

The True Nature of Revival in the Local Church

by Ralph Sutera

Revival is a call to honesty and godliness, putting God first and seeking a clean heart and right spirit.

Duration: 1:22:50

Scripture: Psalm 51:1-2, Psalm 51:7, Psalm 51:9-10, Psalm 51:12, Matthew 22:36-40, Romans 3:10

Topics: "Revival"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a powerful testimony of God's intervention in a broken relationship between two couples. Through God's grace, reconciliation and forgiveness were achieved, leading to a remarkable transformation in their lives. The speaker emphasizes the importance of surrendering to God and allowing Him to work in our lives, rather than trying to control everything ourselves. The sermon also highlights the need to confront and deal with sin in order to experience revival and a deeper relationship with God.

Transcript

Tonight is the true nature of personal and corporate revival. And I personally think that everything we've said leads up to what we talk about tonight. So I want us just to keep our hearts open for a genuine response to entering into personal reviving.

What is involved in personal reviving? Tomorrow night I'm discussing the results of revival, and nobody missed tomorrow night, even though it's my last evening here for now, I just want you to know that the way we end tomorrow night is going to be most fascinating. Make sure you don't miss it. Get on the telephone, get on the people.

It looks like our number is just a little bit lower than it was last night. Maybe last night people got their batteries overcharged. Maybe stayed in church a little bit too long and now recovering tonight.

But everybody back for tomorrow night. Now there are only two kinds of people in the world, and everybody who is here is in one of these two classes. See, those who have said to God, Your will be done.

Or those to whom God has said, Your will be done. As if God is saying, You want to have your own way? Go ahead, have it. Your will be done.

And everybody who is here is in one of those two classes. There's no third class about that. It's one way or the other.

Satan doesn't mind if we have unmolested areas of blessing in our Christian life. Even if we have a little dose of Christian experience and just enough to keep us from really entering into the whole thing that God has for us. He doesn't mind.

And it's so easy for us to think that because God has blessed us in a number of ways that we must be in good standing with God. But doesn't your Bible say to us that the goodness of God leads us to what? Repentance. And all the more, we ought to recognize the importance of living at the foot of the cross.

If you were to say to me, What verse sums up what personal reviving is all about? I would dare say, I'd have to say it's Matthew 22, 36 to 40. That portion of Scripture. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind.

And thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. And the Bible talks about these are the greatest commandments. Love God supremely and the second like unto it.

Love your neighbor as yourself. It's true. And here's the tremendous text of reviving in the Old Testament.

Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may continue to have long faces as they come to church on Sunday morning? No. That thy people may rejoice in thee. Well, you see, Charles Haddon Spurgeon said, A genuine revival without joy in the Lord is as impossible as spring without flowers or day dawn without light.

Joy in the Lord. Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee? It's in thee. You see, where is it? A tremendous statement that was made a number of years ago in an article.

The need today is not for a transitory revival, but for the eternal one to dwell with us forever. A revival that begins where? In the character of God. We'll be as a river ever increasing and widening until lost in the great sea of eternity.

You know, sometimes when we have a crusade, Lou will make a statement like this. Tomorrow night I'm going to speak on the subject. Where does revival begin? He said, Of course you know where revival begins.

And everybody said, Yes, I know where revival begins in my heart. He said, No, it doesn't. Where is it? In the character of God.

A revival that begins. In other words, God himself is the focal point. And when that happens, and then Luke says, Wilt thou not revive us again? And for the Canadians who are here, again.

Revival must always be revived. Revive us again. Do it again.

Do you know what it's saying? It's a reminder to us that there's no such thing as a once and for all cure all. It's not just an experience that's a fix for good. No, no.

It's a process of again and again. And it relates to the New Testament where the apostle Peter talks about times of refreshing. Acts chapter 3. Times of refreshing coming from the presence of the Lord.

Meaning time after time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. Now, some practical definitions before I get into the meat of it. What is some practical definitions of reviving? It's a call to honesty and godliness.

It's putting God first. Not putting him off. Look at this one.

It's when my neology catches up to my theology. You like that word neology? I made it up. That's why I put it in quotes.

It's not in the dictionary. See? When my neology catches up to my theology, it's the impact of divine truth. Both revealed and applied.

See? We've had a lot of truth that's been revealed. But what about the application of it? Okay. Truth will not live in our intellect unless it is relived in our experience.

That's it. See? Not only revealed but applied. You see, this must have been a German.

Henry Krauss. I don't know who he is. Somewhere I picked up this quote and I don't know where it was.

And I've not found anybody who knows where it comes from and knows the man. But it's one of the most profound statements on this subject. Truth divorced from experience will always dwell in the realm of doubt.

What a statement. See? You can talk about the truth in the head. But if it is divorced from genuine experience, there will always be doubtful as to whether it's real in your life.

And I can tell you what happened to a man when God touched him in the revival meetings. He said, I love that. See? We can know it's true.

But when God touches us deeply, then we'll know it's real. Well, a practical definition. When God is my goal.

Not merely seeking the solution to my problems. When God himself becomes my goal. And when that happens, watch how he begins to solve the problems.

Now, if you were to ask me, can you tell us from your experiences, if you say, can you give us an idea of some of the situations and the people that you believe are some of the most dramatic things that have happened in your ministry to people? What would they be? Well, I really wish that Max Cheney were here. I went down to Black Duck yesterday and sat with him. And he has a memory that never forgets anything.

He said, And I'm just sitting there. And he remembers it all. And he's older than I am.

I mean, over and over again. All kinds of things have happened to people. But if you were to ask me what I remember as a very dramatic situation, listen to this.

