

Four Lessons from Biblical Revivals

by Santosh Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of being thirsty for God, highlighting that true revival comes when we are desperately thirsty for the Holy Spirit. It discusses the need to have a genuine thirst for God, to seek Him daily in the everyday things, and to be filled with the Holy Spirit's love that meets the needs of others. The sermon also touches on the significance of loving others in a way that meets their needs, especially in relationships like marriage, family, and church.

Scripture: John 7:37, Romans 5:5, 1 John 3:11, Acts 2:41, Luke 7:37, Romans 12:1, 1 Kings 19:3, Matthew 28:18, Psalm 139:23, Mark 9:24

Topics: "Thirst for God", "Loving Others"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of being thirsty for God, highlighting that true revival comes when we are desperately thirsty for the Holy Spirit. It discusses the need to have a genuine thirst for God, to seek Him daily in the everyday things, and to be filled with the Holy Spirit's love that meets the needs of others. The sermon also touches on the significance of loving others in a way that meets their needs, especially in relationships like marriage, family, and church.

Transcript

There's two ways to look at that promise from this week that the afflictions will be many. It's true. One of the marks of being righteous, being conformed into the image of Jesus, is that our afflictions will be many.

But that's not the promise. It's just a fact. The promise is that God delivers out of 100%.

That's the promise. So, we don't look at the number of the afflictions. We don't look at whether the afflictions are increasing or decreasing.

We say as many as they are. And it doesn't matter if I have a certain number and somebody else has a different number of afflictions. The promise is true for every single one, that the Lord delivers Him out of all of them.

That word, all, is the promise in that. So, I hope you're encouraged by that, family, as I am. The promise of the Lord.

You know, recently there's been a lot of conversation about different gatherings, church gatherings, revivals, in different places, out in the Midwest and east of the US. And I've been thinking about that some,

but, you know, maybe in a different way than most of the conversation that I'm hearing about it. When you hear about revival somewhere, meetings going on somewhere, long meetings, days on end, does that, what does that do for you? Does that make you want to go there and visit and see what's going on there? And does it make you, oh, change your life in some way? I was thinking about this verse in Luke chapter 16, in that context, and I don't think I'm taking it out of context, so bear with me.

If you turn there with me, please, Luke chapter 16. But I want to tell you that it hasn't, this one, you know, when I've heard about it, it didn't do that much for me. I'll tell you why.

Because I've been seeking the Lord wholeheartedly, and I'm not saying that like such a good person that I am. But for the one who is walking with Jesus every day, seeking Him above everything else, and you really are doing that, not just talking about it or hearing about it, you're actually doing that, it's great that somebody else has now decided to do that as well. But if you, you know, there's, what saddens me is that there's a little bit of this attention-seeking mindset, not by them, and again, I'm not thinking of anyone in particular, but there's an us, our flesh, I'll say.

I'm talking about us now. There's an us's desire to want to see it or be a part of it or be around it and talk about it and read about it, and that's concerning to me. And you remember when, in the story of Lazarus and the rich man and Abraham, when Abraham told the rich man, see the rich man said, if you read Luke 16 verse 29, the rich man all of a sudden has a burden for his unconverted brothers.

He has five brothers, he says in verse 28, and he says, I don't want them to end up in hell like I am, so can you send them a warning? And Abraham said, they have the Bible, they have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them. And he said, no father, Abraham, verse 30, if someone goes to them from the dead, or I would paraphrase that, if something supernatural happens, they will repent. But he said to them, if they do not listen to the Bible, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.

And so this was the word the Lord gave me, is with regard to supernatural events, any event that's supernatural, let's say you heard that a genuine miracle happened somewhere, even somebody really being risen from the dead, would you all of a sudden say, wow, God is moving, I better take my Christian life seriously? If so, that's great, but there's something wrong. If you've been sitting in this church, and you're waiting for a supernatural move of some sort to stir you into action, then I want you to pay attention to what we just read. What Abraham said and Jesus quoted was this, and this is a true story by the way, because Jesus actually used Abraham and a real man named Lazarus.

