

# Acts 3 - Times of Refreshing

by Richard Owen Roberts

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*The speaker emphasizes the importance of understanding the Old Testament in order to grasp the truths about revival, and encourages listeners to ask simple questions and seek clarity in their understanding of the Bible.*

**Duration:** 2:33:12

**Scripture:** Acts 3:1

**Topics:** "Faith And Obedience", "Spiritual Revival"

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## Description

This sermon delves into Acts chapter 3, focusing on the miraculous healing of a lame man by Peter and John at the temple gate. It emphasizes the power of faith and obedience in the name of Jesus Christ to bring about transformation and restoration. The message highlights the importance of heeding God's word, seeking revival through humility, prayer, repentance, and obedience, and not neglecting areas in our lives where we fall short of God's commands.

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## Transcript

We'll begin this morning with a little bit of Acts chapter 3. We'll go to the Lord together in prayer, and then Mr. Roberts will come. Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the ninth hour, the hour of prayer. And a man who had been lame from his mother's womb was being carried along, whom they used to set down every day at the gate of the temple, which is called Beautiful, in order to beg alms of those who were entering the temple.

When he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he began asking to receive alms. But Peter, along with John, fixed his gaze on him and said, Look at us. And he began to give them his attention, expecting to receive something from them.

But Peter said, I do not possess silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, walk. And seizing him by the right hand, he raised him up, and immediately his feet and his ankles were strengthened.

With a leap, he stood upright and began to walk, and he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God. And they were taking note of him as being the one who used to sit at the beautiful gate of the temple to beg alms, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

While he was clinging to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them at the so-called portico of Solomon, full of amazement. But when Peter saw this, he replied to the people, Men of Israel, Why are you amazed at this, or why do you gaze at us, as if by our own power or piety we made him walk? The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus, the one whom you delivered and disowned in the presence of Pilate when he had decided to release him. But you disowned the holy and righteous one and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, but put to death the prince of life, the one whom God raised from the dead, a fact to which we are witnesses.

And on the basis of faith, in his name, it is the name of Jesus which has strengthened this man whom you see and know, and the faith which comes through him has given him this perfect health in the presence of you all. And now, brethren, I know that you acted in ignorance, just as your rulers did also. But the things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets, that as Christ would suffer, he has thus fulfilled.

Therefore, repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, so that he may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you. Well, thank you for the privilege of being with you today. Probably you're all alert to the fact that in the days in which we live, things become increasingly difficult.

It doesn't matter where I go, there's bound to be somebody who will tell me, oh, we heard that before. Well, where? Well, in Los Angeles or Boston or, well, you didn't hear it here before. Now, you know, most preachers set their minds not to repeat themselves.

Not that we succeed. I mean, none of us is quite that able. But these days, you never know whether you're speaking about something that the folk don't know, or something they've already heard you say.

And I had kind of a critical experience some while back when I was preaching, I think, in Texas in a series. And there was a woman who had been brought in, a soloist and a beautiful, beautiful singer, a very committed Christian. At the end of the series, she said, I will be with you next week.

And she named wherever it was, Kansas or wherever. And I was shocked. And I said, oh, I'm planning to use some of the same material.

So, well, I said, I'm grieved. Well, she said, I'm planning to use the same songs. Oh, I said, I love your songs.

Delighted to hear them again. Well, she said, do you know, I have friends who have worn out the tapes they've had of your sermons, listened 12, 15 times. Well, now, I mean, it may sound silly, but that helped me.

It really did. Because there I was struggling with fearing that I was saying the same things that at least some had already heard. So I'm not going to worry about that.

I just want you to know that it would be utterly impossible for me every time I spoke to say something that nobody ever heard. And I'm not even going to try. So I would like to begin this morning with a question.

That I want to answer with great care. And it's a question based very much on the difficulty of our day in the whole field of revival. Now, I trust, and I have no idea where most of you come from in terms of theological background, but there are some doctrines that have crept into the church over the last 150

years or so that are very, very destructive to the biblical theme of revival.

So one of the constant questions that is hurled at me, why do you spend so much time in the Old Testament? And often I have taken my Bible and done this. What do you see? This is old. This is new.

Two-thirds old. One-third new, roughly. Now here's the problem.

We have people who say all scripture is given by God. It is suitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. But they say we're New Testament Christians and we're not interested in the Old Testament notions.

Christ replaced the law. Now that's very pertinent to this week because anybody who has given serious consideration to the subject of revival is aware that a great portion of the marvelous truths on the subject of revival come from the Old Testament. Do you know how many times the word revival appears in the New Testament? You do? He says zero.

Oh, then what are you talking about? We're New Testament Christians. Now that may not seem very big to you, but I assure you that is a monstrous matter. Here the nation is on the verge of self-destruction and a huge portion of the church is saying revival is irrelevant.

Now that nonsense did not exist in the church during the great seasons of revival. That kind of teaching crept in since God was moving powerfully and it's one of the major reasons why the church continues to plummet downhill morally and spiritually. And we have got to deal with that issue.

So that's how I would like to begin this morning. How do we handle that clear truth that revival is mentioned zero times in the New Testament? If it's important, even if we don't embrace that nonsensical view that eliminates the Old Testament and focuses solely on the New, how do we cope with that absolute fact that revival is mentioned over and over in the Old Testament, not in the New? It'd be interesting if this were just a discussion and you felt perfect liberty at any and all times that we're together this week to speak up. Now what would be wrong if we did it that way? I'm going to give you the authority to speak up, to ask questions, to object if you like.

I would give you a caution if you object, you better be sure you know what you're doing. But we are here, aren't we, for the glory of God and for the advancement of the kingdom of God in our lives and through us to others and the better grip we can get on these truths and the more powerfully these truths lay hold of us, the more useful will be our time together. So let me say it again just so you clearly understand, you are at liberty at all times this week when you're dealing with me to interrupt, to contradict, to ask for clarification, to interject an opinion of your own.

There's only one thing I would ask and that is you extend the courtesy of letting me know you have something to say but give me an opportunity to finish the paragraph. You don't have to wait for me to finish the whole but just let me finish the paragraph I'm on. And of course just to wave the hand or any other sensible means that will enable me to recognize you want to speak.

So please feel very deeply at liberty. But now on this issue of the Old Testament and the New and the fact that we have just spoken about Old Testament revival and the absence of the word in the New Testament. Now let's get this as an established fact.

It is absurd to say all Scripture is given by God and is suitable for doctrine, reproof, and correction and then to treat the Old Testament as inconsequential because when the Scripture, that word, is used in the New Testament it is not talking about the New Testament. It's talking about the Old Testament. If I may just give you a very personal account of what happened to me when I was a student in the theological seminary.

I had planned to enroll in a seminary in the East and it was just days before seminary opened. I was ministering in Idaho at that time and my mother called me and she said to me, the Domine. Now we came from a Presbyterian background in upstate New York and the pastor, because it was a reformed church area, Dutch reform even the Presbyterians referred to their pastor as the Domine.

So my mom calls and she says, the Domine refuses to send in the pastoral recommendation on you to the seminary where you're planning to go. Why? Well, my mom says, he says it's the wrong school for you. Well, I said, I've already been accepted.

I don't know what will happen when he refuses to send in his recommend. Well, she says, the Domine thinks you need to go to Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena. Well, why? Well, because Dr. Fuller, some of you are old enough to remember the old-fashioned revival hour, that radio program which at that time was the largest Christian program in the world.

Dr. Fuller was a sweet-spirited, godly man. And the Domine of our church thought that someone with a burden for revival such as he knew I had should go there. Well, I said, Mom, that's absurd.

Fuller is full. They're not accepting students. And I don't have any leadership from the Lord to go there.

