

# The Great Transaction

by Ronald Glass

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*Revival is the restoration of God's people to new life, and it requires humility, repentance, and prolonged prayer.*

**Duration:** 59:19

**Scripture:** Exodus 3:5, 2 Chronicles 7:14, Psalm 24:3-5, Isaiah 57:15, Matthew 6:33, Acts 2:1-4, James 4:8

**Topics:** "Revival"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the path to spiritual awakening and revival. The sermon begins with the story of King Solomon dedicating the temple in Jerusalem, where fire came down from heaven and the glory of the Lord filled the house. The speaker then transitions to the story of Evan Roberts, a young revivalist who fervently prayed for a man's victory over Satan. The sermon emphasizes the importance of agonizing in prayer and seeking God's face, rather than focusing on organizational leadership. The speaker also references the example of Daniel, who prayed despite facing persecution.

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## Transcript

As you notice, that hymn is based on a familiar passage of scripture, which is, in fact, our text today. Two texts, actually, that I want you to turn to. First of all, 2 Chronicles chapter 7, verse 14.

That's our main text for the day. And then, if you would put your finger over in Isaiah chapter 57 and verse 15, which is another major consideration for us today. Isaiah 57, 15.

So if you have your Bibles open, I would like to have you read with me, beginning in the 14th verse of 2 Chronicles 7. It actually breaks in the middle of a sentence, and it reads this way. And my people, the old translation said, if my people, who are called by my name, humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. Isaiah chapter 57, verse 15.

For thus says the high and exalted one who lives forever, whose name is holy, I dwell on a high and holy place, and also with the contrite and lowly of spirit. In order to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite. The autumn of 1857 was signaled by a sudden and fearful convulsion in the commercial world.

That calamity was so speedily followed by the reports of revivals of religion and remarkable displays of divine grace that it has been widely received opinion that the two events stand related to one another as

cause and effect. In the day of adversity, men consider when the hand of God is suddenly laid upon city and country, the sources of prosperity dried up, fortunes taking to themselves, wings, houses venerable for years, integrity and success tumbling into ruins, and names never tarnished by suspicion becoming less than nothing in general bankruptcy. It is natural to believe that men will look away from themselves and say, verily, there is a God who reigns.

As in the time of an earthquake or wreck at sea, men's hearts failing them for fear, they will cry to him who rides upon the whirlwind. So it was believed that the financial storm had driven men to pray. And it doubtless did.

Never was a commercial crisis so inexplicable under the laws of trade. It was acknowledged to be a judgment. The justice of God was confessed in arresting men in recklessness, extravagance, and folly.

Thousands were thrown out of business and in their want of something else to do assembled in meetings for prayer. But these meetings had been already established. A spirit of God had been manifest in the midst of them.

Before the commercial revulsion, the city and the country had been absorbed in the pursuit of pleasure and gain. Men were making haste to be rich and to enjoy their riches. Recklessness of expenditure, extravagance in living, display in furniture, equipage, and dress had attained a height unexampled in the previous social history of our country and utterly inconsistent with the simplicity and virtue of our fathers.

These signs of prosperity had filled the minds of good men with apprehension and alarm before the panic seized the heart of the world. Christians who had kept free from the spirit of speculation and the mania for making money had trembled for the future of a people so absorbed in the material as to be oblivious of the spiritual and eternal. These pious people had been gathering in meetings for prayer before the convulsion began.

Now, indeed, the meetings received large accessions of numbers in attendance and a new infusion of life from above. More meetings were established and larger numbers attended. The prayer meeting became one of the institutions of the city.

Christians in distant parts of the country heard of them. They prayed for the prayer meetings. When they visited the city, the prayer meeting was the place to which they resorted.

The museum or theater had no such attractions. Returning, they set up similar meetings at home. The spirit followed, and the same displays of grace were seen in other cities in the country that were so marvelous in New York.

So the work spread until the year has become remarkable in the history of the church. The revival is to be remembered through all coming ages as simply an answer to prayer. New York City, 1857.

I have just read from an account by Reverend Samuel Prime, an eyewitness who also drew upon other eyewitnesses of this great revival that took place in New York City beginning in September of 1857. One man was at the heart of it. His name was Jeremiah Lamphere.

He was a businessman, a successful businessman who gave up his business to become a city missionary. He tried to reach the people of the city of New York. He tried to reach the street people and the down and outers and the people who desperately needed the Lord Jesus Christ.

