

(Revival) Revival Sets Things Right - Part 1

by Michael L. Brown

Revival is the manifestation of God, bringing things into God's divine order and restoring Jesus to his proper role as head of the body.

Duration: 24:36

Scripture: Psalm 111:10, Matthew 6:33, John 3:16, Romans 3:23, Colossians 1:15, Hebrews 9:22, Revelation 1:5-6

Topics: "Revival", "The Cross"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the experience of revival and the overwhelming joy and love for Jesus that comes with it. He emphasizes that God's blessing is on the preaching of the cross, which is the central message that the world must hear. The preacher also shares his struggle in effectively preaching the gospel to Jewish people and realizes that the anointing of God is necessary for the message to have an impact. He concludes by highlighting the supremacy of Christ and how everything in creation will ultimately acknowledge Jesus as Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Transcript

Father, we pray that the eyes of our understanding would be open, that your spirit would give us revelation, that we might know who you are there, that we might recognize the work that your Son has accomplished, Lord, that the blinders would fall from off of us and that we would see and know and understand the God with whom we have to be. Father, give us insight in the working of revival to set things right this night, in Jesus' name, amen. I want you to turn to Colossians, the first chapter, Colossians chapter 1. The subject of revival had been burning on my heart for months before I came to teach it and then since I've been teaching it and spending a lot of time before God praying about these things, the burning fire has gotten even greater.

So I've reflected a lot on the question of what exactly is revival. Of course, we've taught it from different angles and we've talked about what revival brings about and characteristics of revival and highlights of past revivals, but I was just trying to boil things down to the basic fundamental meaning of revival. There are a couple of definitions we're going to look at, but one is as simple as I know how to make it and I believe it'll give you a perspective for everything else we look at.

Charles Finney said that God is one pent-up revival. God is one pent-up revival. I believe that's true.

Now, if that's true, that means revival is the manifestation of God, as simple as you can say it. Revival is the manifestation of God. God is one pent-up revival, and it follows that revival is the manifestation of God.

Just like something else that we'll look at later, I was considering the fact that if our God is a consuming fire and revival is the manifestation of God, then revival is the fire of God falling. It would follow that same way. If God is one pent-up revival, then revival is the manifestation of God.

If God is a consuming fire, then revival is the fire of God falling. Now, I give you some of those definitions, and in particular, the basic concept that revival is the manifestation of God, so that you can understand how revival sets things right. Revival sets things right.

Revival brings things into God's divine order, in the body, among the believers, and in the world as well. Not totally in the world, unless the world becomes, quote, the church, that won't happen. And not totally in the body, because that won't happen until Yeshua returns.

But there is a fundamental setting of things back in order. When you understand that revival means restoration, then you can relate to the fact that when real revival comes, when real revival is happening, things get set in the proper order before God. Now, on the one hand, if you look around and you look at what the Word says, and you look at the fellowship that you're in, and you look at the state of the body as a whole in the United States, it's obvious that things are not in order.

From top to bottom, inside out, it's obvious that things are not in order. We're not going to keep hammering that point. We've laid that out clearly enough.

Revival presupposes declension. Revival presupposes a falling away. We're ready for revival on that level.

We are candidates. Just like I say before a healing line, now listen, you can only come up for prayer if you're sick. If you're not sick, you're not allowed up to be prayed for for healing.

You say, well, that goes without saying. Well, yeah, well, the only ones that need to be revived are those that are dead, or those that are backslidden, or those that are out of order. So when you look around and you see that things are not in order and not according to God's priorities, even according to our limited understanding of what proper order is, we say, OK, we need revival.

What will revival do? How will revival set things right? Well, in Colossians, the first chapter. Paul writing, I mean, it's amazing to think Paul didn't have Paul to read, and yet he wrote what he wrote. In other words, he had he had the scriptures, he had what he learned by revelation, by the spirit of God.

He had the accounts that were circulating of the life and death and resurrection of Jesus. But the whole theology, all the insights, I mean, it was by revelation of the spirit, meditation on the word. It's phenomenal to see what he came up with.

And these letters that he wrote, I don't know if we can imagine the impact that they would have on these early communities of believers as they began to see the depth of what he was saying. So here he's just writing a letter and it begins to say in the fifteenth verse of the first chapter, speaking of Jesus, that he is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. The fundamental fact of Yeshua's coming into the earth is that God is revealed in him.

You want to know what the father's like? He says, look at me, the father's in me, I'm in him. What I do, I do by him and through him. So by him, by Jesus, all things were created, things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rules or authorities, all things were created by him and for him.

He is before all things. And in him, all things hold together. Now, the little chapter heading here or paragraph heading rather in the NIV before verse 15 says the supremacy of Christ.

