

Laying Tracks for Spiritual Awakening in Local Church

by Richard Siple

To lay tracks for spiritual awakening, a church should already be living in obedience to God and doing the things that God has called them to do.

Duration: 48:25

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Acts 2:1-4, Acts 2:41

Topics: "Spiritual Awakening"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of laying tracks for spiritual awakening in the local church. They differentiate between revival and spiritual awakening, emphasizing the need to not only experience revival but also to take action and apply what has been learned. The speaker warns against causing harm by making drastic changes in the church without careful consideration. They highlight the brokenness and pain in the world and encourage listeners to reach out to the hurting and share the gospel, assuring them that even small efforts can lead to winning souls for Christ.

Transcript

Well, you've had a lot of good preaching, so I'm not going to give you any more. It's not just like that. But I have really been trying to get a message for this session.

And the Lord just kept shaking his head no, like he did with the pastor session, and said, no, I just want you to get up there. You know what you're supposed to say, and I want you to just get up there and say it. And so I'm going to try to do that, okay? This is not a sermon, so you have a hard time keeping notes on this one.

But I am just going to talk to you out of my heart. The subject is how to lay tracks in your church, how to go back to the local church and lay tracks for spiritual awakening. Now, one of the problems is that I've never been in a spiritual awakening.

And probably you haven't either. I've been in revival. And I'm distinguishing it because it'll help us understand, that's all.

I don't know if it can be distinguished, so don't get hung up on the terms. But I've been in church revival. And I have a pretty good idea how that happens.

And I think we're moving toward that again in the city of Virginia. But I think we're moving toward something else. I think we're moving toward this tremendous spiritual awakening that's coming, that's going to sweep thousands upon thousands upon thousands into the kingdom of God.

And that's what we've seen through history, and that's what we have to see again, and that's what we're going to see by God's grace. We're convinced of that, we're committed to it, and we just know that it's coming. But now, when I say to you how to lay tracks for that, I'm at a very singular disadvantage, never having laid tracks for it, and gone through it, and come out the other side, and look back and say, oh, this is how you do it.

Now, we can look at history, of course, and that helps us. And we can look at the word of God. So I want you to just look at passage with me quickly as I start.

And so go to Acts chapter 2, Acts chapter 2, and, of course, the famous passage of Pentecost, beginning with verse 1. And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.

Now, that is revival, tremendous revival. And Bill preached on the sixth Pentecost. I thought it was fantastic.

I'm going back and preaching it in my church, Bill, so don't try that when you come the next time. I'm going to use it. I'll put quotes at the beginning and quotes at the end.

But anyway, this is one of those great outpourings of the Holy Spirit. And, of course, this is the great one of Pentecost, and the unique one, I presume, in many ways. But now there's something very singular that followed on the heels of that immediately.

So, you just turn the page, and you come across this statement in verse 41, same chapter. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized, and the same day there were added unto them about 3,000 souls. And when a church grows from 120 to 3,120, in one day, I call that a spiritual awakening.

Don't you? And then, of course, it built right up to 5,000 men in a very short time, besides women and children. So we could say it was at least 15,000 by then, probably closer to 20,000 in just a few days, probably. And that continued so that multitudes more and more of both men and women were added to the church.

We have that statement. And then many of the priests believe we have that statement. And it goes on and on like that.

So what we're seeing here is a revival, a tremendous outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the church. As they tarried 10 days together, and they were all with one accord, finally. They got things right with each other.

And in one place, they were together. Their hearts were right, and they believed, and expected, and they prayed, and they waited. And the Holy Spirit came on them, and there was this great revival among these believers, outpouring of the Holy Ghost.

And then a tremendous spiritual awakening, where thousands were gathered into the kingdom, swept like a fire through Jerusalem, until they finally said their enemies cried with tears in their eyes, they have turned the world upside down and have come here. They were absolutely out of control. There was nothing they could do.

And they could kill them, or jail them, or do whatever they wanted, and it just swept like a fire. Now, that's a great spiritual awakening. At least it is for me.

