

Nature of Revival - Part 1

by Richard Owen Roberts

The speaker emphasizes the importance of repentance in the Christian life, arguing that it is necessary for spiritual growth, maturity, and salvation, and that it is a corporate, not just personal, experience.

Duration: 48:30

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Hebrews 2:1-4, Hebrews 3:6-13, Hebrews 6:1-2, Hebrews 6:6

Topics: "Revival", "Repentance"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the subject of revival and emphasizes the importance of understanding its consequences. He acknowledges that those who are present likely have a sense of the need for revival. The speaker then discusses the language of revival and expresses his hope that the listeners' hearts will be filled with anticipation and joy when considering this topic. He also draws a parallel between the book of Hebrews and a child's excitement about their summer camp experience, highlighting the enthusiasm and excitement that should accompany the study of doctrine. Additionally, the speaker mentions the concept of the solemn assembly and the importance of both personal and corporate repentance.

Transcript

Brother Rubin has used the term repentance, and of course it is a term of great consequence, much neglected. I was in some meetings in the Omaha area some time ago when at the end of the meetings three of the men were driving me to the airport and they said to me, did you realize that you have contradicted much of what we believe? Well, I said, that certainly doesn't concern me. But what in particular are you agitated about? Well, they said what you said about repentance.

You don't seem to understand that repentance is a work, and we're not saved by works, but by faith. Why, we just completed a training course in evangelism, and in the training manual it said don't ever mention the word repentance when you're witnessing to people, because it will only confuse them, lead them to think there's something they must do, when in truth we are saved solely by faith in what Christ knows. If there were just one or two people in the world that believed such wickedness as that, it would be a relief, we could shrug our shoulders and pass it off and think nothing more of it.

But the sad truth is that a very substantial percentage of the Church in America do not believe that repentance has anything to do with salvation. They say that has to do with the Christian life, that it's an optional matter, that if one wants to become really serious and go deep into the things of God, then they

have to consider repentance. But to be saved, no mention of repentance is appropriate.

Do you think I made that up? I wished I did. It is so perfectly absurd that I would like to think that someone who was just fooling, just kidding around, came up with ridiculous viewpoint. But you see, part of the problem is that there are many who don't understand that there is an unbreakable faith.

It is impossible to believe without repentance. And it is absurd to repent and not believe, for repentance is turning from, and faith is turning toward. And the two must be kept together.

And no one can embrace Jesus Christ in faith and do so without that any of you give me opportunity to feel the liberty to. Now I am getting old. Now did you hear what I said? We are in danger of surely, but to repent of sin is not.

We are also to repent of dead works. Let me draw your attention straightway this morning to the book of Hebrews, chapter 6. Admittedly a most difficult passage for many. But look, if you will please, at this passage, and let me draw something very specific pertaining to repentance to your attention.

While you are turning to Hebrews 6, may I take a moment to an explanation, but it is immensely helpful. With the law given by angels, with Moses and the whole Mosaic covenant, with Abraham, with the priesthood, with the sacrificial system, even with angels. I have not given those several words in proper sequence in Hebrews, just suggesting everything.

He is contrasting. Theological. I remember the first time we sent out, and he was telling the author of Hebrews, opinionated on the matter.

But he is under an immense burden for the people to whom, and the interruptions all take the form, let me call your attention with a bit of care here, to this process that I have, how Christ is with angels. But when you come to chapter 2, before he has completed this contrast, we must take closer when the doctrinal portion, that a good beginning in the Christian life is everything. But that is a falsehood, straight from hell.

It doesn't much matter how you start. It's how you finish that really counts. And we have literally millions who appear to have made a good beginning, who do not make a good ending.

But you see, they have been led to think that having started well, all is well. Now the point is quite clear. Hebrews is written to a body of Jewish believers, who have made a wonderful beginning.

But some of you who have been students of Hebrews are aware of the fact that they came under tremendous persecution. We know many things that literally were happening at the time. We know that while these professed believers were attending the Christian meetings, their homes were being ransacked systematically by the opponents.

