

The Means of Grace (Video)

by Richard Owen Roberts

This sermon emphasizes the importance of experiencing revival through the utilization of all divinely ordained means of grace, including prayer, the Word of God, Christian fellowship, church discipline, and the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper. It highlights the need for genuine care, concern, and spiritual depth in these practices to truly impact individuals and the church as a whole.

Scripture: Acts 3:1, 1 Timothy 4:13, Galatians 6:1, 1 Corinthians 11:23, Matthew 28:19, Hebrews 10:24

Topics: "Revival", "Means of Grace"

Description

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Transcript

It's myself greatly moved by what you said last night, Brother, and I want to begin with a word of caution. Don't expect Christian organizations to treat you decently. Christian organizations somehow reach that point where in their thinking the greater good of the institution is vastly more consequential than the well-being of the individual.

So they can trample nearly to death individuals. We are constantly meeting people who have been badly injured by some religious institution. So you younger fellows that haven't had exposure to that yet, don't count on any kind of decent treatment from any institution, especially if it is an academic institution.

I hope it's not going to be of any value to most of you, but it's just simply a word of caution. But the good thing about the rotten treatment that you're apt to receive from institutional Christianity is that it will drive you to your knees. And you'll have no recourse but to turn afresh to Christ.

And if I may go so far as to say I was incredibly injured personally by Wheaton College and the Billy Graham Association. They got my incredible library on revival literature. And through a series of incidents that happened, they ordered me never to set foot on campus again, violated all of the agreements that were made.

But the happy thing was, first I got very mad at them. You spoke of your anger, brother. I got very mad at them.

Then, almost immediately, I got very mad at God, because he let them do that truly wicked thing. Then, very quickly, I got very mad at myself to think that I, who had loved Christ and sought earnestly to serve him for so many years, had gotten mad at them and that God, I was really, truly crushed. I was smashed.

I was at the very bottom. And at the very bottom, God picked me up. And I have been living in the joy of that pickup for a good many years.

So while the experience was bitter, I soon learned to thank God for it, because what I had discovered about myself was that my very passionate interest in revival, which began as a boy of 13, had moved from my heart to my head. And I was, in a sense, almost a spouting encyclopedia of information about revival. But if some saintly brother had tried to get me into a serious prayer meeting for revival, I would have found some way to worm out of it.

I didn't know that that had happened to me. But after that experience with the college and the revival that God brought about, what had risen to my head came back to my heart. And by God's grace, has been there ever since.

And obviously, that's the place where passion for revival must reside. Our heads still do operate. And we use them, hopefully, for the glory of God.

But I'm simply saying, don't be surprised if you get badly abused. It's part of the course. And the tragedy is that so many of the people that we know who had started well, when they came under the abuse of institutional Christianity, they turned aside.

But thank God for those that he has kept in a heart relationship with himself and his wayward church. Now what I'd like to do this morning is to read an incredibly beautiful chapter and then speak about an issue that I think is of tremendous importance. Not giving a Bible exposition, which is my favorite way of ministry.

I really do love to take the scripture and go through it with care and to set out its great tenets. But this morning, I'll use the chapter sort of as a springboard and then deal with what I think is one of the most consequential questions on the subject of revival that any of us can possibly ask. The chapter is in the book of Acts, number three.

I'd like, as I said, to read it, to make a few brief comments and then to turn to a very consequential question concerning revival. So Acts, chapter three. Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the ninth hour, the hour of prayer.

And a certain 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. And when he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he began asking to receive alms. And Peter, along with John, fixed his gaze upon 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 of Nazareth, walk.

And seizing him by the right hand, he raised him up, and immediately his feet and his ankles were strengthened. And with a leap, he stood upright and began to walk. And he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God.

As a boy, Donald Gray Barnhouse, who was then pastor of the Tenth Presbyterian Church, would come to the city where I was raised, Schenectady, New York, on Friday nights to the First Presbyterian Church and teach a very large and profoundly powerful Bible class. As a boy, I remember him making reference to the words of verse 6. I do not possess silver and gold, but what I give to you, or what I do have, I give to you in the name of Jesus Christ, the Nazarene, walk. And I was struck powerfully by a comment that he added.

He described visiting the Vatican with a friend and touring the Vatican Museum and being incredibly amazed at the vast array of silver and gold in the Vatican Museum. And he said, the Roman Catholic Church cannot say, silver and gold I do not have. But neither can they say, rise up and walk.