He quickly came to realize that the task was far beyond him. He could never do it. So he prayed and asked the Lord to show him how he could reach more people.

The answer was to pray. Jeremiah Lamphere called a prayer meeting at the Collegiate Reformed Church on Fulton Street in Lower Manhattan. On September 23, 1857, the prayer meeting was to be for the noon hour, from noon to 1 o'clock, for businessmen to come on their lunch hour.

They can come and go as they please. Stay for the whole hour. Stay for five minutes.

Just come and pray. On September 23 of 1857, Jeremiah Lamphere sat in that upper meeting room, the smallest of the meeting rooms in that church on Fulton Street, by himself until 1230, when steps were heard coming up. And one man joined him, and then another, and another, until six men showed up.

And for the half hour, six men prayed. The next week, there were 20. The following week, there were between 30 and 40.

Word began to spread. Prayer meetings began. Actually, packed out, that little room, they had to move to a bigger room, and then to a bigger room, and finally, to all three meeting rooms there in that church.

Within five months, there were 150 daily, not weekly, daily prayer meetings going on in Manhattan and Brooklyn. 150 meetings, some of them meeting in places that could handle 2,000 people. And in every one of those 150 locations, people had to be turned away.

There was no room to get in. I dare say that most of you have never heard of this revival. I looked in some history books, including one by a Christian publisher.

No mention of this revival. And yet, it was the beginning of a great revival that impacted the entire world for years to come, the whole world. It's been chronicled.

And in fact, our Civil War, which followed just a couple of years later, was actually made less severe than it might have been by the enormous revival that took place, especially in the Confederate Army. But it sounds all too familiar, doesn't it? We're 150 years later. The economic crisis is deepening.

Moral decline is accelerating. Our political environment's becoming intolerably corrupt. And many Americans are beginning to realize that our nation is in trouble.

The problem is that most of us don't know what to do about it. Many Americans who are concerned read conservative books and magazines. They frequent conservative blog sites.

They listen to conservative talk radio. While it's true that these commentators may offer sound political analysis, they have nothing to offer by way of permanent solutions. The reason is simple.

They have chosen to ignore the God of the Bible. One talk show host I heard a week or so ago, when questioned about this, said this, my faith is in the American people. And I thought, oh no, your faith must be in God.

But the impersonal nature's God, the creator to whom our founding fathers refer, won't do. The God that we must seek, the God who must work, is the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. The God who has manifest himself in the person of the Holy Spirit.

What's needed is a spiritual awakening, a powerful revival that will shake America to its core as God gave in 1857 and 1858. The first thing we need to do in this series of sermons on biblical revival is to establish what revival is. And one of the ways I've done that is by emphasizing to you what revival is not.

Again, revival is not an evangelistic meeting. It is not an evangelistic crusade, a series of meetings aimed at winning the loss to Christ. That's not revival.

That's evangelism. That's good, but it's not revival. Likewise, revival is not some sort of an emotional display of Pentecostal fervor that you may see in some television programs or in some churches.

Revival is the restoration of God's people to new life. It is the Holy Spirit breathing new life into an ineffective, apostate, or even dying church. It is spiritual awakening.

It is God's people remembering with what power the Lord has worked in the past and pleading for him to do it again. It is zeal. It is renewed holiness.

It is brokenness over sin. It is repentance. It is confession and prolonged, powerful prayer.

It is magnifying God as he is and crucifying ourselves as we are. Revival is God supernaturally breaking into the life of a church to stir the smoldering ashes into a raging conflagration. Our nation is in desperate need of revival.

It wasn't long ago that I received this newspaper, Freedom's Alert, which I get regularly, from New York's Family Research Foundation, the headline, Governor Renews Calls for Same-Sex Marriage. Now, we know that that's going on in New York. It's going on in a number of states.

What was the most recent development was interesting to me, as I saw a news broadcast recently saying they're not willing to stop there. Now, the push in some places is for the legalization of what they're calling triads. The old word is polygamy.

You can be married to more than one spouse. And that may be heterosexual. It may be homosexual or bisexual.

The question that many of us ask is, how can we stop this descent into Sodom? And the answer, my beloved friends, is we can't, but God can. He must intervene. Our first text today is the most often quoted summary verse in the Bible on revival, and for good reason.