He didn't name the rich man. So it's a true story. There is such a person in hell today, and I'm looking forward to meeting Lazarus as I am Abraham.

But what Jesus said was, if the Bible is not enough to make you repent, then any other supernatural event or some other thing that you're hoping for a stirring of some sort will only result in a temporary, it might stir you temporarily. The only thing that can bring lasting change to your family is this book. That's what Jesus said very plainly.

You've had a book in your home. We have a Bible reading plan. We read from this book.

We use this book a lot. We encourage you all to bring your Bible to the church meeting. Why? Because Jesus said, this is what will cause you to repent, and an emphasis on that.

Now, I'm not against emotional stirrings. They can happen at times, but the important thing to remember is that those stirrings must take us back to the book of life, to Jesus, first of all, who is the way, the truth, and the life. Because there have been, if you read church history, and I've been more than paying attention to what's going on in different parts of the country right now, I've gone back and read history of revivals, genuine revivals and fake revivals.

How do you know that they're fake? Because you see what has been the outcome of that movement now. What is happening in that same church or group of churches as a result of these movements. And so I withhold my, I actually don't have any judgment about anyone.

I don't judge anyone except myself. But my discernment about what's going on now, I wait to see. I don't know.

I hope it is genuine. And for whoever it is there, it's up to them to make sure it's genuine. For me, and for you and I here in Loveland, Colorado at RLCF, the call is to take God's word seriously, to seek for the power of His Holy Spirit more than you've ever sought before.

And if what's happening in somebody else, whether it's genuine or not, causes that in you, that's a wonderful thing. If it stirs you to seek Him now and to seek for Him like you've never sought for Him before. But there have been revivals, Toronto, Brownsville, Lakeland, Asbury, even 50 years ago, 53 years ago, there was in the same college, there was a religious movement, a spiritual movement.

And now, and I've thought about what it was like, if you turn over, turn back a few pages to Luke chapter 9, when Jesus saw large crowds gathering, I, in my free time a little bit this week, I was just kind of looking at a concordance that, where was, how did Jesus handle crowds? And I didn't want to make this a study on that. You can do that yourself. But sometimes go back and do that.

Take a concordance and look at where all in the New Testament it says Jesus was around a crowd. It's multiple, many times. And multitude, those are two words that are used, depending on the translation you use, you'll see that.

But if you're interested, do that for your own benefit. And see how Jesus handled when large crowds came. One of my favorite passages in John 6, where by the time the, while Jesus was still preaching, the longer he preached, the crowd just got less and less and less.

It didn't increase. This is Jesus' style of preaching. Now, that's not always the case.

But if you look here in Luke 9, this is the one, one I wanted to point out to you. Luke chapter 9, it says in verse 10, when the apostles returned, see, he had just sent them out and they probably did a miraculous thing. Supernatural things were happening.

They cast out demons. And in another passage, I think in Matthew 10, it talks about how they came back and gave a report of what all supernatural things were happening. And they gave a count, verse 10, of all that they had done.

And then taking them with him, he didn't say, okay, let's make this even bigger. He withdrew by himself to a city called Bethsaida. But the crowds were aware of this and followed him even there.

And welcoming them, what did he do? He began speaking to them about the kingdom of God. He began speaking to them about the kingdom of God. And that's the word the Lord's been speaking to me this week.

As you think about large crowds gathering, let's say all of a sudden we pack this, this building and overflow and downstairs and all that. What should we do? Speak to them about the kingdom of God. This is Jesus' example of what to do when you find the large crowds gathering.

Speak to them about the kingdom of God. And I'd like to look a little bit about what that means. What does the kingdom of God actually mean in this context? We heard about it on Wednesday as well.

So it was a timely reminder. Among the revivals that I've been inspired by, the Welsh revival, there's been good and bad even there. Other revivals through history.

There's one revival that transformed my life the most. And that's, I don't know if you've heard of it. I don't even think the word revival was used in that context.