Now, that was very true of the Roman Catholics in that day. But tragically, that has become true of vast numbers of Protestants today. We have all kinds of silver and gold.

Some of the churches where I have been invited to preach amazed me so thoroughly that I can barely cope with the amazement. First Baptist Church, Jacksonville, Florida, 28,000 members. The church plant itself covering eight city blocks of downtown Jacksonville.

Would take weeks just to get acquainted so that you could walk freely anywhere you needed to go in that incredible complex, so big that every time I moved there, I had a couple of big burly men at my side escorting me through the vast crowds and through all these incredible assortments of buildings and so on. We can't say, in multitudes of cases, silver and gold. We have none.

But as a boy, when I heard Barnhouse's remark, I longed to live a life where I could say what I do have, I freely give and take a man's hand and help him to live and to walk with Christ. Oh, that indeed all of us might be able to take the hand of multitudes and enable them to walk in the joy and in the victory of the Lord Jesus Christ. 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. And 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 do you marvel at this? Or why do you gaze at us as if by our own power or piety we had made him walk? The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus, the one who you delivered up and disowned in the presence of Pilate when he had decided to release him. But you disowned the Holy and the 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 which we are witnesses of.

And on the basis of faith in this name, in 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 denounced beforehand by the mouth of all his prophets that his Christ should suffer, he has thus fulfilled.

Repent therefore and return that your sins may be wiped away in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord and that he may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you, whom heaven must receive until the period of the restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of his 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. And likewise all the prophets who have spoken from Samuel and his successors onward also announce these days, it is you who are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant of God which he made with your fathers saying to Abraham, And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. For you first God raised up his servant and sent him to bless you by turning every one of you from your wicked ways.

It is on that spirit and attitude that we must press on in service for Jesus Christ knowing it is God's longing, his desire to refresh his people. But as I said, I have a question that was one time put to me and put in the most extraordinary fashion which resulted in a train of thought which I believe to be of incredible urgency and consequence that I want to share with you. The question was put to me following a prayer meeting over a period of roughly 25 years I led a prayer meeting in my office.

Never a large gathering but for a long time in the range of 20 to 25 men would gather at 6 a.m. in the morning and the focus of the prayer meeting was only on prayer. Anybody prayed in any other direction I felt the propriety to take them aside afterward and to rebuke them and to remind them that it was a prayer meeting for revival. And it was an incredibly blessed time.

Unfortunately, it came to an end because for a very long time I had an associate who in my absence led the prayer meeting and he was called by God to move to the west coast and I no longer had anyone to lead in my absence and so it degenerated to the point where instead of being faithfully every week we only could meet on the weeks that I was not preaching out of town but during the days in which the blessing of God was great upon us. Among those attending was the district superintendent of the Christian Missionary Alliance churches in the Midwest, a very sweet spirit and a lovely man who was with us for a goodly number of years. But he came to me following the prayer meeting one morning and he said, I have a question that I'm wanting to put to you but I will not give you the question unless you agree to allowing me two or three hours of your time maybe three or four weeks from now to sit down and discuss the answer.

I don't ever remember being asked a question at any other time and I said to him that is a very appropriate request I gladly concede and will be delighted to set aside some time in a month or so. Then he said, I will give you my question. Having prayed fervently for revival is there anything else that it is legitimate to do I had three full weeks to weigh the question.

I had never quite faced that question before and as I prayed and meditated and wondered this is what came to me having prayed for revival we must now make the fullest possible use of all the divinely ordained means of grace. So when this dear brother came that is the answer I gave him he said, I don't know what you mean by divinely ordained means of grace. I explained to him not every denomination uses that term and some are afraid of that term because it is sometimes used in a fashion that is dangerous and might very well indeed trespass on God.

For instance, just to show you what I mean Lutherans tend to use that expression they would describe the ordinances as means of grace and as I said to someone personally yesterday there are Lutherans who

honestly believe that a person who comes to the communion table is guaranteed blessing from God. They can come with the most impure heart imaginable. They can come in loathing even of Christ but there is something guaranteed in the ordinance.