Well, she said, what will I tell the Domine? Well, I said, when does Fuller start classes? Yesterday. Yesterday? Well, I said, I was going to Columbia in Decatur, South Carolina. I said, I've got 10 days to get to Decatur.

Well, look, Mom, I think it's absurd, but I'll drive by way of Pasadena. So, I do. And when I get there, the Domine has already made arrangements and he's notified certain personnel that I'm coming.

And they make it clear that I'm an absolute fool not to grab the chance to attend Fuller because Fuller is the top seminary in the world. Fuller is exactly designed for someone like you. You'd be an idiot not to grasp this opportunity because Fuller has turned hundreds of applicants away and they've accepted you.

Well, I was troubled because they hadn't seen any report academically on me. All they had was a recommend of one man, but in confusion. Now, some of you have been in circumstances like this.

You think you know what you're supposed to do. Somehow somebody else messes it all up and you end up in an uncertain state. So, I stayed at Fuller, but it wasn't very long before I was wondering, is the whole Bible inspired by God? Now, it's not that they said it wasn't, but they were so adamant in exposing us to all the unbelievers and their opinions that it just got to be very confusing.

Now, I had made a link with Dr. Fuller himself. In fact, I'll jump ahead just for a moment. I began in my large or broader state of itinerant work because Dr. Fuller would turn invitations that he received and couldn't accept over to me.

So, it had that plus, but now listen carefully. After I had been there for a year and a half, I realized I would be worthless in the ministry because I was in the grip of doubt. Now, I'm telling you this not because I want you to know a lot about me, but I want you to know a lot about what's happened to the church.

We have countless men in ministry who have their doubts. When you listen to a doubter, it's not very good for your soul, and the church is in decline in part because there is so much uncertainty in the ministry. But after a year and a half, I made an appointment to talk with the dean, and I went to the dean and I told him of the difficulty I was having believing the Old Testament.

And he said to me, Dick, I want you to promise me now that you will do what I'm going to do at the end of the quarter. I said, what's that? Now, wait a minute, he said, you trusted me enough to come and talk to me. I want you to agree to do what I'm going to do.

And I said, sorry, doctor, but not without knowing what you're going to do. Well, he was disappointed, but he said, all right, I'll tell you. I'm leaving here at the end of the quarter.

Oh, I said, I can do that. So I went back from Pasadena to Spokane, Washington, where I had graduated from college and where I had had very extensive ministry throughout the Inland Empire. And I went to the rescue mission in downtown Spokane, and I said to the director, who had been a great help and encouragement to me, I left the seminary.

I have no money. My parents will be in anguish when I tell them my church will be disgusted with me. But this is why I left.

He said, I have a room here in the mission for you. I want you to stay as long as you need to. I will arrange that your meals be brought to you in your room if you like, or you can come to the dining hall when you want.

You stay as long as you need to. Now listen, friends. Day after day after day for three long months, I was buried in this book.

I began trying to clarify that although I was doubtful about the Old Testament, I was truly believing the New. But I was perplexed every day because I was finding so many quotations from the Old Testament in the New. And it gradually came to me, if you're going to have to dump one, you're going to have to dump the other as well.

And then suddenly I realized, I do believe. And I did. And I do.

And I understood then, although I had not at that time been asked this question, how can you talk about revival and use the Old Testament so much? Don't you know? It's not a New Testament thing. But I understood the issue then. And I believe by God's grace I still understand it.

But I'm speaking this way to you because we have more than one concern here this week. We are obviously concerned for ourselves. We must be.

We must know everything possible about the revival of the work of God in our own lives. We want to know it academically, doctrinally, and experientially. But at the same time, we're living in a world of churches where the whole subject of revival is an obscurity in most circles.

Now thank God there are churches very much alert to this and very much in prayer concerning revival. But honestly, now I'm going to be perfectly blunt. I'll be greatly disappointed if the only benefit that comes to your being here this week is to know more on the subject.

I hope that without exception every one of you will be used by God to further the cause of God in true revival. But now look squarely at this fact. The Bible is not two books.

The Bible is one book. You see what's happened in the church. Many think the Old Testament is nothing but history and that it's irrelevant, that Christ eliminated the old.

But I want to make a very firm statement. I believe everything in the Old Testament is still relevant today unless God himself told us otherwise. Now the book of Hebrews I trust you love as much as I do.

But it's a wonderful clarifying factor in this matter. In the book of Hebrews it is very clear that what Christ did was to take the types and the shadows of the Old Testament and bring them into reality. That's the one area of great change.

So that which was a mere type and a shadow, the priesthood, the sacrificial system, all those matters relating to the ceremonial law, it's not merely that they were dismissed, but they were brought to completion in Christ, the reality. And those of you who love Hebrews are aware of the fact that the basic position of Hebrews, the reason for it being written in the way in which it was written is simply that the young Hebrew believers were under attack. Their families were putting pressure on them.

Don't be so foolish as to follow Christ. Christ was a heretic. Our leaders proved that he was a heretic.

They crucified him because he was pretending to be God. So if you follow him, you're throwing away your life, you're defying your family, you're complicating everything. Stop being stupid.

Come back to the bosom of your family and its true religion. And, of course, Hebrews is making it clear. If you leave Christ and go back to Judaism, you leave everything to go back to nothing.

And then, as many of you know, it was not only the family pressure, but Nero, the ruler at that time, was doing everything in his power to destroy Christianity, like some politicians that we know of today. Now, how successful was Nero? Take heart, friends. It doesn't matter who in high places is trying to destroy Christ.

They'll be the ones destroyed, not Christ. But some of you are aware that thieves, organized bands of thieves, were going around to believers' homes when they were gathered together in their fellowship and worship meetings, and they were looting their homes. Also, some of you are alert to the fact that Nero was sending out palace guards, and they were taking captive these young Hebrew believers.

They were bringing them to the palace. They were mounting them on crosses. They were putting these crosses around the garden.

And when Nero had these festivals, these young believers were doused with flammable material, perhaps tar, something like that, and set on fire, and they provided the light for Nero's garden party. So the pressure was very, very great upon them. And so Hebrews is constructed in the marvelous fashion that it is.

Perhaps a few of you have missed this wonderful truth. Hebrews has two interwoven parts. There are the wonderful doctrinal sections in which Christ is elevated above all else.

He's compared with the angels. He's compared with Moses. He's compared with Melchizedek.

He's compared with the priesthood and the sacrificial system, and in every instance shown to be infinitely greater than any of those things. But all of those glorious doctrinal passages are interwoven with warnings, and at the heart of the warnings is Christianity is not a good beginning. Christianity is a glorious ending.

It doesn't matter near as much how you start as how you finish, finishing well. I hope all of you have that deeply embedded in your hearts. I hope you're as determined as I am by the grace of Christ through the power of the word and the spirit to finish well.

So I've simply tried to clarify the relationships between the Testament. Now listen, God is more intelligent than we are. Suppose I was talking to this lady.

Your name please? Bonnie. Suppose Bonnie and I were in private conversation. She had already outlined a number of things in a given area that she knew quite well.

Then I proceeded to instruct her in the very areas that she had informed me she was well acquainted. Wouldn't there be something terribly stupid about that? We don't try to teach our children what we know they know. We try to teach them what we know they don't know.

Now why would God keep on repeating himself? Is it not sufficient that he has thoroughly established the matter of revival in the Old Testament? Why would it be necessary for him to repeat himself in the New? But now listen. Part of the confusion exists because so many people have never asked simple questions like how long a period does the Old Testament cover? Or how long a period does the New Testament cover? Well I don't think any of us could give an exact answer to either of those questions. But we do know that the Old Testament covers many generations and the New Testament does not.

