

The Canadian Revival Story

by Ralph Sutera

This sermon emphasizes the need for personal revival, focusing on falling in love with Jesus and allowing God to work in our lives. It shares powerful testimonies of transformation, highlighting the impact of revival on individuals, marriages, ministries, and communities. The speaker stresses the importance of surrendering to God, reordering priorities, and being willing to be changed by the Holy Spirit.

Duration: 1:10:12

Description

This sermon emphasizes the need for personal revival, focusing on falling in love with Jesus and allowing God to work in our lives. It shares powerful testimonies of transformation, highlighting the impact of revival on individuals, marriages, ministries, and communities. The speaker stresses the importance of surrendering to God, reordering priorities, and being willing to be changed by the Holy Spirit.

Transcript

How is everybody? How is your faith? Let's try that again. How is your God? I'm glad that your God is greater than your faith. Now there's hope for the rest of us.

You see, that's what we've been talking about, God coming back to us in a truer sense. It's a delight to be here. Just by way of introduction, for those who may not be familiar with who I am, I have a twin brother who is ten minutes older than I am.

I'm ten minutes smarter than he is, so we're even. We are now in our 55th year of ministry together. Now that's a miracle in itself, to put up with a twin brother for that long in ministry.

The ministry has taken us to a number of countries, but what's thrilling is to be in a place where we can see God at work in so many wonderful ways. It's a delight to be here and to share with you. I looked at the schedule and I saw the number of speakers that were scheduled to be here, so I had the idea that you were going to have your supply of sermons, and that I needed to do something different from a sermon.

We're going to have another sermon right after I'm finished, but this morning I have a sense of going back to something that Danny said last night in his first point. Do you remember the first point last night? What was the first point? Remembering. Remembering and being stimulated by what God has done in the past to believe that he can do the same and more in the present as well as the future.

I'm convinced that many of our peoples and many of our churches and many of us in our Christian lives live in such a way that we have what I call a glorious future behind us. We can tell what happened 50 years ago and 75 years ago, 30 years ago, but not too much what the Lord is doing now. You see, God needs to use the past to remind us of the fact that he is the same and that he can continue to do his work in his own way.

So, I just want to get started on the subject of the Canadian revival story and lessons that I've learned as a result of it. I guess I should qualify by saying that I do not speak as some authority on the subject of revival. I think it's right when whoever said it, said it right when he said, revival is one beggar telling another beggar where we both can find bread and eat it together.

Someone said the person who thinks he has all the answers probably hasn't heard the question yet. Or you might as well have a conversation with yourself. You have all the answers anyway.

But I do thank God that through the years he's given my twin brother and me the opportunity of being in town and a number of places where he has seen fit to do a deep work among the people of God. And that's been thrilling. It's been exciting indeed.

And so I do stand here as a witness to the fact not only that we read about revivals in history as well as in the scripture, but I stand as a witness that God is powerfully at work in our day and we can believe that he is the same today, yesterday, and forever. And we need to be believing believers. I am convinced that in many of our churches we are filled with unbelieving believers who really don't believe God can do it.

Now in the light of what we heard last night, it's interesting that Psalm 107, there are four times one statement is made. It's this, all that men would praise the Lord for his goodness and for his wonderful works to the children of men. That's what we heard.

Remember, his wonderful works. Four times that statement is made in the Psalm. A world traveler at the end of his trip around the world was asked, what was the greatest thing you saw? Was it the Taj Mahal? Was it the Swiss Alps? Was it the Grand Canyon or the Canadian Rockies? What was the greatest thing you ever saw? And with no hesitancy he replied, the greatest sight in all the world is a heaven-sent revival.

You see, on his trip he ran into a place where there was a revival. And that was more exciting to him than any other sight that he'd ever seen. You see, it's interesting that Albert Einstein, the Jewish scientist that is renowned as being one of the most brilliant men the world has ever known, made this statement.

If one purges Judaism of the prophets and Christianity as Jesus Christ taught it, of all subsequent editions, especially those of the priests, one is left with a teaching which is capable of curing all the social ills of humanity. Imagine that from a Jewish scientist. Imagine that.

He said, you know what he's saying to us? He's saying if we could get rid of all the nonsense and all the garbage and all the secondary issues and get back to what Jesus Christ clearly taught, we would have the religion that is capable of curing all the social ills of humanity. That's why we need revival, to get back to the simplicity of what it is Jesus taught. Now, revival, we're talking about it.

Is it a must or is it merely it would be a nice thing to have and to happen? And if you're here today with the idea that it would just be a nice thing to have or happen, you're not a candidate to be revived. You see, the truth is that the history of the church is the story of revival. You take revival out of the church, you have no church history.

For all other times, the church was merely treading water, merely just holding its own, merely just kind of trying to keep itself above water. That's why we need revival. Well, what is it not? What is it not? Well, it's not an evangelistic crusade, though an evangelistic crusade could turn into a revival.

It's not always a spiritual happening inside a church building. Some of the great revivals of the past have not occurred in the church. It is not necessarily a time of religious excitement.

See, we get excited about many things in life, but religious excitement is not revival if God is not about whom we are excited. Any other excitement is not revival. And is this revival? Ah, this is interesting.

After revival meetings, three pastors discussed the results. You know, pastors got together. Well, the Methodist minister said, the revival worked out great for us.

We gained four families. And the Baptist minister said, well, we did better than that. We gained six new families.

