

Why Revival and Who Needs It?

by Ralph Sutera

Ralph Sutera emphasizes the critical need for revival in the church to prepare believers for spiritual growth and societal impact.

Duration: 57:57

Scripture: Psalm 29:2, Psalm 46:10, Psalm 66:18, Habakkuk 2:20, Matthew 6:33, 2 Timothy 2:15, 2 Timothy 4:2-4

Topics: "Revival"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the need for revival and a genuine moving of God in the lives of believers. He prays for God to cure the warring madness and selfishness in His children and to grant them wisdom and courage. The preacher encourages the congregation to believe that the joy of the Lord grows sweeter as the years go by and that the younger generation needs to see this. He highlights the example of the disciples who, despite walking closely with Christ, recognized their propensity towards sin. The preacher warns that if a holy God were to look at the congregation, it would resemble hell itself, emphasizing the need for repentance and revival.

Transcript

Thank you so much. How is everybody? How is your faith? Let me try that again. How is your faith? Let me try something else.

How is your God? I'm glad that your God is greater than your faith. Now there's hope for me. By the way, I look out over this group and I see a good number here who used to have beautiful waves up on top and now the waves are gone and you have nothing left but the beach.

It's all right, but nothing grows on a busy street. That's my way of saying that maybe some of you think, well, I don't need what's going to happen this week here because I'm past that. I've had my reviving.

I've been in church long enough. I know God well enough. I'm just getting ready to go to heaven one of these days.

I don't need that. I can tell you that's the way people thought in our church in Mansfield, Ohio. When Lou and I came home from Western Canada and shared with our people there what happened, all at once a revival broke out.

And guess who it affected the most? The people who were over 60 years of age. Those who were ready to retire and flat tire and turn everything over to a younger generation. And God retreaded them and made them Goodyear tires.

And one man was what we called a weeping prophet in our church. You know what he would get up and whenever he'd share testimony he'd say, I want you to know that God has done more for me in my Christian life ever since age 62 than all the years in my Christian life before. He recently went to be with the Lord.

He would stand up and just weep about it. The joy of the Lord in his heart. Do you know what I'm saying? You know what this younger generation needs to see? It needs to see that some of us who are now getting to be my brother's age believe the song sweeter as the years go by, not duller, not more drag, sweeter as the years go by.

And a younger generation needs to believe that it gets gooder as we goer in the bestest of English. That's why we need reviving. And that's why it's important that we're here all this week.

Now this is going to be a series of sessions. So if you just come and take this one session in and say well I've had enough, you've had it. You've had it.

No, no. This is, we're going to keep building one session on top of the next. And I would just encourage you to make plans to be at every session.

There will be sheets that will be handed out. These are the ones for this session. Our Need is a True Revival by Dr. Vance Havner.

Why Revival by Richard Sibley. Why Revival by the Life Action Ministry people. And then Dr. Erwin Lutzer's article America's Spiritual Crisis.

That's for this session right now. Why We Need Revival. Next session will be, we'll share the story of the Canadian Revival.

You'll get something about that. And on we go each session. So what you do is you just file the material.

You don't have to read it now. But you just file it. And it's not for wallpaper.

It's for you to be able to have input on the subjects we're relating to in the truest sense of the word. Now this is going to be a wonderful time. Nobody can afford to miss it.

And if you have this church on your heart, then you need to be here. Especially an older generation. Well you say well I'll get tired.

That's fine. It'll be the most blessed tiredness you've ever known. Come anyhow.

And if your head goes down like this, that's fine. We'll think you're praying. And the Lord will wake you up just in time to hear what you need to hear and go back to sleep again.

That's my way of saying your being here is vital. A younger generation needs to believe that you believe that a touch from God in the church is vital. And especially now.

I believe God has brought us here for a time as this. Now with the transition in your church life, how much more to prepare ourselves for what God has ahead in this church. That's what it's all about.

So if you get serious, if you put your money in the offering plate, that means you're serious about the church. Then let's be serious about what God wants to say to us. By the way, do you still love me? You're better if you're going to go to heaven.

It's great. My brother's on the plane right now, on his way to Manitoba. He speaks there tonight in Portage La Prairie, Alberta.

Okay, now my time is very limited. I'm going to give you in a few minutes what takes an hour and a half. This is an hour and a half session.

Are you ready for this one? An hour and a half session. My desire is basically, oh, are we on? Okay, okay. That God will use our time together to create a tremendous hunger.

A hunger. You see, we're not hungry enough for revival. Now what are we talking about? We're not primarily talking about evangelism.

We are talking about revival. Cleansing, spiritual adjustment to the body of Christ. And then they use the term spiritual awakening.

What is the basic difference? I believe a spiritual awakening is when God supernaturally comes on the scene without any human means. We are basically talking about revival. God preparing the church for whatever he wants to do in evangelizing or should he see fit to bring a spiritual awakening, he has a body of believers prepared.