Now that may sound so simple that you wonder why I'm mentioning that. But that's a very pertinent matter in what we're thinking of now. Are you familiar with the phrase cycles of history? I don't know how you feel about the imagination.

I know some folk who seem to believe that imagination and its usage is for children. And when you grow up you no longer use your imagination. Well if you want to be stupid I can't prevent it.

But I believe the imagination is a gift from God. I was one time talking with a pastor of a wonderfully useful church and he said to me if the deacons of my church caught me at a time when I was doing my best work for God they would fire me. And I was quite taken aback by what he said.

And I said explain what you're meaning. He said I do my best work for God but when I close my office door sit down at my desk put my feet up on the desk tilt back in my chair and dream dreams of the expansion of the kingdom of God. When my imagination begins to think in terms of how the word and the spirit can expand the work and bring glory to Christ I'm doing my best.

Now you may have some disagreement with that perspective that's not a concern of mine but I'm asking you to use your imagination now. I'm going over to this side of the room and I'm asking you to think about an eye hook just above head level. And then across the room in the same position on that other pillar

another eye hook at the same level and then stretch between those two high hooks a cable.

We're going to call that cable the norm. You got the picture? Do you realize that a cycle of history involves the crossing of that norm twice? Get that picture in your mind. Think of the cable and the double crossing up, down or down, up.

Crossing the cable twice crossing the norm twice. Now let me ask you some questions and this time I am expecting you to act alive. Where did the Old Testament open in terms of that norm? On the line as brother said.

Not below the line. Where did the Old Testament close in regard to this norm? Don't ever forget I'm an old man and one of the consequences of age is your hearing isn't as sharp as it used to be. So favor me in that regard by speaking out.

Yes, below the line. I would actually say that the Old Testament opened above the line. But to say at the norm but there's a lot in his favor.

I like that notion. I'm kind of reading your brain but I think yeah. Okay, he means at the start of the line.

But get that picture. Old Testament opens at the norm or perhaps above it. I mean from what you know would you say walking and talking with God in the cool of the evening was norm? I would say it's above norm.

But anyway we're not worried about minor issues. This is a huge matter. So opens at one place closes at a completely different place.

How many times during the course of the Old Testament was that line crossed twice? Well, we don't have a figure. We would just say lots of times. We know that there are at least five separate and distinct counts of this in Chronicles.

We know that in Judges there are not less than seven of these times of crossing it twice. We know that in Ezra and Nehemiah there are three more times. We know that in Exodus there's at least one.

We know that in Samuel there's at least one. I mean it goes on and on. We don't pretend to know the precise number.

But we do know many many times. Now, where did the New Testament open in regard to that norm? Yes, distinctly below the line. Where did the New Testament close in relationship to that norm? Yes, certainly above.

How many times was that line crossed in the New Testament? You got that. Once at Pentecost everything rose gloriously above the line. It never came below the line.

Now, there are warning passages. Many of them. In the Revelation of the Loan, the seven letters to the churches are very clear warnings.

In 2 Timothy 4, Paul enumerates 18 sins that characterize the church in decline. And it warns against those who have a form of religion but deny the power. The warnings are very clear, very distinct.

But now, put together those two matters, the frequency of the crossing of the line in the Old and the fact that the line is crossed but once in the New. Now look, there's your explanation as to why revivals is not a frequent theme of the New Testament, why it was not necessary to use the term at all. Why should a people in the midst of revival be instructed how to have a revival when God has already given all the essential information on that subject? But you see what's happening to us in the church that such a multitude is disregarding the Old Testament as if having any true consequence today and because they don't find the word revival in the New, they dismiss it as completely irrelevant.

Now, you say to yourself I'm not sure he's right in saying that much of the church is disinterested. Well, I don't in any way want to be unkind or cruel or unsympathetic to you but if you think that the bulk of the Christian church is concerned about revival, you better ask God to do some brain work on you. This is an immense issue.

Here we are at a time in our history, both as a nation and as part of a greater world when we are at an absolute crisis point. When any thoughtful observer of the situation should recognize that there's only one hope and the bulk of the church shows absolutely no concern. Just as a partial verification of that, what has happened to the organized prayer meeting in the bulk of the church? It has either been dismissed altogether or turned into nothingness.

Just think maybe even about your church. What are the basic themes prayed for where a prayer meeting still exists in a local congregation? If that congregation takes prayer requests and you look through the list of prayer requests, it is highly probable that if there are ten prayer requests, nine of them have solely to do with temporal matter. Pray for this sick person.

Pray for this out at work person. Pray for this poverty stricken family. If there are any request of an eternal nature, there are more likely requests, say some elderly lady who has a drunken son and she's pleading with the congregation that her son might be converted and if in the course of the prayer meeting a single request is overlooked, it will be that one request affecting eternity and if there's a focus in the prayer meeting, it will almost certainly be upon some temporal issue.

Here we are at the time when the great burden of the whole church ought to be the coming again, the divine visitation, the sunrise from on high, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and it is largely overlooked and if someone gets passionate in the local church prayer meeting, others are behind the scenes whispering isn't that person a nut? Our prayer meeting would be so much nicer if he just kept quiet. So here we are, as I've said, in the midst of the greatest possible crisis and the church by and large just seems utterly unconcerned and what I've tried to say to you is there are of course many reasons for that lack of concern but one very significant reason is a failure to understand the correct relationship between the testaments. So, let me personalize this now and ask you, do you understand this matter? Are you yourself correctly orientated to these things? Do you realize that it is God's sovereign intention and has been throughout history that when there is a season of decline, there must be a season of revival? So again, the two cycles, the down, the up, the decline, and then the revival.

Now, just a wee bit more on this matter. As I've said, we could not possibly safely number all the revivals recorded in sacred history. It is sufficient to say they are many, but now listen.

As you study these Old Testament accounts, certain things become increasingly apparent. The decline deepens with the advancement of time and the upturn goes lower. Have you thought your way through that? You study carefully all the accounts of revival and you do not see them becoming greater and

greater.

You see them becoming less and less. And have you ever considered with any care the last recorded revival in the Chronicles? Did you ever put together the last revival in the Book of Chronicles with the prophet Jeremiah? Do you know that Jeremiah was ministering during that time of the last revival in the history of Israel and Judah? Now, you say, why does he mention that? Listen, friends. Do you remember how Jeremiah approached his ministry? Was it with confidence? If I'm faithful, if I do what God tells me, there will be glorious revival.

No, he knew from the start nobody would pay any attention to him. Maybe some of you are pastors and you have a feeling nobody's paying any attention to you. Should you quit? Well, did Jeremiah quit? But I want you to think of this.

This last revival, let's just familiarize ourselves, not with the details, but with the time frame of these things. So, if you will, turn in 2 Chronicles and just see what I'm making reference to. Have a look just for a moment at 2 Chronicles 28.

2 Chronicles 28. Verse 1. Ahaz was twenty years old when he became king. And he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem.

And he did not do right in the sight of God. Chapter 29. Hezekiah became king when he was twenty-five.

He reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. Verse 2. He did right in the sight of the Lord according to all that his father had done. Thirty is a continuation.

Thirty-one is still a continuation. Then in chapter 32, we have details about Sennacherib. And in 33, details about Manasseh.

And notice these few words about Manasseh in verse 2. He did evil in the sight of the Lord according to the abominations of the nations whom the Lord dispossessed before the sons of Israel. Chapter 34. Josiah was eight years old when he became king and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem.

Chapter 35. Josiah celebrated the Passover of the Lord in Jerusalem. Chapter 36.

We have the priesthood of Joab. And Jehoiachin verse 5. And what's the last chapter? 36. Now listen.

I know that was a lot to try to digest and it was not my intent. I should just get a hold of the whole thing. But just to catch the sense.