The Presbyterian minister said, well, we did even better. We got rid of our ten biggest troublemakers. By the way, six and four makes ten.

And that's a tragedy when those four and those six take their bitternesses and their resentments and all their problems to another church. What they do is just deaden the spirit of the next church they attend. So be careful who you take into your church.

Well, that's interesting. No, no, no, no, that's not revival. Revival is not a big numbers game or picking up a few disgruntled families from another church.

That's not revival. Well, revival is a spiritual experience that only Christians can have. You cannot revive something that has never been lived.

You see, an unconverted man has never been lived. We are now talking about to be revived is to return to where nothing stands in the way to hinder a relationship with God and with man. Nothing stands in the way to hinder that relationship.

Well, when I think in terms of reviving, I think there are all kinds of definitions that can be given. Here's one that I like. It is when hidden springs spring forth.

There are hidden springs underneath and all at once they spring forth. Springs of prayer and fasting and genuine seeking God for a moving of a spirit. And I wonder even in this very area, where are those springs that are underneath that have been praying and seeking God sometimes for years? And many times we go into a community and they'll begin to say, well, here's a group of people that have been praying for so many years, all by themselves, for revival.

Hidden springs. Well, I could talk about D.O. Moody's hidden springs in his ministry. I could talk about Billy Graham and the people that were prayer warriors behind him.

I could talk about Charles G. Finney. But let me just share personally just the sum of the hidden springs that have been behind our ministry through the years. Well, we were in a Western Canadian city.

Mrs. Follis was a member of the church. We were there for one week of evangelistic meetings. And I need to say to you by way of background that Lou and I had 18 years of evangelism as straight evangelists after

leaving university and starting ministry.

And then God Almighty began to work in changing all that, and I'll get to that in a minute. But here's one of those hidden springs. Mrs. Follis.

After we were in her church, she and her husband prayed for us every single day for four years. When revival broke out in Western Canada, we had a weekend conference in the city of Regina, Saskatchewan, and she and her husband drove over the Canadian Rockies. And they were there in the middle of the winter, all bundled up, this elderly couple.

And my brother thought he would honor them, and he asked them to come forward and say a few words to about 700 people there. And they stood up, and my brother, who was kind of excited to see all these people had come from all over Western Canada for this conference, he said to her, he said, what do you think of all this? And she kind of stood rather still and nonchalant as it were. She said, this is nothing.

But here's my brother with 700 people. What do you think of all this? This is nothing. That's a real starter for you.

But he could tell that she was saying something more than that. And he questioned her a little further, say, are you trying to say something else? She said, and she turned and said, this is only. Well, now that's getting a little substance, isn't it? From nothing to only? This is only God answering prayer.

That's all. And then she told that crowd, and we heard it for the first time, that when we were in her church, God laid this ministry on her heart, and for four solid years, she and her husband had prayed for us every single day that God would transform our ministry from evangelism into a ministry of the, into the inner life of the church and revival. So this is nothing.

God answering prayer. That's all. One of those hidden springs.

A year after the revival broke out in Western Canada, one of the men, Bernard Palmer, who wrote the Danny Orless series books for boys and girls a number of years ago, was in South India. He was at a Gideon convention, and he said, and he began to share with the Gideons what he saw in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, in the revival. He was there when it happened.

And when he got finished, two Gideon brothers came running up to him, and they said to him, where did you say that happened? In Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, in Western Canada. Oh, they said, praise the Lord, praise the Lord, praise the Lord. He said, why? Because we asked God to lay on our hearts a sister city on the North American continent to pray for a revival, and God gave us a city of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, to pray for a revival.

And here they are, one year later, they hadn't even heard the revival broke out. Gideon's right. Well, there was a missionary on an airplane, and an evangelist friend of ours said, when I get on the plane with people like that, I just kind of want to find out exactly what they know about answers to prayer.

So I asked the missionaries, can you tell me of a prayer that you prayed, and you know God exactly answered your prayer? And the missionary said to this evangelist, yes, I began to pray for a revival for Canada, and especially for Western Canada. God laid that on my heart. And it's interesting that a short time later, I heard that there were two little twins that were up there, and a revival broke out.

And God answered my prayer. He didn't spring, spring forth. Bill McLeod, the pastor of the church, got so tired of playing the religious games with divine truth with his people, that he literally laid aside many of his pastoral duties, so that he would just give himself to ministry of prayer, intercessory prayer.

And he prayed. Well, I can tell you he prayed five years for a revival. He prayed with other pastors, including Henry Blackaby, who was a pastor in the same city at the time.

And in the midst of it, then God just encouraged him to lay aside even more, to just call his whole church to pray. But his people didn't know that on his face, in his office, day after day, here he is calling on God for a genuine revival. Well, there it is.

Didn't we hear last night the importance of prayer for a revival? Here's the pastor. Here are all these hidden springs, spring forth. Well, when Lou and I found ourselves in a western Canadian city, at Prince George, British Columbia, the pastor said to us, said, fellows, my part in this ministry is to pray.

If you need anything, you talk to the associate. I have to pray. And he would sit on the platform night after night, very somber, very sober.

And we hardly knew exactly what was taking place. A week and a half into the crusade, where God began to work at such a powerful level, he came to the platform one night. It was as if a bird let out of the cage.

And he stood up. He said, folks, I want you to know that God answered my prayer. He set me free.