What would happen if there would be a spiritual explosion in this city right now? Thousands of people converted overnight because of God's hand at work. Where is a church that is spiritually prepared to take on all those new believers? Where is a church prepared spiritually to do it? That's what we're talking about. Well, the text for this morning's hour, the book of Habakkuk chapter 2, the Lord is in his holy temple that all the earth keeps silence before him.

I don't have time to elaborate on what leads up to that. Merely as the prophet had a concern about why God would be so patient with his people when they had sinned so much. That was one of the concerns of his heart.

And when he gets to the last verse of that second chapter, it's almost as if he's saying, all right, now, okay, the Lord is in his holy... The judge has entered the room. Silence, please. Let all the earth keep silence before him.

A holy judge has entered the room. Nothing else matters now. Quiet in the courtroom and in being struck by that presence.

The prophet says, he prayed a prayer. Oh, Lord, I heard thy speech. I'm afraid.

Tragedy in our day is we can hear God speak, but there's no holy fear in our hearts about what he's saying. The prophet, he recognized he was in the presence of a holy God. He said, Lord, I heard your speech, and I was afraid.

And all at once, he prays the prayer. Oh, Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years. In the midst of the years, make known, oh, Lord, oh, Lord, even though we deserve your wrath, could you please give us mercy? Mercy is, God, please, don't give us what we deserve.

In the midst of your wrath, you have a right to judge us, God, for what we've done to you, but God, please, don't give us what we deserve. I wonder if that's a cry for our nation right now. When we look at what's happening to our country, even now, you just wonder as if God said, look, I've put up with you long enough the way you've treated me, taking me out of your classrooms and out of every semblance of your culture and doing everything to do away with me.

God, as if God's saying, all right, do that. I just need to give you something of what you deserve. And that's why we need to pray for revival.

God, somehow, stay your hand. Give us another chance. That's the concern.

Of course, in the book of 2 Timothy, Paul writing to his young son in the faith, he says, I charge thee before God and the Lord, the judge, quick, he's going to judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, preach the word, be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort, with long-suffering doctrine. Here's what the problem is. The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall they heap themselves teachers with itching ears, and they shall turn away their ears from the truth.

And when that happens, they turn to fables, to believe lies. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of evangelists, make full proof of the ministry. The time will come.

The time will come. Men would rather hear something soothing than to hear the truth of what it is God is saying. Who needs revival? In the local church.

Who needs revival? Well, the preaching level needs revival. Now, and all the people in the congregation said? Amen. I know why you said that, because I'm preaching, right? You're right, you're right.

The preaching level needs revival. And the pastor said? Amen. And everybody said to that? Amen.

Amen. And then, you see, a pastor, when God worked in his heart, I'm going to say more about this in another session. He said, the most devastating thing about revival is, to be honest enough, with myself to admit, there's only one thing that caused my cup of joy to spring a leak, and that's sin.

Then the prominence level needs revival. Those are the church leaders, those who are in charge of the running of the operation of the church. And all the rest of the congregation said? Amen.

And the prominence level people said? Amen. And I got weak. And then the people level needs revival.

And the pastor said? No, no, no. And the church leader said? You know what I'm saying? The point is, see, a pastor commented, when God worked, he said, I can hardly believe seeing people so anxious to deal with sin. People not previously willing to deal with their sin, now can hardly wait for God to show them something else to make right.

He said, oh, I'm having such a wonderful time making things right with God and with other people, I can hardly wait for God to show me something else to make right. That's altogether different from those of us who have done our best to try to hide and cover our sin when God works. Well, what I'm really saying, the

preaching level needs revival, the prominence level needs revival, the people level needs revival, but then the truth is that all levels are level in God's sight.

Neither one, none of them, none of the three, are inferior or superior to the others. The only difference is function. But we all get dirt between our toes.

All level. Who needs to be revived? Well, the psalmist David needed it. He was called the man after God's own heart.

God gave him that reputation, and yet here he is in the sin of adultery, and then virtual murder to cover his adultery. He needed it. He needed that fresh touch, Psalm 51 and Psalm 32, and psalms that relate to his need and revival.

The St. Paul, the world's greatest evangelist, needed it. The world's greatest missionary needed it. Oh, wretched man that I am, who's going to deliver me from this body of sin and death in Romans chapter 7? He said, I thank God that it's not in myself.

I thank God it's through Christ. And then he gives us that tremendous truth. I am crucified with Christ, but it's not my living.

But it's His living. The life through me. He needed it.

St. Peter needed it. On the day of Pentecost, he needed to be filled with power. You remember Christ turned to him in St. Luke and said, Peter, when thou art converted, strengthen the brethren.