Josiah rises to the throne at a time when it was already too late for Jerusalem. Josiah reigned during the prophecy of Jeremiah. And if you know Jeremiah you know it was too late.

Jeremiah is an astonishing book because it is loaded with compassionate appeal. And time after time the people are urged to return to the Lord. And yet Jeremiah knew they would not.

But understand this now. Because Josiah sought the Lord a revival did occur. But it made no difference in terms of the eternal well being of the Jewish people.

They had already sinned beyond hope. God had placed them under judgment. They were to be carried away into captivity.

And yet God did send a wonderful stirring and movement under Josiah. But now if you will connect it with what I was speaking of before we came to Josiah. I said to you that if you go through the records instead of each revival rising higher each declension went lower and the revival not as high as the one before.

So the revival under Josiah did not save the nation. It did save some. It was from God.

It did accomplish its purpose. Now, why do I tell you that? Do any of us dare say America will not be destroyed? I wouldn't dare say that. I spoke yesterday about Romans 11 and the promise of the Jews being provoked to jealousy.

And I gave you an argument which I know is sound. That there are more Jews in America than in any other land. And therefore I hope with great fervency that the filthy bride of the American church will be made pure in the true revival.

And that the Jews will be provoked to jealousy. In short, I am saying I am convinced that another great revival will occur. But, I don't dare to go so far as to say it will occur in America.

I hope it will. And, in looking at this account of Josiah, we need revival whether it leads to the salvation of the nation or not. And so it will be pertinent now for me to ask you are you really committed to seeking the face of God in true revival? Well, I've given you what I believe is a solid reason not in any way to be affected by those who say revival is an Old Testament theme.

It has nothing to do with the New. But, let me simply reiterate for the slow-minded. God established all the great principles about revival in the Old Testament.

There was no need for him to repeat himself in the New. They are as valid to us as they were to Israel. Now, the bulk of the church doesn't say that.

The bulk of the church says 2 Chronicles 7.14 is irrelevant to today's church. And they take other passages like Joel 1 and 2. I am burdened for a given church where the pastor has been pressured by some godly people in the church to call the church to a solemn assembly. I mentioned that yesterday as God's appointed means of dealing with corporate sin.

That pastor says he hasn't found a word about solemn assemblies in the New Testament. And so, it's irrelevant. No reason to pay any attention to that.

Now, that's something going on right now. The church in desperate straits and the pastor unwisely rejecting that even as a possibility. Now, I want to pause and ask any questions about what I have spoken thus far.

I gave you the open opportunity. You didn't take advantage of it. Or if you did, I missed your hand.

But I'll give a moment now to ask. Yes. Yes.

Yes. And thank you for bringing that up because I should have mentioned that. There is no question about the earnestness, the sincerity, the purity of heart of Josiah.

But, what Jeremiah says is that the people had not repented as they ought. And yet, they were involved in this great movement. There's a powerful passage in chapters 5 and 6 pertaining to this.

But, it's a passage in which God makes it clear. Religious ordinances, liturgical activities, are an abomination in his sight when they come from impure hearts. Now, this is immensely practical because there are denominations in America today that think that benefit comes to people through what they usually call the sacraments.

We're more inclined to call them ordinances. But benefits come guaranteed. And some of you know that the distinction between liturgical churches and churches that fall under the general heading of reform, the difference in part is that reformed people, and I'm not referring now to reform theology, but simply to the camp generally known as reform, that the ordinances are only meaningful if the heart is right.

I'll be very brief on this, but just as an explanation. Some of you are familiar with the word or the phrase means of grace. Now, evangelicals don't tend to use that word because the liturgical churches speak of baptism and the Lord's Supper as means of grace.

And what they mean by that is a person with a life full of sin can approach the table of the Lord and participate and gain blessing no matter what. Whereas our view is a person in taking communion can eat and drink damnation to themselves if they dare to approach the table of the Lord with an unrepentant heart. So there's a very great distinction there.

But what has been mentioned is that Jeremiah makes it clear that there was this movement under Josiah, but probably the bulk, I don't think it specifies in terms of ratios, but probably the bulk never did truly repent of their sins, but they involved themselves in the Passover and so on. And did so to their own condemnation. Anything you want to add on that? Anybody else with something you would like to interject or a question, sir? Yes, and we're going to come to that this morning.

That's my intent. It was read deliberately because we want to look at that passage. So while the term revival is not there, the concept is there, and just now because that issue has been brought to the fore, let me urge you to realize that the concept revival is a very frequent concept in the New Testament.

What about the Beatitudes? Have you thought your way through the Beatitudes? The Beatitudes are a glorious portrayal of the great issues of revival. What about James chapter 4? There's a list of seven things in James chapter 4 that are very, very pertinent and essential to revival. Throughout the book of Acts there are obvious matters that could only be explained in terms of revival.

So in no way could it be said that the theme of revival is not at all a part of the New Testament, only the word itself. But you see, in the shallowness of our day, there are those who are insisting it's not a New Testament theme because the word isn't used. So thank you for mentioning that.

Anything else you would like to speak of? Sir? Just give us a moment so that those that wish to may turn to the passage and then proceed, sir. Isaiah 29 you said. Alright, please proceed.

Well, I would like to go back just a wee bit. Verse 15 Woe to those who deeply hide their plans from the Lord and whose deeds are done in a dark place. And they say, Who sees us or who knows us? You turn things around.

Shall the potter be considered as equal with the clay? That what is made should say to its maker, He did not make me. Or what is formed say to him who formed it. He has no understanding.

Now throughout Scripture, where clay and potters are brought together, there are references to revival. So the greater passage itself is dealing with the subject and most certainly verse 17 is as well. So that's one of the glorious pictures of revival and now this is an addition to what we've been talking about but the whole portrait of clay and potters is also putting revival in its proper theological perspective.

I don't want to trouble anyone or to make a nuisance of myself in this situation but that leads us to a tremendously important matter that needs weighing this week and I had intended to speak of it later but now it's a good time to do so. Do you understand that in American history from the time of the landing of the pilgrims till about 1830 and that was a great season of revival. We speak of the first and the second and the third.

That's okay but it should not in your mind suggest that those were the only revivals. Revivals happened in America from the very earliest days. There was an earthquake that shook Boston in the 1600's that led to a revival.

There were two young men who drowned in the Charles River and that led to a revival. There was a policy in the early days of our country that has been forgotten. Any dramatic event prompted them to ask the question is God speaking to us? I know I have spoken to some of you about this next matter but others of you are not acquainted.

Now at one time speaking as I'm about to wouldn't be very useful because I'm making reference now to rare published material. There was a time in our history when just a few people like myself owned stacks and stacks and stacks of these rare documents. Now anyone of you can find these things on the internet at no cost.

Here's what I'm going to say. In the early years of this country there were at least annually sometimes more frequently published fast day sermons. There were also election day sermons and Thanksgiving day sermons.

So there are hundreds of these. I don't own all of them but I have a perfectly marvelous collection of these pamphlets from the 16th and the 17th and the early 1800s. Most of them have very pertinent matter in them on the subject of revival.

So the earthquake as I said or the drowning of two young men in the river prompted the leaders of God's work in New England to ask the question is God speaking to us through this event. They called solemn assemblies. The people came fasting and asking is there a word from the Lord for us? And often that led to true revival.

But in all those years you see this basic fact was taken as a given. God is sovereign. It's his world.

He is the potter. We are the clay. That ring and I'm not pushing a theological theme.

I'm just giving you American history. That idea that God is the potter, we are the clay passages like our dear brother has referred to were interpreted as relevant passages on the subject of revival because God was sovereign. He was the potter.

We are the clay. But in the 1830s a major drift began. I don't want you to misunderstand.