How about you? Wouldn't that suit you? Right here in Toronto, or wherever you're from? It would me. Now, there's something I think we have to be careful of when we come to this kind of a conference. And so, I want to caution us on this, and try to give us some tracks to run on, that will help us as we go back to our local church, because we have to go back to that, don't we? And I'll tell you, unless it's a very unusual church, it won't be just like what you've been in here the last few days, because you understand that people have come together from many places of like mind, and like hunger, and like desire, and, you know, it's a concentration.

And so, it's great, isn't it? But then, of course, you can't stay here forever. God wants us to get filled up, and then go out and do something. And so, we go back into our churches, and place of business, and work, and whatever, and then we have to try to apply what we've learned, what God's done for us.

Now, if we're not careful, we will cause more harm than good. Okay, this is a warning now. Somebody says, what kind of tracks do we lay? One of the problems with this kind of a conference is, is sometimes we go home from it so blessed, and so excited about the truth we've heard, that we are ready to change everything immediately tomorrow.

And we go back to our church, and we become iconoclasts, and we start breaking statues, and tearing down altars, and changing the whole program, and turning everything upside down, and it's absolutely impossible for people to handle that. And you must realize that they haven't had revival, and they haven't been lifted, and they haven't experienced what you've experienced, and they simply can't handle it. Okay? Somebody says, what kind of a church is it that is the most likely to have a revival and precipitate spiritual awakening in its community? Now, I will tell you what I think.

Okay, so you don't have to agree with me. And I'll love you even if you're wrong, all right? But what I think is that the church that is walking in the most careful obedience to God before the revival is the church that's likely to have the most positive results afterwards. Now, what do I mean by that? Well, look at Acts 2, 42.

We've had the revival now, the beginning of the spiritual awakening, 3,000 conversions in one day, which is to go on and on. And it says in verse 42, and they continued steadfastly. They continued.

Now, if you're going to continue something, you have to have already been doing it, don't you? Don't you? Or else you're starting to do it, you're not continuing. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, that is, the study, teaching and preaching, and study of the word of God, all right? You agree with that? Good, solid, doctrinal, biblical, preaching and teaching and learning and so forth. And in fellowship, that is, getting together as Christians and fellowshiping and sharing and doing some of the things we've been doing here.

And in breaking of bread, and I take that to be things like the Lord's Supper and the ordinances of the church. And in prayers, prayer meetings. Now, what's been outlined here very briefly is sort of a church program, isn't it? Doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer meetings.

It sort of covers the gamut of church programming. And not only did that happen, but it says down in verse 47, they were praising God and having favor with all the people, and the Lord kept on adding to the church daily those who were being saved, literally. So the evangelism program went on.

Now, let me talk to you out of my heart what I think. Because I was in a church in the city of Akron that experienced revival. But in this revival movement, I have seen churches experience revival, and I have seen those churches afterwards.

Once the whole thing had sort of settled down and people kind of got back to normal, I have seen some of those churches get into trouble and not go on with God and sometimes have splits and all kinds of problems. But the church I pastored in Akron, that didn't happen. And the church I'm pastoring now, that didn't happen.

But the church went on and grew. And God continued to bless. So here's what I think, and here's what I want to talk to you about.

If you want to lay down tracks for spiritual awakening, not only do you go back home and begin to pray and work and teach with these principles and the things you've learned here, and begin to really live the Spirit-filled life daily in your home and in your church and at work and wherever you are. But I believe that you need a church that is already obeying God. And having revival and having spiritual awakening does not negate all of the things a church ought to do in obedience to God.

Right? Oh, you're not sure about that. So you're being very quiet because you don't want to get committed. For instance, when revival came to the church in the city of Akron, we already had a strong evangelism ministry in that church.

And people were already being saved on a regular basis, and people were already being baptized and already coming into the church in regular places. I mean, it was already a regular thing in that church to have people converted week by week by week and coming into the church and being taught and growing in the Lord and being baptized and becoming members of the church. And this was already in progress.