Now none of us I hope could believe such a foolish thing but as I just said some are afraid of the expression means of grace because it is sometimes used in a fashion that is not in any sense in conformity to the word of God. But I explained to the dear brother when I'm speaking of the means of grace and describing them as those divinely ordained means of grace. What we're talking about is the channels through which God pours his grace upon his people.

I was very quick to say to him part of what is so tragically wrong in the American church is that we feel the liberty to determine our own means of grace. We invent things that God himself has never given and we utilize them and have the gall to say to God this is what I'm about to do now bless it. We are truly limited in our usage to those things that God himself has given us.

You know part of the great split that occurred in the reformation on one side the reformers saying we must eliminate absolutely everything that the church has been doing that is not God ordained. And others saying oh no we don't have to go that far we just have to eliminate those things that the Bible forbids. And there's a huge gap between those two positions.

But I'm speaking this morning of what it is appropriate to do when we have truly fervently prayed for revival to make the fullest possible use of all the God ordained means of grace. So we're speaking of course about prayer that is a means of grace. We're speaking about the word that is truly a means of grace.

We're speaking about repentance and faith. They are means of grace. We are speaking about Christian fellowship that is a God ordained means of grace.

We are speaking about church discipline that is ordained means of grace. We're speaking about stewardship that too a God ordained means of grace. I think you get the picture.

There are certain things that God himself has ordained which when utilized to the fullest result in the blessing of God flowing upon us. Now I hardly need to say that the church has failed miserably in recent years in using prayer to its fullest. In fact it has been minimized in a conversation with a pastor of one of the smaller of the megachurches a mere 5,000 people.

I asked him about the prayer life of the church. This is what he said to me. We know how to make the church grow and grow.

The last thing we want is people depending upon God to do what we're quite capable of doing. We have a number of elderly people in the congregation who aren't really much good for anything. They somehow think prayer is necessary so we allow them a room where they can have a weekly prayer meeting.

But I don't believe that we need prayer when we know how to make the church grow. Now probably the only thing that's unusual about that is the boldness with which the man stated his opinion. My impression is there must be thousands of churches and pastors who feel that way because they certainly have not paid any serious attention to prayer and indeed I meet multitudes of men who will be glad when the leadership team of the church proposes, let's just cancel the prayer meeting it doesn't have any significance.

But because nobody has proposed it yet and they don't want to have to take the blame for doing so among that handful of elderly who still believe in prayer they let it drag on. I've been in churches where the pastors themselves never attend a prayer meeting where it's led by some layman. Well I don't want to labor the point I'm simply urging you to take it as a given that it is necessary that we make the fullest possible use of prayer the means of grace that God has ordained for the spiritual growth for the spiritual health for the spiritual advancement of the church.

Having already said something on prayer this week that shall suffice let me move to the second issue making the fullest possible use of the word of God. I'm going to speak very bluntly I don't even know how many of you are pastors or do some preaching. I don't for one moment want to be suggesting that everybody ought to do what I do.

I do what I believe I should and I don't care whether people like it or not. My own personal conviction is if they're foolish enough to invite me to speak in their church they better be willing to listen to what I have to say. And if they don't want to they can ask me to leave.

I had one church last year that scheduled several days of meetings but at the end of the first day they said that's it, we don't want any more. They had paid it. I don't think they would have but they had paid it in advance.

Anyway, that's neither here nor there. Here's simply my point. In the first letter of Paul to Timothy in that portion where he says let no man despise thy youth he says pay careful attention to these things.

The public reading of the Scripture. Number two, exhortation. Number three, teaching.

I think some of us need to repent of our failure to pay careful attention to the public reading of the Scripture. Somewhere not long ago I read five full chapters in the course of a sermon. People came up to me afterward and they said do you realize you took more time reading Scripture than most pastors take in their whole sermon.

And I said to them do you see something wrong with that? Is it not God's Word? Is it not the source of life? Is it not for those of us who have grown weary and perhaps even backslidden the source of refreshing? Let every one of us set our hearts to give careful attention to the public reading of Scripture. If you read a portion of a passage shame on you. Do you think your words are more important than God's Word? I was in a church not long ago where the total Biblical content of the entire service was the Scripture reading which consisted of two words out of one single verse.

The music had no Biblical content. The sermon was a how to do it a kind of a sermon that had no Biblical basis whatsoever. That's an extreme but most of the preachers that I know wouldn't dare to read an entire chapter.