I'm not knocking down a giant. I'm just telling you the truth. A man by the name of Charles G. Finney entered the scene and he taught that that high view of God, that view of God's sovereignty was the undoing of revivals in America.

And that a revival is nothing other than the right use of the right means. So when you need a revival, get busy and do what you need to. That's really the origin of the altar call system.

That's why evangelistic meetings became known as revival meetings. A meeting in which nobody was revived. So we moved from utter reliance upon God to reliance upon human activity.

That of course is what prevails in our churches today. Now having said that, as I said, I wasn't trying to knock down a giant. Charles G. Finney was a giant and in many ways a very good man but a grossly unintelligent man in huge matters.

A few of you know I'm deep into books. I mean it's kind of hard to believe when I tell you this. I almost think I must be lying.

But I have more than 300,000. And at my age, believe me, that's not as much of a blessing as it is a curse. But anyway, let me go on without the humor.

I have hundreds and hundreds of volumes of systematic theology. Not something of any necessary pertinence to you, perhaps. But of all these hundreds of books on theology, all of which of which, with one exception, began with the doctrine of God.

But the book of systematic theology written by Charles Finney begins with the doctrine of man. And as I said, I'm not trying to get you to think ill of the man. But whenever man comes before God, great problems ensue.

And the decline of America began when that reversal took place. When man became sovereign and God became his helper. And without any regard to what your overall understanding of the vast issues of theology is, I want to tell you, with no uncertain terms, nothing can get better as long as God is brought law.

Some of you have seen the video series Behold Your God. And the main speaker on that will be here today and leading the afternoon session, John Schneider, a choice servant of Christ and a man whom I have the joy of knowing well. So it's a good time for me to adamantly insist your major cause in life should be the growth of God in your own soul.

The bigger God gets, the greater the work of grace that will occur in your life. When you shrivel God down, you lessen your own usefulness and your own growth in God. Well, looking at history then, I'm simply saying that this notion of the sovereignty of God, which held sway throughout the land, didn't matter whether it was a Methodist or a Presbyterian or a Lutheran or an Episcopal or a Baptist church or what have you.

The sovereignty of God was the great issue. God is the author of revival. And our task is to do what God says.

And if we do what God says and we have done it not to our level of standard, but to God's level of standard, then we can anticipate that God will fulfill his part. And having said that, let me just reference

that then too. 2 Chronicles 7.14. You see, the problem in the church currently is we have some people preaching on that theme and they're saying, if my people call by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and forgive their sin and heal their land.

And I personally have humbled myself. I have indeed done exactly what is commanded and God is now under obligation to send revival. Well now, the standard of humility that's called for is not my standard, but his.

And how would I ever dare to say I have done all that God requires. When you have done all that God requires, do it more seriously. Go at it more earnestly.

Do it with greater level of commitment. And honestly, it's kind of silly to talk about prayer as a key to revival when you haven't humbled yourself. Well, any other statements before we turn then to the next part? Any? Yes, brother.

That's an important question. We're all able to hear the question. Yesterday I took some time to speak of Romans 11 and I made reference to it again this morning.

Is there anything in the Bible anywhere that declares that revivals will reach lesser heights every time they occur? No. What I was speaking of is not the plan and purpose of God, but the record of history. And that record of history from the Old Testament is gloriously broken in Pentecost because surely Pentecost rose higher than anything ever before.

And the revival of Pentecost lasted longer as I've already pointed out. We don't have the other side of that up and down picture. We have the up, but not the down.

We have the hints of and the warnings against decline. I would say we have reason to hope for the greatest revival in the history of the world yet before us because Christ is not going to take a filthy bride. And I'm looking for a revival sent by God that cleanses the bride and gives our dear Savior a virgin bride.

And the declining movement will not do that. So I see absolutely nothing biblical to support any notion that things will continually worsen. But I'm not God, not even pretending to be or not even deluding myself into thinking I am.

But I honestly believe we have reason for incredibly great hope. Now, if there's anything else, I'll be more than glad to hear it. Alright, then I want to do something further.

And being nothing but an old man, I'm not going to hesitate to show you. I've got some sheets here. You won't be able to read them, but there's several pages and, well, I've got six.

And what I want to do is to give you a sense of the immense consequence of revival as it is revealed in the language that has been used throughout the church age to describe revival. I have here a list of 16 terms used to describe revival. Yesterday I mentioned three.

I spoke about revival and awakening, and then place them both under the heading of divine visitation. But let me give you this list. And the purpose of the list I trust is obvious.

The more we cherish the notion of the revival, the more glorious it becomes in our thinking, the more profound will be our prayer that God will once again come in this glorious way. Yesterday I used, I've

arranged my 16 words alphabetically, and so we began with the word I've already sought to familiarize you with, the word awakening. Now in Psalm 44, 23, the psalmist is urging God to wake up.

Now that's a bit odd. I find I can't quite imagine doing that, but I expect that he was in such a position himself of downward looking that he wrongly interpreted the problem as God being asleep. But I'm not referring to that notion.

But listen to these words. Arouse thyself. Why dost thou sleep, O Lord? Awake! Do not reject us forever.

Why dost thou hide thy face and forget our afflictions and our oppression? For our soul has sunk down into the dust. Our body flees to the earth. Rise up! Be our help, and redeem us for the sake of thy lovingkindness.

So there is a legitimate way in which to ask God to arouse himself. And we are living at a time like that. Has it really gripped your understanding that God is not listening to our prayer? Have you familiarized yourself with Psalm 80? If not, may I urge you to do so.

I read just a portion, a very small portion, yesterday of Isaiah 63 and 64. But if you were to read extensively and go over with great care, in Isaiah 63, God is asked to stir himself up and come and save us. So at a time like this, we do have the tendency to think that God has turned his back upon us.

Is that silly, to think that way? No, no, absolutely not. I mentioned Psalm 83. Thou who does dwell between the cherubim shine forth.

Listen, did you get those words? Thou who does dwell between the cherubim shine forth. Why would someone ask God to do that? And what was he referring to when he said, Thou who does dwell between the cherubim? Just think now of the reality. In the Old Testament system, once a year the great high priest entered the holy of holies to make sacrifice for his sins and the sins of the people.

But before he dared enter, they had to shove in an incense pot, a smoke pot, if you please, because the glory of God was so great that no man could be there in that glory and survive. And in addition to the incense pot creating the smoke, they had to tie a cord around the ankle of the high priest so that if he offended God while in the holy of holies, he could be dragged out by that cord, for it was understood if somebody else went in, God would strike them down. And so, the cord.

But now, I'm referring to the first verse of Psalm 80. Thou who dwellest between the cherubim shine for. In other words, the glory of God was not among them.

Well, I won't pursue that. I urge you to do so yourself. Psalm 80, Isaiah 63.

But now, let's come to the use of the word awaken in terms of the church. In Ephesians 5, verse 13. Believers are urged to awaken.

Awake, sleeper. Arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you. Romans 13, 11.

Knowing the time that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep. For now, is salvation nearer to us than when we believed. So, there is a responsibility on our part to awaken, but then there is the act of God, which takes away the blind eyes, the deaf ears, the heart of stone, and sends a great awakening.

Now, listen. Are you not personally familiar with glorious conversions? Oh, I've had the joy to see so many. And some, I could spend a whole day telling you about conversions that I have seen.

Glorious. But the great issue we need to retain in revival, if God can save one here and one there, or two there, or maybe three here, why can't he save a thousand, a hundred thousand, a million, all at one and the same time? So, when we describe revival in the term of awakening, that's what we're speaking about, God moving in a colossal way. That's why we describe the great awakenings in America.

Our fathers used to use phraseology, like the awakening and conversion of many, or the awakening that must come. And in that amazing vision of Ezekiel recorded in chapter 37, the valley of the dry bones. The question, son of man, can these bones live? And the answer of the prophet, oh Lord, you know.