And that's certainly what Paul is presenting here, the absolute supremacy of the Messiah in all of creation to the point that in the second chapter, he lays out that everything in creation, heaven, earth under the earth, everything is going to have to acknowledge that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God, the father. So all things are created by him and for him. And he is before all things and in him, all things hold together.

Paul is nailing this on every level to show that Jesus is preeminent. When John was baptizing people, they came to him and they said, well, you the Messiah, you Elijah, you the prophet, you should know. He said, there's one coming after me who has the preeminence because he was from before me.

He came first, even though he's being revealed after he came first. He has the preeminence. He is the head of the body, the church, the congregation, the ecclesia.

He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead so that in everything he might have the supremacy. What is God's central purpose? How can you sum it up that in all things Jesus would have supremacy for God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him and through him to reconcile to himself all things with the things on earth or things in heaven by making peace through his blood shed on the cross. Now, we could go on with Paul's argument here, his whole emphasis in Colossians on Jesus being the head, having the supremacy.

But I want you to understand that one of the first things that revival will do is restore Jesus to his proper role as head of the body. It will restore him to a position of preeminence within the body. That's going to happen in different ways.

On the one hand, he will again become the center of worship. Now, there's a certain parallel in the charismatic movement and in the Messianic Jewish movement, which is that there are a lot of courses based on old covenant themes and Israel, Jerusalem restoration themes that don't talk all that much about the work of Jesus. It's not just in the Messianic Jewish movement that in our emphasis on restoration of Jewish revival and Old Testament truth, not just us that have left out the cross and the blood, but it's something that's just central these days in the charismatic movement that there has been a leaving out of the fundamental message of the cross, the blood, the work of the Son of God.

Now, it's not totally absent, obviously, but there's no depth to it. A lot of the courses just are. They may talk about Jesus on some trite level, but the depth, the reality of his work is missing.

When revival comes, it will bring Jesus back to a place of centrality in worship. Songs will be written about him. Praises will be directed to him.

Yes, always to the glory of God the Father. It's not either or. But again, that'll be central.

Preaching about the cross, preaching about the blood will become absolutely foundational. If I ask you, how many of you have heard a series of messages preached on the cross or on the blood since you've

been believers? Many of us, if not most of us would say, I can't really remember. I remember Dynamic Series on the Gifts of the Spirit.

And I remember before the building program, we had a big series on tithing. And I remember we had something about reaching out to our neighbors, you know, and having family barbecues. And I remember, but I don't really remember a series on the cross or on the blood.

Recommend to me a good series of tapes on the cross or on the blood. Tell me good books to read on the subject. It's just not what people have been talking about.

That is a symptom of the fact that we are not a revived body. And that we need revival to get things right so that Jesus as Lord is seen in his central and supreme role within the body. Now, it has happened all the time because, listen, God's setting things right.

God's setting things in order. It's out of order that Jesus is not central. It's out of order that people are not caught up with him as they ought to be.

Therefore, when revival comes, the focus goes back on him. And God gives us a tremendous revelation of the son of God. OK, I just want you to get a feel of some of the things that have that have happened as revivals come.

This is in the description of Jonathan Edwards. But you could multiply this all over the place in the so-called First Great Awakening in the 1700s in the United States. He's giving some characteristics of revival here.

He says the highest transports I have been acquainted with, the affections of admiration. Remember, he's not writing in 20th century slang here. Love and joy, so far as another could judge, have been raised to the highest pitch and the following things have been united.

A very frequent dwelling for some considerable time together in view of the glories of the divine perfections and Christ's excellencies. The soul has been, as it were, perfectly overwhelmed and swallowed up with light and love, a sweet solace and a rest and a joy of soul altogether unspeakable. The person has more than once continued for five or six hours together without interruption in a clear and lively sense of the infinite beauty and amiableness of Christ's person and the heavenly sweetness of his transcendent love.

I mean, we sing, I keep falling in love with him, falling in love over and over again. I mean, he's talking about the real thing here. The heart was swallowed up in a kind of glow of Christ's love coming down as a constant stream of sweet light at the same time, the soul all flowing out in love to him so that there seemed to be a constant flowing and reflowing from heart to heart.

The soul dwelt on high, was lost in God and seemed almost to lose the body. Extraordinary views of divine things and the religious affections were frequently attended with very great effects on the body. Let me just read this next paragraph because it's good, but it's not totally related.

The person was deprived of all ability to speak. Remember, Jonathan Edwards becomes the president of Princeton. I always rehearse that fact.

One of America's greatest philosopher theologians. And yet he's discussing these things that happen when real revival breaks. It's not just emotionalism.

In fact, it's not emotionalism at all. The person was deprived of all ability to speak. Sometimes the hands were clenched and the flesh cold, but the senses remaining.