It wasn't something that just suddenly began because we had revival. We did have revival, a very intense revival, for three weeks when God came, and we had no crusade and no evangelist and nothing organized except God came in and answered a prayer and in His grace and mercy, and we experienced revival at a very deep level. But before we experienced that revival, the church was doing many things right.

Our elders were trained and their wives, and they were already out visiting and praying with people and visiting the sick in the hospital and the people that were shut in. They were already ministering to the needs of the congregation financially through benevolence where they had need. They already had home Bible studies going.

They already had a visitation ministry going. They already were doing many of the things that God has called the church to do. Now, if you want to trace this in the Scriptures, what I want to tell you is that before Pentecost, Jesus and the disciples were already doing many of the things that the apostles continued to do after Pentecost, only now they got a tremendous surge of power.

And what they were doing before, and doing rightly and in obedience to God, now they did with a tremendous upsurge of power and blessing. So I guess what I want to say to you to start with this afternoon is that if you want to go home and prepare a church for spiritual awakening, not only do we go home and do these spiritual things. I'm going to talk about them in a minute, but I need to talk about this first.

Okay? Not only do we do those good things you've been learning here in this conference, but we make sure that our church is living as far as we can get it to live in obedience to God. You say, well, I thought that's what Revival was supposed to do. Well, I hope Revival will give that a tremendous boost.

But we need to be doing the things to obey God before. And I'll tell you what happened in Akron, and it's exactly the same thing that happened in Regina. What happened in Akron was that when we had the Revival and, you know, that great surge of blessing and people getting right with God and going to the cross and being filled with the Spirit and marriages put back together and all these things happened, then we had tracks for people to run on.

People looked around and said, let's see, what can I do now? I'm all revived. We said, that's fine. You know, we got something for you to do right here.

You want to serve the Lord? Don't sit around and soak and sour. We got a job for you. God's met you and gifted you.

What has God laid in your heart? Well, I think I should be teaching children. Good. We've got a place for you right over here.

Get you trained. Start teaching children. Lend them to the Lord.

Somebody says, well, you know, God's taken away all my fear of man and I think I ought to be witnessing. Great. We have a witnessing program.

Put you right in here and train you how to handle the Word of God and you can get right out there and start winning souls. Say, well, and I actually had people come and say, you know, I really think I should be an elder. I mean, out of total humility and love for Jesus.

They got right with God and said, I think you should too. Let's start getting you ready. I'll tell you what we'll do.

We'll make you a junior elder and you start going out with this elder and learning how to be an elder and learning how to pray and how to love people and how to minister to people. And when we set up our nominating committee next year round, we'll see if we can find a spot and get you into being an elder. Sure.

Why not? You ought to start serving the Lord. Do you understand what I'm saying? Am I making any sense to you? Somebody said, well, I thought if we had a revival and a great awakening, I mean, it'd be automatic. No, no, no.

God didn't make us automatons. And a revival isn't going to make us automatons or machines either. I mean, we're not going to be like a robot and say, now, praise God, I'm filled with the Spirit.

It isn't going to be like that. No. If you don't know how to lead somebody to Jesus, if you really don't know how to lead somebody to Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit won't suddenly teach you how.

It'll certainly give you the power and the love and the desire. All right. And it may take away your fear of man, which may be the main reason.

You know, Kennedy said that the reason he never won souls as a pastor for so many years was because he had back trouble. He said he had a great big yellow stripe right down the middle of his back. Well, revival can get rid of the stripe.

Absolutely. You meet God and deal with self and pride, that nasty giant, and get him nailed on the cross so self doesn't matter anymore. And let your heart get filled with the Holy Spirit of God.

You suddenly wake up and open your eyes and start to love people. And God will take the yellow stripe off your back. But somebody may need to sit down with you and just teach you how to present the gospel.

I don't know. Sure, you can give your testimony and you may win people to Jesus right away without it, but you still may need some help and some direction. Do you understand what I'm saying? So, what I'm trying to say about the local church is that we need to be doing the things in the local church that God has told us to do.