And the command, prophesy over these bones and say to them, oh dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. And that's the way to approach preaching. First in prayer, oh God, give life to the dry bones in my congregation.

And then in some fashion appeal to the dry bones to awaken and arise. The second word I would mention, fire. Fire.

Now this is doubtless derived from Pentecost itself, where the cloven tongues of fire appeared and rested on each believer. But it's probable that it's also referring to Mount Carmel, verse Kings 18, 24. The God who answers by fire is God.

And so frequently praying people, pleading with God for fire, let the fire fall. And I often hear earnest people saying, do it again Lord, do it again. Let the fire fall.

And there is that picture I suggested yesterday of being baptized in the Holy Spirit and fire. That fire that purifies, that fire that burns the dross out of our lives. That fire that puts passion in our bones.

So revival as fire. So revival is described as fire from heaven, or as the baptism of fire, or as fire on the earth, or flames of fire. It is frequently said the fire fell.

And some people, I wish everyone here would fit this. Some people are described as a blaze for God. Wouldn't that be wonderful? Think of yourself.

Think of yourself as a burning and a shining light. Remember what I said about William Grimshaw yesterday, John Wesley's analysis. William Grimshaw, a man of fire.

Everywhere he goes, the fire of God falls. Why shouldn't that be you? Number three. Revival is described as fullness.

I've made reference already to the backslider as one who's filled again with his own ways. Revival is a time when believers are again emptied of self and filled with Christ. I have many pictures in my mind of revival, but one I like particularly well.

I learned as a young man, I'd been in college for a season and needed to drop out and work. I was given a job in a market chain, working with a maintenance crew. One morning, this was in Schenectady, New York, one morning, my boss said, here are some keys.

He handed me this set of keys. He said, make a note now of this address. He said, I want you to go down to our warehouse at this address.

It's a four-story building. I want you to throw everything out that's in that building. There's a courtyard that's fenced.

There are large doors that slide back on each floor. All you have to do is to throw everything out. I'm I guess about 18, been in college a couple years and now working.

I go down there and go in and walk through the floors. On the top floor, these great big glass showcases. Couldn't lift them, but could push them.

Then in one section, these great white Toledo scales. All I had to do was to roll back the door and shove the stuff out. Four flights up, one of these great glass showcases.

It was quite a sensation to see it smash. I enjoyed most the Toledo scales, but I learned something wonderful. It might be said that there are several parts to a real revival.

There's a brokenness, there's a remaking, there's a pouring full, and there's an overflow. As a boy, throwing that stuff out of the warehouse, I liked what I was doing. I wouldn't get any pleasure out of that now because I would much rather see something broken put together than to break something.

Listen to these four terms. Brokenness, remaking, pouring full, overflowing. We're talking about the word fullness.

Again, may I ask you to use your imagination. Will you imagine yourself right now as a cup? Can you do that? I was several years in the past before I met Maggie. The dear folk in the church had put together a collection of stuff so I could manage on my own dishware, odds and ends of furniture.

Being somewhat sentimental, I saved all that I could of that stuff. When Maggie married me, we had some of that terrible stuff. She was wishing to throw it away, but I convinced her it meant too much to me to throw away.

In that lock were some green mugs. Not very nice now, but I'm asking you to envision yourself as a cup. I'm thinking of myself now as this green mug.

Now listen here. We maintain guest quarters in our home. Not everybody who comes we're able to entertain because sometimes we're full, but if you were to come and to notify us in advance of your coming, and if we possibly could, you would be welcome to stay in our guest quarters.

It wouldn't be a very good experience necessarily. I'm just laying out the facts. If you were to eat with us, I want to tell you plainly, you would not be served your tea or your coffee in my mug.

Not because of selfishness, but because of love for you. What's suitable for me wouldn't be suitable for you. I don't mind having my tea in this old mug.

Not very nice, cracked perhaps, chipped maybe, stained, yes, but have you got a picture of yourself as a mug or a cup? I want to ask this question. What if God, the Holy Spirit, came and smashed the cup of your life? Would it be any loss? Well, you say, that depends. Depends on what? God's purpose in smashing it.

Have you any idea how small your cup is? We can pretty well gauge the size of our cup by looking at the extent of our prayer life. They're a pretty powerful testimony as to the size of our cup. Some of us pray for ourselves and our own.

And maybe occasionally, oh, oh, by the way, may the Lord bless my pastor. Other people embrace the entire world in their prayers and do so with such passion and feeling. There's simply no question that they mean it.

So, the size of the cup is important. The condition of the cup is important. The cleanliness of the cup is important.

And the fullness of the cup is important. What might seem suitable for you personally might be very unsuitable for serving others. I've already set that in front of you.

I'd like to ask, how big is your cup? I'd like to ask, what is the condition of the cup of your life? I'd like to ask, how clean is your cup? And I'd like to ask, how full is your cup? I know a lot of people trying to serve God out of a midget mug. I know people trying to serve God with all their cracks and chips. I know people trying to serve God out of a filthy cup.

And I know people trying to serve God out of the dregs of the bottom of their cup. Did you ever listen to a sermon that gave you the impression that the preacher had a little wad of filthy cloth, and he was down in the bottom of the mug, stirring around, trying to get something. And then he stood in the pulpit, and he took that rag, and he squeezed, and he twitched it, and he pressed.

And finally, a little sour drop fell out, and you went home brokenhearted because you went to hear from God, and all you heard was the dregs from a near empty cup. I'm talking about fullness. Does it seem clear to you that when revival occurs, God smashes these lousy little chipped, cracked, stained, near empty cups, and he replaces them with great new cups, sparkling, clean.

And then he pushes back, the angels push back the very portals of heaven, and they start dumping the fresh graces of Christ, and they pour, and they pour, and they pour some more, and your cup, under this flow of divine blessing, is filled to overflowing, and still God's busy pouring more and more, and everywhere you go, that fountain is still pouring down on you, and everywhere you spill, you spill not the sour dregs of an empty cup, but the fresh graces of God being poured out from heaven upon you, and through you, to the lives of multitudes. Revival. Fullness.

Wouldn't you love to be so full, that everybody around you is getting soaked with divine blessing from the overflow of the cup of your life? Well, somebody once said I was long-winded, it's hard to believe, but maybe I'm proving it to you this morning. Let me give a fourth word. Glory.

Glory. Revival is called glory. Remember that account of Moses in Exodus 33, when he said, show me my glory.

And God took him back up into the mountain, and said, now stand there, Moses, in the clefts of the rock. Let me cover you with my hand, and then I will cause all my goodness to pass before you. And when Moses came down from the mountain, the afterburn of God's presence was still so brilliant on his face that they had to cover it with a veil.

For two reasons, obviously, because eventually the glory was fading, but also because the glory was too great for others to look upon. How would you like to be so radiant for Christ? The glory of Christ so prominent in your life that everywhere you went, the glory of God shone forth. That's the nature of revival.

And so when we speak of revival, we speak of glory. We publish a fair number of books, Maggie and myself, and one of them is entitled *Glory Filled the Land*. A beautiful book.

I can say this because I didn't write it. I just put it together, edited it. But it's about that movement in Wales that I mentioned yesterday, 1904, 1905.

The nation was aglow with the glory of God. Another book I really love, *Scotland Saw His Glory*. Just a record that I gathered of other people's writings demonstrating how it was when Scotland was aglow with God's glory.

And then a long introduction deriving some lessons from all that. But think of revival as glory. Glory in the church.

They saw his glory. The whole earth filled with the glory of God. Number five, judgment.