He said, and he told the congregation that for one solid year, he had not prayed a night, he had not slept a night through without God waking him up in the middle of the night, calling on God for a revival for a city, for the province, for the country. And one solid year interceding like that. And he said, last night, God said to me, all right, my child, I've answered your prayer.

Now rejoice. Hidden spring, spring forth. That man, Cliff Dietrich, godly man, just passed away about a month ago.

Hidden springs. Well, what happened? Duncan Campbell found himself in the city of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, a year before the revival took place. The church was so cold and so backslidden that they couldn't even get 50 people to come to hear him speak.

Here he's talking about the great revival in the Hebrides and off of Scotland and so on. And he couldn't get more than 50 people. But God revealed to him, and I'm not exactly sure how, whether it was a dream, a vision, but knowing that godly man, how God used him so powerfully, revealed to him that a revival was going to break out in western Canada and it was going to start in this very church.

And he locked that secret in his heart in the city of Saskatoon, only to go to the city of Winnipeg, where he spoke to this pastor's brother, and he told him what God revealed to him. And he said, you lock that in your heart, and when it happens, then make it known. And I can tell you that if you were to read the autobiography of Duncan Campbell, before he passed away, it happened.

And the mention of what I've just told you is there as a record that God made it clear to Duncan Campbell that a revival was going to start in that city. Well, in the midst of that, Lou and I got so tired of just going to churches as evangelists and finding that many people would be prayed with for salvation, then go back a year or two later and wonder, where are all those people? What happened to them? Where are they? We

thought a church knew how to carry on leading people on in the things of God. What happened? Is there something wrong with the message? Well, could be.

Is there something wrong with the church? Could be. Is there something wrong with the pastoral staff? Could be. All those things could be involved.

And in our spirit, God began to sharpen the focus in our hearts as to what the message was all about. You see, in evangelism, for too long, many of us made the mistake of presenting a kind of gospel message, and as what Don Kern was talking about, of understanding what the gospel is all about in that earlier hour this morning. We made the mistake of presenting a message of, come get all you can from God, and can all you get, and sit on the lid.

Come get all you can from him. Get your sins forgiven. Get free from going to hell.

Get a clear conscience. Some of your habits that have harassed you for so long, God wants to set you free from those. Come on, get all that.

Just think how much better it's going to be for you. Well, who wants to burn in hell? I want to be saved. Now, are you suggesting those things are not real? Of course they're real.

But if that is the essence of Christian experience, we have missed it completely. You see, it's not what we get from God, but it's giving ourselves back to a God who's already given himself to us. And the Lordship of Christ, the truth of the Lordship of Christ, came into sharper focus in our hearts, in our minds, as to calling people not just come to find Christ the Savior, but are you ready to surrender all that you are, and all that you have, and all that you ever hoped to be, to his Lordship, to his control, to be able to walk in the fullness of his Spirit? Well, when we got to this city, the pastor, Prince George's pastor, Dietrich said, tell us, that's wonderful how the Lord is leading you.

But he said, I believe there's something else, and that is Christ cannot be Lord until we understand that death principle, that it's going to be no more I, but Christ. I am crucified with Christ. Romans 6, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Christ.

And God sharpened the focus further, and all at once the truth came in such a way that God used it to break the hearts of many people in Western Canada for his honor and glory. And so, from that background, we find ourselves in this city of Saskatoon with 190 people on the first night. The second night, God Almighty got ahold of a lady in that congregation.

By the way, I need to get back to the prayer preparation. That pastor not only was hidden himself for prayer, but as one reporter wrote, let me just share it with you, the pastor persuaded his church to clear the calendar of all activities on Wednesday night. Sunday, he told his people, if you have to miss a service, miss the Sunday morning or evening service, but don't miss Wednesday night.

He stressed this until he saw the adult prayer meeting attendance rise from 40 to 120. There were also two children's prayer meetings, total of 40 in attendance. Thus, a total of 160 out of 300 people were coming to a midweek prayer meeting.

He then invited his people to stay after church on Sunday nights for a half-hour prayer. Next, he started cottage prayer meetings around the city. The attendance was not large, but prayer was growing.

He set up a prayer wheel and asked people to sign up 15 minutes around the clock, people were praying. The deacons met on Saturday night for an open-ended prayer meeting that began at nine o'clock and lasted until they felt it was finished. Prayer, preparation.

So, we walk into that situation, 190 people, first night. Second night, God gets ahold of a lady who was praying for a revival in Canada, so concerned about the economic situation, the political situation, the religious situation. And God said to her, Emma, why are you praying for the country when you can't even stand your own pastor's wife? How phony can you be? By the way, that's about as phony as it can be for some of us praying for revival here when we're not willing to be honest and deal with our sin.

We can say it as loud as we want to say it in prayer. How phony can we be? And God broke her heart and she had to make things right with the pastor's wife and other women in the church. Well, you know what that did? That helped her husband to recognize he had a problem.

Of course he did. Thirteen years, he and his blood brother had been at odds with each other. And for the last two years, they had not even spoken to each other.

They used to sing together and now they're in separate churches because they couldn't stand being in the same church. And guess what happened? We saw God Almighty work in that man's life and in a reconciliation with his brother. And before the seven and a half weeks of a crusade was over, they were on the platform singing together for the glory of God.

Well, things began to happen. All at once, we found ourselves with people meeting God in every direction. Ten-day crusade, we knew that we could not stop after ten days.