The Lord is saying to Peter, Peter, there's going to come a time when there's going to be a conversion of your lifestyle, and when that happens, then you're going to be able to strengthen the brethren. Peter, you may be a believer now, but when you're genuinely converted, when your lifestyle is genuinely touched and affected, then you'll be able to strengthen the brethren. And it was not until the power of God was on his life to then be able to preach.

3,000 were converted in one day and the whole story that was born out of that. Who needs revival? Well, you remember when Jesus sat together with 12 disciples? And he turned to them and he said, one of you is going to betray me. One of you will betray me.

Well, you know what happened. They went around the room. Probably started with Peter.

Peter said, Lord, certainly I'm not the one. You know, he was always outspoken. He was speaking out fast.

And John, Lord, I'm not the one. And Bartholomew, Lord, I'm not the one. And John, Lord, I'm not the one.

And Matthew, Lord, I'm not the one. And they went around that table and they said, Lord, I'm not the one. And then they came to Judas Iscariot and Judas says, well, Lord, I guess I must be the one because I'm the last one here.

And you said, one of them. Is that what your Bible says? Mine doesn't say that. It's as if with one instinctive motion and as if in one instinctive cry, every single one of them around the table said, here's what they said.

What did they say? Lord, is it I? Lord, is it I? Interesting. Those who walk closest to Christ for three solid years, who could feel his heartbeat, who could see him perform the miracles, who could watch his lifestyle, could listen to his messages, saw those tremendous miracles, blind seeing, dead being raised to life, they walk that close to Christ for three solid years. And when he said, one of you will betray me, every single one of them recognized, every single one of them recognized the propensity towards sin in their own lives.

And if that was true of those people, then my question is, where is the deacon, and the elder, and the pastor, and the Sunday school teacher, and the church leader, and the worker, and the mother, and the dad, and the teenager, and the grandparent, and the charter members of the church who can say, I don't need to meet God personally and be revived. Where's a person who would say that? No matter how long we've been walking with God. The pastor commented, he said, you know some of the most spiritual people now in my church are the ones who confess the most sin.

And some of the spiritual people, quote unquote, who think they're the spiritual ones, are now the ones covering their sin. So easy for us, especially if we've been in the church for years, I've arrived, I don't need that. You talk about spiritual pride? There it is.

See? It's true that through the ages, godly people have recognized the need to be revived. Certainly have. Who needs to be revived? Well, the command of Jesus, of Saint Peter, he says, but grow in grace.

Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. See, there's no such thing as arrival in the Christian life. Christian life is not static, it's dynamic.

It is salvation plus. It's not salvation period. It's not, oh, I'm on my way to heaven, I've got a one-way ticket to heaven in my back pocket, so what else do I need? I met the Lord one day at the foot of the cross, and I haven't been back to the cross since.

I don't need it. No, no. It's a growing in grace that God is after.

When we talk about, well, why do we need revival in the local church? Why do we, oh, I did not bring, maybe I did, I brought it, but a letter from a pastor. Hold on, I may have it here, let me see. It's the first mistake I've ever made.

Let's see if I brought it, did I? Or did I not bring it? And I did bring it. I did bring it. There you go.

Here, a Wheaton, Illinois pastor here. He wrote us this letter. You know, we used to get letters from pastors who would say, we have two evangelistic crusades a year, one in the spring and one in the fall.

Which one would you like to hold? I never wrote back what I would like to have written back. I would have liked to have written back, dear pastor, neither one, goodbye. Well, we have two necessary evils in the church every year, one in the spring and one in the fall.

Which one would you like to hold? It's one of those necessary evils on the calendar, revival meetings. No. We don't get letters like that anymore.

Now we get heart cries. Here's one, Wheaton, Illinois. I'm writing at the request of the Board of Elders to ask you to minister in our church and through our church to our community at your earliest convenience.

The Lord has blessed me in recent months with a growing hunger. I have encouraged my people to settle for nothing less than God's miraculous answers to overwhelming needs. Yet our personal needs and

those of the people touched by our congregation are staggering.

My concern is also for our city. Wheaton, Illinois, touches the lives of many Christian people. One recent survey indicated that the combined mailing list of all of the Christian organizations in this town totaled millions.

Students come from around the world to study and go out from Wheaton College to be leaders of the evangelical world. Yet this city, at the heart of the evangelical subculture, is a picture of Christian mediocrity. I have felt very lonely for four years as I've tried to rescue my church from easy acquiescence into this spongy subculture.

I have often been discouraged to find how easy it really is to slip into a self-serving yet busy, busy Christian lifestyle. At this point I feel growing desperation. I preached last month at a chapel at Wheaton College from the experience of Jacob, I won't let you go until you bless me.

That describes where I am personally. Revival is not chick, C-H-I-C, and he puts it in quotes, chick, in other words, it's not the in thing here. And this is a town where chick is important.

But I am willing, and the core people in my congregation share this commitment, to do whatever is necessary, whatever the personal cost, to set free the spirit in our lives, and in our church, and in our community. And then signed by the pastor. Do you think I should rip that letter up? What a heart cry.