We know that Nero would take these Christians in groups and he staged these huge and lavish gardens. And we know that he would mount them on crosses and then cover them at his garden part. We know that many of these Jewish believers came and the families were saying to them, for you to abandon the old.

Hebrews makes it plain that the old were a type. Had they gone back, they would have gone back to nothing. But now that's desperately needed in our day.

And that basic understanding that I've suggested, that it doesn't matter how you start, but how you finish the Christian life. But I give you that as background to what we're going to read now in the third warning.

Now just for the sake of... was hateful as a son over his house.

Whose house we are. Now get this. Whose house we are if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end.

Did you get those words? We are of Christ household if, and let's be sure we understand what follows the word if. If we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end. And that word confidence, hold fast our refers to the bold open ongoing proclamation Jesus Christ is Lord.

Now you see there are many who have been taught that if we believe in our hearts that Jesus Christ is Lord and confess with our mouths we're saved. And what they are led to believe is an error in connection with that biblical statement. They are led to believe that if once they believe in their heart and once they confess with their mouth they're saved.

But that's not true. The faith that saves is not faith that once grips us, but faith that grips us throughout the remainder. The confession of the mouth is not a one-time, this is the baptismal pool over here sir, it's not a one-time dip in the pool.

But it can't end in the waters of baptism or it can't end with the first testimony. There has to be, if we were to speak correctly, those where their present life has nothing to do with that past experience and they named some time when they had this. The point is that the book of Hebrews is a book that is making it crystal clear it doesn't matter how you start it, it's how you finish that counts.

Now in the second warning we have become partakers of if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end. So the great focus of the second warning is the mandatory nature of pressing on, pressing on, pressing on unceasingly in the pursuit. But I began these brief words about Hebrews by telling leaving the elementary teaching about Christ.

Now I should tell you that the third warning begins in chapter 5 and continues through verse 12 of chapter 6. So in short, the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of instruction and washing and laying on of hands and the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment. He singles out six foundational doctrines. But we concern ourselves now with only one, repentance from from dead works.

How many of you men who preach have preached upon repentance from dead works? Well one, another, thank God several. That's encouraging. I've been in places where it appears that nobody ever even heard of the matter, let alone preached upon it.

Now what would be an illustration of a dead work to be repented of? Yes, absolutely sister, something done in the energy of the flesh. For instance, a man could lead in a public prayer meeting and he could be prayed and he would need to repent of that dead work. Others, if they were to repent of dead works, would need to repent.

Now listen carefully lest you go away saying that poor Mr. Roberts is to be pitied and inherited. For many, when they say they have accepted Christ, all they've done is to acknowledge historic fact. Now Christ does not require my my great burden ought to be his acceptance of me.

It's vastly more important that he accept me than that I give mental ascent to him and accept the facts about him. There are some who deliberately have accepted Christ, as they say, as their savior, and yet

they have willfully, and yet they think they can be saved from hell by, well it's not my purpose, all of the realms in which, but even worship can be a dead work. Whole crowd can fill this sanctuary and have a wonderful time, just go away glowing with joy, and even came near him.

There is that possibility, isn't there? Have you not yourself some, so there has been in our day preaching on repentance from that a grievous error, or a grievous area, I meant to say, where repentance is false from erroneous doctrine. Much of what is being taught and proclaimed in our day. Last evening, some of you were here, I indicated that back in the 1800s, a viewpoint began to develop, grievously wrong viewpoint, said that revived, plows the field, and then he plants the seed, and he cultivates, and then at the appropriate time, he leaves the harvest.

And what he said was that as I pointed out last night, revival comes from the sovereign hand of God. There is nothing any of us can do to force. There are things for us to do.

We can repent, we can pray, we can pour out our hearts longing to the Lord. But if revival comes, it will come because he determines to send it, not because we determine to have it. Now this may not seem consequential, it has been said of our day, of our generation, that we have lost because we do not know history.