But this was almost 50 years ago when two men, independent of each other, were seeking for help in their defeated Christian life and the dryness in their Christian life. And they both were in a place of need and were desperate and were hungry and were thirsty. And they met together and they prayed, but then they went back separately and prayed, locked themselves in in their bedrooms and cried out to God on their knees, and God filled them both separately with the Holy Spirit.

And out of that movement in 1975, out of that work of God that happened quietly, in a way that even their neighbors probably didn't even know. There was no news channels or anything like that, no cameras in there, no iPhones in those days to take videos of what's going on in the meeting. It was two men separately by themselves on their knees before God, bowing before Him, crying out to Him, and God filled them with the Holy Spirit.

It was Brother Zach and Brother Ian. The Lord brought them together in 1975, and the work that started there, I tell you, I didn't see it for many years, growing up there. I was alive at that time.

I was a year and a half, two years old at the time. And of course, it took me a long time to be aware of it, but that, the movement that started then has really changed my life, allowing me to really know the true Jesus, not another Jesus and the other Jesuses that are presented so often in Christendom, a move that took me back to God's Word. And there were a few things that they emphasized.

First of all, the foundation for that was Matthew 28. We've heard about this often, like us to see it again. Matthew 28, and this must be our emphasis as well.

Matthew 28, verse 18, 19, and 20. Matthew 28, verses 18, 19, and 20. If anybody asks you, what is the mission of RLCF? You can just go to this verse and say, this is it, because this is the mission Jesus gave us.

He says, all authority, verse 18, has been given to me in heaven and on earth. So, because Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, first of all. That's what it means to be a disciple, is to be baptized in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and to observe all that Jesus commanded us to do.

This is very simply what it means to be a disciple, and this is what we have sought to proclaim here at RLCF, following the example that CFC has set us. But what does that look like? What does it mean to obey all that Jesus taught us? I mean, you can read about it. We went through a study of the book of Matthew, through that series, All That Jesus Taught, all the words of Jesus in the book of Matthew.

But very simply, these are some of the things that we've sought to emphasize. Repentance, true turning, it starts there. No matter how much you sing and have prayer meetings that last hours and hours and hours, if there is no repentance, no actual turning, it doesn't matter how long you sit there in a meeting.

If it takes that long to get there, then stay there. Stay there overnight, stay there for a week. If it takes you that long to repent, but you must repent and the revival can end when you repent, otherwise, yeah, keep singing, keep crying out to God, but it starts with repentance and a repentance that leads you to holiness in the inside and inner life.

If you have a piece of paper, we have bulletins in which you can write, I encourage you to write it down or take a note of it. These are the things that we seek to emphasize. Repentance, first of all.

Secondly, inner holiness. Not holiness that looks holy on the outside where we change how we dress or change this or change that. That might be a result of it, but it's an inner holiness.

Inner holiness, holiness in the inner life because that's where nobody else can see how holy you really are. Only you and the Lord and I think the devil know how holy you really are, but that's where it matters. The outward impression of holiness that you gave to people will mean absolutely nothing when Jesus comes.

He will peel back the covers and we'll all see what all of us were like on the inside and be ready for that. Dear friends, that's what matters, holiness in the inside. Mutual love, love for brothers and sisters, husbands and wives, parents with children, genuine love for each other.

Manifest in building a body, not just a congregation of people that come together on a Sunday and they leave, they come back the next Sunday or if they don't like it, they find another restaurant church or theater church experience. Mutual love where we are committed to each other, where if you suffer, I suffer with you. If you rejoice, I'm rejoicing with you.

I have a care for you. I'm interested in your spiritual welfare as much as I'm interested in becoming more like Christ. I'm interested in you becoming like Christ, brothers, sisters.

That's why we are a local church. Purity, number four, purity, moral purity. That means we're upright with our eyes, men.

Whether you're actually sitting there and watching things on the phone or the internet or whatever, that should be the extreme of it. But even a little bit of a glance, how you think about women. I mean, this is going on in Christendom today where even pastors in their sermons are objectifying women.