We knew that God was just beginning to work. But what do you do with your schedule? After all, you're busy. You've got a full schedule.

And God Almighty began to talk to us about that. Who owns your schedule? Whose schedule is it? When are you going to begin to live by faith and trust God instead of saying, oh, look, I'm so busy. I'm booked for five years.

I'm so important. And we sat down and wrote a letter to all the pastors that we were engaged to be with for the next two years and canceled all the meetings. And I can tell you, it was interesting because one pastor in Ohio, we had been scheduled to be with him for almost two years for a 100-year celebration of their church.

And they were doing a whole month, and we were going to have one week of evangelist meetings in the middle of it. And we write him and tell him that, I'm sorry, we've got to cancel. God's about to do something here.

We can't walk away from it. And we get an airmail special delivery letter back. And I say to my brother, I said, Lou, you open this letter.

I thought surely we were going to get it now. And instead, we open it, and he said, thank you, thank you, so glad. We'll be glad to release you as long as you give us some other dates.

But it's about time you begin to walk by faith as you tell the rest of us to live. Oh, no. He didn't say it quite that bad.

But that's what it said to us, and God was on the scene. We had to move to a larger building. From a building that seats 300, we moved to one that would seat 700, and the first night it was filled.

The second night, it was packed again. While we were there on the second night, we get a phone call from a pastor from a church that would seat 1,000. He said, our church board has just voted to open the church.

If you want to come over tomorrow night and start in, we open our doors. And so we moved to that church, and we were there that week, and that was full. And we rented a building which seats 1,700 people, and we started in there, and we just continued night after night.

Sundays, we'd have two services with 1,700 people at each service, and we'll continue for seven and a half weeks. Well, what was happening? All kinds of things were happening. Reconciliation between people, restitution of stolen goods around the community.

The newspaper office was getting reports, something's happening in the city. What's going on? The pastor said, you know, maybe we should send a report into the newspaper and let them know a little bit what's happening. But he thought, you know, this newspaper is not conducive to helping us in anything spiritual here.

I said, let's try. So I went with the pastor, and we took the report in, and the editor of the newspaper said, oh, you're too late. He said, look here.

And he shows us an article that he had written. And he said, look what it says, and it's going to be on the front page of the newspaper. Morality in the wake of a revival.

Why was he writing it? He was getting phone calls from the department stores. What's going on? We have all kinds of people telling us that they've stolen goods here in the department store and want to make them right. Well, what's going on? The grocer calls and says, a lady comes and she says, they didn't ring up a 99 cent bag of potatoes that should have been rung up.

And I knew it was not rung up, but I stole it, and God has spoken to my heart, and I've got to make it right. And the manager of the grocery store says, he said, when she came to me like that, I just put my hands on my head. I said, oh no, not another one.

He said, you're the sixth person that has come to me today to make something right. All at once, the reconciliation and restitution turned the eyes of a community on God. The newspaper reporter, the editor said, I get a phone call from the police department.

The police department said, what's going on in town? Nighttime crime is at an all-time low. What's happening? God was at work. We pick up the Saturday newspaper where all the churches have the advertisements, and we look, 12 churches cancel their services.

We now join the revival that is happening in our city. Word to God that God would get a hold of some church people in some cities, where we begin to understand that we're not building our own little kingdoms, but we're building the kingdom of God. I can tell you, it's great when you see that begin to happen, and the community sees God at a different level.

Well, all at once, things are happening. Well, we ended on a Grey Cup Sunday in Canada with 4,000 people in the large auditorium. You know what Grey Cup Sunday is like in Canada? Sure, I'll tell you what it is.

It's Super Bowl Sunday down here. You know what that's like? Why, we even have churches that dismiss services on that night, or we have churches that change the time of their service to accommodate Super Bowl here. In fact, we even have some churches that have Super Bowl for the Sunday night service, and at the intermission, they have their 10-minute service.

Isn't that a nice one? But there are 4,000 people, snowstorm all around, to see what God was doing. Well, what was happening? Well, I can tell you one lady came to the meeting. She said, Lord, if you don't heal me tonight, I'm jumping off the bridge.

Another lady, she and her husband took in a woman whose husband had left her, only to find that that woman then began to run around with her husband, or began to get interested in her husband, and the bottom line is then she runs off with this woman's husband. And when her children would come home from school with the books from school, Alice in Wonderland, and this woman would say, it's Alice in Blunderland. That's the name of the woman that ran off with her husband.

And that woman was good for the psychiatrists, all kinds of pills she was on, and if God had not touched her life, she'd either be insane or in the grave today. And what a sight to see when God broke her heart, and she saw her bitterness, and how God put love within her heart for that husband. That situation has not changed.

But I can tell you, in March of this year, she was there in the conference that we had in the very city where the revival broke out, and you see the glory of God on her life, and the way God has anointed her and gifted her to be able to minister to people. Toronto Seminary chaplain, he came from the eastern part of the country to find out what was happening. In fact, many of the Christian periodicals were sending reporters to find out what was happening.

People said, is it a youth revival? Is it a youth revival? Said, the generation gap never had a chance. We had 25-year-olds praying with 75-year-olds. We had 18-year-olds praying with 88-year-olds.

I'm just using some figures. They're saying, we just want to be one. We just want to be together, because God was at work, and there's no generation gap.