We were asked to go to a church where there was two couples that were fighting with each other. Why? Because one woman was pregnant and it was not sure whether or not the child to be born would be from her husband or from another man in the same church. Now, how's that for one? In an evangelical church.

It was so bad between those two couples that the husband of the wife who was pregnant was already negotiating with people in the underworld in the Detroit area to have this other man knocked off. He was ready to pay \$500 at that time years ago to have him killed. Already in the process.

How's that for walking into a situation? Well, without all the details, merely to say to you that we saw God break through that whole situation and bring about a reconciliation between both of those couples to the

place that the husband would say that even if the child would not be my child, I will accept the child as my own. And then to think that two weeks later both of those men were at such peace with each other that they could drive 10 hours one way in a car to a bowling tournament and the one saying, just think, a few weeks ago I was ready to have you knocked off and now we're rejoicing together for 10 hours in the same car. Marvelous story how God saved two marriages in that whole process.

Well, Lou and I were in another ministry a short distance from there several, a couple months later and this couple that had this happen to them came to visit us one night, the meeting. And I asked them to come and share a word of testimony as to what God has done in their lives. Now when that happens, we teach people in a revival-oriented ministry what to say and what not to say.

Some things are said in public and some things are not said in public. And so there was no fear as to that in that process. So I asked them to share a word with the people here.

And I'll never forget the wife stands up and she says to the congregation she said, I want you to know that in revival God saved our marriage, put our marriage together as it's never been before. God did a marvelous thing for our marriage and she was just thanking God for what he did for their marriage without details but just rejoicing in that. And then she said something that kind of shocked me.

Listen to this, she said, but what God did for our marriage was nothing compared to, and I'm, oh, I'm listening what God did for our marriage was nothing compared to what God did for us. And I wonder what was coming next. And I knew, I'm standing next to them knowing the story that I just told you and the people didn't know it and they said what God did for our marriage was nothing compared to what God did for us.

And the next statement, God himself has become our goal in living. That's it. You see, some of us just want God to straighten out a few of our problems, things that we can't handle ourselves but that's not reviving, it's when God himself becomes our goal for living.

And I can tell you that it's now 35 years later with that couple. I can tell you now that he is an associate pastor of a church staff, she's the church secretary, they've been on mission trips for years. Say, how long does it last? I'm telling you.

So you see, we need to get our eyes off of our problems and begin to think of how we relate to God himself. Well, practical definition of revival is when the viewpoints and value systems of believers are transformed into the value systems of eternity. It's amazing how our value systems change, our priorities change.

And I would probably say, oh, there's other definitions there, getting back to the cross with a sob in your heart, conformity of my heart, so on. Okay, giving up my rights, right. But the bottom one is probably the most important thing as a practical definition of revival.

You know what it is? It's judgment coming early. It's my being willing to deal with my sins now so that I do not have to face them at the judgment seat of Christ. Doesn't your Bible say that we'll stand before God and give an account of the deeds done in our body, whether they be good or bad, as believers? So what is revival? It's judgment coming early.

Instead of waiting to be judged then, we deal with our sin now so that that judgment takes place right now and we get those things settled between us and God. What a blessing that is! Judgment coming early.

Turn to Psalm 51 as we come to grips with the true nature of personal reviving.

There are a number of portions of Scripture that relate to the subject, but what could be more significant than the way God worked in the life of the psalmist David? By the way, it's on page 623 in my Bible. Have mercy upon me, O Lord, O God, according to Thy lovingkindness, according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies. Blot out my transgressions.

Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity. Cleanse me from my sin. I acknowledge my transgressions and my sin is ever before me.

Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned and done this evil in Thy sight, that Thou mightest be justified when Thou speakest, clear when Thou judgest. I was shaped in iniquity, and sin did my mother conceive me. Thou desirest truth in the inward parts.

In the hidden part Thou shalt make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop. I shall be clean.

Wash me. I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which Thou hast broken may rejoice.

Hide Thy face from my sins. Blot out all my transgressions. Now that's all we're going to read right now.

But I can tell you that in the first nine verses we see the psalmist David dealing the problem of unconfessed sin. In other words, if we're going to be right with God we have to do what he did. Come to grips to deal with the unconfessed sin.

We've been talking enough about that. Merely to say to you that as I look at this portion of Scripture without a detailed accounting of it, you see in this portion the confession of the psalmist David was so real. It was so real.

You see, there was no such thing as vindicating himself in the process. You recognize, we understand, that this was his confession after sinning in adultery with Bathsheba and then virtual murder to cover his adultery. And that whole story of what went on with the sin of his life.

Now remember we are talking about the man that God called the man after his own heart. Well, people say, well, why is the story like this in the Bible? Why? Well, for some reason, here's one. So that those who find themselves in this kind of sin need not despair to know that God's grace is sufficient to minister and meet that need.

But it's in here only once like this so that none of us presume on the grace of God. So, how do I know his confession was so real? How does I know it? You see, the point is, true confession is total agreeing with God about it. When you take a look at this psalm in the first three verses alone, you see that the psalmist David uses the three basic Old Testament words that describe what is not contrary to the will of God.

Here are the words. One is transgression. Second one is iniquity.

And the third one is sin. All three words are in the first three verses. Transgressions, iniquities, and they all have a little different meaning.

See, transgression, you know what transgression, it's another word for trespassing. Whenever you see a sign that says no trespassing, it means you can go up to a certain point and then if you move past that

sign, you have gone too far and you're subject to the law. Trespassing, transgression.

And the word iniquity gives the connotation that God has drawn a straight line. He's drawn a straight line. And he says to us, he said, if you want to be right with me, you've got to walk that straight line.