My dear friend Edwin Orr, in his final sermon preached at Ridgecrest, not too far from here, was entitled *Revival is like judgment day*. Because in revival people's sins come before them in an awful parade of wickedness. The presence of Christ, the glory of Christ in the revival brings these sins before their eyes and so repentance goes deeper and is more valid than at any other time in the Christian life.

Revival is like judgment day. We also have number six, the term outpouring. You remember these words from Joel chapter 2 verses 28 and 29.

It will come about after this that I will pour out my spirit on all mankind and your sons and your daughters will prophesy. Your old men will dream dreams. Your young men will see visions.

And even on the male and female servants I will pour out my spirit in those days. And when Peter preached that Pentecost sermon, this is that. Identifying what was happening with that wonderful word from Joel.

Wouldn't you love to be involved in a season of the outpouring of divine grace on the land? Don't let some religious nut deprive you of the blessing of enjoying the great work of God. Why should some unbeliever rob me of the joy of believing? Number seven. Obviously, it's likened to Pentecost.

And we speak of a modern Pentecost. Or a present day Pentecost. Number eight.

Power. A way where church is a powerless church. Or to cite again the passage from Timothy.

We have the form of religion, but not the power. In Psalm 110 verse 3, it speaks of God's people volunteering freely in the day of his power. Do you remember that after the record of that great revival under Moses recorded in Exodus 32 33, as the account goes forward, Moses has to plead with the people.

Will you stop bringing things? You brought so much already. We can't use what we've got, let alone anymore. In Ireland at that time of great awakening in 1858 and 1859, one of the great shipyards in Ireland had to issue an order to all of its employees to stop bringing things back.

In the midst of the revival, they started bringing back things they had stolen. Wheelbarrows for instance, loaded to the top where they were in constant danger of spilling over with things that had been stolen. And finally, the owners of the company who had built a giant new warehouse to receive back all these stolen goods said, we really can't build another warehouse.

Don't bring anything else back. My wife and I, just the two of us, are owed over \$750,000 by seminaries and pastors who purchased books from us and never paid for them. I'm not wanting revival to get paid back.

I'm too old even to enjoy that now. But honestly, isn't it beautiful to think of revival in this fashion? Number nine, revival is described as progress or the success of the gospel. The current church is daily losing ground, producing record numbers of false converts.

There's a rampant backsliding throughout the church world. But in the book of Acts, many of those who heard the message believed, and the number of men came about to 5,000. And then, when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they broke in to rejoicing.

As you go through Acts, you see these constant evidences of growth. Not artificial, not manufactured, but growth because of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the mighty things taking place. So, progress or the success of the gospel.

These two wonderful things Anthony referred yesterday in prayer to the second of these. I told you that all revivals are marked by the manifest presence of Christ. But they're also marked by the word of God running like a mighty torrent of divine blessing across the land.

The success of the gospel. As a young man, I saw people converted in droves. And as long as those converts lived and kept in touch with me, they were still marching forward in the kingdom of God.

Now, a significant percentage of those who are reported as converts can't be found anywhere in the life of Christ. Some of the great evangelistic organizations, like the Graham Association, have acknowledged that at least 92% of all the domestic converts are nowhere in the life of Christ two years after the event. The success of the gospel.

Often I return to my hotel at night in the spirit of weeping because I have poured out my heart and pled with people to turn to Christ. And then people come by and say, oh, that was interesting. Oh, I like that.

You're a good speaker. Did you know that? Do we speak to hear compliments? Oh, for a season of success. Number 10.

Revival is described as rain. Often in the Old Covenant the rain is described. It is said by God, when I withhold the rain.

But a revival is a season when God unleashes the rain. Almost everywhere I go, I meet dry people. But oh, to be among the people who are in the midst of God's great rainstorm of divine blessing.

Number 11. Reformation. I'll pause here for a moment.

We don't often refer these days to revival as reformation. But I must take the time to explain this to you in a way I hope you will feel it deeply. We don't just need revival today.

We need reformation. Let me give a specific point here. Most preaching is not preaching.

Because Maggie and I have essentially supported our ministry through our book businesses. We've had lots of dealings with book dealers around the English speaking world. And I was on very warm terms with the largest book dealer in England for years.

A lovely man, sweet wife. And he didn't operate an open business but it was closed because of the zoning. And he didn't have customers as such come.

Just private parties like myself. And he loved my coming because we provided tens of thousands of pounds to him on a regular basis. But he was the most knowledgeable book seller of my acquaintance.

I was an absolute dummy in comparison with him. And every time I was entertained in his home while there on a buying trip I would seek to talk about Christ to him. We could talk on any subject theologically that you could imagine.

But he would never talk about Christ. Every indication was he didn't know Christ but he knew with great brilliance Christian theology. Time after time after time at the dinner table when I turned the subject to Christ he turned it aside.

His wife would speak with me some about Christ. But he would not. Then to my absolute astonishment he called me one day from England and he said I'm coming to America.

I'd like to fly into Chicago. I'd like to stay with you and Maggie for a few days. Oh! I was thrilled.

Oh by all means tell me when your flight comes and I'll pick you up at the airport. So he later gave me the information on the flight and I was there to greet him and when he got in the vehicle he said to me I want to tell you right off why I'm coming or why I have come to America. I have come to America to listen to some of your great preachers.

Well I almost fell over to wonder we didn't crash. I was so amazed. And of course inwardly I said thank you Lord.

This is something oh boy are we going to have a good time. But to my amazement I still couldn't speak to him about Christ. He was delightful.

He took to Maggie and to our handicapped daughter. He was gracious. Just a wonderful man.

But he wouldn't let me talk about Christ. Well a few weeks after his trip here I was there again in his home. We were seated at the dinner table.

I said now I've been anxious to hear about your trip to America. You told me you had come to hear the great preachers of America. I'd like to hear your report.

He was a big man with huge hands. He balled up his fist and he smashed the table so that everything leapt on the table and he said I didn't hear a single preacher in America. Well I gasped and I said what happened? Were you taken ill? Were you unable to complete your itinerary? No! He said I went to every place on my itinerary but I never heard a single sermon.

You don't have preachers in America. All you've got in America are teachers. Well then in a naive fashion I said in your opinion what is the difference between teaching and preaching? Well then for a second time he balled up his hand and this time I'm still astonished that the table didn't collapse.

He gave it such a blow. He said it's not a matter of my opinion. It's an absolute fact.

To teach is to inform. To preach is to move. You've got a lot of people in America with stuffed heads but they don't pay any attention to the gospel.

They don't live it out. The preachers aren't living it out. They don't even know how to proclaim it as a preacher.

Suppose we had a revival starting next Sunday and all we had in the pulpit were teachers. We need a reformation. We need to get back to the Bible.

We need to have men of God filled with the Holy Spirit who have courage and who preach the gospel with such plainness of speech that people shake in their boots. That the church breaks into tears and falls on its faces crying out for forgiveness. Number 12 Refreshing That was my intent but I've kind of undone myself by speaking so long.

But Anthony did read Acts 3 19 Repent therefore and return that your sins may be wiped away in order that times of refreshing might come from the presence of the Lord. Times of refreshing. Number 13 Renewal Create in me a clean heart O God Renew a steadfast spirit within me.

David in Psalm 51 or Isaiah 40, 31 They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength They will mount up with wings like eagles They shall run and not be weary They shall walk and not faint I've been privileged to speak in far more places than I can remember. And I used to speak to audiences where there were many who were obviously in a state of refreshment. They glowed.

They were such joy in their inner being. It was sheer delight to be with them. But now I see far more droopy, weary, tired out, undone, unhappy, discontented people than otherwise.

I'd like to live long enough to see a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. Number 14, Visitation I'll not renew what I said about that. Number 15, Wind The wind of the Spirit 2 Samuel 5 24, repeated again in 1st Chronicle speaks of the sound of the wind in the top of the mulberry trees.