How a pastor gets sick and tired of playing religious games with divine truth week after week, and not seeing happen what is necessary to transform his church and his community. That's the heart cry. Why is revival needed? What is next for this frustrated world? How long can civilization survive? When you look at the lawlessness, and the pleasure mania, and the revolt, and the moral decay, how long can it survive? And a church seemingly powerless to affect society.

And all of our stopgap measures, and our programs, and all our attempts seem to be beside the point. You almost get the idea of the prophet Jeremiah, who said, the word of the Lord came unto me the second time, and saying, I see a seething pot to God's question. The prophet Jeremiah saw a cauldron hissing, foaming liquid tipping over into his country.

God revealed a fierce enemy was about to boil over into his land. And I said to myself, I wonder, could that be a picture of our culture? Could be a picture of our culture. The spirit speaks expressly.

There's what we've just read. In the latter times, some will depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, speaking lies and hypocrisy, having their conscience seared. The time will come they will not endure sound doctrine.

If commerce makes a nation strong, Tyre would not have fallen. If political organization makes a nation strong, Rome would still be in power. If military might makes a nation strong, Germany would have not crumbled.

But God says, righteousness exalts a nation. Sin is a reproach to any people. Some of us really don't believe that.

We think somehow, human means can make the difference. We have enough brains and brawn. We have survivor instincts within us.

We'll pull through somehow. We'll pull ourselves up by our bootstraps and we'll make it happen. We still think we can do it man's way.

Billy Graham asked the professor what he saw as the greatest need of our time. He was asking a professor, college professor. Graham, look at this answer.

I would be able to give a variety of answers that vary from income tax to disarmament. It might surprise you. Watch this.

Because I'm not a believer. But look at this. I believe the greatest need of our time is a spiritual awakening that would restore the individual and mutual morality and integrity of our nation.

You see what I'm saying? We even need the unsaved world to tell us what the answer is. And here we are, the church, with a whole book that tells us what the answer is. And the unsaved world has to tell us what it is.

And we sit home on Sunday night and pleasure ourselves with everything else except being in God's house where we ought to be. Do you have Sunday night services here? Sorry about that. We still at our church.

We still have Wednesday night prayer meeting, which is the outstanding service of our week. I'll talk about that during the weekend, during our time here. Okay? Whether it be in the personal life or the church life, the late Dr. Stephen Olfert said, we need revival.

Revival urgently. We need it desperately. Now, Harold White.

Was he here with us 30 years ago? Harold White from Pontiac, Michigan? Harold and Jewel White, they were not with us? Yes? Someone say yes? I think so. They should have been. They should have been.

They should have come to the promised land. Anyhow, they traveled with us. He was a landscape contractor from Pontiac, Michigan.

God touched their lives and meetings in 1971, 72, in their church. And as a former Sunday school teacher, as a deacon in the church, and traveling with us and then going home and watching, he sat down one day and he wrote symptoms of a carnality that he saw as a layman sitting in the pews. Church, watch what he said.

Sunday morning service must not extend beyond human plans. No thought that we are in God's presence. No real expectation that the Holy Spirit will work.

Insensitivity in the order of the service. The announcement's just as important as the message. He's just jotting down.

See? He said, resistance to change. Programs, procedures, traditions become doctrine. Yeah.

Yeah. Tradition becomes doctrine. It's interesting.

I wonder if I'd ask, how many of you who are sitting here right now are sitting in the same seat you sit in every Sunday morning? I see those hands. I see those hands. Oh, that's a good way to get a response.

And you know as well as I, that if you who are sitting over here, if you sat over there the pastor wouldn't look right from that side. And we get stuck in the mud by what we've always done. See? Well done.

We beautifully resisted change. Yeah, that's the way some of us are. And the importance of change is real.

Often in the waves of change we find a true direction. And you see, we're not open for God to do something that we've not seen before, something new in our lives. Even George Bernard Shaw said, progress is impossible without change.

And those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything. Very real. And then he said, what else did he say? Coldness, deadness, little evidence of supernatural God at work in the church.

And he said, reluctant volunteers, board members, Sunday school, nursery workers, oh, everybody's reluctant to volunteer, to be involved. And he said, lack of unity and divine love, cliques in the church, divisions in the church. He said, lack of biblical fellowship.

We have class parties for fun and games, but it's untimely to talk about spiritual things when we go to a class function. We'll have 10 minute devotional that we will endure to get that out of the way so we can enjoy the rest of the evening. Then he would say, failure in the homes of the leaders, children unresponsive to God.

Disappointment, frustration, discouragement, resulting in bitterness towards God on the part of the pastor or the leaders and turning into unbelief. Then one day I was sitting with a group of pastors as we started a crusade, and I said to the pastors, would you express to me what are some of your concerns as we start this crusade? Now I said, please don't tell me which members you'd like to see leave your church and go to the other church. No, no, no, not that.