And the moment you, as you keep walking that line, if you get one toe off that line, either way, that straight line is no longer straight. No wonder the psalmist, in the book of James, the writer says, if a man keep the whole law and yet offend in one point, he's guilty of breaking the whole law. That's a reminder of how absolutely perfect God's standard is.

And so, that's the word, iniquity. And then the word sin, meaning, oh, God has a perfect, God has a perfect mark. In other words, he sets up a target.

The word sin. He said, all right, now if you want to be pleasing to me, you aim. You aim.

And if you don't hit that bullseye dead on, you've missed the mark. And you know what the truth is? All of us have missed the mark. All of us have transgressed.

All of us have gone too far. All of us have made the line crooked. There is none righteous, no, not one, the Bible talks about.

But I'm merely saying to you that as a one who is walking with God, as the man after God's own heart, who found himself in that kind of sin, when it came to dealing with that sin, he's saying to God, he's saying, God, no matter how you look at sin, I'm guilty. Every way you look at it, he used all the basic three Old Testament words. He's not condoning it, not trying to hide it in any way.

And he also reminds God that it's against God alone that he sins. And all the rest of it is the result of it. So I'm merely saying that when we say we are wanting God to deal with us and we are candidates to be revived, it starts with our being absolutely, transparently honest about sin.

I know a man of God who said, you know, before I was saved and sanctified, I had a vicious temper. He said, now that I'm saved and sanctified, and this was a Baptist pastor talking like that, saved and sanctified, he said, now I don't have a vicious temper anymore, now it's just weak nerves. Isn't it amazing how we try to cover it up and change the name, and yet the same acts are there.

As long as we're trying to excuse it and cover it up, you see, we'll never find spiritual victory. A man was filling out a job application, came to the question, have you ever been arrested? It's on a job application. And then he wrote no.

And on the application, you see, the next question was intended only for those who answered yes. And the next question was, why? He wrote no, he'd never been arrested. But if he had written yes, the next question is why? Have you ever been arrested? He said no.

And he just filled it in by mistake. And the man answered, because I never got caught. But my point is simple.

Isn't it amazing how we do everything to cover it up? There he's exposing, but basically, you see, he never got caught. And you see, the idea is this, the idea is this, see? That's the world's view, the world's view of how we deal with sin. If we didn't get caught, we didn't do it.

We act as if we didn't do it, if we didn't get caught. But see, when it comes to God, you can't act like that. Thou God seest me, Scripture says.

The psalmist David said, if I take the wings of the morning and I fly out into space, thou art there. If I make my abode in the pit of hell, thou art there. Where wither shall I go from the presence of God? You remember when the space travel just began and the Russians sent up some Sputniks, first of all, and some of those cosmonauts got up there and said, well, we're up here in this great big universe, the world above it, and we're looking for that God.

Where is that God who's supposed to be everywhere? Where is that God who's supposed to be everywhere? Aren't you glad they couldn't find him in a box? You can't put anything in a box. It's all present everywhere at the same time. Thou God seest me, and the sin that is committed under the canopy of the darkest night, the God who made the night has eyes strong enough to see right through it.

We can't hide it from God. So if we are going to be candidates for reviving, we must deal with sin. A Ugandan Christian said it this way.

He said revival is very simple. He said no roof over our heads and no walls around us. He said nothing between one's heart and God and between one Christian and another.

He went on to say it means abhorrence of sin and self and then appropriation of forgiveness and restoration of fervent faith. The way in which he said it. So that's where we start.

Deal with the unconfessed sin if we're going to be candidates to meet God personally. Then the second truth is we must agree with God about the unemptied self-life and that we see in verse 10 of the psalm. In verse 10.

He says not only not only purge me with hyssop and clean me from that outward sin but now he deals at a deeper level. He says create in me a clean heart O God and renew a right spirit within me. Do you know what he's saying? He's saying God the real problem is I've got a filthy heart.

The real problem is I've got a wrong spirit. The real problem is my heart, my inner life was so carnal and so self-centered and sensual that I demanded my lust to be gratified. It's the inner man.

It's the part where other people do not see. It's when nobody else is around what I think about when I'm thinking about nothing else. What way does my mind go? It's the demands of self to be vindicated in dictating the terms.

And having my way and not allowing anything to get in my desires in the way of my desires no matter who's affected in the process and in David's case whole family and others his whole kingdom was affected as a result and cloud over his life in the midst of it. Just let me have my way. It's a filthy heart.

It's the inner man. It's that self-life. It's that inner being that is so contaminated.

I need a clean heart, oh God. I've got to have a right spirit. That spirit is so wrong demanding my own way.

That's more than the outward acts. That's the inner man. You see, that is so real and so important.

When men would fain have a revival Andrew Murray said as the outgrowth of their agencies and progress God's way is the opposite. It's out of death acknowledged as the desert of sin confessed as utter

helplessness that he revives. He revives the heart of the contrite one.

You see, when I say create me a clean heart and I'm saying self is in control self is in control you know what it is? It's self defying the God of the universe for the control. Anything with two heads is always a monstrosity. Now that's hard for me to say being I'm a twin.

Have you ever seen two children trying to sit on one chair at the same time? My chair. Get on. Get off.

My chair. Two kings trying to operate one kingdom. War.

I know what that's like. Lou and I growing up sleeping in the same bed as children as young boys. If he got that much of his elbow over the center of the line of that bed we're in for an all night fight.

My side. Get over. My side.

My side. Two of us trying to operate in one bed. My side.

Anything with two heads is a monstrosity. And if that self and that filthy heart and my own desires are in control then I'm challenging God's right to control me. Always a problem.