It's a powerful summary of the path to spiritual awakening. What it is is part of God's response to King Solomon. King Solomon had just built that magnificent temple in Jerusalem, and he was dedicating it.

And in that service of dedication, most of the time was spent in Solomon praying to God to bless that house. Last time we asked the question, where's the fire? The answer is found here in chapter 7, verses 1 to 3. When Solomon had finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the house. The priests could not enter into the house of the Lord because the glory of the Lord filled the Lord's house.

And all the sons of Israel, seeing the fire come down and the glory of the Lord upon the house, bowed down on the pavement with their faces to the ground. And they worshipped, and they gave praise to the Lord, saying, truly He is good. Truly His loving kindness is everlasting.

They saw the fire. They sensed His presence. They knew His presence.

They couldn't even enter in because of His presence. They understood the power and the holiness of God. Now, the reality is, however, that that fire burns out.

That's because sin reemerges in the lives of people. The Holy Spirit does not work where He is grieved and where He is quenched. And thus the Lord addresses future generations who will fall away from Him.

They will experience His chastening. Look at verse 13. If I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or I command the locusts to devour the land, or I send pestilence, disease, among my people.

Sometimes God resorts to those things in order to bring His people back to reality. Sometimes, as we just read and as we're seeing in our own nation, it may be economic reversals. People thrown out of work.

People in bankruptcy. People losing their homes. People losing all of the hope that they had because their hope was placed in material things.

Now, when God's people fall into spiritual declension, into a state of spiritual decline, the Lord provides a way back. God's promise here in this text is an amplification of His covenant relationship with Israel. We looked at that last time, Deuteronomy 28 to 30, where God said, if you obey me, then I will bless you.

If you disobey me, I will curse you. And if I curse you, and if you suffer under my mighty hand, and you repent, and you come back, I will restore you. Now, God promises to answer the prayer of His people offered from the temple or toward the temple if they're in a foreign land.

But I want to propose to you today that the principles here continue into this church age. Whenever and wherever God's people genuinely repent and turn to the Lord, He will respond. I want you to examine with me today this great transaction by noting the three elements of true biblical revival that we see here.

First of all, revival always has distinctive recipients. There are two concerns here in 2 Chronicles 7, the first part of verse 14. First of all, revival concerns the restoration of God's people.

Now, this bears repeating. We are not focused here on evangelistic campaigns. The first concern of revival is not the regeneration of sinners.

It is the renewing of languishing saints. Notice what he says. My people.

Before the church can impact the world, before we can reach out effectively to unbelievers, we must experience the awakening power of God. God's people must have a new understanding of who God is. My people, the people of God.

Not the people of some mythical god, of some god of man's own creation. Not the god of the idols of the pagan nations, but the living creator God of Israel. Holy, sovereign, Lord of glory.

Creator and ruler of the universe. Come back with me a moment to that passage in Isaiah 57. Isaiah 57, that 15th verse again.

Listen to how it is introduced. God speaking through the prophet. For thus says the High and the Exalted One, who lives forever.

Look in your margin. It says, who dwells in eternity. The God who never had a beginning.

The God who will never have an end. Whose name is holy. His character is distinguished by being separated from all that is sin.

All that is evil. He is infinitely holy. I dwell on a high and holy place.

Earlier in Isaiah, the 43rd chapter, verse 1, God says to Israel, thus says the Lord, your creator, O Jacob, and he who formed you, O Israel, do not fear. I have redeemed you. I have called you by name.

You are mine. The infinitely holy God had chosen a people for himself. In fact, in Deuteronomy chapter 7, and in the sixth verse, God says through Moses to Israel, you are a holy people to the Lord your God.

The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. My people. But my people have sinned.

And my people need to be restored. The focus here, my people. God is not at this moment concerned for the nations.

He is concerned for his people who are to be his channel of grace to the nations. Now you say, well, that's all well and good, pastor. That's Israel.

That's the Old Testament. Well, wait a minute. Wait a minute.

What does Peter say in 1 Peter chapter 2, verse 9? Listen to these words. But you, you, the church, you, believers, Christians, in this age are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Revival concerns the restoration of God's people and my people.

But notice, secondly, that revival concerns the reputation of God's name. My people who are called by my name. Again, if you refer to the margin, you get the impact of the Hebrew text here.

It is over whom my name is called. It's as though God has inscribed a banner and placed it over these people. And the banner contains his name.