Animal nature was often in great emotion and agitation and the soul so overcome with admiration and a kind of omnipotent joy as to cause the person unavoidably to leap with all his might and joy and mighty exaltation. That's how a philosopher theologian talks about people getting set on fire by the Holy Ghost. Well, you could read account after account after account where people in revival just get transfixed with the Son of God, just get visions of the cross, just get visions of the power of the blood, just get overwhelmed with the absolute reality of what Jesus has done.

You have to ask yourself, when is the last time you felt overwhelmingly grateful for the sacrifice of Calvary? There was a friend of mine that that I got to lead to the Lord, became a friend after I led him to the Lord in high school. And when he got saved, he really got saved. I mean, he we used to call him his reputation before he was saved was like Mr. Goody or good body or something.

I mean, he was just not like the rest of us. He didn't smoke. He didn't drink.

He didn't get high. He didn't curse. He didn't fool around with anybody.

I mean, he was just like a real good guy. But when he got saved, he got such a revelation of his sin that he wept and cried out to God and broke. And I never saw anybody repent like that to this day.

It's about almost 17 years ago. Never saw anybody get saved the way he got saved with a depth of conviction, praying through till he knew that he knew that he was saved, jumping up and shouting hallelujah in the streets afterward. Well, he was so caught up with the love of God and so, so intimately excited about Jesus, that some of the words to the songs that didn't make sense to him didn't bother him because he was so happy and he didn't realize he was singing about cavalry.

He thought he was singing about the cavalry and he couldn't understand, you know, the whole thing about singing about it and rejoicing about it. Years I spent in vanity and pride, knowing that, you know, it was for me. He died and so on, you know, and singing about the cross.

He couldn't understand the connection of that, you know, to some American, you know, horse army or something like that. But he was just so excited about Jesus. He sang it anyway.

When was the last time you just felt overwhelmed with joy for what Jesus did and just so close to him, just in love with him? That's what happens in Revival. And you see, God puts his blessing on the preaching of the cross. That's why in Revival it's prominent, because people are preaching what he blesses.

And that's the central proclamation that the world must hear. That's the fundamental message that they must take hold of, that our sins were nailed to the cross on the shoulders of the son of God. That's where God's power is on.

I've been really wrestling with issues in prayer about how to effectively preach the gospel to Jewish people that don't know the Lord. What's the message? You know, when you get a shot, when you get the opportunity, when people are gathered together at a rally, what is the message that you can bring? How can you show them? How can you cause their eyes to be open? What's it going to take? And as I've really prayed about these things and God's just reduced me to the most basic, fundamental proclamation of human sin and God's solution and the need to repent and be saved, it's just hit me, you know, the only

way this can possibly work is if the anointing of God is on it. You know, I mean, we always go around that we're going to convince, we're going to persuade, we're going to do it all these other ways.

If we'll just preach the message and the fullness of the spirit, God will bring about the results. And I've heard people engaged in legitimate mass evangelism talk about how they just got up and basically quoted the scriptures. A movie I saw of T.O. Osborne preaching in India, almost all he did was just preach the word, just quote scriptures about that God wanted to give us life.

And the effects of that message were tremendous to see. So during revival, Jesus is brought back to his central place, the cross and the blood are emphasized, God's blessing is on that message. There's another reason, though, that the cross and the blood are emphasized in revival.

That's the only way into the presence of God. There's no other way in aside from the blood. And if we're going to meet with God, we've got to go back to that fundamental door and pass through that door in order to get in.

I would challenge you to go to some of the older hymn books and read songs about the blood and the cross and see if they seem foreign to you. When I got saved, I mean, I heard about the blood continually, not not so much an explanation of the power of the blood, but just it was something talked about all the time. I can remember.

This is strange. All this emphasis on the blood. I mean, it's almost it's almost uncomfortable.

I mean, the blood is not a pleasant subject. But I remember just hearing a lot of talk about it when I was first saved. And I remember when I was going to be preaching a series of messages at my home church when I was saved, I don't know, a couple odd years, maybe three years.

We're going to have a series of so-called revival meetings and I was going to do the preaching. And one night I just really I had this one song on my heart and I knew that it was written by a fellow named Elisha Hoffman, and I just assumed that he must have been Jewish with a name like that. And that night we used to take requests for the hymns that would be sung and all the hymns that were requested, all three that were requested were all songs that this guy wrote.

And I noticed that all three of them centered in on the blood, and I said, well, that would make sense if he was Jewish and got saved. The whole revelation of the blood would make sense. Go back to the hymnals, read them, read the songs about the cross, see if they almost seem just too Christian, if you know what I mean, too traditional Christian or or dead Catholic or something.

See, see how far you've gone from just these fundamentals. I want to quote to you from Martin Lloyd-Jones in his book on revival when he deals with the glorification of Jesus. Let me give you his words beginning on page forty seven.

Revival above everything else is a glorification of the Lord Jesus Christ, the son of God. It is the restoration of him to the center of the life of the church. You will find this warm devotion, personal devotion to him.