And others who would dare say well it simply can't be done. The service is at 11. It's expected to be over at 12.

Can't possibly read that much Scripture. Why should the service be at 11? I have knowledge that a lot of people who don't truly love the Lord and His Word get very antsy once the clock reaches 12. And I don't see any necessity to antagonize people unnecessarily by running past 12 o'clock.

Why not start at 10 o'clock? I wouldn't pastor a church that had an hour service. I would take it as a given a church that is only willing to give an hour is not a church that is worthy of the investment of prayer and time and strength. As I said yesterday pastors are those angelic beings that Jude described.

Those men appointed by God they are God's authority in the church. And it's time that we made it clear if you want me you want God's authority through me. And if you don't want God's authority then why should I waste my life on a people who are playing.

Pay attention. Give careful heed to the public reading of God's Word. And don't let anybody push you around on that subject.

The time to make demands is not when you've been there three years but before you accept the call. Make it clear. But if you've been there for three years then by the grace of God take your stand anyway.

And even if they crucify you pay attention to the reading of God's Word. Now some of the translations of that passage in Timothy say pay attention to the reading, the public reading of the Word of God to preaching and to teaching. And some of you perhaps haven't yet gotten this picture clear.

There is a very, very clear distinction between teaching and preaching. I believe God ordained both. But don't confuse teaching with preaching.

Teaching informs. Preaching moves. When you have a congregation gather on Sunday morning it is not to hear teaching.

It is to hear preaching. Now good preaching includes teaching. But good teaching does not include preaching.

Teaching fills the head. Hopefully with necessary and consequential truth. But when the congregation assembles on Sunday morning this is where they are.

But here is where they're supposed to be. And the preaching of the Word is designed by God to move them from where they are to where they ought to be. Every man ought to go into the pulpit with that determination under the power of the Word and the Spirit this congregation is going to be moved from where they are to where they ought to be.

It takes courage because if you do this you're bucking the tide. The well-known preachers are not preachers at all but teachers. You can say just about anything you like and as long as you don't make it pointed as long as nobody feels the prick of the sword they'll accept it.

But once there's preaching there's penetration. There's that movement of the Spirit of God upon the conscience that makes a person feel uncomfortable if they're unwilling to go forward in the fashion God demands. Then let me speak of Christian fellowship.

I'm sure that you have observed exactly what I'm going to say. In most situations the people have switched the subject to something secular before they reach the end of the pew following the service. They are talking about the picnic they're going on or the football game they're planning to watch or the basketball game they watched the night before or they're buzzing against the pastor and how could he make that stupid statement? I say before they've reached the role and they have already turned the conversation away from God and away from the sacred and the sanctified.

And Christian fellowship by and large consists of my stepping up and I understand that you went to Disney World last week. How did it go? Did you enjoy yourself? Now Christian fellowship is not being pleasant with other people in the church. It's going up to a brother and say my dear sir I've been worried about you.

I haven't seen you in the prayer meeting the last three weeks. I mean it's going right to the heart. It's caring for one another.

It's doing that which is appropriate to advance the cause of Christ in each individual with whom you associate. My wife and I were involved for a long time in the largest church in the city of Wheaton for years. I taught two Bible classes every Sunday morning when I was not preaching out of town.

I learned one week that an older couple in the church in their early seventies had been in the service Sunday morning. They went home, had their lunch, did the dishes but laid them on the counter and then by prearrangement he took a gun, shot his wife through the head and shot himself through the head. Now the city of Wheaton is the holy city.

It's the evangelical Vatican. It's the city where we never admit anything is wrong. Crimes by and large never even reach the newspaper.

Everything is covered up. And this dual suicide was covered up. I happened at that time to be giving a series on the subject of Christian fellowship.

And I said the next Sunday this is what happened in a prominent family in our church. We say that we have Christian fellowship here but a prominent family in the church can be under such stress that they plan and execute a dual suicide and nobody even knows they're troubled. In the typical church the vast majority of the people carry their problems alone without help.

Nobody is there for them. There are churches that you could attend every single Sunday for ten years straight and then you could stop going totally and nobody would know that you weren't there because nobody knew you were there. Nobody cared.

If there's any caring at all it's in the form of counting. 986 in the first service, 1240 in the second service, 911 in the third service. But people, they don't matter.