It's so dishonoring to God. Guard your thoughts, men, guard your thoughts. Only you know and the Lord, and as I said, the devil, know if you're lusting in your thoughts.

And you don't need a phone or a computer to lust. You have eyes that can see. Moral purity and uprightness in your speech.

If you say something, mean it. Let your yes be yes. Let your no be no.

No double talk. It's moral purity. Financial integrity.

This is something that's, is that five? One, two, three, four, five. Five is financial integrity. Let me go again.

Repentance, holiness on the inside. Love for brothers and sisters, mutual love. Moral purity is number four.

And number five is financial integrity. Again, you see in Christendom. It's one of the reasons we don't, we're not boasting.

We're not putting our collars up because we don't have any paid staff. We don't beg for money. You can give money if you want.

If you don't, that's fine. Nobody's asking you whether you'd give or not. None of us is paid for what we do.

It's volunteer. The reason we want that is because we want to preserve financial integrity. And I see even some of the best churches, a little bit of a smear, some of the best mission organizations, even the world recognizes, they've got some shady dealings.

It should never be said about a true church of Jesus Christ. Ever any kind of inappropriateness with money. And lastly, being a bold witness.

Being a bold witness. This is our mission. Let me say it again.

Repentance, first of all. Holiness on the inside. Inner holiness.

Mutual love. Love for others. Love for brothers and sisters and our family, first of all.

Fourthly, moral purity. Purity. Number five, financial integrity.

That means being righteous in money matters. That might be a big word for some of your children. Financial integrity means you're absolutely righteous with money matters.

You don't cheat anyone. You don't steal from anyone. You don't take advantage of anyone financially.

You don't have any debt. That's something we preach in this church as well. There should not be any debt that you owe somebody and you have the money to pay it.

Financial integrity. And lastly, being a bold witness. And all of that is based on God's word.

We're not coming up with some new idea, some new model. All of that, you'll find the principles in God's word. And the revival of that movement, that revival is what I have found has lasted the test of time.

Where that standard hasn't been watered down and all of a sudden now, yeah, we're creeping in a little bit of moral impurity. Where you're finding there's a little bit of impurity that's allowed. Now, it's not to say that we won't fall, but if we fall, we deal with it.

Sin is dealt with radically. That's the standards that the church must uphold. And again, I wanna stress, it doesn't mean we don't fall, but we hate it and we preach against it.

We continue to do that. And we never lower the standards even if 50 years have gone by. And that's how I know that it's a true move of God because the standards haven't dropped.

So that's a little bit of how, when I think about revival, that's what I think about. That's the kind of revival I want the Lord to do through RLCF as well. Over time, it may not happen in a day, may not even happen in a month.

I want it to happen over time. I want it to last until Jesus comes, God willing, if it is his will. But we're not in control of that.

And that's why I believe that God is, he doesn't believe in denominations. He's not got an allegiance to anybody. He didn't have an allegiance to the Lutherans when Martin Luther started that movement or the Wesleyans when John, the Methodists when John Wesley started that movement or the Pentecostals or any, he doesn't have an allegiance to any denomination or movement.

He's looking for his bride. People who no matter what limited understanding they may have of God's word, they're devoted to Jesus. The bridegroom is everything for them.

Jesus alone is everything for them. And that must be the case here. And that's up to us individually.

So if our children, when they're the ones that are sitting here, when they're the adults at RLCF and one of them is up here preaching the word, it's up to them to lead the church forward. It won't be up to what we did or what our forerunners did. Are they following Jesus individually? And so children, it's gonna be up to you.

If the Lord takes you, leaves you here or takes you somewhere else, I pray that Jesus Christ will be everything for you children until the end of your life. Then you will be useful for God and for his kingdom. And RLCF will remain as a church that's a pure lamp for God if the people sitting in it at that time, a hundred years from now perhaps, love him.