But in general, what are some of your needs that we can pray? Watch what pastors had to say sitting together in a community. Status quo people, the plateau Christians. In other words, we just plateaued.

We're not going to grow any more than this. If we get any more excited than we are right now, people will think we've become emotional and extreme, and we've gone out of bounds. The core people to weakly commit to serve God in the church, a lack of desire to be involved.

What's the concern? Even my core people weakly commit to distinguish between secular ideals and Christianity as a lifestyle. Can hardly tell the difference between those who, to understand the difference between secular kind of thinking and a godly lifestyle. Hard to find the distinction.

Social rather than spiritual desires among long-standing people. They love to have coffee with each other. But where are the spiritual desires? Need for discipleship.

Harmony and unity. Now the youth pastor, our youth pastor spoke up. Look at this one.

The kids mirror the images of their parents and have not seen Christian joy at home. And the young people are mirroring the images of their parents. Entertainment culture.

Oh, just entertaining. Anything to keep our young people happy. Instead of tremendous spiritual depth.

Parents to own up to their own need. The pastor said, I can't get the parents to even own up to the fact that they need to meet God. No wonder young people don't want it.

The need to see, the need for reviving. Our people don't even see, don't even think they need it. Break down tensions between pastors in this community.

Need for stable godly families. Traditionalism and prejudices are deep-rooted in some of our people. Need a sense of the glory of God that will care for all the issues in the congregation.

A sense of the glory of God. And it went on and on. That's just some.

You see, this is where the rubber really meets the road. It's one thing for us to come week after week and sit and look nice. And we are nice people.

But for God to do what He longs to do, God is looking for some of us with gray hair and no hair. To be concerned about where we go from here, not where we've been. And lead the way for our congregation to see a genuine moving of God's Holy Spirit.

Revival is not staging new projects. Oh, you should see the programs we have. Well, I can tell you, here's a pastor commenting about that.

He said, I have a congregation of 200 people, and I can count 20 different projects that are now running in the church. 200 people, 20 different projects. Now watch what he said.

He said, it's viewed as revival. They think we have revival. Look at all the activity.

But he said, it's just the result of human effort. He went on to say, it does not lead to much, but it demands much. Demands much.

He said, the effect is mostly emotional. We feel good. Look at all the activity.

We just feel good. Isn't it wonderful what's happening in our church? Feel good. He said, it is liveliness without much life and little lasting fruit.

There's a pastor commenting of what's going on with 20 programs in his church, and the people think it's revival. Can we relate to this? We think we're walking with God at a deep level because of all the programs, all of our activity. Relate to it? You might say, our church is a thriving church.

After all, we've got the largest evangelical church in the community. Why do we need a revival-oriented ministry? I'll give you three reasons why. To confirm that all is well.

It's like a chartered accountant coming into a business. A businessman, a good businessman calls a chartered accountant in. Why? Because he thinks everything's out of line? No, he wants somebody to look over the books to make sure, to confirm that all is well.

And to sharpen the focus. He's there to sharpen the focus on an already thriving church. That's reason to rejoice.

You see, it's not that we're way out of line. The point is, sharpen the focus. And if I had the camera here, the projector, I would just twist it a little bit and the same words would be there, but the focus would be wrong.

And why is a revival-oriented ministry necessary? To sharpen the focus. To take a good look at what we're all doing in the church. Good things, good things, but we need to sharpen the focus as to what it is God is trying to say.

And why do we need revival? To correct whatever is out of order. And even if there's one figure that's out of order, that was worth having the chartered accountant to make sure that everything is in order. So, every church needs to be, have a revival-oriented, orientation.

Why do we need revival? Wilt thou not revive us again? Thy people may rejoice in thee because of the deadness in the church. Well, Dr. Robert Coleman said it this way, too many are unwilling to cut loose from self-determinations and actually let God have his way. Complacency is the accepted norm.

We want our rights, our privileges, our security. Little concern for the demands to be the Lord's disciple. The rugged obedience of the cross may still be found in our creeds, but hard to find in our daily lives.

We are so tamed that the world cannot hate us. We like it that way. We are so calm that the world doesn't even hate us anymore.

Those few fanatics in the church who do not fit into the mold are generally looked upon with dismay and apprehension. Now, don't get too close to that person. You know, there are places where people who get that serious, in some places, in some cities, it's the fifth floor, some it's the fourth floor, third floor.

Be careful. Go overboard. Our tragedy is we become so subnormal that when a man gets normal, we think it's abnormal.

Spiritually. Mother asked a little girl to wash her hands. She said there were germs on her hands.

There were germs on her hands. And the daughter said, Mother, they're not dirty. And the mother said, Yes, dear, they have germs on them and Jesus doesn't like us to be dirty.