A nation who claim to be God's people had little or no concern to live like God's people. The world knew them as the covenant people of God, but often throughout their history, Israel proved to be a nation that was no different from the other nations of the world. And in the eyes of the pagan peoples, the Lord's very character was defiled.

He was no more to them than the idols of the nations. And so it was that his name was defiled. It's no different in the church today.

I shared this with some of you, I think, once not too long ago. But it's no different in the church. Our young people today don't want to be called Christians.

You know, there's a movement. This is something that's being said among young people, especially in the emerging church environment, the postmodern church. But even in other places, more evangelical, young people today don't want to be called Christians.

Why? Because the name of Christian has been so rubbed in the dirt by Christians who don't live like it, who have no power, Christians who are godless, but claim the name of Christ. My son said to me the other

day, a few weeks ago, he said, I really don't want to be called a Christian. He said, I just want to be called a follower of Christ.

And yet that name Christian has the name Christ in it. We are called by his name. My people who are called by my name.

See, the Lord cares about his reputation before the world, and so should we. But revival concerns the restoration of God's people and the reputation of God's name. Revival is always focused on distinctive recipients, the people of God.

Now, let me come to the second of these three elements of true biblical revival, and it is that revival always has definitive requirements. History proves that revival is always preceded by intense preparation by at least a small number of God's people. Now, what is the requirement as set forth here in the 14th verse? Actually, there are three things that we need to note.

First of all, my people who are called by my name humble themselves. First of all, we must humble ourselves. Let me go back to that Isaiah 57, verse 15 again.

Let's read the last part of the verse. The high and exalted one who lives forever, whose name is holy. I dwell on a high and holy place.

And also, not only on the high and holy place, God is not so transcendent. That is, He is not so far removed from us that He has nothing to do with us. That was the God of the deists.

But He says, I also dwell with the contrite and lowly of spirit in order to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite. Now, my friends, what this tells me is that our pride is the foremost obstacle to revival. In the Old Testament, self-humiliation was associated with fasting.

They fasted in order to demonstrate self-denial, self-humiliation. It was actually required on the Day of the Atonement. Leviticus chapter 16, verse 29, this shall be a permanent statute to you in the seventh month.

On the tenth day of the month, you shall humble your souls and do not do any work. Verse 31, it is to be the Sabbath of solemn rest for you that you may humble your souls. Most scholars agree that that meant fasting.

On the day when they remembered God's sacrifice for sin, they were to be humbled. They were to actually humble themselves, humble their souls. In the New Testament, self-humiliation is associated with Christlikeness.

Jesus said, take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, says Paul, being in the form of God. Thought it not robbery? Thought it not something to be grasped eagerly, to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation and took upon himself the form of a servant? It was made in the likeness of men and being found in fashion as a man.

He humbled himself unto death, even the ignominious, the notorious, the tragic and horrific death of a cross. He humbled himself. Let that mind be in you.

Historically, revival has always meant God's people recovering a deep sense of their own sinfulness and unworthiness, leading to confession of sin. Listen, God doesn't revive proud people. Our preoccupation

with self will absolutely quench the Holy Spirit's reviving work.

Norman Grubb, in a book he has written on a great man of prayer, Reese Howells, writes this, the presence and power of the Holy Ghost in the Church has always been a fact recognized by true believers. So it was not so much a case of asking him to come as acknowledging his presence and very soon realizing his power. That's the normal way that it went.

But often, they had first to pray out the hindrances to blessing. Disobedience and unforgiving hearts were two sins that were constantly dealt with. You will hear me speak often of the great Welsh revival.

It began in 1904, and it continued for about four years into 1908. It was a fascinating work of God. In that little country of Wales, at the heart of it was a young man, 26 years old, named Evan Roberts.

God saved out of the coal mines and used him powerfully to lead this first wave of this great revival. I want to read you something from a biography of Evan Roberts. Evan Roberts went to one of the chapels there in Wales.

He made visits to hundreds of them. He walked into this chapel. Suddenly, a chapel member fell upon her knees, and her friends heard her confessing all her sins publicly.

After that shock, there was a wave of sorrow and another wave of joy. Women knelt in pews. Men lay down in the aisles, and a few stood there speaking joyfully about the blessing they had now received.

