

Revival in the Church

by Rolfe Barnard

Revival is the work of God, not men, where people are revived and renewed in their relationship with Christ through a genuine encounter with the Holy Spirit.

Duration: 49:13

Scripture: Psalm 27:8, Matthew 6:33, Luke 11:9-10, John 4:23-24, Acts 1:4-5, Acts 1:14, Acts 2:1-4

Topics: "Revival", "Salvation"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher addresses a group of people who are feeling desperate and guilty for their actions. They realize that they have killed the son of the living God and wonder if there is any hope for people like them. The preacher emphasizes that they cannot limit God and that He can work even in the midst of their mess. He encourages them to have absolute confidence in Jesus Christ and to be in union with Him, as this is the only thing that can keep them out of hell and bring transformation to their lives.

Transcript

What a long past time for an intervention of the Holy Spirit upon our parched churches and our parched lands. I wonder if I'm foolish. I'm daring here, this second visit, to treat you as you would want to be treated, as God's people.

If there's one thing I want to be delivered from, it's casting pearls before swine. I would not dare even suggest being as serious as I was this morning and hope to be this week to a bunch of people who just take things for granted. I'm forbidden to sow among thorns, the scripture says not to.

I'm forbidden to cast holy things to dogs. I'm forbidden to suggest that God will give blessings to a bunch of people who will be satisfied with less than that. So whatever your treatment of me, and at least being a gentleman, I'm paying you the courtesy of believing until otherwise proved, that many of you, I hope all of you, are really God's children and you're hungry.

Long since you've discovered, there's no way we can work this out, that there's no one, two, three, bam, revival will come. That revival is the work of God and not the work of men. And that for 105 years, God has blessed as much as he did, but he's not opened the windows and taken charge.

This morning we talked about the revival that's to come. It will be worldwide. And notice three characteristics that would make up that revival, turn men and women into seekers after the Lord.

Tomorrow night I hope to preach on my deepest shame as a preacher of the gospel, the thing that shames me more than anything and all other things combined. That's a condition of my own life that I'm utterly, terribly ashamed of. I want to preach on my shame tomorrow night.

But tonight I mention my greatest heartbreak. It is the fact that I preach to people all over the country who claim to be saved, who give no evidence as far as anybody who is hungrily looking, not being God, just hungrily looking, hoping to find something in that individual's life that reveals the deep seeking of the Lord. I do not believe a man is a Christian who isn't hotly seeking Christ right now.

I didn't say that as so, I said I do not believe it. In my own heart, Christ, the God-Lord, of nought, the plural old preacher, hasn't got much sense. Help me to take the word and penetrate between the asinine smiles on the face of this generation of miserable people.

People who are in this state, they claim they are saved, but they don't know what repentance is. Daily repentance is a stranger to them. They do not know what it is to sob over sin in their own life.

I don't believe a person like that is a Christian. Maybe you do. I didn't say you wasn't, I said I just don't believe whatever that's worth.

I'm afraid that this generation of Church members are so good they're going to split hell wide open. It's a good they never need to pray, Lord, forgive them. The Lord told us to pray daily, forgive us of our sin, but we don't sin.

The reason we don't sin is we decide what's right. We say, well, my conscience doesn't bother me and it doesn't condemn me and I don't think there's anything wrong with it. See what I'm talking about? Thus we sleep at night and work by day and go on to hell, because we've become God and decided what is right and what is wrong.

But we aren't smart enough to do that. All for men and women who know the Lord, and about all you can get out of them is, I'm vile, but he's precious. What I can't do is not have you understand, Brother Barnaby, I'm all right.

I'm all right. And we've been getting more all right for at least a hundred years, until we are pretty much right now. We are right smack dab fixing to land in hell.

The whole Church gathers. If God Almighty leaves us alone, we're going to go to hell saying, I'm all right. That's an indication we're all wrong.

That's an indication we're judging ourselves by the fellow sitting by us, not by him. For I'm just about as good as you are. And if you let me compare myself with you, I'd make it fairly well.