So the question is who's going to be in control? Jesus Christ the Supreme Lord and Master or I'm going to bow down to and serve at the shrine of self? Hmm. This is interesting. Here's the scripture.

Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. This is somewhat comical. People were talking about that and one says, you know I haven't actually died to sin but I did feel kind of faint once.

And you know when I saw that I couldn't help but chuckle and say yeah that's about it. Some of us have felt kind of faint but we'll do anything but die. Anything but surrender the rights of self at the cross and continue to live with a filthy heart and the wrong kind of spirit that is the very heart and essence and core of it.

Like Jack McDonald, four months old in the Lord. Lou and I were in British Columbia. One night I saw a man and his wife a young couple sitting off the aisle about three or four rows down and I noticed how intrigued they were listening the first time in the church.

When the meeting was over I immediately went down from the platform I went to them and I said so nice to see you would you like to join us for a cup of coffee in someone's home tonight? Oh yes we would. So by the time I got to the back I grabbed one of the members of the church go home put the coffee pot on we're coming. And we're coming with about 20 others as well.

Isn't it amazing how you invite yourself? Now where I'm staying here that wouldn't be a problem with Jim and Jeanette you know that's no problem. But anyhow the point was so here I guess what we found out here's a couple that moved to the west from the eastern Canada and they were there looking for friends and one day Lou and I were on television being interviewed about meetings and she happened to see us when he came home from work she said honey I saw something that I was interested in we ought to go see and find this out maybe we can find some friends. And they came.

She was an agnostic her mother was with her as well he had a church background but was nowhere near church so they came so they came to that session that night and they heard people start talking about

what God was doing in their lives in the crusade and they were intrigued just listen and by the time we got finished they said how about if we do this again tomorrow night would you like to come back in tomorrow night oh yes we would. And that second night I can tell you that she and her mother were asking all kinds of questions playing the devil's advocate as it were listening to people talk about the reality of God couples from the church. Two o'clock in the morning we were still going on they were ready to leave this man Jack McDonald touched me on the shoulder he said would you please send someone to our house tonight tonight? It's two o'clock in the morning.

So I went two or three other people went and I saw those three people husband, wife, and mother just broken before God ready to kneel around their coffee table in their living room to repent of their sin and give their hearts to Christ. And that elderly woman became one of the most outstanding prayer warriors I've ever known through the years and this couple Jack and Ruth just a year ago they worked with us in a crusade this is 35 years later. It's marvelous how many people they've won to the Lord it's a marvelous story and I said to the mother I said mother, mother do you remember that night in that living room when all three of you reached for one Kleenex box at the same time? And she said Kleenex box nothing I went for a towel.

You talk about genuinely being born into the family of God not just had knowledge.

Well I can tell you four months after this couple met the Lord he writes me a letter and I just want to share a little bit four month old Christian being saved in the midst of a revival crusade this is what he says today I know what the abundant life is all about he was a businessman all I can do is keep myself cleansed of new daily sins and to be available to God this way God can use me 100% and then he went on to say it's so wonderful to see how God can handle things once we give him a chance it's quite difficult for him to run things when we continue to live watch this a selfish, self-centered life and try to run things ourselves four months old in the Lord and I know people who are 40 years old in the Lord who have never learned the lesson some of us are slow learners self in control

we can make it four months old in the Lord well I can tell you a lot about self what is it? self will read the Bible will pray will tithe will go to Bible school or seminary will live in a jungle as a missionary for years yes do anything but die though it looks like making a great sacrifice to go to a mission field even that may not be the sacrifice of self whether at home or abroad we must come to the place of death to our self-life and all of its demands many want to be filled with the spirit for selfish reasons self reasons like Saul said to the prophet Samuel I have sinned yet honor me now isn't that amazing I have sinned but I still want honor hmm God won't go along with self-glorification programs no matter how nicely wrapped and presented to him self has to die so Christ can live

and shine out in our lives through the fullness of the Holy Spirit self must die to be filled with the Holy Spirit see Martin Luther said I do not fear the Pope and all his cardinals as much as I fear the king that lives in my heart self there's the problem it's not just trying to be forgiven from outward acts it's that inner being somebody sent me a whole bunch of old cartoons that are classics here's one look at this you see see on the right on the left it's the right see I ought to go that way see but look at this one see that's what I ought to do but look at this one this is what I want to do look at the man tossed between it all see and that's what Romans 7 is talking about to will is present with me but how to perform that which is good I find not see no wonder the apostle Paul said

oh wretched man that I am who's going to deliver me from this body of sin and death I've got a will to do right but to perform it is not right I want to do right but something pulls me the opposite way yeah that's right why be a slave why be a slave when you learn to live with the bondage of self living with self in control you know what you're doing you're actually consigning yourself to second rate citizenship in the kingdom of God and wondering why God's blessing cannot flow self challenging God's right to control you demanding our rights you know what Leonard Ravenhill said it right he said you know what the problem is the absence of deaths is killing the church you know what we don't have enough deaths we're too alive we need some funerals the absence of deaths is what's killing the

church well that's the camp meeting prayer of a man who every year would go to the camp meeting and he'd pray Lord take away the cobwebs out of my heart Lord next year he's back Lord take away the cobwebs out of my heart next year he's back same prayer every year you know he's coming for the shot in the arm once a year Lord take away the cobwebs and after several years of that going on like that some of the people got tired of hearing him pray like that and one man piped up and said Lord don't take away the cobwebs kill the spider deal with the root of the problem get to the bottom of the problem that's what it's talking about that's what we're talking about tonight why we can't have spiritual victory so alive to ourselves F.B.