Well, what about that seminary chaplain? He goes back to Toronto, and one of the students says, I knew I had to be in chapel that next day, because I saw the chaplain's face, and I knew something had happened to him. Well, I can tell you what happened. Chapel service started at 10 o'clock in the morning.

Bill McCloud was there ministering 10 minutes. He spoke 10 minutes to the students, and God broke in on the scene, and what started at 10 o'clock in the morning ended at 1.30 a.m. the next morning. All kinds of people making things right, getting off their knees, going to the telephone, calling their parents, making things right.

One pastor in northern Manitoba said, if God doesn't do something for me, I'll never preach again. He said, I had to travel 700 miles to attend my own funeral. You know what he's saying, to die to myself.

He said he went back to his church, and people began to get saved week after week as a result of it. There was a fugitive criminal who was just passing through the city, and by chance, oh, just by chance, he was led to the meetings. Just by chance.

Coincidence, isn't it? Guess what? He got saved, and he turns around and goes to the police department, and he turns himself in and saying, I'm a fugitive criminal, and I'm turning myself in, and I'm ready to have whatever is necessary for me to make it right. And the police department in the city of Saskatoon said, why did you do it in our town? He said, because it was in your town that Jesus Christ has become Lord of my life, and I want to make it right. The bottom line is that his wife came later, she was saved, and three children, a whole family born again as a result of it.

Workman's compensation. A man lied that he was injured on the job, and God got a hold of him and said, when are you going to make that right? He had thousands of dollars already given to him through workman's compensation, and he turns and goes back to the people in charge and says, I'm ready to go to jail, I'm ready to pay it all back, whatever is necessary to be thoroughly right with God. Well, there was a man and his wife who traveled with us.

It was marvelous what God did in their lives, but I can tell you that he began to pray for his daughter going to the University of Alberta, and the Lord said to Henry, quit praying for your daughter's safety and for her to have a good year until you go back to the university where you cheated on that last term paper for your final exam and for your diploma. Who was he? An administrator in the education department in the city. One of the leading educators of the city.

Now God gets a hold of him saying, when are you going to go back and make that right? Quit praying for your daughter. And he went and made it right with the university. What about those who had stolen goods from Ornita Stainless Steel Company on the job? How to make it right? A man writes a letter to the Prime Minister of Canada, dear sir, you better fix up some kind of a conscience fund because there are going to be lots of Christians in western Canada who are going to be sending you money that they cheated the government.

I can tell you when God goes to working like that, you better believe the eyes of God, the eyes of the world will be turned on God. Now it's no more business as usual, no more playing games. The pastor of that church, the largest church, Walter Bolt, when we went to it, when God got a hold of his heart, he said the most devastating thing about revival was to be honest enough with myself to admit that there was only one thing that was causing my cup of joy to spring a leak, and that was sin.

Well, what was sin? Sin of the pride that he did not need any of his other brethren in the ministry in that city. He had the biggest church, he had the wealthy people, he had everything he needed, and God broke his heart about his lovelessness for the brethren in the ministry, and one day he called as many of the pastors and their wives to a home of one of his parishioners, and there we started in at 9 o'clock in the morning, and he asked all those brethren for forgiveness, and I can tell you what started at 9 o'clock ended at 4.30 in the afternoon, just enough time for us to get ready and go back to the next evening service, and during that day all kinds of things happened. One pastor after another making things right, one with another.

One wife, one pastor's wife, she said here I am in Saskatchewan, I'm used to being out in British Columbia with the beautiful trees and the hills and the mountains and the water and the ocean and all the rest of it, and here I am in Saskatchewan, and here nothing like that, and here I'm in a basement suite, we live in a

basement suite, and a small congregation, and the winters of Saskatchewan and all the rest of it, and she went on like that. She said I read a book when I became a pastor's wife, How to Be a Pastor's Wife and Love It. She said I've been a pastor's wife for three years, and I can write a book, How to Be a Pastor's Wife and Hate It, and God broke her heart, and that couple was melted before God and restored in ministry, one thing after another taking place like that.

It was amazing to begin to see how God was at work. Well, churches were cleansed. One pastor said to another, he said I wonder what this church would look like if at any given Sunday God Almighty would take the lid off of my congregation, and this was a church close to a thousand people.

If God would take the lid off of this congregation, I wonder what it would look like to God, to a holy God, to a pure God, absolutely pure God. Another pastor said I have the idea that if that happened in my church, it would probably look like hell itself to a holy God. Well, we found ourselves there on a Sunday morning.

The service began at quarter to eleven, only to find that the meeting ended at quarter to four in the afternoon. Did we preach that long? No. No.

The message was preached. God Almighty came on the scene. God began to break people's hearts, all kinds of people across the congregation making things right one with another.

We gave four invitations for people to go to a place of prayer. Some people left. They left to go to the restaurant at twelve, twelve-thirty.

They had to beat the Pentecostals to the restaurant, and so they were there. They left. Guess what? They went home, and they get phone calls from the church.

Please come. Come on back. Come on back.

Come on. The service is still going on, and by the way, come on back. I've got to talk to you.

Why? They've got to make something right. The pastor sat on the platform. All kinds of people coming up to him.

He sat there. They were making things right, one with another, with the pastor, right on the platform. Quarter to four.

The following Sunday, we're in the same church, and guess what? The service ended at quarter to two in the afternoon. You know what the pastor said? We're getting cleaner. We're getting cleaner.

God cleansing his church. Does revival affect church boards? Absolutely. There's a church board in Eastern Canada, when God worked in their hearts and lives.