There was still no Bible reading or address, and the church organist stayed idle while the people sang hymns unaccompanied. Somehow, people forgot to go home for their Sunday dinner, a thing almost unheard of in South Wales in those days. Sunday school was canceled, and the evening service became a continued prayer meeting.

When the breath of the Almighty had filled the hall, behold, Evan Roberts, hastening in himself like a doctor hastening to the sick. Without even casting his eyes across the meeting and without any pause, he was directing his steps straight to the left-hand wall at the top end of the chapel in the balcony. And then, falling to his knees alongside a young married man who was pleading earnestly, the young revivalist kept a clear circle around the praying one lest anyone should disturb or impede his winning the battle.

We saw him often pulling a handkerchief from his pocket to dry the man's sweat drops. How quickly his eyes had perceived the battle, and how soon he had rushed to that place and become inflamed with love for him. The burden of his prayer was a plea to God to give the man victory over Satan and strength to break out.

Then the young man prayed, and here was his prayer. Take the mud from my clothes, for I have been in the gutter. Take the sin stain from my flesh.

Divorce me from secret iniquity. This was a complete confession of sin. One of the things that I have seen personally when I have experienced a couple of instances of real revival in my past is this confession of sin.

God's people publicly confessing their sins. Humiliation. You will notice what he says here.

My people, called by my name, must humble themselves. He doesn't say that God will do the humbling. He says you humble yourselves.

You cannot bring revival, but you can humble yourself. I think back over years of ministry and how many times I have heard the same things over and over again. I don't like the youth ministry.

I'm going to another church. I don't like the youth pastor. I'm going to go someplace else.

I don't like that kind of music. I can't worship that way. I'm going someplace else.

I want a Bible study for my age group. They don't have one. I'll go someplace else.

It's my money. Why should I give more of my money? I have other things to do on Sunday night. Why do I need to go to church? I'm tired on Wednesday night.

Why should I pray? Now these and many other excuses, ladies and gentlemen, did you notice the thing that is common to all of them? And as long as we make excuses for our disobedience and as long as we make excuses for our sins by saying I, I, I, all the time, God isn't going to bless, we have to come to a point where we say, I doesn't matter anymore. I don't exist for myself in this ministry. I am here to serve Christ and through Him and His Spirit to serve others.

Humble yourselves. We all need a heavy dose of humility. We all need to see serving self in the interest of serving God.

Humble ourselves. Secondly, and pray and seek my face. We must humble ourselves, one, two, we must pray.

This is predicated on the promise of verse 15. Notice, now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayer offered in this place. This was the answer to the prayer that Solomon had prayed in chapter six.

Oh my God, let your eyes be open and your ears attentive to the prayer offered in this place. God said, I will do that. How shall we pray? Well, there's no better example than that which we find in that godly man, Daniel.

You remember Daniel, he got thrown into a lion's den. Daniel chapter six, verse 10, for what? For praying. How did he pray? Daniel six, verse 10.

Daniel knew that the document was signed. He entered into his house. Now, in his roof chamber, he had windows open, what? Toward Jerusalem.

You don't think he understood the promise that God had made to Solomon? And he continued kneeling on his knees three times a day, praying and giving thanks before his God as he had been doing previously. He was thrown into a den of lions. He was an elderly man by this time, probably in his 80s.

Praying toward Jerusalem, just like Solomon said, Lord, if your people in captivity, pray toward this place. Hear and answer them now. Listen to him pray.

And now, oh Lord, our God, who brought your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand and have made a name for yourself as it is this day, we have sinned. We have been wicked. Humbling themselves.

Oh Lord, in accordance with all your righteous acts, let now your anger and your wrath turn away from your city, Jerusalem, your holy mountain. For because of our sins and the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and your people have become a reproach to all those around us. So now, oh God, listen to the

prayer of your servant and to his supplications.

And for your sake, oh Lord, let your face shine on your desolate sanctuary. Now listen to this passion. Oh my God, incline your ear and hear.

Open your eyes and see our desolations. And the city which is called by your name. There's that phrase from the seventh chapter of Second Chronicles, verse 14.

Called by your name. For we are not presenting our supplications before you on account of any merits of our own, but on account of your great compassion. Oh Lord, hear.

Oh Lord, forgive. Oh Lord, listen and take action. For your own sake, oh my God, do not delay because your city and your people are called by your name.

There is no more passionate prayer in all the Bible. And it's a prayer for revival. I know of no revival in church history that was not preceded by prolonged, persistent, and expectant prayer.