Meyer said next to seeing Jesus as my sacrifice nothing has revolutionized my life like seeing my sinful self in the sinless Savior I saw myself God has nailed the likeness of my self life to the cross well Rome Virgin Mary number of years ago Lou and I had occasion to be in the city of Rome and one of the missionaries said when you go on the tour where they take you around to the cathedrals make sure that you in one place make sure you get away from the tour guide because he will not take you go around the back side of that one cathedral and you'll see something that's unique you'll see a cross and you'll see Jesus Christ hanging on that cross but what is unique about it is when you look at the back side of that cross you'll see someone else on the cross you'll see the Virgin Mary also

on the cross Jesus Christ one side the Virgin Mary on the other side and those of us who understand the Bible truth of salvation through the finished work of Christ alone we look at that and we say oh look at that that's heresy to think that we in our background as Italians and so on we understand and I think it was in 1959 it was called the Marian year where even on the hospitals the Catholic hospitals you'd see the statement save the world through Mary Mary co-redemptrix with Jesus Christ so it's nothing strange and so there they were just displaying it on the cross even and we look at that and say whoa that shouldn't be because Christ alone hung on that cross and you know that was my first reaction to seeing that but when I got away from that a little bit and began to reflect on what I

saw I said you know what the problem was? they had the wrong person up there I should have been there not as a co-redeemer but does not the apostle Paul say I am what? with Christ nevertheless I live but not I but it's a whole new life you know what it is? it's a life of crucifixion death to my own rights living the life of a dead man no more I but Christ that's the story and the truth is the reality is that many of us know the truth but for many of us we have never by the act of our will agreed with God that it's going to be no more I but Christ and I take the place of crucifixion to all of my rights and all of my demands and all of my dictates and I come and say God I'm sick and tired of self being the master demanding its own way dictating the terms in my life by the way it's true of a

church everybody says oh I'm going to stand up for the right I'm going to contend for the faith what they mean is they're going to be contentious over the faith they're just going to prove that they're right and you

know what coming to the cross is all about? you know what it is? it's when I'm even willing to give up the right to even be proven right that's death to my own rights well I can tell you that it's so important that we come to grips with this truth pastor I'll die if I don't get right with God when Lou and I were in lived in Mansfield Ohio a pastor told us the story of a true story of what happened to a man man came to him and said pastor you know I really want to get right with God I just need to get right with God can we go out somewhere and pray together?

I just want to get right with God he said yes let's go out in the woods and pray so he said they began walking through the woods and the man said pastor can't we stop here and pray? no let's keep walking kept on walking through the woods said pastor can we stop here and pray? no we're not there yet and he kept walking through the woods and said pastor can't we stop here and pray?

I want to get right with God pastor said we're not there yet and he went on deeper into the woods and it continued and the man began to get furious pastor I want to get right with God can't we stop and pray? no we're not there yet and he went on this is the woods here he said pastor I'll die if I don't get right with God pastor said we're there now we're there now ready to die we're there now see when we quit playing games with the truth and get desperate to be set free from our bondages and self demanding its rights we pray with a solemn as David create in me a clean heart oh God and a right spirit within me a contaminated spirit that heart that's filthy where nobody else knows me but I know it's there we get so sick and tired of that up and down in and out kind of experience on top a

few weeks and then down in the dumps and do you think that God almighty allowed Jesus Christ to go to the cross and pay the price that he paid for our salvation so that we'd have to live a miserable life absolutely not and God needs to set us free from all that all the contamination of self demanding its own way and its rights to be crucified with Christ means we no longer have to be overpowered by temptation we can choose to obey God through his power what has been shattered is not the presence of sin but it's the mastery of sin in our lives that's why the songwriter said the savior can break sin's dominion the victory he won long ago in him there's freedom from bondage he's able to conquer the foe so what have we said tonight said if we're going to be genuinely revived we must deal with

all the unconfessed sin we must agree with God and come to that place of emptying the self life at the cross and then we become candidates deal with an unfilled sanctuary to accept a fresh and filling of the Holy Spirit you see everything I've said so far is negative get rid of the sin the garbage get rid of the contamination of that filthy heart that's negative but the positive side is that God wants to fill the sanctuary with his presence that's the positive side you see verse 11 and 12 see the psalmist says cast me not away from thy presence and take not thy Holy Spirit from me see that's the concept of the Old Testament concept of the Holy Spirit coming upon restore unto me the joy of thy salvation and uphold me with thy free spirit so there's the Holy Spirit there's a free spirit and

if you look in verse 17 the sacrifice of God or a broken spirit a broken contrite heart God thou will not despise it's amazing when our spirit is broken when we deal with God on God's terms that's the kind of sacrifice God is pleased with now we're talking about the ministry of the Holy Spirit by the way do you know what he says he said cast me not from your presence take not thy spirit from me restore unto me the joy of thy salvation and look at verse 13 then will I teach transgressors thy ways and then sinners shall be converted to thee oh look at the process having dealt with sins having come to surrender the rights of self the contamination of a filthy heart now calling on God for the power of the Holy Spirit take not your spirit from me and restore to me that joy of your salvation

and uphold me with that free spirit the next thing you read is now when I teach Sunday school class it will not just be teaching alone but it will be sinners shall be converted to thee results results so what do you say when I tell you of a man who had been a Christian for 20 years and never witnessed to anybody and in a Michigan City crusade he met the Lord deeply on these terms and in the next two weeks he witnessed to 20 people and had the privilege of seeing 6 of them give their hearts to the Lord all at once things changed you see when we have a clean heart having dealt with our sins and then the surrender of self we are no longer challenging God's rights to control us and we are accepting a fresh infilling of the Holy Spirit and receive that free spirit then all at once something

has happened in our lives now God can do that work revival begins when we admit our greatest area of need and sin we come to Him in humility and cleansing allowing Him to deal with our self life only then can we appropriate the fullness of the Holy Spirit by faith now the simple truth is that God cannot fill with Himself the person who is all full of Himself and you see that's the self life if we are all wrapped up in ourselves don't expect to be filled with Himself cannot happen well now look at that now look at it oh look at what's the right thing and look see oh that's better look I want to do it I ought to do it to do what's right see look they that are after the Spirit do mind the things of the Spirit to be spiritually minded is life and peace to be spiritually minded to mind the