Let's go back to the earliest days in which our forefathers were populating this continent. I don't want to take advantage of you by exalting my own position, but I happen to be, and you may want to forgive me for this, I happen to be a Congregationalist. Now that may not mean a thing to some of you, but to others of you, you know that the people who settled in New England, the pilgrims, were Congregationalists.

They fled the old country because of the terrible persecution of Christians, and because they were not, and so they landed on the shores of the Plymouth Bay colony. And in their hearts they thought they were establishing a nation in covenant relationship with God. That was in their hearts.

You read the early documents from the 1600s, it's crystal clear. They didn't consider themselves the equal of old Israel, but they felt themselves called of God to establish a new Israel, a nation under God. They sought the face of God.

They practiced fasting and prayer. Every time there was some registration of God's anger against them, a fire, a flood, a great storm, the death of some young prominent leader, whatever the incident, every time they thought that God was registering his anger against them. That began, as I implied, in the 1600s before the nation was established.

I know that this won't interest most of you, but it may interest a few. If you were to study the books and the pamphlets published from the earliest days of the founding of the Massachusetts Bay colony, you would see that an amazing percentage of those books and pamphlets were devoted to the theme of the solemn assembly. Now I don't know how many of you understand the biblical concept of the solemn assembly, so I'm going to take a moment to fill.

I've spoken to you, but I need now to add this important. We must learn to see the difference sin and corporate repentance of corporate sin. I know some of you have been exposed.

We later published, it is a corporate, is that person, well no one could read that with any care, and who are called by my, you go all the way through that passage, and you'll see that it is clearly a passage dealing with the nation. Now that is not to say that there is no personal aspect to revival. It is only to say to focus

on the person.

But you see, many many churches have never faced the problem of their corporate sins. They have never practiced corporate repentance. Now I don't speak belittlingly or critically.

Well there's certainly a time and a place, but if that's as far as it ever goes, we have missed something of tremendous consequence. If you study the judgments of God as they are revealed in the scriptures, it is more. So as we're approaching this theme of revival, we've got to have it clear in our minds that we need revival not merely, but what we need is corporate revival.

I don't think I'll offend the pastor by saying this church needs revival, and woe to us if we do not do these things. So I've suggested to you, and if it is not corporate, then it will be vastly less consequential than what is so desperately needed. Now the sense that I have is that the understanding of revival that exists among us here, and certainly that exists in the church across the land, is much too low.

We've taken a position that is inconsequential in comparison with the immensity of the need. And so for a few moments what I'd like to do, I've brought along some notes to help me to do this in a system. I don't think you would be here if you didn't have some, but I do think it's possible to be.

Now the degree to which we feel the need is definitely going to affect our prayer and our promotion of this theme. So what I've done, as I implied a moment ago, is to put in front of me a list of terms that have been used in the church on this wonderful theme of revival. Now I don't need to tell those of you who love the Lord how precious such words as grace, forgiveness, justification, redemption, propitiation, blood atonement, mercy seat, throne of grace, and many others like them are.

Don't you find those wonderful terms? Doesn't it delight your soul to just teach upon the language? We have a book that Reuben has been offering for sale in this area entitled, Salvation in Full Covenant. And what it is, is a group of 20 sermons that I selected, not my sermons, but sermons that I selected from the period that we call the Great Awakening period in America, from the 1740 period, essentially. And they're sermons having to do with the great words of salvation.

Now some of you wouldn't consider it a great word, but shame on you, election. Some of you are troubled by that word. You just struggle with it.

But that's to your shame. It's a biblical word. No man made it up.

Atonement, regeneration, repentance, which I've stressed, faith, adoption. Oh, what a lovely time we could have just thinking together about the biblical theme of how those of us who were aliens from God, strangers and outcasts, have been adopted into the family of God and made joint heirs with Jesus Christ. Well, that book, as I said, takes 20.

Well, readily we delight in such terms, those of us who love the Lord. And I repeat what I said already. I'd just like to hope that your heart will swell with anticipation and joy and enthusiasm, as you consider the language that has been used.

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