

Getting Back to Basics: Survival of the Revival

by Robert Wurtz II

True revival requires a genuine and permanent change of heart, leading to a life of service and holy living.

Duration: 38:08

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Acts 4:13, 1 Corinthians 1:19, Hebrews 5:12-14, 1 Peter 2:2, Revelation 3:16

Topics: "Spiritual Revival", "Repentance Warning"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the concept of revival and how many people experience temporary awakenings but eventually fall back into their old spiritual condition. He emphasizes the importance of not becoming lazy or seeking alternative entertainment for our spiritual walk with God, as this can lead to trouble. The speaker also mentions the significance of exercising our senses and not allowing sin to delete our knowledge of God. He warns that when God calls His people to repent and they refuse, judgment will escalate until it reaches its apex, just like in the story of Pharaoh and the children of Israel.

Transcript

We're going to continue our study this morning in getting back to basics. A series that I have subtitled, The Stewards of the Dunamis. We're now in chapter 6, and I want to talk this morning along this thought, Survival of the Revival.

Survival of the Revival. How many of you know that a lot of revivals have come and gone? A lot of revivals have come and gone. A lot of people have awakened out of their slumber.

They have sat right back down and fallen back, as it were, asleep in their spiritual condition. And they end up, after a time, being exactly where they were before God sent revival into their lives. So I want to talk this morning about several different issues that go along those lines.

We will probably jump around a lot more than we normally do. But I want to cover a lot of different areas this morning. Do you really want revival? Do you really want revival? You know, Jesus said that we should count the cost.

Because there is a cost associated in our life with having revival. It means that there are things in our life we're probably going to need to get rid of. It means there's going to be a lot more devotion and dedication to God.

There are a lot of things we have to consider when we count the cost, and ask ourselves, do we really want revival? Revival begins when God sovereignly begins to place an urgency within the hearts of His saints to awaken them out of their spiritual slumber and repent of all of their ungodly deeds. You know, God has to do it sovereignly. The fact is, you just don't wake up one day and think, well, I think I'm going to repent today.

And awareness comes over as people of the times and conditions in which they live. The saints of God are carried along with the tide of worldliness. If they are not careful, they will find themselves falling in step with the behavior of impenitent sinners.

It's not difficult to do, especially when we allow a lot of things in our life that influence us, and we begin to act just like the world acts. I remember saying this several times that my generation, Generation X, is the first generation, probably in the history of the church, that did not believe you need to live like a Christian in order to call yourself one. And we have only gone downhill from there.

God calls His people to repent. The word repent is used in connection with the seven churches of Asia in the book of Revelation eight different times. Revival begins when man rightly responds to God's call to repent.

See, we have to rightly respond. We can either harden our heart and stiffen our neck and be cut off without remedy, or we can yield to what God is wanting to do. McClinton and Strong defines evangelical repentance saying it begins with conviction of sin, accompanied by sorrow for it, confession of it, hatred to it, and renunciation of it.

We need to hate our sin, and when we hate our sin, we'll turn from it. The author, as well as the object of true repentance, is God. Man and of themselves do not desire to repent.

It is initiated by God when He sends His ministers to preach repentance to the people. The Bible said, How shall they hear without a preacher? God will awaken certain individuals, and it will be up to them to begin to bring the message, and it spreads like wildfire from a few. The Holy Spirit begins to convict of sin, righteousness, and judgment.

It is up to the hearers whether they will submit themselves to God or resist the Holy Spirit and stiffen their necks. The Spirit of God, Genesis 6, tells us that He will not always strive with man because they were also flesh or mortal. In other words, we have another option.

We can serve sin if we want. God gives us that. Man's response to the call of repentance answers the question if they really want revival or not.

How do you respond to the message of repentance? That will dictate whether you really want revival or not. Some will heed the call to forsake all their sin and the objects of their sin, while others will continue to believe that they can manage their compromise, and in the end, will finally believe a lie, Scripture says, and be damned. You know, there's a danger when we get to the place where we enjoy our sin.

Sin is deceptive. When we take pleasure in our sin, 2 Thessalonians 2.12 said that they would believe that lie. Short-term repentance.