And if you've got a church that is not doing anything it's supposed to be doing, and believe me, there's a lot of them that aren't. I mean, there's a lot of churches where they just come to church on Sunday and they have a few Sunday school classes and the preacher gets up and preaches and they go through the same old form of service and sing the same old songs and they go home to the same old dinners of roast beef and mashed potatoes and eat the preacher for dinner and that's what they do week in and week out. They have a missionary convention, they have what they call a revival once a year that isn't a revival and they just go on and on and on.

Church never grows, nobody's ever saved, nobody's ever baptized, nothing ever happens. And don't think that a revival will suddenly change all that and turn your church into a dynamic, powerful, soul-winning church that is doing the whole will of God. It won't just automatically happen.

Now it may mean that some people will come alive and be ready to do something but somebody better tell them what to do. That's why God gives us leadership, amen? Some of you are with me but if the rest of you aren't you're going to wish you were. I think I know that this is right, what I'm talking about here today.

And then after Pentecost they just went right on doing those same things. See, before that, let me ask you a question. Before Pentecost, was there anybody that was praying? Okay? Before Pentecost, was there anybody that was preaching? Was there anybody that was witnessing? Was there anybody winning any souls? Oh, absolutely.

Jesus sent the disciples out two by two in the villages and they weren't enough so he got 70 more and sent them out. And he gave them his power and they went out and preached that men should repent and that the kingdom of God was at hand and that they should believe on Jesus. And they cast out devils and healed the sick and they did all these ministries.

In fact, they came back and they had a praise service and they said, Hallelujah, even the devils are subject to us and they were very excited. I mean, that's before revival. They were doing a lot of good

things, a lot of right things and God was even blessing some of it.

You see how they did run into some snags, they had a bad spirit sometimes and they made a lot of mistakes and they ran into some demons they couldn't handle and some other things. But they were already doing most of these things and after Pentecost they knew what they were supposed to do and they just went right on and did it. Only now they did it with power and now the Holy Ghost came down on the population and prepared their hearts and now they were ready for an awakening and there were thousands converted.

And so, don't mistake me, I'm not saying go home and get your church all highly organized, that's not what I'm talking about. I'm just saying that the local church that is already walking in simple obedience to God and obeying the Great Commission and doing some of the things they ought to do is the church that when revival comes is going to come out of the other side of revival, hot for God and moving for God and going straight out into the world and winning the loss to Jesus Christ. The church that is not doing any of the things they're supposed to do is very likely after the revival to sit around and praise God together and tell each other what a wonderful time they've had for a number of months and then go right back to doing nothing and become critical and ingrown and sour and wonder what was wrong with the revival.

Okay? You still love me? Okay. I want this thing to work. Now, so you say, what tracks? Well, I'm not going to tell you all the tracks because I might tell you how to, you know, what God wants you to do and He might not want you to do it at all.

He might want you to do something else. But I think your church needs to very carefully sit down and decide what it means to obey God as a church. Now, let me talk to you personally.

One of the things that causes division in the body of Christ is for someone to meet the Lord in a very special way and then go home and really think that they're going to get everybody around them to experience exactly the same thing right away and just start pushing it on everybody and trying to change everything, going into the board meeting and say, man, if you'd been where I've been and you've been in the blessing I've been in this week, I tell you everything we're doing is wrong. Ooh, watch out. You'll get a one-way exit right out of the board meeting.

It won't work, you know. And don't take your pastor out for coffee and say, pastor, you know, I hate to tell you this, but we've been doing everything wrong in this church and you're preaching wrong. Ooh, careful.

It won't work that way. What can you do? Now, I really believe in this, so listen carefully. I believe that one of the things God wants us to do, however he's working in our life, I believe one of the things he wants us to do is to pray and ask him to lead us to someone who is hungry and who will be like-minded and whom we can influence personally for God, who is hungry and wants to be influenced for God and find another man or another woman that God leads you to that is hungry and searching and longing for something better than they have and start to get together with that person and share with them the word of God and what God is doing in your own life and love them and pray for them and help them to come into an experience of the fullness of God's Holy Spirit in their life the same as God is doing in your life.