You know what they said? We used to spend the first two hours. No, no, no. No, no.

We spent the first ten minutes with a devotional. Get that out of the way, and then just get on with the business. And then the rest of the night, fussing and fuming over what needs to be settled, and go home close to midnight with our stomachs churning.

Now they're telling other church boards, now it's changed. Now we spend the first hour and a half or two hours on our knees, praying for each other, ministering to each other, bearing each other's burdens,

praying about the decisions that we need to make for the church. And then get up off our knees and spend the last hour doing the business, going home with all kinds of things confirmed, settled, and peace in our hearts to know that we've heard from God and we've responded to God in such a way.

A district superintendent of that district, over 170 churches, of 70 churches in that district, a year and a half after the revival meetings took place, he said to us one day, he said, fellas, you need to know that in a year and a half after revival meetings, I as a Sunday school, as a superintendent, have not been called out on one troubleshooting assignment in any one of my 70 churches. Not one in a year and a half. I said to him, are you trying to say to me that in a year and a half no church has had any problems? He said, no, I didn't say that.

He said, I as a superintendent have not been called out on a troubleshooting assignment in a year and a half. And then he made a statement I've never forgotten. He said, I said, he said, tell me, what are you, what are you trying to say? He said, because revival taught church leaders how to solve their problems with knee pads on instead of with boxing gloves on.

Pray through your problems instead of fighting. Revival made the difference. That district in the denomination the next year reported 119 percent increase in conversions.

And it was a district that was considered one of the lowest as far as conversions was concerned. And it was by far much larger than any other district in both Canada and the United States in conversions as a result of revival. I can tell you missions affect, oh, let me get back to the city of Saskatoon and church growth.

Henry Blackaby was pastor of the church at the time. He had been praying with Bill McLeod for a number of years for revival. He was pastor of the Southern Baptist Church, a small work at the time.

And he was there for the meetings. And I can tell you that he personally was impacted directly to what was taking place. I met him there in his office one day.

In fact, he was very much behind the scenes during this whole time. But God was doing a powerful work in his life and in his heart. And it's wonderful to see that happen.

And then I can tell you that if he were here right now standing on this platform, which he was in April, in March of this year, in front of the 35th year anniversary celebration in his own city, he would tell you that revival absolutely revolutionized his ministry. The church, he started about 10 churches. For 10 solid years after, he'll tell you the results of what happened.

University students were impacted. Ten other churches were started in the area. And then he starts talking about how revival changed his family, changed his ministry, changed his writings.

And he said, you realize that Experiencing God was produced in 1998. He said, that's all a direct result of what happened here in revival in 1971 that changed my life. In fact, I interviewed him on the platform that night and it was marvelous and the words right out of his mouth, he said, I guess I would have to say that my whole DNA for life has been changed as a result of revival.

So when you think of the ministry God has given that man worldwide, just remember God Almighty got a hold of a pastor in a simple little church in Saskatoon and touched his heart and ignited him at a level that he's never been the same and he's not afraid to say it. So who are we? Where are we? What does God

want to do in any of our hearts, any of our lives? I can tell you what happened to other people and missions. Winnipeg, the city of Winnipeg alone, where Bill McLeod and another pastor had the crusade, Lou and I were not even there.

That was the beauty of what was happening in revival. It didn't matter who was preaching. God was on the scene.

Things were happening. It is known that out of that one crusade alone, there are at least 30 people in full-time Christian service. People say, how does revival affect world evangelism? I'm telling you right now.

There was a mission station where in Africa, four couples were on the same mission station, did not know each other, only to find that all four of them were the direct result of meeting God in the Canadian revival. A pastor wrote me. He said, you'll be interested to know that today in my church, I had a guest speaker in the morning and then a guest speaker at night, two different speakers.

They not knowing each other, the morning speaker said, I am here to say to you that I was saved as a result of the revival that took place in Saskatoon and now here I am in the ministry. The night comes to a nighttime meeting and the man gets up and says, I was saved as a result of a revival and here I am now in the ministry. How does revival affect the world? A youth pastor, well, I could say a man who was in the youth group in the city of Regina, he's now a pastor in Egypt, said to me that out of the 35 young people in his youth group, 75% of that youth group now in full-time Christian service as a direct result of revival.

I can tell you that the Bible colleges reported a vast increase in enrollment of students wanting to come to study and the registrars would tell me that on the applications, they would find this kind of a statement, I'm coming as a result of the change that has taken place in my parents' lives and now our family has been changed and now I want to study for God as well. I can tell you that the tract societies reported such a tremendous increase in the giving for printing of gospel tracts. I can tell you that Bible colleges not only increased by way of numbers, but the dynamics that began to flow out of that have affected the entire world.

In fact, in the Canadian Revival Fellowship, which was born out of the revival, we have several people who were Bible college students at that time who are now involved in full-time revival ministry. It's wonderful to see what happens when God excites people about the things of God. Oh, that men would praise the Lord for his wondrous works among the children of men.

This is a moment, this is an hour of remembering that in our lifetime, in our day, God can do it. Have any of you ever heard of the name of Dr. Sherwood Wirth, former editor of Decision Magazine? Just keep that in mind for a moment and I want to say something about it. Here's the definition of revival.

When God's people come out of their bondages to be able to fulfill the Great Commission. That's it. Out of our bondages to be able to fulfill the Great Commission.