Short-term repentance. Some people initially repent because they're in a crisis, or they see danger looming and they repent to avoid judgment or to ease the punishment that's associated with it. If their

heart is not changed, replaced, listen, their foolishness will only be driven far from them as it is found in the heart of an impenitent sinner.

You know, children are like that. Children, until they reach an age where the Spirit of God can transform them through the born-again experience, has foolishness bound up in their heart. And the only thing you can do until they are changed is to drive it far from them.

That's true even in adults who have never repented and been born again. God has to send calamity into people's lives a lot of times to get their attention. When the goodness of God doesn't work, He will send calamity.

And what will happen is that people, one of two things, they will decide to repent and turn to God, or that situation will just drive their foolishness far from them for a time. And then what happens? We see them come to the altar, they cry at the altar, they get back up, and in about four or five weeks, we don't see them again. The reason that is, is the situation only drove their foolishness far from them, and when they got relief, they fell back into their situation.

Their heart was never changed. It was temporary repentance. If their heart is not changed, their foolishness will only be driven far from them as it is bound in the heart of the impenitent.

When relief from the trial comes, they will soon forget their pain, and their foolishness will return and take center stage in their life once again. And you won't even be able to tell. As a matter of fact, they'll probably be worse than they were before.

True repentance used to be preached, I believe this is Spurgeon, but don't quote me on that, as follows, it must be haughty and not timid. It must be total and not partial. It must be permanent and not temporary.

If the repentance does not follow this pattern, it is not true biblical repentance. When those who temporarily repented sinned, listen, they felt no shame. Think about it.

They didn't feel any shame. When was the last time you ever seen a person who was wildly in sin showing shame for their behavior? Have you ever seen a drunk person? Shame is far from their mind. Huh? I've never seen a person yet get drunk that didn't embarrass himself.

Have you? Before the night was over, I've never seen a person that didn't embarrass himself. They felt no shame. But yet they were ashamed to openly repent.

Think about it. They were ashamed to openly repent. They were haughty sinners and timid repenters.

That can't be, church. I'm here to declare to you this morning that that cannot be. That cannot be.

And it should not be. They sinned with a fist in the air with all matter of shameless high handedness. But they repented silently and hid themselves as though they were ashamed to be seen repenting and accepting the Lord.

Excuse me. I don't think so. I just don't think so.

Jesus openly rejects this when he said, But if you're ashamed of me before men, I will be ashamed of you before my heavenly father. What wrath must burn in the eyes of Christ when he bore our sin in his own body on the tree laid bare before the entire world? Yet a temporal repenter won't even acknowledge that

they sinned and caused it. The fact of the matter is our repentance needs to be total.

It must be serious. How is it that we can embarrass God and all the host of heaven and then refuse to embarrass ourselves by openly repenting? How is that? We can embarrass God? You don't think God was embarrassed, church? Did you know that the devil accuses you before the Lord day and night? Did you know he comes before the throne of God with all manner of accusations that you have done? Get up and just acknowledge I have sinned against the Lord. Everybody, I've sinned.

Just tell everyone you know I've sinned against the Lord. And I repent of that sin. I've embarrassed God with my behavior.

Show me a person embarrassed to repent and I'll show you them at their house in six weeks on Sunday morning. Dangers of short-term repentance. Pharaoh remains as the great example of what happens when you resist the Holy Ghost and the judgment of God that brings repentance.

I notice this. This is important even in our young people. It's almost like each time I have gotten up to minister over the last several weeks, it's been stage one, stage two, stage three message.

Stage four, we are fastly getting to the doorpost and the blood and the Passover. Hear what I'm saying this morning, church. When God is telling His people to repent and they refuse to, He will step the situation up each time.

And judgment comes. We've already seen judgment last week hit some young people. But we're in the lower stages of judgment.

It's going to escalate each week. I don't know what's going to happen in the end. As God stepped up the judgment, Pharaoh resisted the Holy Spirit and God hardened his heart all the more.

Finally, when the judgment reached its apex, Pharaoh agreed to allow the children of Israel to go, but later, listen, he pursued them to his own destruction. Not even destroying the firstborn caused him to turn. It only made him harder.

And as soon as he found relief, he got up in his chariot and he rode out after God's people. This is how people are. They have no intention to repent until the situation is at maximum judgment.