All right? That's one thing. Now, I want to speak to pastors for just a minute because I didn't get to say everything the pastors wanted to say the other day. So, you laymen, don't you close your ears, okay, because you're part of this.

Sometimes pastors say to me, well, pastor, you're in a large church now, but if you were in a small church like mine where we have 50 people or 30 people or whatever it is, what would you do if you went in a church like that? I'll tell you what, I would do, I would do two things. Number one, I would look around and I would try to find the man who was the obvious leader in the church. And I would get that man and make friends with that man and love that man and pray for him every day of my life and do everything in my power to get close to that man and try to bring him into whatever experience God has taught me and try to help him and disciple him into being a man of God.

And I would share with that man my dreams and my visions. In fact, I still do that. I was talking to a couple of pastors at lunchtime.

They said, how do you get something done when you go into a board and there's somebody in the board that opposes everything that you bring in? You bring in a program, it doesn't matter what the program is or how good it is, they're against it. It's that simple. I never bring in any programs.

They said, what do you mean? You never bring in any programs? Well, I said, I never do. I always get other men of God on the board to bring in the programs. I never bring them in.

No. And I'm not chairman of my board either and I hope you're not. And if you are, try to get rid of that as quick as you can.

I sit right next to him in the board meetings and before we have the board meetings, my church administrator and I, we meet with him and we lay out the board meeting and then we go into the board meeting and he's chairman of the board and I sit next to him so I can help him if he needs help and I pray for him while he's leading the board meeting but I don't lead it. And if I have a program that I'm convinced is of God, I get with some godly men in the church and I discuss it with them and I ask them what they think and we have prayer together and I listen to what they think and if they want to make changes in it, I let them make changes and we continue to talk and pray about it until their hearts are really heated with it and they are excited about it and they think they've got the bugs ironed out and then I just go into the board meeting and sit there and pray and let them present it. Are you listening? So one of the major ways to get something going for God in a church is to disciple godly men and women.

Disciple them. Disciple them. That's the process.

Get some godly men and women and disciple them and let them let them take the place of leadership. Oh, you say, but I'm the leader. Well, then you haven't been to Calvary yet, have you? You can be the leader without getting the credit.

Amen? I was weak. You don't need the credit. Let's give the glory to Jesus, huh? Let's give the glory to Jesus.

Like some pastor, some pastor, he had an assistant pastor and he took a friend in and he said, he said, the friend said, well, how's your new assistant pastor doing? He said, no, he said, I think he's doing all right. He said, I've got him straightened out. Oh, he says, all right.

He said, what have you taught him? He said, well, come in the sanctuary. I'll tell you one thing I've taught him. And he came in the sanctuary.

He said, you see this chalk mark in a half circle right around the pulpit? He said, yes. He said, I've told him never put your feet inside that circle. That's awful.

Shoot him. No, no, that's not Christian. Why are we so threatened? We're so threatened by our laymen and our laywomen that are men and women of God.

We're so threatened by the people that God's given us to work with us. What is the matter with us? We say we've been to Calvary, but we're so threatened and worried. I say, if there's anybody there that can do it better than me, great.

Let them do it. Bless God. Let's get the job done.

Amen? I can always tell when you're going to get quiet. When I choose assistant pastors, and we have six of them, I try to find a man for each spot who can do that better than I could ever think of doing it. All right? I want a man in that spot that can do it better than I can.

Absolutely. And I want, hey, I let them go, boy. Let them go.

They do wonderful stuff. Let them go. Let them work.

And do that with your laymen. Get with the leading laymen and laywomen in your church and love them and get close to them and pray with them and share your heart with them and your burden and the fire that's in you and the vision you have for the church and the city. Share it with them and share it with them and share it with them.