It is said of Jonathan Goforth, comments of the heathen where he worked, the heathen would say when the revival broke out in Jonathan Goforth's life, the heathen would say, their God has come, their God has come. They would say, well we've heard about their God, but now their God has come, their God has come, their God has come. What to God that America would start talking like that.

That our God has come. A pastor in Iowa during the Easter season, we happened to be there for meetings at the time, he wrote something in his church bulletin that to me is very profound. Listen.

Revival is resurrection power at work in us. Resurrection power at work in us. Transforming the deadness of our sinful selves into the beauty of the resurrected Christ.

When people see him living in us, then they will be able to respond to our testimony, he is risen, he is risen, and with a bold affirmation we can say he's risen indeed, he's risen indeed in our lives, he's risen. Well, Leonard Ravenhill, we've heard that name mentioned, have we not? Well, I can tell you that during these days, Leonard Ravenhill wrote us a letter, and in the midst of his letter he said, thank God for what he had heard, what was happening, but listen to what he said. The answer, oh here's what, amidst the tragedy of this hour, and he talks about Watergate, the oil crisis, unfinished war in Vietnam, many things, trickery, political schemes, and so on, so on, but he said amidst this all, all this satanic deception, there is one supreme tragedy.

What is it, Leonard? And in big, bold print, a sick church in a dying world. And he goes on, the answer is a revival of holiness amongst the people of God. I know that some snicker at the deeper life teaching, but there is a deeper life.

This is Leonard Ravenhill. There is a deeper life. It is as deep as Gethsemane, and as costly as Calvary.

That's it. That's not playing games with God. And then he ends his letter to us with a statement that is on his tombstone in Louisiana, epitaph on his tombstone.

It is, think you that the thing most Christians are living for are worth Christ dying for? Repeat, think you that the thing most Christians live for are worth Christ dying for? And then he signed it, yours for revival, God's way, Leonard Ravenhill. Well, let me just tie this together. My problem is to try to tie such a happening together in a short hour.

What have I learned? There's nothing more important than times of refreshing in hours of God's visitation. Our agendas must be set aside when God wants to visit us in a special way. And some of us are not ready to set our agendas aside, and that could be one of the biggest hindrances to revival.

I've learned that we cannot put God into our mold or into a box. He will break out in some unexpected way and place. It is his work, not ours.

I've learned that the Spirit of God needs very little help in convicting people of sin in times of revival. You see, that verse says, in the hour of God's power, his people are willing. And what we strive to see happen with conviction, when God goes to work and we pay the price for a holy ghost revival, then what's the willingness? One pastor said to me, I never thought I would live long enough to see the day where the people in the church are saying, Pastor, I can hardly wait for God to show me something else that needs to be made right.

I'm having such a good time making things right with others. I can hardly wait for God to show me something else. He said, those are the same people that before revival would do everything to try to hide and cover their sin.

You see, in the hour of God's power, the Holy Spirit doesn't need much help in bringing conviction. I've learned that God cannot do his work and live his life through us until he strips us of all our reliance on human resources. As long as we can depend on our human resources, we have the know-how, the ability.

God has to strip us of that if he's going to do his work. God does not call the equipped, but he quits those he calls. So don't try to make ourselves anything other than what God has made us to be.

And you know what that is? 1 Corinthians 1. God loves to use the weak things. Aren't you glad? That's what gives my brother a chance. And that's what gives his brother a chance.

And everybody said, you didn't have to say it so loud. Why did I say that? Because when one newspaper reporter, a Christian periodical, reported what was happening, four or five pages worth, and somebody brought us the article, look at this, and one paragraph said, the music, trying to describe what was happening in the revival, the music was below par. And it was.

We had Dr. Virgil Brock was our song leader. You know who he was, the man who wrote the song Beyond the Sunset, and many other gospel songs. But he was 83 years of age.

He had a natural vibrato in his voice. You were never sure which note he was on. So the music was below par.

It was. And then it went on to say, and the preaching was below par. Oh, now they went to meddling.

And went to say, in both content and delivery. Now what's left? And I've got to get this in. I've got to get this in.

My brother was doing most of the preaching at that time. And there's a reason why. There's a reason why I had to tell you that.

Here's why. Because when I looked at that article, I thought, I'm going to have fun with my brother on this one. And I said, Lou, look what they said about your preaching.

Look what they said. And I'll never forget. His eyes just began to sparkle, a great big smile, and he bursted out, Amen! Praise the Lord! Why? Because the rest of the sentence said, but one could not escape the fact that God was at work with his people.

And when he said that, he said, Amen! Praise the Lord! It's about time something happens that nobody can get credit for it but God! 1 Corinthians 1. Why did God choose the weak? So that if anything good happens, no flesh could glory in his presence. So that all the glory goes to God. I've learned that you can be too big for God to use, but you can never be too small for him to use.

That's wonderful, isn't it? I've learned that revival must always be revived. It's not a once and for all, pure all, forever ill in the body of Christ. Does not your Bible say, Wilt thou not revive us? When? Next word, what? Again.

The revival needs it again. There was a church where a revival broke out a number of years ago, and a visiting speaker was there. This is a true story.

And he said, Where are the people who were here 25 years ago when revival broke out in this church? And the hands went up. Guess where they were? The last three rows of the church. Last three rows.