When we ask the question having prayed for revival is there anything that is legitimate to do? Yes. Turn the church into a Christian fellowship where everybody's hurts are felt by all. Where everybody's victories are celebrated by the whole group.

Where there is true concern. That in some cases is somewhat on the way already but in no cases it's non-existent and it's going to take a courageous leader or group of leaders to turn things around. The Methodists in their early days had an answer that worked for them.

Every convert was required to become part of a class meeting and the class leader had perhaps 25 or 30 that he met with as a group every week and he went around the circle every week and all right now, what's happened to you this week? And you wouldn't rest content until the whole story was out and then they would help one another, pray for one another, encourage one another. It's time to get back to New Testament Christianity. I personally would love to be part of a church that cares.

The church we attend doesn't care at all at this juncture. Christian fellowship. What a difference just that alone would make.

And when people are, as I use the brother to illustrate, when people are missing from the prayer meeting, going to them, demonstrating real concern. The aged, and I spoke of this yesterday, those who because of their age and the condition of their sight can't drive at night, making sure that somebody is there to take care of them. Also, obviously, the physical matters.

The aged, whose roof needs repair. They have no money, and yet there are skilled men in the church that could readily repair the roof for them. There needs to be genuine Christian love and fellowship.

And it's almost heartless to pray for revival when we're asking God to do something when we won't do ourselves what we ought to do. Church discipline, of course, is another of these matters. And I know that some of you practice it because you have mentioned it to me.

But the kind of love that's involved in true discipline, and the happy thing is discipline does work. I've had the joy of being a part of immensely effective church discipline. Apart from a distance, let me just share an incident.

One day not long ago, a total stranger came raging into my office, shaking his fist at me and saying, you are responsible for my having been put out of my church. I said, I don't know you. I don't know what church you say you've been put out of.

I can't imagine how it would have been possible for me to be responsible for your excommunication. Well, you are. And he ranted on.

And finally I said to him, do you consider yourself a saved man? Oh, yes, absolutely. Well, I said, what were you saved from? Well, I suppose hell. No, I said Christ doesn't save people from hell.

He saves them from sin. Well, all right, I was saved from sin. Well, what sin were you saved from? Were you saved from sexual sin? No, that's why I was put out of the church.

So I said to him very plainly, if you haven't been saved from sin, you haven't been saved. In a few weeks, the church called and asked if I was free on a Wednesday night. Well, I am, but why? We have a man who says he was saved as a result of talking with you.

Well, I said, I'm sure some mistake has been made. No, he said. And then the pastor said to me, do you remember several months ago I came, told you I just wanted to review the process of church discipline? Oh, yes, I said, I recall.

Well, he said, we disciplined that man. He came to you in anger. And he says, what you said to him resulted in his salvation.

We'd like you to come and listen and see if you think he truly has repented and turned to Christ. Well, he had. Church discipline works.

When we do it the way God intended, we should. Well, I haven't any time left to speak of. I just want to stress one other area.

All of the divinely ordained means of grace I'm urging you to make the fullest possible use of. But let me speak of the ordinances. Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Not long ago I was invited to preach on a Sunday morning in a church in our area where I had never been. And I had an extraordinary difficulty discerning what the Lord wanted me to preach upon. It was so bad that I finally decided I will simply go on Sunday morning and say to the congregation, God has given me no word for you.

And refused to take it. So I went into the church that morning with that in mind. I had no sermon from God.

Oh, there were thousands of things I could have said. But nothing I knew was from God. When I walked into the church, I saw that the communion table was spread.

I said to one of the deacons, and who is expected to preside at the communion table this morning? And he said, you, of course. I said, you want me to preside at the communion table? You never breathed a word that you were having communion this Sunday? Oh, he said, we always have communion on the first Sunday. Well, straightway, I had a word from the Lord.

But look, the way communion is celebrated in most of our evangelical churches stinks. It's creepy, shameful, wicked. You rarely ever hear of a church that focuses the whole service on the table and the requirements of those who come, the responsibilities and the benefits.

You don't have to go very far back in our history to learn they didn't celebrate communion once a month. In many cases, not even once a quarter, but once a year. No, I'm not making a case for fewer occasions.