Don't take it into the board. Don't take it into the committee meetings. Don't talk about it outside.

Share it with these godly leaders and then just sit back and pray for them and then watch them go ahead and run with it. That's the way to do it. Now, that's one thing I do.

I get that kind of person. The other thing I would do, and I mean this with all my heart, I would ask God to lead me to another man, if I were a woman, to lead me to another woman that God wanted to make into a soul winner. And then I would get with that person and pray with them and love them and say, listen, I think God wants to make you a soul winner.

Don't you think so? Well, I'll pray about it. Okay, you pray about it. And let them pray about it and keep praying for them until their heart gets all stirred up and they start to get a burden and then say, now, you come with me and we're going.

And then take them out and take them with you and say, now, you don't have to do a thing. Hey, don't be scared. You don't have to do anything.

Just come with me and you sit there and pray for me. And if the baby's getting awake, carry him out or the dog or turn off the television or whatever. And you just come along and you just pray and you watch and go with me and teach them how to win souls.

Or you say, I'm going to wait for the spiritual awakening. It won't work. No, no, no.

What did Jesus say? Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to how many? Every creature. Every creature. And God can lead you to the right people.

He can lead you. But I'm going to tell you, I was a pastor for many years and I got up in my pulpit and I said, you go out and you bring them in. That was okay the first few weeks until they found out I didn't do it.

Getting awful quiet. But I tell you what, it won't work like that. No.

You say, but I'm not a soul winner. Well, listen, there are a lot of hungry people out there today. Don't you think so? I mean, there are hungry people out there.

This is a messed up world. And I mean, I don't care if they're rich or poor. This is a messed up world.

People are sick and they're hurting and they're in pain and their lives are breaking up and their marriages are breaking up and their homes are breaking up and their bodies are breaking down and they are in awful shape. And I tell you, if you just try it, you don't have to be good at it. If you just try it a little bit and pray about it and trust God, you'll win some souls.

I don't care. Even if you don't try very hard, God will almost hit you over the head to help you win some souls. And how are churches going to be ready for spiritual awakening if there's nobody in the whole church that has a hot heart and that is interested in souls? So we have said about our church that if there's any program in our church that does not finally, down the line, minister to bringing people to Jesus, that program has to go.

I don't care how sacred a cow it is. We may not be able to shoot it today, tomorrow, but it'll get lame and fall over somewhere and we'll just let it die or something. But we're not going to keep any program and we've got a list.

And my administrator is good at that. He's a lot more cruel than I am. He's ready to shoot something right now.

I'm a little more tender, compassionate. He's ready to just go out with a revolver and knock them off. I say, wait, wait, wait.

I'm not as bold as that. Take it easy. But everything should minister salvation of souls.

See, the Christmas program, oh, you say, don't touch that. That is sacred. Well, the Christmas cantata, ooh.

You're trying to ruin the church. Don't you have a Christmas cantata? Yes, we do. But you know what? It better present the gospel.

And when we get to the end of it, they get the gospel. Because this senior pastor is on that platform at the end of it and preaches the gospel. You have a baptismal service? Hey, we send out beautiful invitations that are like a wedding invitation.

And everybody's getting baptized, gets a whole handful of them for all their relatives and friends and people they work with and people, neighbors next door and everything else. And they all have these beautiful invitations and it's inviting them to their baptism. And all these people, they think, why, my poor neighbor, he didn't get baptized.

The baby must be, I'll go see him get baptized. And they're sunk. Because it takes us a whole hour to get them baptized.

About every two or three months. It's so much fun. You see all those sinners sitting out there? And you preach the gospel and then all these people get in there.

We tell them, you got two minutes. Two minutes, you would drown if you take any longer than two minutes. You got two minutes.

You do three things, you tell them what you were, how you got saved and what you are now. And their testimonies are looked over carefully by our minister of personal care who organized it. And then, boy, what fun we had.