Stephen Oldford, great pastor from New York City, said, and I quote, the burden of revival can be summed up in one word. It is prayer. Selwyn Hughes, a gentleman from Wales who belongs to the Crusade for World Revival, has written this.

He said, my own view is that many are wishing for a revival, but do not want it deeply enough to pay the price in fervent, believing intercession and prayer. And genuinely speaking, we are far too easily intoxicated by our successes, and thus less dependent on the Holy Spirit than we ought to be. And this next sentence really hit me hard.

He said, the key word for the life of the church nowadays seems to be organize rather than agonize. In a church environment that's gone to seed over leadership, everything is leadership. Conferences, training, classes, books, tapes, videos on leadership, organize, organize, organize.

And the biblical prescription is agonize. Prayer is an act of humiliation, which puts self and selfishness to death. See, that's because prayer is seeking God's face.

That's what he said. If they will humble themselves and pray and seek my face. We must become intensely God-focused.

Earnestness, zeal, persistence, perseverance. Jesus put it this way. Ask, keep on asking, and you will receive.

Keep on knocking, it will be opened to you. Keep on, keep on. At one point, Jesus said, you fathers, you know how to give good gifts to your children.

And if you know how to give good gifts to your children, don't you think the Heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to them to ask? Pray, pray, ask, and you will receive. Seek, you will find. Knock, it will be opened.

Keep on asking. Keep on seeking. Keep on knocking until God answers.

We must humble ourselves. We must pray. And then the third thing he says here is, if they will turn from their wicked ways, we must turn from our sins.

Here's repentance. A turning away from sin, which leads to revival. A turning again.

Now listen, friends. Revival presupposes a passionate longing after holiness, a discontent with sin. Now let me go back again to Isaiah, who has so much to say on these points.

Isaiah chapter 55, verses 6 and 7. Seek the Lord while he may be found. Call upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts.

Let him return to the Lord, and he will have compassion on him. And to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. Listen to this indictment.

Behold, Isaiah 59, 1 and 2. Behold, the Lord's hand is not short that it cannot save, nor his ear dull that it cannot hear. What's the problem then? But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God. Your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear.

It's not God's fault. It's our fault. Remember how James puts it in James chapter 5, verse 16.

Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another so that you may be healed. Now, this was the Lord's revelation. His message in Revelation chapters 2 and 3 to 4 of those seven churches.

Listen to them. To the church in Ephesus in chapter 2, verse 5. Therefore, remember from where you have fallen and repent. Chapter 2, verse 16, the church at Pergamum.

Therefore, repent or else. Chapter 3, verse 3, to the church at Sardis. So remember what you have received and heard and keep it and repent.

If you do not wake up, I will come as a thief. Verse 19, to the church of Laodicea. Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline.

Therefore, be zealous and repent. Even in the first century, the message to the church was repent and wake up or God will extinguish your light. G. Campbell Morgan, great preacher in London of the past generation, talked about the revival in Wales.

Here's what he said. I quote, Morgan observed that the movement was characterized by, quote, the most remarkable confessions of sin, confessions that were costly. Indeed, he heard some people had been members of the church and, in fact, officers of the church rise to their feet and confess hidden sins in their hearts, impurity committed and condoned, and then request the prayer of their fellow Christians for cleansing and forgiveness.

When God's spirit comes in among a congregation of people, people are comfortable confessing their sins publicly, knowing that nobody is going to criticize, nobody is going to gossip, but they're going to pray and they will be delivered from those sins. It's a high price to pay for revival, but most of us Christians today would just rather not be bothered. We'd just rather come to church for an hour and we'd go home and come back the next week and so what? We limp along in spiritual defeat.

I want you to hear the testimony of Duncan Campbell. It was a great revival in the Hebrides Islands in 1949. These are islands off the coast of Scotland.

Here's the story of Duncan Campbell, who was one of the main leaders in that revival. Here's what he said. I personally believe in the sovereignty of God in the affairs of men, but I do not believe in any concept

of service that eliminates man's responsibility.

Here are men and women who believe in a covenant-keeping God, who believe that God, to whom they pray, could not fail to fulfill his covenant engagements, but they also believe that they, too, had to do something about it. God was the God of revival, but they were the instruments, the agents, through which revival was possible. I heard one of the elders of the church praying, quote, Lord, you must do it, for we cannot, but we want to tell you now that we are here before you as empty vessels for you to fill.

