare that I do want that, and I've got to get rid of that people-pleasing attitude. There's people in the first service, and there's people at the second service, and I'm already wondering what they're going to think of Dr. Brown's message, even though I say almost the same thing. Amen.

But it's that religious spirit. It's that pride and that arrogance. They think they know it all.

They got the Bible. They're bored in worship. There's just no spiritual life in them, and this kind of stuff irritates them.

And really, God should use that to wake you up. So I'm fine if people want to just, you know, if this isn't the church for them. I mean, I'm not saying that means spirited at all whatsoever, but we've got to stop worrying about what people think and start wondering, God, what do you want to do? Because, and I'm going to close with this.

As he was preaching, I was praying, Lord, I'm sorry. I'm sorry, because how many lives could have been changed over the last few years? How many deliverances could have taken place? How many people could have been set free? And it's not pretty, is it? I mean, can you imagine a couple people coming to the altar while I'm preaching? Like, uh-oh. What do we do with this? This isn't what I planned that ruins the message, but it's God moving.

And you have to be open to God moving or you will not experience the abundant, vibrant Christian life that is throughout the Bible, for sure. So this is an ongoing debate between conservative churches who haven't experienced the power of the Spirit and those who have experienced the power of the Spirit. And I just want to get back to those roots of seeking God and letting Him do what He wants to do.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/30/SID30081.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/michael-l-brown/how-revival-is-hindered-dont-make-the-same-mistake/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net