They come down into the waters of baptism and they share the gospel and all these poor sinners are sitting out there and their eyes are getting bigger and bigger. And then some of our people, they have baptismal parties all set up for that Sunday night after the service, you know. And they invite their friends that came and they go home and have something to eat and they take them home afterwards.

You know, this person got baptized. Are you getting the idea? See, we just aren't serious about it. We just play about all this business and then we say, now, we're going to have revival and a spiritual awakening and all that's going to get cured.

I don't know. I think that what will happen is those good things that God is helping us to do, they'll get a running start and they'll really go. They'll really go.

See, the reason I know that so is because out in the mission fields, like Bill has said, there's some spiritual awakening taking place. I went down to Lima, Peru, and I stood up to preach in one of our newest churches that seats 2,000 people. Pueblo Libre Church.

Well, the church grew from 150 to 15,000 in 10 years. And I stood up to preach in this church that seats 2,000 people and they have two baptismal tanks in front of the church, one on each side. And they baptize usually about a hundred people every baptismal service.

And they go, zoop, zoop, zoop, zoop each side. It takes them hours. See, the difference, I mean, they've got a, the Holy Ghost has given them a tremendous empathy.

And the thing is just, just running wild. People getting saved. President of the church in Peru is only 36 years old and the pastor of that church that seats 2,000 people and has people saved anywhere from 30 to 50, 60 every Sunday is, that man's only been a Christian five years.

He's a senior pastor. That's the way the church is growing. So you see, don't you want that to happen here? Then let's, let's do the things you want.

Now the third thing that I'm going to set up. I've talked about getting your church leadership and discipling them. Getting somebody and teaching them to win souls.

The third thing, get some people, and I should have started with this, but I'm ending with it because it's the most important of anything I'm going to say. Get some people to pray. Get some people to pray.

You say, well, we have prayer meetings. Yes, so do we. We have average 41, 42 prayer meetings a month in our church.

And we do not really believe we've started to pray. I mean, I come to something like this. I heard Bill speak the other day.

I sat there and I said, oh God, we're just, we're just crawling at this prayer business. We haven't even gotten going at this prayer business. Lord, when I go home from this conference, I'm going to get this thing going.

Now, you're not going to be able to get up there and beat the church over the head with a baseball bat and preach hard sermons and tell them they're wicked and try to force them to pray. They're not going to pray that way. But again, how about discipling somebody in prayer? How about getting somebody with you and start to just pray with one or two people and let the warmth and the heat and the love of your own heart and your own life begin to permeate them.

I have an elder that comes to me. We have two morning services. So we have the 930 service and then the people have a half hour between Sunday school and church, but I have 15 minutes and I'm back into the next service.

And he always comes in with a glass of fruit juice for me and then he sits down next to me and he has this big grin like the cat that just swallowed the canary, you know. And he says, how did it go at 930? You know why he's asking me that? Because him and some others have been praying all through the 930 service. And so now he wants to know.

I mean, because they were asking for God to bless. They were asking for the Holy Spirit to be there. They were asking for God to give me liberty.

And he wants to know whether I had it or not. And he wants to know how it went. Because he's serious.

I mean, he's not playing games. And so then I tell him. And then he decides what he ought to do for the next service.

That's the man I like to have right next to me when I have to cast out demons. It makes a big difference. But I want to tell you that I'm convinced that in our church we still haven't even started to pray because I think that's the main number one thing we've got to do because it's God that's going to bring revival.

It's God that's going to bring spiritual awakening. And in the final analysis, if we seek His face, He's the one that's going to bring this. And we must get our churches to praying.

Prayer's not everything, but everything's by prayer. Isn't it? That's what Scripture said. In everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.

So you pray about everything and in everything and through everything. And so I say, you can't get up there and organize some great big prayer meeting, but what you can do is get a few people who sigh and cry for Zion, right, and get them together and start to pray. And as you start to pray with them, start to confess your sins to each other.

You know, take a little time until you get to know each other, get used to each other, feel comfortable with each other. And as you pray, then start to confess your weakness and need and start to pray for each other. And let that confession and that closeness and that caring spread among this small group so pride is not in the way.