Spirit to have the mind of the Spirit to have the Spirit of God control your mind anyway you want to say it life peace do you know where that is that's in Romans chapter 8 in Romans chapter 7 the Apostle Paul said oh wretched man that I am who's going to deliver me from this body of sin and death and he said I thank God I can't do it for myself by the way somebody comes and starts praying Lord I want to crucify myself Lord I want to crucify no no you cannot do it try it lay down on a cross put nails into your feet and then you stretch yourself back up on the cross this way and you stretch out one arm this way and you pound nails into this hand this way and you're crucifying yourself right you're crucifying yourself right but then look here you've got this hand to nail well how are you

going to get it nailed this one's nailed feet are nailed how are you going to get this one nailed can't do it see it's not something in self we cannot do it the Apostle Paul said I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord at full surrender to Him and he starts that chapter 8 there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit and he talks about the spirit of life in Christ has freed us from the law of sin and death and it's in that chapter where he says to be carnally minded is death but to be spiritually minded they that are after the spirit do mind the spirit and that's a tremendous 8th chapter a victory that we have a father son image of God God our Father and he cries Abba Father and then the spirit itself bears

witness with our spirit that we're the sons of God and then we can know that all things work together for them that love God who are called according to who are those those who have a love for God those who have a sense of divine calling in their lives we know that all things work together why? because he's in the process of conforming us to the image of his son verse 29 and only those who walk in the spirit say yes Lord that too yes Lord yes Lord they allow that to happen yes Lord that too they recognize that's all a part of the process of God making us more like his son Jesus Christ a carnally minded man will never understand Romans 8 28 and 29 carnally minded professing Christian is not willing to come God's way will never be able to understand it something happens in his life

immediately starts blaming God but when we begin to see what it means to walk in the spirit and let God do that office work in our hearts to make us more like Christ he puts our wanter and our otter in the right

direction for his glory we talk about being steadfast but the tragedy is many of us are only stuck fast and back oh brother asked us there's another one went to camp meeting these by the way are true stories Lord fill me with your spirit I wonder how many have ever prayed that how many times we prayed it Lord fill me with your spirit next year he's back Lord fill me with your spirit next year Lord fill me with your spirit follow you Lord and the people got tired and one man prayed it right he said Lord don't fill him with your spirit plug up the leak plug up the leak you know what

the leak is self and control that's the problem do you know that some of us have made 1st John 1.9 our life verse without even recognizing it do you know what we say isn't it wonderful that 1st John 1.9 is in the bible that we can always be forgiven always be forgiven if we confess our sins he's faithful just to forgive us and to cleanse us we can always be forgiven so what if I sin can always be forgiven do you know what it means do you know what it's saying it's saying that some of us never expect to have victory over that sin just live on the plane of just coming back to God for another dose of forgiveness as if that's the essence of a Christian life and the reason is because self is in full control filthy habits we're trying to get rid of wonder why well here's one man and his wife

traveled with us for a number of years interesting he told the story of what it was like for a number of years he had a problem he was trying to get victory over tobacco and he'd go to the pastor and say pastor you know I really want to get victory over the cigarette and tobacco I just don't need to be smoking it I know it's harming my body and I know it doesn't please God it's not a good testimony and my family doesn't like it either and all the rest so I want to get victory over it so the pastor prayed Lord help our brother Paul with his tobacco Lord help him with his tobacco you know I wasn't there if I were there I would have probably stopped the pastor from praying that way I would have said pastor don't pray that way his tobacco doesn't need any help it's doing quite well on it's

own sometimes our prayer is so beside the point Lord help brother Paul with his tobacco no no no any couple days he'd have victory he's right back to smoking again he'd go back to the pastor and they'd pray the same prayer and he'd just go through this cycle but I can tell you when Paul's wife came to the revival meetings and they recognized that that sin in his life was a result of something deeper self satisfying gratifying his own lust and he recognized that it was not just asking God to help him with the tobacco recognizing that he was demanding his own rights and demanding his own desires and not pleasing to God and he recognized that it was all a part of the self life in full bloom and when he came to the foot of the cross so it's going to be no more I but Christ in control and

accepting a fresh infilling of the Holy Spirit that's the power you know what tobacco's gone and if he were here tonight 30 years later you know what he'd say holy smoke holy smoke and whatever your situation may be we wonder why we act as if we just keep coming back and forth come to the Lord again and just oh we can always be forgiven always be forgiven and that is not what God expects and who wants that kind of Christianity and when the world begins to see the dynamics of true commitment to Christ and true sense of what it really means to know God in reality then you see it's exciting because they need to be released from their bondages as well in the power of the Spirit well there's Jack McDonald four years old four months old here's part of that letter look at this I now realize that

unless unless you are filled with the Holy Spirit it is very difficult to share Christ with anyone look at this as the flesh has too many hang ups do you know what he said in that letter he said here I realized I had clients who were Christians and when I was in their home they never talked about Christ he said some were pastors and others as well and he said after I gave my heart to the Lord I found out that they were