And by the time they repent, they think they've done God a service, but all they've really done is hardened their own heart. That's all they've done. They've hardened their own heart.

They've told the Holy Spirit, You're not welcome. And when the moisture in something leaves, what happens? It dries up. It hardens.

The clay pot hardens. Why? Because the Spirit of God is leaving. When you tell God He's not welcome, He'll leave.

That's when hardness comes. And that because as soon as they find relief, they pursue their old sin as though they felt it slipping through their fingers. Kind of like when you saw your ex with a new boyfriend or girlfriend.

You thought, Oh, they're slipping away. And you run after them. That's what happens when people see their sin slipping away.

Sometimes they're looking. Am I going to pick God or my sin? God or my sin? God or my sin? Short term repentance is not repentance at all. And it will be revealed in the end.

It'll be revealed. See, you can only fake it for so long. You can only live this Christian life in the flesh so long.

Pretty soon, you run out of steam. Repentance means forsaking sin and the means of the sins. It is not really repentance until the high places and the groves are thrown down.

Did you know as long as there were high places and groves left in Israel, the devil always had a route back into the people's lives. He always had some stepping stones back as long as the groves and the high places were still there. Jehoshaphat was one of the great kings of Israel.

It was said of him that he would always have the Lord before his eyes. In 2 Chronicles 17, 6 we read, And his heart was lifted up in the ways of the Lord. Think about it.

The devil's heart was lifted up in pride. But this man's heart was lifted up to do the will of God. Moreover, he took away the high places and the groves out of Judah.

When our hearts are truly lifted up to do the will of God, we will destroy the high places in our lives. Christians all over the nation have severe strongholds of the devil that have been built up, and yet they refuse to let God destroy them. But you know what? If the devil has a stronghold in your life, you can ignore it, you can try to put it in the closet, but you know what happens? As soon as you get weak, the devil will launch an attack from that thing into your life.

You get a little bit cold, you get a little bit sick, you get a little bit tired, as Charles Stanley says, you get tired. He's got a whole list of things that happen. And then you become vulnerable.

And when you become vulnerable, if you have stepping stones back to that sin in your life, you're going to head back to it. The enemy has built sin or sins in their life that the person keeps running back to over and over again. True repentance is when we burn the bridges back to our old sins.

That's when true repentance is. This may mean getting rid of things that serve as stepping stones back to our sins. As long as you think to yourself something like this, well, if anything goes wrong, I can still go back to thus and such.

I had a young person that I used to work with, and he got saved, in quotes. And he took all of this heavy metal, you know, death metal, demonic music it was, and he put it up in his attic. And he says, you know what? Or he was going to do that, he said, next time.

He said, because I threw it all away and every time I backslide, I got to go buy it all again. Next time I'm going to put it up in my attic so I can save myself some money. That's not burning bridges, church.

That's almost premeditated backsliding. True repentance is when we take hold of the plow, we refuse to look back. True repentance is when you do as did Elisha, and kill the oxen, and burn the yoke and the plow.

That's true repentance. The revival will last as long as the repentance lasts. You hear what I said? The revival will last as long as the repentance lasts, and no longer.

When the people fall back into their old ways, revival is over. When the newness of repentance is worn off and the zeal to do God's will is wearing thin, there is a danger to falling back into a spiritual slumber. When the people don't get into the Word of God and pray, and they don't begin to witness, they'll be running on the same dead battery that they had before.

God may jumpstart the people. Hear what I'm saying. Imagine Him, He's putting the jumper cables on you.

He's giving you the sense of urgency. He's giving you enough juice to get your motor turned over, okay? Follow me here. With the sovereign act of revival.

But then He expects us to stir up the gift of God that is within us from there on out. See what happens. We shut the motor off, and we didn't make sure the alternator was working.

Then she wouldn't restart. Thermonuclear revival. I like this one.

Thermonuclear revival. It's not what you think either. There comes a point when God is sending revival, that the people keep taking in and taking in and taking in, but they're not giving out.

God has empowered them for service, and they're using that power as a means for a new spiritual experience, rather than to do God's will. Think about what I'm saying. I like something Brother Andrew said.

Listen. Revival is not the top blowing off the church. It's the bottom falling out.