And the child said, Well, wash your hands. All I hear is germs and Jesus and I've never seen either one. See, it's so easy for us to use the name Jesus whenever we think it's convenient.

And our young people know better when we don't live the life. Apathy in France. You know, in France, you know what the philosophy is among many Frenchmen? If God doesn't bother me, why should I bother him? Funeral director was called Sunday because someone in the church died.

And you know what the story said? The story went on to say that they went to pick up the man that died and it said they carried out six bodies before they found the right one. London Church, they called a revivalist. A number of people were saved in a short period of time.

And the pastor knew that unless something happened to his own people, the regular people, they would cause the others to backslide. The new ones to backslide. Called a revivalist in to preach to the believers.

Iowa Church, 1985, a country church. Here's the report. The average attendance, here's the yearly report, 1985.

151, country church. On Sunday morning. There's the Sunday morning attendance, 151.

On Sunday night, the average attendance was 58. 151 in the morning, 158 at night. Then they had a night, during the week was a Tuesday night, where they did everything, all the activities one night.

Everybody met for everything. The children, the boards, the prayer meeting. No, no, not the prayer meeting.

Everything else. All the activities. Everything went on at night.

Food and all the rest of it. They averaged 121. 151 Sunday morning average, 58 Sunday night, 121 for their family night activities.

Now the next one is a blank. You know what it is? Prayer meeting night. Now I want you to start guessing.

With figures like I just gave you, how many do you think they averaged in prayer meeting in that church? Okay, who's next? Holler it out. What's that? 25. 25.

What's that? 15. 10. We're going down.

25, 15, 10. You don't have much faith in mankind? Anybody else want to try? Well, at least they were apostolic. Here's what they averaged.

12. 12 apostles. Now I ask you the question.

Does a church like that need reviving? Okay, now look here. Here, an Ohio crusade. In Mansfield, Ohio, when we lived in Mansfield, Ohio, when we were here years ago, we were in Mansfield, Ohio.

180 churches. It was a Billy Graham crusade. Not with Billy Graham, but one of his associate evangelists.

He was a wonderful evangelist. 180 churches. Ours was one of them.

Our church had about 700 people. They held a prayer meeting two and a half weeks before the meeting started. And when the meeting started, they had the grandstands of the county fair packed with people.

They brought musicians in, a different one every night, specialists, and a great preacher. And I'm not belittling any of that. I'm merely giving you the facts.

Two and a half weeks before the meeting started. 180 churches. Now, how many people do you think came to a prayer meeting to pray for that crusade? Guess.

How many? How many? 20? Did you try to figure it by percentage? Anybody else? Anybody else want to try? Okay, just double that figure and you have it. 40. 40 people out of 180 churches showed up two and a half weeks before to pray.

They had a great crusade. Great crowds. Wonderful music.

Great preaching. Gave invitation. Scores of people responded.

Guess what? Go back to Mansfield, Ohio and try to find converts from that crusade. Fact of the matter is, they didn't even start trying to follow up for three months after the meetings were over. We know some of the people who were involved.

In our church, with 700 people, one of the leading churches, there may be one person out of that whole crusade that is in our church as a result of that. And I'm not belittling that. But they spent thousands of dollars.

Now, I'm not saying whether they should have done it or not. Sure, the gospel is preached to the community. But I say, just think what could have happened had there been a burden, a brokenness, a sense of need, a breaking before God, a calling on God, and putting the priorities where they ought to be.

What could have happened to that community? No, we can do it by our human means. That's our problem. That's our problem.

Pastor's eight-and-a-half-year-old daughter said, Daddy, do I have to go to church? It's so boring. Hmm. And here was his answer.

Yes, child, I know it's boring. That's why we need revival. My congregation is in need of a sense of the glory of God.

Then that will take care of all the other issues in our church and in our town. Hmm. And by the way, that was a Minnesota pastor.

And by the way, you would know him. And by the way, he was on your staff. From Bemidji? Do you know anybody by the name of Johnson? That's his daughter when she was eight years of age.

And that was his reply. And I can tell it was wonderful how God touched him and his people during those days. See? Youth pastors comment.

He said, All the things I tried to teach for years, now the youth were teaching each other when God worked in their hearts. Yeah? I tried to teach for years, but when God sovereignly gone to work, now they're teaching. In Bemidji, one pastor said, Youth pastor said, I saw God do more in one hour than happened in a whole year.

He said, God did more in one morning than I was anticipating happening in six months. Another pastor. Church.

The need for revival, not only deadness, but what about the defeat in our lives? If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. See? Dr. Coleman, listen to what he said. With a compromising attitude toward the world, it's no surprise that we live defeated lives.

When we protect our own desires, we lose the glory of the heavenly vision. He went on to say, Frustration comes from living in a divided kingdom. It punctures the radiance of our devotion to God, and the joy leaks out.

No spring in our step, no shout in our soul. We have faith, but without power. Faith.