Christians and he said it surprised me that none of them ever talked to me about Christ and then he said this statement I now realize that unless you are filled with the Holy Spirit it's too difficult to share Christ with anyone because the flesh has too many hang ups and we sit here and say you know I just can't witness to people I just can't there's something in me I just

the flesh has too many hang ups self in full bloom what will people think of me how will I be viewed see all there to be filled with the spirit why is that important do you know why when you read Ephesians 5 18 through 20 and be not drunk with wine wherein is excess but be filled with the spirit sing to yourselves speak to yourselves singing in psalms and hymns and spiritual psalms making melody in your heart towards God and it goes on and on that whole portion do you know why it's absolutely essential to be filled with the spirit well before I say that I can tell you of a lawyer in Pennsylvania who dealt with marriage cases and divorce situations he said to me as a tremendous believer he said Ralph I don't know how any man can live a successful life in marriage without being filled with

the spirit he's right because the flesh has too many hang ups you talk about problems of marriages you know what the problem is if you've got a wife in a marriage that has her rights and a husband who has his rights see it's a problem of rights and it's until those rights are surrendered at the cross now we can be filled with God's spirit so there can be oneness of spirit in Christ why is this necessary I'll tell you why when you read this whole portion of scripture you see it talks about mutual submission in the fear of God we're to submit to each other in the fear of God and how we desperately need it we need it in our lives we need it in our homes we need it in the church mutual submission and wives submitting reverencing husbands as unto the Lord you reverence your husband as unto the

Lord and husbands loving your wives as Christ loved the church you put all that together those three things together and if they're operating properly each one properly with each other you watch you watch the power that comes into that kind of a relationship it's a result of being filled with the spirit and it goes on children obeying their parents and honoring their parents and it goes on fathers not provoking but nurturing their children in the admonition of the Lord and it goes on servants being obedient to their masters as servants of Christ doing God's will and it goes on masters respond the same way to your servants recognizing your your masters in heaven all those human relationships flow out of being filled with the Holy Spirit so the truth is very real and I'm going to close and

then give an invitation for those who are ready to enter into these truths tonight you say well I've given my heart to no that's not what I'm talking about I'm talking about we know how many things we've allowed to keep us from being filled with the Holy Spirit and by God's grace tonight we want to come to the place of prayer and say God I'm sick and tired of it I repent of it and I surrender the rights of self at the cross and I accept a fresh and filling of the Holy Spirit and I thank God for it can you say the Lord's Prayer? can we say the Lord's Prayer? do you know the Lord's Prayer?

Our Father which art in heaven hallowed be thy name thy kingdom come oh stop let's really say it ready our I can't say our if I live in a watertight compartment wrapped up in myself Father I can't say Father if I don't demonstrate that kind of a relationship in my daily life which art in heaven I can't say this if I'm so occupied with the earth and I'm not laying up treasures there hallowed be thy name the word hallowed means holy I can't say hallowed if I who am called by his name am not holy thy kingdom come I can't say this if I'm not doing all in my power to hasten its coming why pray it and not do anything to hasten it thy will be done I can't say it if I question and resentful of or disobedient to his will in earth as it is in heaven I can't say that if I'm not prepared to devote my

life here to his service in earth as it is in heaven give us this day our daily bread I can't say it if I'm living on past experiences and past blessing why do I need daily bread if I'm still living in the past forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us how can I say this if I sit here and I still hold grudges against other people what right do I have to ask God to forgive me of my sins if I'm not willing to forgive others why pray that as we forgive those who trespass against us are you forgiving those who trespass against you you know how smug having smug complacency we can say the Lord's prayer church some do it in church every Sunday morning like rote memory lead us not into temptation I can't say it if I deliberately place myself in positions to be tempted

why pray that deliver us from evil I can't say this if I don't resist it through the weapons of prayer and other weapons thine is the kingdom I can't say it if I don't accord the king total immediate obedience as a loyal subject why say thine is the kingdom revel in that kingdom when I'm not willing to submit to it as a loyal subject thine is the power I can't say this if I fear what men may do or what my neighbors may think if I share that the gospel with them why do I say thine is the power glory in God's power when I I can't say it if I live in all kinds of fears thine is the glory how can I say this if I'm always seeking glory for myself wanting to be patted on the back have everybody tell me that I did a good job and if they don't tell me that then you see if I'll do it again ego

self carnal nature in full bloom you say thine is the glory forever I can't say forever if I live for time rather than laying up treasures for eternity why do we say forever when we're all wrapped up in time no concept of eternity amen I can't say amen if I'm not willing to agree with God about his total control of my life you see amen means so be it so be it so be it how can you say amen so be it if I'm not willing to agree with God about his total control of my life why say so be it truth is simple can we honestly say the Lord's Prayer and you know why we really can't in many cases self in full bloom my way my glory on and on it goes and if we're candidates for reviving we need to come to grips with it amen amen let's stand as we pray Lord God I pray thou will just make us so hungry for

true genuine personal reviving Lord I pray thou will make us so tired of half-hearted commitment I pray thou will just bring us to the end of ourselves so to be no more I but Christ break our hearts for the way the way we've allowed self to be in such control the spirit of the living God has not been able to do the work necessary to reveal Christ in his beauty and glory in our lives spirit of the living God may we make choices tonight that will not only affect time but also eternity that will transform our lives from merely being average professing Christians into those who can walk in the power of God in the truest sense of the word have your way have your way while we are praying there could be some of us here who say you know I'm not even sure I've ever started right say you know when