That's the way I've been praying this week. Such was their confidence and conviction as they lingered in the presence of God month after month, three nights a week, meeting together in a barn at 10 PM and remaining there before God until 4 or 5 o'clock in the morning. Yes, they believed that revival was coming, but they also knew that a price had to be paid.

They waited. The months passed. Nothing happened until one morning about 2 o'clock, I believe, one young man, known very well, took up his Bible and read from Psalm 24.

Who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath a pure heart, who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor be it sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord. Not our blessing, but the blessing.

The young man closed the Bible and he looked at his companions on their knees before God and he said, quote, brethren, it is just so much humbug to be waiting thus night after night, month after month, if we ourselves are not right with God. I must ask myself, is my heart pure? Are my hands clean? And at that moment, a moment that will ever live in our memories, something happened. God swept into the prayer group.

And at that wonderful moment, seven elders discovered what they evidently had not discovered before, that revival must be related to holiness. Is my heart pure? Are my hands clean? Yes, at that moment, they found themselves in the searching power of the presence of God and discovered things about themselves they had never suspected. But the blood of Calvary heals.

Well, let me come to the third of the results of true biblical revival. We've seen that revival always has distinctive recipients. It has definitive requirements.

Now, thirdly, revival always has decisive results. God promises to respond to the prayers of his people. Now, the circumstances, that is the way that God does this, is varied from one revival to another.

His providence is amazingly varied. The evangelical awakening in England and the great awakening in the colonies in the 1740s was distinguished by great preaching. The Welsh revival was distinguished by great testimonies, a confession of sin and singing.

The revival that we referred to earlier of 1857-58 was especially distinguished by prayer. But these three results are always present. One, the Lord will hear.

Then I will hear from heaven. Again, that is an answer to Solomon's prayer in verse 40 of the previous chapter. I pray, let your eyes be open and your ears attentive to the prayer offered in this place.

The Lord promises to heed the earnest, humble pleas of his repentant people. When we pray with that self-humiliation, when we pray humbly, selflessly, God will answer. But remember, there's another promise.

That promise is Psalm 66, verse 18. If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. That's why our prayers have to be preceded by self-humiliation and confession of sin and repentance turning from our wicked ways.

The Lord will hear. Secondly, the Lord will forgive. I will hear from heaven will forgive their sin.

We forget that this is an act of God's goodness, his crowning attribute. Go back and read it again. Exodus chapter 34, verses 6 and 7, when God revealed his character in that marvelous demonstration to Moses who asked for a vision of his glory.

The Lord passed in front of him and proclaimed, the Lord, the Lord God. Now, how does God describe himself in all of his holiness? Here's how God described himself. The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in loving kindness and truth, who keeps loving kindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression, and sin.

The first way God reveals himself is a compassionate God who forgives sin. Now, here's the point I want you to remember from this. God is not reluctant.

He delights to forgive when we repent of our sins. But repentance of sin means humbling ourselves and turning away from it, giving it up, parting ways with our sins. The Lord will hear.

The Lord will forgive. And thirdly, the Lord will heal. We'll hear from heaven, we'll forgive their sin, and we'll heal their land.

The immediate result of revival is the restoration of God's people. They are awakened to new life. There is new joy.

There is new vibrancy. There is new openness. There is freshness and power in worship.

There is power in prayer. There is power in the preaching of the word of God. There is power in their witness.

And that's why they are awakened to new life. But inevitably, there's more to this healing, because multitudes of unbelievers come to faith in Christ. When God gets a hold of his people in the church, the unbelievers come flocking.

You say, I've never seen that. No, you haven't. Neither have I. But I've read about it.

It's happened. That's why we ought to be praying that God would revive us. But then something else happens.

Society itself is renewed. Let me just mention to you, this is from J. Edwin Orr, who is a scholar of revival. In fact, he's the author of the final hymn we're going to sing today.

But he wrote a history of the 1857, 1858 revival. And this is just from his description of the impact of this revival in Northern Ireland. Here's part of what happened.

This revival crossed the ocean, 1858, 1859, into 1860. Coleraine, the city of Coleraine, 1860, April of 1860, only one new case and a very unimportant one in court. Belfast, only three new cases, all of them trifling in character.

London dairy, no criminal business at all in the courts. Down, no prisoners appearing on the calendar for trial. The courts were emptied out, no criminals, because there was revival.