I'm simply saying in those places where they celebrated communion once a year, they had an entire week of preparatory service. Some of you perhaps have heard of the Kirk of Shutes, that small spot in the road between Glasgow and Edinburgh, little tiny church where I've had the privilege of preaching to very wealthy women who were journeying from Glasgow to Edinburgh in a horse and carriage. The axle of the carriage broke.

When they were in the Kirk, the Kirk is church, the church of Shutes. And it was a parish name, not just a building, but the area itself, the parish. There was no proper place for women to stay.

And so the pastor of the Presbyterian church, learning of the breakdown of the carriage, invited the two women to stay in the manse. They were there for several days because they had to send to Glasgow for the parts. When the carriage was prepared and they were on their way, again they thanked the pastor and asked him to thank the elders and the congregation for the hospitality.

But on their way they determined to show their appreciation in a much greater way than with words. When they got back to Glasgow after their visit in Edinburgh, they made arrangements with masons and carpenters and with the lumber yard. They purchased all of the material and paid all the necessary workmen.

And they went and built the large, lovely new manse for the church of Shutes at their expense. Now the congregation was indebted to the ladies, so they sent some of the elders to Glasgow to thank them and to ask if there was not some way that they could express their appreciation. And the ladies, who were conniving women, said, why yes, there is a way you can show your appreciation.

At the next communion season, you can allow us to name the preachers. And the church really had no recourse but to say, yes, these were godly women in touch with the great preachers of Scotland at that time. Once the news got out that Scotland's greatest preachers were leading the preparatory services at the Kirk of Shutes, 10,000 people assembled there from every direction.

A little tiny building, they could not possibly meet in the building. They set up preaching stands in the field surrounding the church building. And for six days, the greatest kind of preaching, the moving, compassionate preaching of spirit-filled men swayed this congregation greatly.

On the Saturday, they had the examination. Anyone who wished a seat at the table of the Lord had to pass an examination led by these godly pastors and elders. Some 2,000 people received a communion token.

Some of you perhaps know something of antiques. You know that one of the very collectible items these days is the communion token, the little coin that was especially minted indicating that this person had passed the communion examination. Because there were 2,000 and because the table seated only 24, they had groups coming and going all day and all throughout the day on Sunday.

These three preaching stands were occupied by these mighty men of God. So precious, so sweet was the presence of Christ that at the end of the day, when the people would have normally started for home, they instead lingered throughout the night in little huddles and groups praising God and exchanging their testimony and expressing the greatness of their joy in Jesus Christ. On Monday morning, they pled, could we not have one more sermon before we leave? And a young man, a licentiate, a man not yet ordained, a young fellow with a tiny bit of preaching experience, was asked to preach.

And as some of us ourselves can remember, when first asked to preach, we say yes and then later we realize what we had done. And this dear guy, his name was John Livingston, when he realized what he had done and he realized what these people had been fed all week started for home. And he got some distance from the curve.

When these words pressed themselves into his heart, was I ever a fruitless vine? And the powerful spirit of conviction came upon him and courage with conviction. And he returned and for an hour and a half he held up the Lord Jesus Christ as the answer for every heart need. Then the clouds darkened and some rain began to fall and people pulled their coats up over their head but remained intently listening.

Then he stopped preaching and went to pleading with the people saying such things as if a few drops of rain from heaven have such an impact upon us, imagine what it would be like if God was raining fire and brimstone upon us. And for a full hour he kept on pleading with the people to get right with Christ. Five hundred persons who had not sat at the Lord's table were profoundly moved, gloriously converted, joined the churches of the region in the week following and proved themselves to be born of God.

Make the fullest possible use of the table of the Lord. Pour every ounce of spiritual concern and energy into the preparation of your heart, into the preparation of the people's heart. If you're doing things that cheapen the Lord's table and make it commonplace, make those changes.

Do whatever's necessary to give the Spirit of our God a chance to profoundly move your congregation in the celebration of the table of our Lord. Baptism. Oh, how disgusting it is to sit in the typical church and listen to the careless words and feel the indifferent spirit of the congregation as individuals are baptized

when indeed it could be an occasion to bring revival to every soul in the place.

When the Spirit of God could descend with incredible majesty and might and totally transform the congregation. Oh, you understand, I'm sure. Having prayed for revival, is there anything else that's appropriate to do? Yes, brothers and sisters, make the fullest possible use of all the divinely ordained means of grace.

That's the way of revival.

Video: https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/hL_ayRYlr4.mp4

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