As I move about the country my ear is attuned, looking for the sound of the wind in the top of the mulberry trees. Just once in a while I hear it. My wife doesn't go with me very much.

She can't. But one time we were together in the state of Colorado. I had been preaching there for seven days.

This was the eighth and the final day. The pastor had told the congregation through the week that on Sunday morning all the older children and adults would be meeting together and he would be speaking at the Sunday school hour and then I would be preaching after that. Indeed, it was that way.

He spoke on the parable of the prodigal son and focused upon the elder brother. It was very good but didn't seem to move anybody. Then he said, just before Mr. Roberts comes to preach, is there anyone here with a very great burden that you want to share and ask prayer for? Immediately a man near the front stood up and started weeping in such a way, it was very difficult for me to discern what he said.

In so far as I know, what he said was, someone with very great need came into my shop this week and I tried to help them and I failed completely. Would you please pray for him that somebody will help him and pray for me that somebody or that God himself somehow will help me. Then there was a moment of silence.

Maggie was sitting to my right. I took my elbow and I jabbed her in the ribs and I said, he has come. She said, what? I said, he has come.

She said, who has come? And I said, our dear Savior. I didn't get to preach that morning. Finally, along about 5.30, the pastor and I were able to remind the people that they had human functions that needed to be cared for and we would take a ten-minute break.

Maggie and I rushed to use the facility. When we got back, things were already a stir again. All day long, people crying out, confessing sin, pleading with God for his grace.

You see, before I poked Maggie, I heard the sound of the wind in the mulberry tree. What a glorious day. We were there till ten that night.

I got to preach in the evening and the Lord just used that to keep the fire burning brightly. Oh, my dear friends, do you long for the wind of the Spirit? Finally, number 16, work. Habakkuk said, Lord, I've heard the report about thee, and I fear, oh Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years.

In the midst of the years, make known in wrath, remember mercy. I'm tired of my work, not ready to quit, but tired. I would love to see the work of God, the truly great work of God.

I'm glad for every individual who has helped, but I long to see hundreds and thousands and millions turn to Christ because God himself is at work. We have but a few moments, but I believe it will be sufficient for the purpose of going back to Acts. I had intended to a lot more time, but I think this will do.

If you will, go back to the passage in Acts 3. It's such an exciting passage. One could just dance like the lame man did for 15 or 20 minutes just in rejoicing. I'll not focus very much on the details, but isn't it thrilling that when Peter and John approached the temple and the lame man who had been carried there for a long time day in, day out was seated there.

When he saw Peter and John coming, he thought, oh, here's a good chance for some alms. Peter says, we don't have silver or gold, but what we do have we gladly give. He reached out, laid hold of the man's hand and pulled him up.

Now some of you have trouble with the subject of divine healing. We're always meeting cessationists who say that the Holy Spirit no longer does things like that. I don't like nonsense of any kind, and I don't like that nonsense in particular.

Years and years ago I had started a church in the Albany Capital District area of New York State. It was mostly made up in the early days of professional people. We had a medical doctor in the group and the church soon became strong and he was one of the elders.

But after I had gone on in my ministry elsewhere, I talked with him one day and he said, I want to share with you an incident that I think will warm your heart. He named the lady and he said she was dying of cancer. I was told that and we were asked to come and pray for her.

But he said, I didn't want to, and I knew this but he repeated what I knew. He said, I don't remember the title, but I'm the head of the Department of Health for the State of New York. Now I knew that.

But he said, when I was asked to come and pray, I thought, no. I'm sure we can help the lady medically. Why should we pray? So he said, because of my position, I have access to all the medical records in the state, and in reviewing her case, I found everything known to us to do had been done and the facts were absolute.

She was dying. So he said, although I went without any faith, when I got there, I realized God is going to heal this woman. And we prayed and she was healed.

But he said, by my very nature, I like to be sure of facts. Months later, I went through her records again, and the doctors attending her case said, we cannot explain it, but all the cancer is gone. She went back for periodic checkups, and every time they said, no cancer.

You could not convince me that God has ceased healing people. I'm not making a fuss about it. I think we must only anticipate it when God makes it clear he's going to do it.

And if he does it without our anticipating, we'll praise his holy name. But don't come and ask me to pray for you, because I can't do you any good. It's only God that can.

And when this man began leaping and jumping and dancing around Peter and John and having a glorious time, and then he accompanies them into the temple and the people know who this is. They have watched him for years. A lame man born with lameness right from his mother birth.

He's lame. He can't walk. Now he's leaping and jumping and praising God.

So how does Peter behave? He confronts the people and he makes it clear I didn't do anything for this man. This man was healed by Jesus the one whom you crucified. Part of the great biblical principles of revival is learning to be confrontational.

You can be confrontational in a nasty way and without benefit, but as I think back on that multitude of occasions when I have confronted people and God has worked a miracle. Oh sure, some get angry and if they ever approach you again it's only to spit upon you. But many of the greatest conversions I have known came directly as a result of calling someone a liar or telling them plainly they were a hypocrite making it clear you crucified Christ.

I urge you to keep that in mind. But we do want to close this morning with these wonderful words. Verse 19 Repent therefore and return.

Now that is at the heart of the revival message. Repent and return. And the lovely words that follow that your sins may be wiped away in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.

I did want that to be emphasized in these closing moments this morning. That which I have been talking about all morning is a result of the presence of the Lord. But I think it's urgent that all of us face the next statements.

That he may send Jesus the Christ appointed for us whom heaven must receive until the period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of the holy prophets from ancient times. Moses said the Lord God shall raise up for you a prophet like me from your brethren to him you shall give

heed in everything he says to you. And it shall be that every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.

Now there you see is the heart. Give heed to every word that he speaks to you. Go back to what I said about 2 Chronicles 7.14. Humble yourself.

Pray. Seek my face. Turn from your wicked way.

I hear lots of people talking as if they had done all that who have gross areas in their lives where they do not heed God. We had a bit of a demonstration of this yesterday in a sentence. I didn't pay any attention to the clock yesterday morning.

I didn't see any reason to. Now I get into situations where they have 3 services and when the first service runs 35 minutes, 55 minutes overtime the leaders get upset. But that's one of the reasons I wouldn't have multiple services.

How can the Holy Spirit work when we got everything fixed? But anyway, that's beside the point. But this is the point. People are saying they're seeking revival but they've got gross areas in their lives where they haven't paid any attention to what the Lord said.

I emphasized yesterday the Lord's Day not the Lord's Hour. I know but the smallest handful of people who believe in the Lord's Day even the prayer movement focused on revival adopt such absurd slogans as give five at twelve. So here we got the day of prayer announced for the whole nation and people are told to take five minutes at noon to pray.

What kind of a dumb God do they think they're worshipping? God knows the difference between five minutes and a day. He created both. I'm simply asking now as we close do you give heed to every word he has spoken? Now this can be tough but I'm going to recommend something to you.

It's something I have done and I'm going to do again. I've gone through every word Christ spoke and I have written down on three by five cards every single word and I have arranged them by subject. Everything Christ says about money.

Everything he says about marriage. Everything he says about talents. Everything he says about everything.

And I have systematically gone through these things and sought diligently to be sure that I was heeding everything he said. I'm asking you to do that. That times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord and those of us who have known wonderful seasons in the past can't live upon those past seasons and we need from time to time to review and to honestly consecrate ourselves.

And may God help us. Thank you Lord for your word that it is absolutely reliable. Thank you for the mercy and the grace of seasons of visitation.

And thank you for this direct command to heed every word that our prophet, our priest, our king has spoken. Help us with great integrity to honor you by lives obedience to the glory of our king, Jesus. Amen.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/richard-owen-roberts/acts-3-times-of-refreshing/>

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