This is where many people and many revivals blow up. People start seeking a deeper experience in the Lord in some mystical way, and they end up ready, listen church, for the funny farm. They start weird now.

Happens in almost every revival. Instead of coming to the revival thinking, I'm going to get on fire for God and take this message somewhere else, they come seeking an experience and they start weirding out. And when their weirding out begins, pretty soon the revival ends up in chaos.

People get the wrong concept of what revival is. It's not about manifestations, church. It's about empowerment for service and holy living.

That's what revival is for. Instead of allowing the Spirit of God to empower them for service, they keep seeking more and more and more spiritual blessing until they just lose it all together. They just lose it.

They just lose it. The pressure and drive to minister becomes so volatile that they nearly explode like an atomic reaction from the pressure. You know, there's something so many times you can ask God to anoint you and you not go do something before you flip out.

I'm just being straight with you. I'm just telling you what I've seen from practical observation. There's just so many times you can say, God anoint me, anoint me, anoint me, and not go do something before you start weirding out.

That's what happens in a lot of revivals. It's what gives a lot of revivals black eyes. Pretty soon people start barking like dogs.

Doing birthing pains and weird kind of stuff. Calling it God. No, it's not God.

Somebody hung around when they should have been out in the fields. And they stayed back at the threshing floor until they flipped out. Anyone seeking an experience with Christ, apart from knowing Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, what's that mean? All they who live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

If you're not living in such a way that you're being persecuted, if you're not ministering, bringing persecution, you don't know the Lord and the fellowship of His suffering. Being made conformable unto His death, you're headed for Flakesville Church. The anointing of God is for service.

I remember Brother Burch saying that. As young people, we would come to church and we'd have these awesome prayer meetings. Awesome prayer meetings.

I remember him one day getting up behind the pulpit and gave us a real word of knowledge. The anointing is for service. It's not so I can weird out and jump three pews and see if I can put my head through the wall or make a new door over here.

Anointing is for service. That's what it's for. And so oftentimes we come and we just shout the anointing off.

We shout the zeal off. We leave out of here. Man, I'm wore out.

When you should have left out of here on fire for God. We need to learn this, church. When God sends revival, suck it up and go out and do the work of the Lord.

An experience with God that is genuine causes us to want to share the faith with others and conform to pure religion. A lot of things have been blamed on the Holy Ghost that we're not God at all. People don't bark in the Holy Ghost.

You know what? People used to cast that stuff out. People get to roaring. Man, somebody would say, hold them down.

Grab the anointing oil. But instead of doing that, because we're so far out in Flakesville, we don't even have discernment, we start calling everything up God. When people don't use their anointing to minister and they keep seeking more and more and more power and blessing, they open themselves up to devils.

That's what you do. That's what you do. God brings revival.

Use it for what He brought it for. Take to the fields. Do the work of the Lord.

Live a holy life. Don't keep seeking more and more deeper mystical experiences in God. Protecting the ground that God has given us.

Protecting the ground that God has given us. It is impossible to be full of the Holy Ghost and not greatly desire to minister to the lost. It's impossible.

It's impossible. When you get full of the Holy Ghost, you're going to be full of the very heart of God, and that is to reach the lost. It is impossible to be full of the Holy Ghost and continually struggle with sin.

The more full you'll be, the more out of, let me put it this way, you'll be out of the devil's tractor beam. The closer you get to this world here, this is going to suck you right in. How many of you have ever seen Star

Trek? You know, if you stayed at a reasonable distance away from that tractor beam, you could probably pull away from it.

But the closer you get to it, the more vulnerable you are. And so it is. When we're full of the Holy Ghost, sin is manageable, church.

Oh, the desire may still be there. You're going to still have to resist, but it's not going to be like if you're half full, lukewarm, or anything else. You're going to be in a street fight if you don't stay full of the Holy Ghost.

It is that simple. It is impossible to be full of the Holy Ghost. Now when I say full of the Holy Ghost, I mean it in the Book of Acts sense.

Not in the Spirit-filled-life Bible type of thinking. That just because you spoke in tongues once, you're full of the Holy Ghost. I'm talking about full of the Holy Ghost until you speak the Word with boldness.

Full of the Holy Ghost until there's a change everywhere you go. It is impossible to be full of the Holy Ghost and not love your neighbor as yourself. It's impossible.