It leads to our hymns, our anthems of praise, Christ, the center of the life of the church. You will find that in every period of revival, without exception, there has been a tremendous emphasis upon the blood of Christ. The hymns that have been sung most of all in periods of revival have been hymns about the blood.

The very nerve and center and heart of the Christian gospel is this, whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, that he might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus, in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sin without shedding of blood is no remission of sin. The very heart of our gospel is that God hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. That's our glory.

That's our joy. That's our identity. That's what sets us apart.

And revival brings us back to that foundation. If revival is the manifestation of God, then another byproduct of revival is going to be a new revelation of the holiness of God and consequently walking afresh in the fear of God. So you sure will be exalted again as central, but then the father will be seen in all of his holiness and all of his glory and all of his power.

Someone heard a teaching recently about different ethnic groups or different nations or different peoples having specific tasks by God tasked to bring certain aspects of truth back to the body. Now, I can't say that I fully understand where each person fits in specific emphases, but it's clear that you've got different people, groups, different nations with certain strengths. And I know for sure that God is not pleased when Gentiles try and become Jews.

Why? I'm not saying appreciate the whole word and appreciate the feasts and things like that. But when Gentiles try and take on a legitimate Jewish lifestyle, I'm sure God's not pleased with that. Why? Because he's created each one for his own special honor and glory.

A word that God gave me very clearly in Israel was for Gentiles to quit trying to be Jews. Why? Because he said, you're insulting my taste when you do it. I made you the way I want you to be.

It would be like me here speaking, not God, but me coming in in a dress. God didn't make me to be a woman, he made me to be a man. Well, the same way it says at the end of the book of Revelation that all of the kings of the different nations bring their glory into the into the kingdom, that there's a specific glory and splendor and special quality about each people group in each nation.

And the fact of the matter is that it was said by this woman who was giving a teaching that the specific call on Jewish believers is to bring back the holiness of God to the body. Again, she was dealing with different aspects, this nation as this call, this nation is that I can't say I agree or disagree. I haven't really listened to it carefully, just heard it through the grapevine.

But why would it be so? Why could it very well be true that Jewish believers are called on to bring a restoration of the holiness of God back to the body? Well, we take the whole Bible seriously. One well-known preacher said he said, now you've got to take the whole Bible seriously from Matthew to Revelation. Well, I agree with that as long as you don't leave out the rest of the Bible along the way there.

And for some, that is the Bible, Matthew to Revelation or the Gospel of John or the epistle to the Romans, or maybe a glimpse in the Psalms or Proverbs. But when you look at the whole word, you've got to take God's holiness seriously and you've got to walk in the fear of the Lord. You see, for for a Jewish believer, Mount Sinai is a foundation and you're we're not standing under the mountain that's quaking with fire and smoke, Paul says, or the writer to the Hebrews says, it's much worse now.

I mean, now we're talking about hearing from God straight from heaven. He says those days it was easy. Now God's really putting a demand on us.

Well, during revival, as God reveals himself, people see just how cold and hard they have been towards God, they see how little fear of the Lord there's been in their lives, they see just how much they were able to sin without conviction, because all of a sudden you see him and you recognize, you know, my thoughts during the day or the words that came out of my mouth or these desires or late at night when no one's looking in the things that race through my heart, God knew all of that. See, we know that all the time, but there's not a working revelation in us, there's not a clear understanding of that. One rabbi in the Mishnah said, basically, if you want to live right here on the earth, they're just a couple of principles to go by.

You know, remember that there's an eye that sees everything and a year that hears everything and all your deeds are written down in a book. Well, there's that revelation that comes back to us, the fear of the Lord, the holiness of God. When Isaiah saw God, he knew the Lord before that he may have been operating prophetically before when he saw him in his fullness.

He was undone. He was shocked, shocked and undone by the holiness of God. When Peter gets a revelation of the character of Jesus on a boat, he was following him already.

He'd already left everything to follow him. But when he saw his glory reveal on the boat with the miraculous catch of fish, he fell on his knees and said, Depart from me, Lord, I'm a sinful man. Now, you have to realize how totally undone Peter must have been to say that, because he was on a boat and the water when he said, Lord, depart from me.

I mean, he was so overwhelmed by the presence of the Lord, he just wasn't even thinking. I don't think he was saying you could walk on the water. He wasn't conscious.

I didn't understand that. Just so undone. Depart from me, Lord.

I'm a sinful man. When Job gets hold of a revelation of God, he repents in dust and ashes. There's a revelation of God that comes.

And that's why people who have been even the godliest people, you know, and there's a real revelation of God, they weep and wail and get on their faces and say, I'm undone. I'm vile. People say, oh, that doesn't line up with my faith confession.

When you meet the object of your faith confession, you change your speech a little bit.

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