But that's not the comparison. Oh, that God would visit us, change our chant, I'm all right, I'm all right, I'm all right. Until once again the houses of God would be full of people, hungry for more of Christ, a taste in that dear revival.

Tonight I want to talk about a revival that took place in the Church, if you like this one. And I get from it encouragement that if it did one time, who knows what it can get. And of course that Church is the Church in the city of Jerusalem, and the record of it is given us in the book of Acts, chapter 2. And just one verse of scripture, Acts 2, confronts us with what a revival is.

Something had already happened for the members of that Church that were already saved. They were filled with the Holy Ghost, is that right? And they went all over the city, proclaiming the wonderful works of Christ, of God in Christ. And then one man standing for all of them, for the scripture says Peter stood and with him the eleven, twelve men stood up.

One of them was a spokesman. And they had the first gospel sermon preached by a Church. In fact it was the only one on the face of the earth at that time.

And it was literally set in order in a prayer meeting, and in the filling of the Spirit, and in the presence of the risen Lord. And this one man stood up and spoke for all of the members of that congregation, not some of them, but at that time. But for all of the members, they spoke through this one man, through this one man, the Holy Spirit spoke, God spoke.

And as a result of what had taken place in the experience of the ones, the 120 who already knew the Lord, and as a result of the message delivered by that congregation through the spokesman. Verse 37 pictures the second thing that takes place in revival. The first is the reviving of people who already know the Lord.

And the second is the conviction and salvation of people who do not. Those two things can be brought to pass only by Almighty God. Nobody on earth can revive his people, he'll have to do it.

I can flutter his people, that wouldn't do any good. That wouldn't do any good, would it? But only God can bring you life and put a spring in their step and a song in their heart and joy in their praise and power in their witness. Only God can do it, but he can't.

And only God can convict the sinner. For as I compare myself with you, I'm not under much conviction. I doubt not that people here tonight live much holier lives than this poor, weak preacher.

But even you do not cause me to lay awake at night crying how vile I am. For just a little glimpse of the Christ, holy God in Jesus Christ, I could throw up my hands and the apostle Peter saved a part for me. And I'm a man of iniquity.

These nice people, the reason they're so nice is they don't know the holiness of Christ. Facing him will lose all of our niceness, and all we can do is cry, have mercy on me. But here are some people in revival, just one verse.

Now, when they heard this, they were pricked in their hearts, stabbed in their hearts. And they were so stabbed, they were so stabbed, they were so smitten that they did something about it. They said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, men and brethren, what shall we do? Is the game up? We've murdered the Son of the Living God, and God Almighty has taken that one whom we murdered and raised him from the dead and put him on the throne, and placed him in charge of everything that wiggles, and given him the job of saving or damning every human being.

And the one that God has exalted and turned everything over to, we've killed him. Is the gig up? Shall we just hold our hands and try to be reconciled to him, or is there any hope for people like us? Here are some people who are desperate. They want to know if there is any way out.

If there is forgiveness with God, if there is any hope for sinful men and women, what shall we do? By and large, ladies and gentlemen, with the exception of God's ordinary blessing for which we thank God, by and large, it's been a hundred years since there's been much of that going on, especially in America. By and

large, our churches are not full of people who got so desperate that they went around screaming, is there any hope for a sinner like me? By and large, our people in our churches are people who decided to accept Jesus, whatever that means. I do not know myself.

And they did what they call made a decision, and went through some motions, and they hope maybe something happened. They're not sure. Oh, how could we call ourselves Christians and not long to live just a month if God had granted that length of time of just a week, or one day would be blessed, when people would be desperately anxious to find out if a holy God was just going to send them all to hell, or whether they could find mercy in his sight.

Nothing short of men and women in the surrounding territory, wailing in God's people, catching hold of your skirts and your clothes, begging to increase the tone of mercy that God might show mercy to them. Nothing short of that is a work of revival. It's been so long since we've had it.

It's been so long that you wouldn't get mad at me if I made this awful, cruel statement. It's been so long that this preacher wonders if he's saved and if you are. There is so little evidence in my life and in yours that we came in our desperation and experienced a great deliverance that we've never been able to thank God enough for.