And the pastor said to the visiting speaker after, he said, Do you want to know where my problems are in this church? He said, The last three rows. They've had their revival. My brother says it this way, Brother, if you've had your revival, you've had it.

You've had it. They've had their revival. He said, You want to know where the life is in this church? First three, four, five rows.

These new believers, these that are hungry for God, those are the ones that sit and soak and sour and will hope that everybody else will sweeten up and take care of them. Had their revival. Revivals need to be revived.

And there are times of refreshing. There are cycles, times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. So if I could tie it all together, personal revival summed up in the commands of Jesus.

To love the Lord your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your mind and to love your neighbor as yourself, the first and great commandment and the second like unto it. The essence of revival, falling in love with Jesus. And Dr. Sherwood Wirt, the editor of Decision Magazine, when he talked to Leonard Ravenhill, he said, Leonard, I've heard that a revival is broken out in Canada.

What should I do? And Leonard Ravenhill said to him, Woody, Woody, get on the next plane. Get up there as fast as you can. By the time he got up there, the meetings were in the city of Winnipeg where the two pastors were holding the meetings.

And he saw they were having afterglows where people were meeting God after the service. And he saw a bearded engineer and his wife whose marriage was changed. And by the way, got involved in revival ministry.

He now is in heaven. She's still going on beautifully with God. And when he saw these people meeting God, he said to this couple, would you come down to Minneapolis and I'll get some of the Billy Graham people and some other people in Minneapolis together and let's have what we call an afterglow where we sit in a circle, put a chair in the middle and anybody has a need, just kind of share your need and we'll pray for you.

And that's what God was using in that revival in Canada. And so he did that. So this engineer and his wife go to Minneapolis and Sherwood Wirt says to the group there, said these folks are here and they've come to pray with people.

Now who has a need? Come and sit in the chair and they'll be glad to pray with you. And Sherwood Wirt says nobody moved. Here I brought them.

And he says, well, maybe I ought to start. So he says, I'll go. After all, a little prayer won't hurt.

Sherwood Wirt says. And so he kneels at that chair and he talks about this bearded engineer from Winnipeg who says, let me just read it to you out of the book called Afterglow that's out of print. Too bad it's out of print.

A blow by blow account, how a revival transformed the life, the ministry, the marriage of the editor of Decision Magazine. He said this, soon hands were being laid on my shoulders, my head. People were kneeling alongside me and praying for me.

Then my turn came to pray and I did fervently, eloquently and I thought adequately. I asked God to help me be this and help me do that. I finished and tried to get up, but the hands held me down.

Then I heard Harry, that's the engineer, Harry's voice said, ask God to crucify you. He's talking to the editor of Decision Magazine. And he says, crucify me? I wasn't even sure the idea was theologically sound.

To do what, I said? Crucify you, nail you to the cross, he replied. Well, he had me, this bearded civil engineer from Manitoba. What could I do? I did as directed.

Now, ask God to fill you with his spirit and thank him for it. I swallowed and obeyed. Someone started a course and they let me go.

I went back to my seat, considerably subdued, feeling awkward and foolish. Evelyn, this man's wife, smiled in my direction. You probably don't have much of a sensation of blessing now, she said.

Don't worry, the feeling will come later. And how? She was right, it came and it has never left. And here's the story of the transformation of the life of the editor of Decision Magazine.

For Revival. Now, why have I said that to you? So I can read to you, let you read some of the words of his testimony as I close. Here it is, and word to God, some of us would begin to see ourselves the same way.

Here it is. Revival met my need and forced me to reorder my priorities. It was exasperating to spend many years trying to change other people and then discover that God wanted to change me.

The impact I had hoped to leave on my world was nothing to the impact the Holy Spirit made on me. He sent me back to square one. Instead of talking and writing about the cross, I was nailed to it.

Instead of taking up the problems of humanity and trying to unravel them, I faced up to my own. Instead of urging others to be unselfish, I was emptied of self. And instead of going through life spiritually dehydrated, I fell into a vat full of love.

Amen. Amen. Let's pray.

Lord God, I pray thou will make us so sick and tired of business as usual. Thou will make us candidates for such a moving of the Holy Spirit that we will pay any and every price to be thoroughly right with the King of Glory. Whatever it may be, O God, deliver us.

Whether it's our agendas, whether it's some secret sin, whether it's broken relationships, whether it's professional jealousy, whether it's denominational pride, whatever it may be, O God, set us free so that the Spirit of the living God can move in genuine revival to do things that cannot be described in human terms. That the world will say, we've never seen it on this fashion before. When the Holy Spirit comes upon us in such a way that all the charms of the world will be broken, even among our young people.

Have your way. Spirit of the living God, fall fresh on us. Have your way.

Have your way. Spirit of the living God, fall fresh on us. Spirit of the living God, fall fresh on us.

Break me, melt me, mold me, fill me. Spirit of the living God, fall fresh. Thou art the potter, I am the clay.

Mold me, make me after thy will. While I am waiting, yielded and still, Lord God, quiet our spirits. Have your way.

May we make that full surrender to your Lordship today. We'll give you the praise, the glory. You're worthy of it.

We long for you to have it. Do what no man can do. We are not interested in what man can produce.

We long for a moving of the Spirit of God so that the world can see a demonstration of divine love such as never before. Have your way. Praise you.

Give you the glory. In Christ's name we ask it. For his sake and all of God's people said, Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/GzJ9oeOj0ts.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ralph-sutera/the-canadian-revival-story/>

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