In those days, they had what they called insane asylums for people who had mental problems. The number of people in these asylums drastically went down. So did the instance of prostitution.

The Reverend John Bailey was startled to learn of a prayer meeting being held by converted inmates of a house of ill fame. That's a place they put women who were prostitutes. The Ulster Penitentiary for the Reform of Fallen Women was in great need of funds and space to take care of an influx of converted prostitutes seeking rehabilitation.

In fact, certain prostitutes confessed that they were first made to consider an amended life, that is, they first woke up to the fact that maybe they ought to straighten their lives out by the falling off of business. There were no men coming to them. The Reverend John Venn of Hereford quoted a Belfast policeman who saw a body of 14 prostitutes making their way to a house of refugees as a result of a visit to a prayer meeting.

14 of them went to a prayer meeting and got saved. Not only that, Scottish figures indicated that the 1859 revival diminished noticeably the incidence of illegitimacy, illegitimate births. There was a moral reformation.

You see what God means when he says, I will heal you of their land? What's our hope for this? Not legislation. It's God waking up his people. Education.

One of the great results of the Great Awakening here in the colonies of America. You don't probably realize this, but revivals were the birth of, just here in the East, the University of Pennsylvania, Princeton University, Columbia University, Rutgers University, Brown University, and Dartmouth College. All of those were born out of spiritual awakening.

Is revival a realistic possibility in our time? I believe that it is. But now you say, wait a minute, Pastor. I remember a certain verse back there in 2 Timothy that goes like this, but realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come.

And then verse 13 of 2 Timothy 3, which says, but evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. Yes, yes, I understand that. Things will get worse and worse before our Lord's coming, but revival is always a possibility.

Historically, it has always been when things were the darkest and appeared to be the most hopeless that the Lord broke in with power and his awakening grace. There was a major epidemic of alcoholism in England when the evangelical awakening began. It was a hopeless situation there.

And as we've just seen today, there was an enormous economic crash with job layoffs and businesses going out of business and bankruptcies and people losing their homes. The things we're hearing today, the very same dynamics in 1857. Do you see our desperate need here in America at this time is not for tea parties, it's for prayer meetings.

Perhaps half a million frustrated citizens showed up on April 15th in some 700 different rallies. Can you imagine the impact if half a million genuinely earnest Christians would gather for humble confession of sin and prayer for revival? I ask you then to face squarely the truth of these verses. You are a believer, you

are called by God's name.

The name of the Lord Jesus, you are a Christian. Humble yourselves, seek his face, begin to pray, really pray. I'm not under any illusions.

Many of you won't take this that seriously, but I'm praying that at least one or two of you will. And begin praying. I don't know whether you can give two or three or four hours a day to pray, to pray for revival at Wading River Baptist Church and in Wading River in Eastern Long Island.

And then to turn from your sins in genuine repentance, to search your heart, to come to God and say, Spirit of God, search me, search me, with the searchlight of your holiness and show me my sins. And then I want to repent. I want to be done with those sins.

And if we do that, I believe we can trust the Lord, that he will open the windows of heaven and pour out upon us revival blessings that we so desperately need and that we earnestly seek. Let's pray. Now, Father, we ask in the closing moments of this service, search us and know our hearts.

Try us and know our most intimate thought and see if there is any wicked way in us, any way of evil in us, and lead us in the way everlasting. Oh, Lord, we are your people. We are called by your name, but we get in the way of your working.

And so, Lord, today we would humble ourselves and we would pray and seek your face, realizing that it's our sins that have caused the separation, not your reluctance, purge us. Hear from heaven, Lord, forgive our sins, heal our land. Father, we realize that there's nothing we can do.

We can't vote people into office. We can't do it by political rallies. Congress, our state assembly, our president, our governor, none of these are going to bring a reversal of our slide into Sodom, but revival.

Revival. Oh, God, in our day, before this generation passes, will you please revive your church? We have so often sinned against you. We mourn our sins.

We seek your forgiveness. We long for your glory and your power to be manifested once again. We long for dozens, yes, even hundreds, or thousands of lost souls to come to Christ.

Will you do it, Father, for Jesus' sake? And we pray it in his name, amen. With a spirit of reverence, let's sing our concluding hymn. Kevin, come and lead us, please.

Please take your hymnal, stand to your feet.

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