We take it so for granted that it scares me. I wonder if any of us have ever experienced the so great salvation that it would take to keep sinners such as me out of the pits of hell. There is revival when men got desperate about their condition in the sight of it.

And this is what we must cry to God for, only he can bring it. Now, as I said, lots of Church members don't want this, but saving people do. I have many hope for unsaved Church members.

If God doesn't save them, they'll go to hell. I can't save them, and if God doesn't, nobody else can. But I'm talking in the night to those of you who are saved.

Oh, my soul, I'm not giving holy things to dogs tonight, am I? You're not booking this, not if you're a Christian. Because you know our Church, this one included, has got our backs to the wall. We're in a desperate condition.

I hope you quit chanting, I'm all right, and get to where you'll actually be honest with God. God, we've done everything, if not got the job done. Oh, God, you come.

Men say, God, they're blessed. And there they have been in your day and mine, and not brought to the place they have to say, that's God's mercy. This generation is going to go to hell.

Their style and their efforts is complicated and as good as they are. We're not getting the job done. This world is getting crystallized, and this rebellion is all about us, and hell is going to pop, it's already popping.

That I ever came to this local Church, the Holy Spirit came and made Christ real. Notice verse 33, "...therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he shed forth this Christ into the Holy Ghost, which ye now see and hear." Verse 36, "...let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." When they heard this, they picked up and began to cry, what must we do? What must we do? What did the Holy Spirit do? He quickened. He revived.

He invigorated the 120 who were already the First Church. What else did he do? Bless God, he made Christ real for 3,000 unsaved people. This morning I ask a question very simple, but the most profound question any human being this side of the eternity will ever be called upon to face.

Do you know for yourself who Jesus is? The Mohammedans say he is a prophet. The Orthodox Jews say he is a good teacher. The Modernists say he is the best man that ever lived.

The Fundamentalists say he died. Who do you say he is? Mama said this, but who do you say? On the day of Pentecost, 3,000 people who did not know who Jesus was, found out who he was. They found out that that's when they hung on faith.

God Almighty raised them from the dead. They found out he was the exalted Lord of glory and the Savior of the earth. They found out, 3,000 of them personally, who the Son of the living God is.

Now, Jesus is God the Son, whether you believe it or whether you experience his power or whether you get acquainted with him or not. But the big question for Rob Barnard, and the big question for you, is not what somebody else said about Jesus, but what you have experienced yourself. Man cannot be saved unless he puts himself in the care.

Jesus Christ is real. The big question is, is he real to you? And you know that's something nobody on God's earth can settle for you except you. I can probe you with it and suggest it not knowing.

How do I know? I don't know a thing on God's earth about the inside relationship of a single person here. The Son of the living God, only you. The Holy Spirit made Jesus Christ real.

And made him real in the truth about him. And that would be revival. Christ Jesus revealed himself through the Holy Ghost to this church in the city of Jerusalem.

And that's revival. If he'd be pleased to reveal himself in Seguinville one more time, that would be revival. If he'd be pleased to make himself known in the truth of him, in the reality of him.

He's not a ghost! He's not a name! He's not a moderate! He's a person! He's the exalted God! This generation is not acquainted with him. Men do not know this living Lord. They know something of the Christ of history.

They can tell you about what the Bible says and what history books say, but they don't know who. They do not know by experience this one, who right now is at the right hand of God, not going to be in your clothes. In heaven and earth, they know something of the power and influence of men.

Everyone here knows of the influence of Martin Luther King, maybe the most powerful man in America, or the President, or the God of France, or somebody like that. But this generation doesn't know him, who right now is head over all things, who right now is working out the role of the Father in the course of human history. This generation doesn't know Christ.

They know about him, but they don't know him. Do you know him? Do you know him? Not this little Jesus you can accept, but the big Jesus whom you hope will accept you. Not this little Jesus who has been robbed of the truth of him, but this Jesus in all the truth of him, absolute Savior, absolute Lord.