I hear this I see it laid out clearly that God has a wonderful plan of redemption to set me free from my sin and from my bondages and to give me power to have victory over that sin I'm not sure I've ever even started right I may be a good person but I can't say I'm God's person I'm a good person yes but I'm not I do not have the assurance that if I were to lay my head in the pillow of death even now that I'm ready to meet God that I've ever genuinely received this kind of a Christ in my life you've come to the right place you can open your heart and receive Christ coming to the end of yourself dealing honestly with God about sin surrender the rights of self and let God fill you with His power you see when we come to Him His Holy Spirit indwells us and when we begin to walk that way watch

He who indwells us now begins to control us as we allow Him to do it so tonight may be a night where some of us who are not sure that we've ever genuinely been born of God's Spirit can enter in by faith and

then for some the rest of us could be many of us say Ralph I realize tonight why I've just been so mediocre my prayer life the study of the word of God and everything about the Christian experience seems to be such a struggle and I wonder if there's not anything more to Christianity than what I'm experiencing I'm about ready to give it up and when I see the difficulties of people and circumstances and sometimes even in the church I say oh if that's what it's all about and you're not ready to give it up and the reason is we just need to come God's way and be set free from all the

bondages and by faith enter in to the fullness of the Holy Spirit I'm not talking about some radical experience I'm talking about the simplicity a truth experience where we agree with God that I'm tired of living with self in control and by faith I enter in to the fullness of God so all those human relationships can begin to flow certainly not perfect but oh what a tremendous thing when we begin to see changes take place and we become more like Christ and our children begin to see the beauty of our Christ flowing through us as well how many say Ralph that's exactly what I need I know God has spoken to me during these days and nights and tonight I want to bow before Him and get this thing settled and go from this place beginning to walk in the Spirit at a different level pray for me pray

for me I want to pray for you quietly slip your hands up place them down hands are being raised all over this congregation pray for me wonderful hands are being raised it's wonderful others a recognition you need up in the balcony as well those are up there yes you may place them down if you're not sure you've ever started right as well let's get it settled tonight let's make sure the doubts are removed a no so kind of experience with God pray for me any others before we pray the others Lord God I thank you for your presence thank you for ministering truth to our hearts tonight may it be a wonderful night when we enter in by faith to what it is you say have your way I pray for each one who's expressed a need a sense of hunger a desire to move past the mediocrity of just getting by in the

Christian life into the reality of the joy of the Lord beginning to flow in their hearts and lives Spirit of the living God do that work in all of our lives tonight and we'll thank you for it while we are praying while we are praying I just believe it's the right time for those who have heard from God tonight and you don't care what anybody else does why don't you slip out from where you're standing make your way here and let's kneel together we're going to pray together then I'm going to give you some material to help you get started in what it is God's saying how we begin to walk in the Spirit as well slip out from where you are right now let's join me here we're going to pray just feel free come and join us we're going to pray just gather around let's kneel that's it just keep coming

I'm not asking you to join a church I'm not asking you to do anything I'm asking you to be honest with the truth if God by His Spirit has spoken to you made clear what it is He's after let's deal with it before God tonight it matters not what anybody else will do we just want to meet God on God's terms we do not want to be the same just keep on coming nobody forces anybody to do anything but if God's Holy Spirit is ministered to your spirit then we just want to believe God to meet these needs so that we move past human relationships marriages you talk about putting it together when we surrender all the rights watch the peace begin to flow in a marriage children begin to see move in close so others can keep coming just feel free to keep joining in as others are coming even if you did not

raise your hand and God by His Spirit has spoken to you during these days and nights and specifically tonight just keep moving in close feel free keep coming you don't have to be afraid of this this is nothing to be afraid of you can be glad that God by His Spirit has spoken to you and you have enough sense not just to be a hearer of the word but a doer also and those who are just hearers are those who deceive

themselves we never have a better chance to respond to God than the moment when He speaks to us just keep on coming others feel free we're just waiting a few moments it matters not who you are where you're from whatever church it matters not by God's grace we just want to believe God to meet our needs our lives to be changed by God's power others feel free join us let's pray Lord

God I just thank you for ministering to our spirits as well as to our understanding with your truth I pray God that you'll just do divine work in all of our hearts and while we're here praying let's do what we've heard tonight start where God starts if there's unconfessed sin that we've not been willing to deal with recognize we cannot be revived if we're not willing to be honest with God about sin confess it confess it forsake it the sight of God repent of it name it be specific like I talked about last night whatever it is thank Him thank Him for the forgiveness and cleansing of sin thank Him for the forgiveness we recognize where that sin comes from the root of it is self spirit of pride self self bring it to the cross God I'm sick and tired of self being in control I surrender myself

at the cross no more I but Christ thank Him for accepting that surrender thank Him for accepting that at the cross thank Him for meeting that need now Lord we really can't live this Christian life Lord you have to live it through us through the power of your Holy Spirit and by faith tonight we accept fresh infilling of your Holy Spirit put it in your words your own words ask Him to fill you with His Spirit thank you Lord for hearing my prayer by faith I receive fresh infilling of your Holy Spirit thank you Lord thank you for the promise if we being evil know how to give good gifts to children how much more will He give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him and that's a father-son relationship we have the Spirit within us but now how much more the infilling the power to live that Christian

life thank you Lord thank you Lord Lord God I pray that you will seal every decision that is being made in your presence tonight I pray that this will not just be an end but a beginning of living the Christian life at a deeper level for some of us than ever before recognizing the importance of walking in the Spirit so we need not fulfill the lust of the flesh and Lord I want to praise your name for what you're going to do in setting us free from our bondage the bondage of self and then releasing your power through us to be able to witness to the world of the change that has come about in our lives and even some of our families to see the change that is taking place in our lives we're going to thank you we're going to praise you for it we're going to give you the glory for it in Christ's

name we ask it for his sake Amen Amen

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