It's impossible. He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is what? And if you're full of God, you're full of what? It's the fruit of the Spirit. When God sends revival into our lives and into our church, serious changes begin to take place.

People begin to hear and feel the heart of God and they want to witness. They begin to live holy lives that are separate from sin. That's why God wants to bring revival.

He's coming back for a church that's without spot or blemish. Their life is characterized by godliness. When we begin to wax lazy and begin allowing the enemy to offer us alternative entertainment for our spiritual walk with God, trouble is on the way.

When you seek to be entertained, just mark it down. Just remember I told you this so you'll know why it happened. Trouble is on the way, especially in the hour in which we live.

See, there was an hour when you could get into a lot of foolishness and it may not have the effect it does today, but not today. The spirit of antichrist is so strong in the earth. I like what Brother Tony said one time.

He said, you can't even take a morning off from God. Don't even take an hour off from God, church. Because you might give the devil one hour and he might make an inroad just that quick.

Pretty soon you don't even realize what happened to you. Revival according to Atkins. Amen.

How many of you know what the Atkins diet is? Yeah? Protein diet. The revivalist diet is one of strong meat and very little fluff and nonsense. Many people believe that they can turn God on and off like a switch.

They can shift into spiritual mode or compromised mode. It will. I've had people actually say that.

I don't even know where I heard it, but it got back to me one day. It's like, man, that's amazing how I can turn on the anointing and turn it right off like that. Like, man, I don't know what anointing you're talking about.

The spirit of the Lord comes upon me. Maybe I can't even sleep at night. I'm up at two o'clock in the morning and can't go to sleep.

I can't shut that off. However, anyone who has ever done anything meaningful for the Lord lives with a high level of consecration to God. Hey, listen.

You're not going to get anywhere with God until you get to a level of consecration where God can use you. You know, John the Baptist, he didn't even go into the city. Now, I'm not saying move out to the country and live out in a cabin, okay? But listen, he lived away from the people.

He got away from them. And when the people came, they came to him and they came outside the city. You know why that was? I'll tell you why I believe it was.

Because he probably knew with the sin nature he had, walking up and down the street, he couldn't stay focused with God like he needed to, listen, to bring that message. Because listen, you don't just live any old way and bring that message. You don't just live any old way and bring that message.

You just don't live any old way and get your head cut off and brought in a charger. You don't just live any old way and go before the king and tell him what you're doing is sin and not repent, knowing it's going to cost you your life. See, if he'd have been mingling with the people and just kicking it with his people and all of that, you know what? He wouldn't have had nearly the message he had.

They were often misunderstood and disliked. They said of John the Baptist, he had a devil. This guy's got a devil.

He never says anything positive. He's got a devil. No, they were the ones with the devil.

They seemed to be dull and boring. This is because, listen, impenitent sinners measure their beliefs by their fleshly standards and not by the fruit of the Spirit. What a sinner hates, a believer loves, they cannot understand spiritual things.

How could it possibly be that you could get any kind of anything out of going to the nursing home? How is it possible you could get anything out of standing up there with the eight-foot sign that said repent, pass out 192 Bibles when people are acting in every single way from giving you an untimely sign all the way up to saying bless you, brother, because it is our meat to do the will of Him that sent us. That's why. That's what fulfills us.

An on-fire-for-God individual has a different diet than a person who is half backslidden or lukewarm as a Christian. Notice what I said. They have a different diet.

Too often we forget that Jesus rejects lukewarmness. We were half in. If we're half out, He spits us out of His mouth.

When we get into a condition, this condition, listen, we need to be taught again spiritual truths that we once understood. There was a time when you could readily witness. There was a time when you loved to talk about the Lord.

There was a time when you could sit down and just go and flow and flow and flow in the things of God. You say, well, I've only been saved five years. Listen, there are young people that I have encountered in the last three months that are as learned in Scripture as probably I am.

24-year-olds. But He knows the Word of God. He knows the Word.

For when for a time you ought to be teachers, you have need that one teach you again, which be the first principles of the oracles of God. I've become such as have need of milk and not of strong meat. As a newborn baby grows up in Christ, they begin to apply the Word and their understanding moves from the milk to the strong meat.