Do you know him? I say it with a heart that means, well, at least, the little Jesus who has been preached for 60 years in America, wouldn't harm a flea and couldn't save a man. I say it and I speak the truth, so

help me God. The way we got nearly everybody in America to profess to be Christian, was by preaching of Jesus and hiding from the man who heard us the truth about him.

Why everybody in this country has accepted Jesus, but they haven't accepted the truth of him? And you can't have Christ if you don't have him as he is. And the only way you'd find out he is about it, is in the truth of him. And the truth of him is in this book.

Jesus Christ, in whose presence all of you, get away, do thy sinfulness, give up the idols. That standing congregation in Jerusalem, at least 3,000 people, confess it! With the living Christ, all the truth shall be shed blood in his egotic throne. Not all of them, but 3,000 of them.

I expect there's several million people there, I don't know. And what happened to the others, but 3,000 of them were stabbed in their hearts. Why? They were confronted with the only person between the eternities.

That can convict men of sin. That's the trifle, a living son of Almighty God. Brother, this generation won't go to hell if Jesus carries their burning hand.

Unless we have revival, where one more time Jesus Christ will make himself known and you'll find people that talk in the night, I'm putting my foot on the pillar, the more you'll hear them screaming, O God, is there mercy for me, such a wicked sinner as I am. I want to say just two things about how Christ was pleased to make himself known in this local church. And I'll waste no time unless out of this congregation some of you begin to band together as you never have in all of your life.

Not trusting me, not trusting yourself, not trusting anything you can do. Do everything you know to do, but don't trust it, brother. It's too little, too late now.

I'm not going to about fold your hands, no, no, I'm going to about being busy, doing everything you know to do. But for God's sake, don't put any confidence in what you do. If you've done that for a hundred years, you won't get the job done.

Unless it will be wasted, if you just consider it another service, you ought to just vote for those of you who are going back home. But don't take this seriously unless you begin to band together. And on this confession, Lord, Lord, we are not big enough.

Our testimony is not powerful enough. Our prayers are not powerful enough. This generation is not paying one bit of attention to us.

Oh, God, we are hopeless, we are bankrupt. We confess it all, God. If you will, we know you can.

Have mercy on us as God's people. Open the windows of heaven. Walk the streets again and confront me and yourself.

That's our only hope. There are just two things I say quickly first. Christ revealed himself in this local church according to his sovereign will.

He just did it. You ought to bond right quickly. Don't get mad at all the days of your life.

Most of us have been taught that if we did one, two, three, four things, God would work. But God couldn't work until we did things. That's not so.

That's what the mess we're in now. Hear me now. You cannot limit God.

I can limit you. There are some things you can't do, brother. And there are some things you can't do until some other things are done.

And there are some things this church can't do until it does some other things. But, brother, the heart of that woman, by the sovereignty of almighty God, he could change things like that and bring the Bible. And that's the only hope I've got.

I'm not a novice. I've been in this a little while. This isn't the first time I ever came and tried to help a bunch of people get the blood of sinners off their hands.

But I have this much sense. You just put it down. I'd never go to another meeting if I trusted myself or you.

I wouldn't give you a sign of what you can do. Or me, either. My only hope is that under the same conditions that this chapter talks about, my sovereign Lord, if he pleases, he can do it again.

Brother, if there ever was a time when conditions weren't right for revival, it was on the day of Pentecost. The political world wasn't looking for anybody to praise that fellow Jesus, was it? They just put him to death a little while before, and they wanted to be rid of him. The political world in America and everywhere else, brother, it would be terrible if we had revival and tear up all of the political plans, because we couldn't afford it, could we? It just wasn't doable.

And the religious world, if that wasn't a mess, there were the religious people of the day. You know what they'd done? They'd screamed and killed. The Roman Empire had put the Son of God to death, and it's still fresh on their memory.

And just a little handful of 120 people had nothing left but room-scaled hash out of their wits. That's all that God had! And the religious people weren't praying for revival, brother, but God's Son revealed himself in him. The religious world today don't want revival, but God's Son can die if it pleases him.