And so you can begin to really help one another. And then it'll start to spread and then get somebody else in and then get somebody else in until that spreads and spreads and fills your church with prayer. Every time I hear Bill tell about the prayer in Saskatoon, I just say again, Lord, I'm still not doing it.

I'm still not doing it. You say, don't you pray? Yes, I pray. But I'm still not doing it when it comes to getting my people to praying as much as they ought to be.

And it's still because I get too busy and I'm not taking enough time with some of these elders and some of these men and women of God who would just love for me to take time to get with them and pour out my heart to them and pray with them privately. Right? So I'm still not really... I'm talking to you, but I know that I'm still not doing what I need to do personally in spreading the love of prayer among my people. God's taught me to pray.

Not enough, I suppose. We never pray enough, but God's taught me to pray. But I know, and I'm teaching my staff, my pastoral staff to pray.

And we pray. Our elders meeting, we meet at 6 o'clock for fasting and prayer from 6 to 6.30. We ask our men not to eat supper, to come from work or whatever, and meet us at 6 o'clock for fasting and prayer for our board meeting and it's 6.30. Then we divide up into three sections to consider various parts of business. I won't explain that.

And then we come back together. We have a devotional time then and some more prayer and then consider our last items of business together as a board. But I still don't feel that I'm doing what I ought to do about prayer.

And my youth pastor has recently got me ashamed. He's from this church. And he's recently got me ashamed because Warren Reeve, his wife just gave birth to a little baby this week, their first, and Warren Reeve started the Power Hour.

And he started it for teenagers and senior citizens and it meets at 6.01. Sounds like a youth meeting, doesn't it? 6.01. It meets at 6.01 on Sunday nights the teens and the senior citizens. I had one of the teens come to me not long ago at the door, just beaming, and said, Pastor, Pastor, we had such a great time in the Power Hour tonight. And I said, What happened? He said, Well, I got so excited listening to one of those senior citizens pray.

I said, I didn't know they had that much life. Just thrilled. And that's really what's happening.

There are a whole bunch of senior citizens and teens in there praying together. It's the most ridiculous looking mixture. And these kids are just praying with their kids' lingo.

And they're praying And these saints are praying with their beautiful prayers that they've done all their lives. And you think it wouldn't mix and it just mixes. It's just fantastic.

And so, in January, in our youth group, they had 36 teenagers converted in January. 36 teenagers come to Christ in January. And this past year, the college and career group was under that same pastor.

The college and career group, they said, Let's win five people to Christ this year in the college and career age so we'll call it Five Alive. And we'll get five college kids alive. We'll bring them to Christ.

Get them to give eternal life. Well, they won those five so quickly they decided they had to change the name. So they said, Let's call it the Big Ten.

And we'll win ten to Christ. We'll double it. Well, a few months ahead, their ten, they said, What are we going to call it this year? Well, they called it The Big Ten.

And they called it The Big Ten. And they had twelve conversions on that trip. So we've got to get we have to get to praying, don't we? Prayers, prayers, you know, you can put the tracks down, but prayer, prayer is the, you know, it's oil now, isn't it? But you're putting the locomotive, huh? It's the power.

And so we've got to pray. And I'm convicted again from this weekend. I'm just, all over again, I'm convicted again.

And I've done some praying, talking to God about it. I've got to get some more of my, these elders, these godly men, I've got to get them alone and teach them to pray. I mean, maybe they're already praying better than I am and I'll probably find it out.

But I've got to get them alone and teach them to pray and get little bonfires, some more bonfires going all over the church until power's there and ready for the awakening. You believe it's coming? Well, if you try to take notes, you must be crazy by now. That's very disjointed.

But maybe you've gotten a couple of ideas of what I think God was trying to say to me and put on my heart about laying tracks in your local church for spiritual awakening. And let's go home and do it. It was given at the Canadian Revival Fellowship Conference held at the Bayview Glen Church in Thornhill, Ontario, February 1989.

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