Power's gone. Power's gone. Defeat.

Defeat. Defeat. Defeat.

A man said, I need to reach out in love to my estranged wife and daughter, but I can't if there's bitterness in my heart against some of you in the church. Please forgive me. That happened in the crusade.

See? Defeat in our lives. We want God to answer our prayers, and God's saying, I'm waiting for you to get honest. And I dare say, in this congregation, in this room right now, there are prayers that you've been praying for years, for children, for grandchildren, and so on and so on, and God is saying, I'm waiting for you to get honest about your own sin, about your own needs.

It's easy to be concerned about others, but what is it about your spiritual life that keeps me from being able to answer those prayers? Defeat in our lives. God does not condone in saints what He condemns in sinners. We somehow think that God will overlook our sin, and we're looking for the unsaved to repent, but God will overlook our sin.

What about the devastation? Not only deadness, not only defeat, but devastation. Romans 12, I beg of you, please, be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. And the paraphrase is, don't let the world around you squeeze you into its mold, but let God remold your minds from within.

And the tragedy is, the mindset of Christians seriously affected by the world's culture every single day, and most of us, most of us don't even recognize how much we are impacted by the culture of the world every single day, by what we see on television, what we hear, what we read. We are impacted by all the distractions, the mindset of Christians impacted by the world. I'll tell you how it happens.

It happens, how does it affect Christians? A dissipated God conscious. We become more conscious of our surroundings than we are of the God of the universe. We have a distorted world view.

We have a distorted We no longer see God as the one in control of everything, the one who has his hand, and we say we believe in history, but do you realize what history is? It's his story. It's God at work. And we have a distorted world view.

We think man has the answer to the problems. Humanism destroyed our biblical self-image. Where are the people who revel in who we are as children of a heavenly king? That there's royalty in our veins.

We are rich because we're children of a heavenly king. Where are the people who get excited about that? We just now take it for granted. We've been saved for so long, we just take it for granted.

The world is so impacted, so interested in things around us that we've even lost sense of who we really are as children of a heavenly family. Why do we need revival? What about the dead? Think of the disunity in the body. When Christ's prayer for the church, that we would be one.

Think of the disunity. Kneepads instead of boxing gloves. What's that all about? I'll tell you what it is.

Two and a half years after God saw fit to work on the Canadian prairies in 1971, 72, 73, two and a half years later, Lou and I sat with a district superintendent from Manitoba and Saskatchewan. He was responsible, he was the head superintendent of over 70 churches. And he said to us something that I've never forgotten.

He said, fellas, I want you to know that in two and a half years since God worked on the prairies in Western Canada, two and a half years later, I as the superintendent have not been called out on one troubleshooting assignment in any one of my 70 churches. And I said to him, are you telling me that in two and a half years none of your churches have had a problem? He said, no, I didn't say that. I said to you that I as the superintendent have not been called out on any troubleshooting assignment in any one of my

70 churches.

And then he made a statement that I've never forgotten. And here it is. He said, Revival taught our church people how to solve their problems with knee pads on instead of with boxing gloves on.

Instead of fighting with each other, taught them how to get on their knees and call on God to meet their needs and to solve the problems. Revival taught our church leaders how to solve their problems with knee pads on instead of with boxing gloves on. Amen.

How we need it in our day. Warren Wiersbe, he talks about going through a community in Michigan and he saw a church that said Harmony Baptist Church and he said by the time he left to the other side of town he saw another church and the name of that church was New Harmony Baptist Church. Well you know what that means don't you? And then he talks about seeing another church, the original church of God number two.

And the tragedy is instead of our finding the solution to our problems God's way, you know what we do? We go out and start another church. And we end up building a monument. We put it in brick and mortar, another church.

And as the unsaved world drives by, the unsaved world drives by and the unsaved world says see that church? See that church? You know what that is? That's a monument to the fact that Christians couldn't get along. And we wonder why the world doesn't want our Christ. See that church? See that church? That's a monument.

They couldn't get along with this group. They couldn't get along with this group. See? There they are.

Don't misunderstand me. I know there are times where churches need to be built because of principles and doctrinal truths and all the rest. I'm talking about those who left the church because they couldn't get along.

They couldn't relate to each other. They had this problem, this problem, this problem. And so they started another church in their own bitterness.

And wonder why God can't bless that one. Unresolved conflicts. Why we need revival.

And then what about the disgrace? Why we need revival? Oh, the disgrace. What does it mean? See? Christ said, I counsel you to buy of me gold tried in the fire. Talking about the Laodicean church.

So you can put some clothes on. So you can make it through a winter in northern Minnesota. You better get clothes.

And also that. Your nakedness is appearing. Everybody sees it.

Shame on you. Yeah, you're a church, all right. Shame on you for not being able to impact us.

I counsel you to buy of me. Anoint your eyes with eyesalve. You're blind.