Milk, Scripture tells us, not raw words. Scripture is for new converts. And when it is needed again among aged Christians, it is evidence that their senses are not being controlled and all manner of sin is being let in to their heart and mind.

Sin comes in and just starts hitting the delete button on everything you know about God. It's like a virus. Man, I used to know that.

Man, I used to... Man... I remember talking... You know what's happening to you? You're not exercising your senses. You're letting the devil come in and steal. That's what he does.

Steal the seed of the good Word. Finally, drowning in chocolate milk. Drowning in chocolate milk.

Hebrews 5, 14 and 15 reads, For everyone that uses milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness for he is a baby. But strong meat belongs to them. They're of full age.

Even those who by reason of its use or practice have their senses exercised to discern good and evil. What's that mean? They just don't look at any old thing. They don't just listen to any old thing.

They don't just do any old thing with their body. And because of that, they live on the meat and not the milk. The use of meat has less to do, listen, about education than it does with our walk with the Lord.

Hear what I said? It has less to do with our education. And it has more to do with our walk with the Lord. Many people in the time of Christ could not read and write, but they could exhort the meat of God's Word.

Think about what I just said. They were far less educated than we are, church. And they could exhort the Word of the Lord at will.

In Acts 4, 13 we read, Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled. And they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus. Think about it.

They hadn't been to the school of the prophets. They hadn't sit at the feet of Gamaliel, like Paul the Apostle. They hadn't sit in the school of Hillel and Shammai.

They hadn't been there. They had been fishermen. But now they are expounding the Word of the Lord, the meat of the Word, with great boldness.

Why? Because they had been with Jesus. On the contrary, someone who has not been with Jesus may have multiple degrees and not know the first thing about the truth of God's Word. Dr. Fahrenheit, don't know a thing about God.

The Word of God is not intellectually understood, though it's somewhat intellectual. Don't get me wrong. It is spiritually discerned.

God hid His truths from the wise and the prudent and revealed them unto His children. Strong truth has little to do with human wisdom and much to do with being born again in simple obedience. The more light that we have and we walk in, the more light that God will give us to see with.

If you'll walk in the light God gives you, He'll give you more light. Pretty soon, the path will be clear through the Word of God. But we've got to walk in what we know.

Otherwise, we're holding the truth in unrighteousness and God's not going to keep giving you more truth until you walk in what you've got. If there's no years, if there's no hunger, rather, or thirst for righteousness, men and women will eat the strong meat of sin and iniquity for years and they will sip the milk of God's Word. Oh, they can tell you all about technical things.

They're real articulate in their field of expertise. But they expound the milk of God's Word and it has nothing to do with intelligence. It has everything to do with whether or not we've been with Jesus.

Soon it will get so bad, listen, that the only thing they will drink is the chocolate milk of God's blessings and promises. What a meal. Steak and potatoes, sin washed down with the chocolate milk of God's promises.

That's where we're at today, church. This circus, as it's been called by many people now, and I'm taking up the word and using it, eats steak and potato sin and washes it down with the promises of God. This is the preferred meal of modern Christendom.

And it's a mockery of God, worse than the impenitent sinners that are on the streets. People trying to use God's promises to assist them and they're serving the God of mammon. Think about that.

Think about that. We already serve the God of mammon in America, but then your messages are predominantly nothing but prosperity and blessing. Excuse me.

We live in a day opposite. Now this is what I really want you to remember. And I want you to really take this home and think about this.

Because I read this in a book of Dave Wilkerson's that he wrote called *The Vision* way back in 1973. I'm just borrowing this quote from him and it just shocked me to the core. Listen to what he said.

He said we live in a day opposite of the book of Job. It's as though Satan approached the throne of God and he demanded that God bless His people until their vats were full so He could sift them to see if they would serve God or mammon. Instead of going before the throne of God and saying, take their stuff, take everything, take it all, take it.

He went before and said, bless them with all you can bless them with and then we'll see if they still serve you or if they'll turn to the God of mammon. Now that's a radical thought. You think about that.

You think about mass blessing coming in your life to sift you. What will you do with it? Will you serve it? Or will you make it serve God? Will you serve it? Or will you make it serve God? I thought that was pretty radical. That's a radical thought.

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