If there is one thing that makes religious people seem immersed today, it's the praise of big God and little people. Oh, just imagine the truth that God is not such a style of manipulation that he can't do any more! He'll break out every time. That takes all the pride away from us.

We have nothing to glory in, in what we've done. But the Lord did it in us. Oh, I'm not asking people to pray to fate.

I'm asking people I don't guarantee he'll give. You can't even pray to him. You can't even pray to him.

You can't even pray to him. You can't even pray to him. You can't even pray to him.

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You mean to tell me you're willing to just keep going on without it happening here? And the scriptures say three things, and I preach on them, I'll mention them, about this local church. First, it says this local church that had revival, they had revival, was united on the basic teachings of the word of God. They were united

on the basic teachings of the word of God.

Now I mention that to say this. Our churches may not in your day and mine be united in all of the teachings of the word of God. We might have done, us folks are.

But brother, this church, is not even a church unless the inner circle in the mixed multitude are united on the two central teachings of the word of God. It says, from the day of Pentecost or what one calls it, they all believe the same thing about two things, Christ's bloody cross and Christ's bloody throne. That's the doctrine that Peter preached.

He said, you took Christ and killed him. God brought him out of that grave and put him on the throne. Ladies and gentlemen, hear me.

Unless the working membership of this congregation are sold out, stock and barrel to the absoluteness of the saving power of the throne of Christ alone, you need to expect God to ever bless you. And unless you're absolutely sold out to the absoluteness, you're not a church. And I need not stop in this hot mocket to tell you that Edward Baptist Church and the Southern Baptist Convention is split wide open tonight over the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

How many people am I preaching to tonight that dare to call him your Savior in the marks of his absolute totalitarian rule and reign? Or not in your daily life? How many of you, how many of you, deny the very heart of the gospel that before you may have him as your Savior, you must come to know the absoluteness of his rule in your life? What's filling our churches? It's the men and women who call Jesus Savior, and some that know that as Lord. What can you tell a man who doesn't claim to be a Christian? You're not under Christ's rule either. You're in the same boat he's in.

You're headed for the same hell. You've never met him, but you can't meet Christ except where he is. And bless God he's on the throne.

Some of you have never bowed to him in absolute surrender, thus you've never gotten acquainted with him. We can differ on every other truth, I guess, in the Bible, we do. God help you not to differ here, brother.

This is it. A church that's united on the fact that there is only one thing that will keep a man out of hell, and that's absolute confidence and independence on the shed blood of Jesus Christ. And the only thing on earth that will bring power into your life is to be in vital union with him who lives on the throne.

Oh, what will keep a man out of hell with the blood of Christ? What will make a new creature out of a man? For the song of his heart, put his feet on the solid rock, let them overcome the hellish atmosphere of this hour. Brother, it's vital union, being joined by holy faith to the living Christ as he sits on the throne of God forever. Be united there.

The second thing about this church that's a challenge to us today is that it was a praying church. In Acts 1.14, all the men were married to the Mother of Jesus, and some of the other married, and they met and continued in prayer, continued in prayer. I touched on it this morning.

Our clove of the third thing, in the fourth verse of the first chapter, the 120, they waited to see exactly what it reads. "...being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father." The Lord said, Now you wait. And they waited.

They waited for ten days. Let me close by telling you what waiting means in the New Testament. First of all, it means obedience.

Second, it means utter dependence. There was a world going to hell. The Lord said, You wait.

But Lord, the world is going to hell, and we've got the gospel. You wait. That's obedience.

That's utter dependence on him. Now, ladies and gentlemen, don't get mad at me, I'm going to cut your heart out now. You can't have revival unless you go in there at the Church, unless God comes and changes it.

Tell you why. You are not obedient to the Lord. You don't know anything about the Lord's hypocrisy.

This is utter claim. It'll bring the holiest things that ever lived, the daily repentance. Daily crying, God, O God, how far I've soared.

I come of your glory. He demands 100 percent of your mind, of your body, your soul, your spirit, your heart. He won't take 99 percent, he's absolute desperate.