You need to see. You say, well, which one of those is the heathen? Is it the American bowing down to the mighty dollar? Or the one on some foreign field? Which one is the heathen? Shame on us. Who needs to be revived? I can tell you it's either revival or ruin as far as this generation is concerned.

Who needs to be revived? Well, churches need to repent. Sure they do. Look at the New Testament.

Look at all those churches in the book of Revelation. Book of Ephesus, they left their first love. Lovelessness.

Pergamos harbored false teaching. Thyatira, because of uncleanness. Sardis, imperfect works.

And Laodicea, spiritual poverty. And unto the church, unto the angel of the church I write. Unto the angel of the church I write.

All those churches, they needed to repent. Sure they needed to repent. Well, what is it? What could it be? Whatever the situation is, whatever it may be, churches need to repent and make things right.

Churches need to repent. Well, when I talk like that, J.O. Knorr said, the church knew their backs were against the wall. They knew they needed revival.

Chuck Colson made the statement, I want to put it in plainest terms. This nation cannot be saved unless the church is revived. This was in the fall of 2008.

Renewing the church is the key to saving America. I do not have time to elaborate on this. And yet, I should do it.

Here it is, real quick. Two pastors in Saskatchewan, when God worked, walking down the street together. One said to the other, I wonder what my church would look like.

I didn't come up with this question. They did. I wonder what my church would look like on any given Sunday morning.

Should a holy God lift the lid off of the roof of my church, and a holy, pure God would look down from heaven and look into my good congregation. What would it look like? And by the way, that was the congregation with over a thousand people. And I'll tell a little bit of the story in the next hour.

Nobody leaves for the next hour. Make sure you stay. Even if you didn't plan to, you can change your plans right now.

I wonder what it would look like if that holy God would lift the lid off of my congregation. What would it look like to the holy God? Pure, holy, holy, holy. Clean.

You know what the pastor said? I have the idea if that happened on any given Sunday morning with close to a thousand people in my church. If that happened in my church, I believe it would look like... Now, get ready for this. Hold your seat.

I believe if a holy God lifted the lid, looked at my congregation... I believe it would look like... Are you ready for this? Hell itself! Hell itself! To a pure, holy God. Well, I can tell you a couple weeks later during that crusade that went for seven and a half weeks, Lou and I had the privilege of being there on a Sunday morning. We started at 10.30. You know what time the service ended? Quarter to four in the afternoon.

Did you preach that long? No. Preach the message. God Almighty was on the scene.

God moved in that congregation at such a deep level, people started to get right with God, right with each other. They started to walk around asking each other for forgiveness. The pastor sat on the platform.

All kinds of people coming up on the platform and asking Him for forgiveness. And they're weeping on each other's shoulders before God. And some people... At 12 o'clock, some people went home.

You know those who serve by the... worship by the clock instead of in spirit and truth and had to get to the restroom before the Pentecostal people got there? Some of them went home. And guess what happened? Some of the people... They were home having dinner and they were getting phone calls. Come on back to church! Come on back to church! Come on back! I've got to see you! People need to make right with some of the people who came.

And so people were coming back to church in the middle of the afternoon. Quarter to four, we got finished. The following Sunday, we were there for another session.

And guess what? We ended up at quarter to two in the afternoon from 10.30 to quarter to two. And you know what the pastor said? The pastor said, we're getting cleaner! We're getting cleaner. I wonder what would happen if God would do that here.

Lift the lid. All kinds of differences and grudges and bitternesses and resentments and inhibitions toward each other. Unconfessed sin.

Leonard Ravenhill on his tombstone said, think you that the things most Christians are living for is worth Christ dying for? When Leonard Ravenhill wrote us a letter in 1973, he said, amidst the tragedy of this hour and all the satanic deception, there's one supreme tragedy. Here it is. A sick church in a dying world.

That's a supreme tragedy. The answer is a revival of holiness amongst the people of the Lord. I know that some snicker at the deeper life teaching, but there is a deeper life.

And look at this statement. It is as deep as Gethsemane and as costly as Calvary. And the real question is, as I close, what is it going to take for us to recognize the need and then act on it? And I said, Minneapolis bridge collapse? You know, Lou and I, just a couple of years before, we were in the Minneapolis area, and I can tell you, we were over that bridge that collapsed twice, four times, back and forth, twice a day for three weeks as we had a crusade.

How did it collapse? Just from neglect. Taking for granted that it was all right. Here's the prayer.

Cure thy children's warring madness. Bend our pride to thy control. Shame our wanton selfish gladness.

We're rich in things and poor in soul. Grant us wisdom. Grant us courage.

Lest we miss thy kingdom. Go. Let's pray.

Lord, I pray that thou will just wet our appetites for a genuine moving of God. Something that cannot be described in human terms. God in the midst of his people.

And we're going to thank you and praise you for it. In Christ's name we ask it. For his sake and all of God's people's head.

Amen.

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