We're commanded in the scripture to bring every thought and detective into the Jesus Christ. I love you with the demands of the Lord Jesus Christ, our God in Jesus Christ, all the most flesh-tearing things you'll ever see. O my soul, this generation calling Jesus insane.

Most of us have decided what was right and what was wrong, haven't we? We haven't brought it to him. We haven't brought it to him. We haven't even brought our habits to him, much less our thoughts.

Thus we are but a rebel. We're doggers, men and women. We don't know the meaning of obedience, and we don't know the meaning of utter dependence on him.

Ladies and gentlemen, the reason we do not know what it means to wait on God and utter dependence on his moving is we've not understood what it means to be saved. I just want to ask you to hear me one more minute as we're going on. If what we've heard for 60 years is salvation, once you accept Christ as your personal Savior, that will save a man, all right.

But if you can't have Christ unless you have him, and if God made him not only a Savior, but absolute Lord, and that's what the Scriptures say, then it's silly to talk about having Christ unless you've got him not only to keep you out of hell, that's good, but also to be the absolute ruler in your life. I look to the Savior and tell you, if he does not rule you lock, stock and barrel, you're going to split hell wide open. I'm not preaching perfection.

I'm preaching relationship with Jesus Christ that will make you have to cry for forgiveness every day of your life. That will make you know what repentance is in the mouth. Brother, hear me.

If salvation is a sweet bow of a rebellious man, conquered, and he sweetly bows and surrenders himself at the time he returns, he locks, stock and barrel to the Lord Jesus Christ to have his way in heaven! If that's what salvation is, and that's exactly what it is, then we need to depend utterly on the working of the Holy Ghost, for no person listening to me tonight will ever bow to the Lord Jesus Christ unless the Holy Ghost conquers him and bends over his knees. You'll never do it, bud. Hear me? Actually, we've been able to get along with our survivor for hundreds of years.

We've been converting people. We've made people more pure today. It takes the Holy Ghost to break your heart and make you bow to Jesus.

No power this side of hell can bring that to pass except the Almighty God. So he said, don't you go out there and tackle that squirrel until you're filled with the spirit. He said, you'll make him worse rather than better until you're filled with the spirit.

Oh, he said, you can get people to take your little Jesus, whatever that means, or the Savior, that's not scriptural and you know it. You can't get these people to have a change in masters, for the scriptures say, no man can call Jesus Lord except by the Spirit. If we believe that this church would wet the rug by your bedside, that'd be some kind of God.

Oh, all these masked people, we don't got them to make a profession, they're not living holy lives. They all claim Jesus as Savior. Can't see a mark of his rule in their life.

Oh, thou Spirit of God, we confess it, unless you come and confront me in the Christ and all his holiness, our loved ones are going to go on to hell. That's how serious it is. I'm going to ask you to stand and sing as a congregation, so many of you as feel like you can and will, number 230, the song we sang this morning.

I'm going to ask you to stand and sing it as a congregation. You were here before I came, you'll be here after I leave. I'm here to be as close as I can.

All the members of this church put together cannot convict the sinner of his need of having Christ as his absolute Lord. But all this church could begin to cry at the thought he could never have, Lord, you give joy to me. We're asking you not to pass this fire.

Come one more time as you did on the day of Pentecost and confront me with all of your glory, with all the truth there is in you and about you, with all this holiness. Don't pass this church by. In the revival in Wales, they sent people out from London and newspapers to criticize the revival.

And every reporter that got within 100 miles of where God was blessing, without any air and sermon, since they'd gotten 100 miles of where the blessing was falling, they'd get convicted and saved. That's when God's working. In the revival under Jonathan Edwards, the only one America has ever known, it started in the bear taverns and in the open houses of prostitution.

It didn't start in the church. The power went out from there. People came in screaming for mercy in the bear taverns without hearing any preaching.

It was just the Lord working. He can do it again. I know he will not.

All I can do is preach and say, Oh, Lord, do it again. Can you pray that for me tonight? Stand, sing, passionately in auto-genesis.

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