Jesus is not affiliated to CFC or RLCF or Baptist or Pentecostal or this or that. He is building his church a pure bride. And if in this building, if it's still standing 50 years from now, I don't know if it will be, but wherever the name of RLCF is gathered, if there's a group of people there who are saying, Lord, we wanna follow you, we wanna be devoted to you above all else and it is our children, I pray it is so, then he is pleased with it.

But I've also been thinking about biblical revivals. If you read the history or you read the Bible, you'll see that there were revivals in the Bible as well. There was a revival in the time of Hezekiah when he gathered the people together and they sought the Lord as one.

There was a revival in the time of Josiah. You can read about it where they started to rebuild the temple and they found the book of the law. Read about it.

I think it's 2 Chronicles 34 or something like that. The latter chapters of 2 Chronicles where they found the law and if you read it, what happened to Josiah? It's like they didn't have a Bible. They were trying to have a Bible without the Bible and just, I don't know, they were singing and doing whatever and then they found the Bible and they opened it and it was like, whoa, God is gonna judge us.

Sin is real and then he was in a panic so he called for the prophet, I think it was Hilkiah and he said, tell us what it is and they repented and it says, Josiah ripped his clothes when he opened the Bible. This is why we must have more teaching of the Bible, such prophetic teaching that even if you don't actually rip your clothes, there's that wanting to. Oh Lord, woe is me.

Myself has been laid bare with the preaching of the word. I've been found out. That's the mark of revival that the secrets of our hearts are revealed and then even a visitor in our midst says, wow, God is here.

Not because of the singing or how long the meeting is taking or crying or praying or anything like that. No, because my thoughts were revealed. How did the preacher know what is inside me? Because he didn't.

The Holy Spirit did and the Holy Spirit is in this church when the secrets of our hearts are revealed. So there was Josiah. You read about the revival in the time of Ezra, Haggai and Zechariah to rebuild the temple.

So wonderful revivals there. I thought I would just mention four lessons that I learned from biblical revivals. Four lessons.

I could probably go on a list, but you'd be here for two weeks or so. We don't want that. I'll just pick out four that the Lord's laid on my heart that I've learned from studying biblical revivals that were genuine.

Now, three of them come from the revival on Mount Carmel. So let's turn there. First Kings chapter 18.

Children, you'll probably remember the story of Elijah. And the essence there was that there were Elijah who was the prophet of God and 450 prophets of who? Baal, yes. Prophets of God and prophets of Baal.

First Kings chapter 18. So the first point lesson I wanna share with you that the Lord's laid on my heart, I've learned through studying biblical revivals and from this story is this. My love for God is tested in my attitude toward money.

My love for God, and you can write that down if you like, my love for God is tested in my attitude toward money. Now, you might think, oh, is this gospel preaching? Really? What does money have to do with it? What about sin and hell and all that fire and brimstone? No, my love for God is tested in my attitude toward money. And the devil would love for any kind of preaching that avoids dealing with this issue of money.

I'll tell you how the Lord spoke that to me through this story. So in first Kings 18, first of all, you see the call from Elijah to the prophets of Baal. Elijah, verse 21.

First Kings 18, verse 21. Elijah came near to all the people and said, how long will you hesitate or limp on the two undivided opinions? That's the literal meaning. My margin says, how long will you limp in an undivided opinion between Jehovah and Baal? It was what it was for them.

How long will you limp sometimes on God and sometimes on Baal? Sometimes on God, sometimes on Baal. That's what he was there to address. How long will you go on limping in this undivided, in this divided opinion between Jehovah and Baal? If the Lord is God, follow him.

But if Baal, follow him. You ever seen the invitation from Elijah to follow Baal? He says, yeah. It's the same thing you read in Revelation three.

I would rather you be cold than lukewarm. So why do I say money? Because Jesus said almost the exact words in Luke chapter 16. Let's turn there.

Luke chapter 16. And Baal in the Old Testament, which is, it wasn't that Israel completely abandoned Jehovah. They held on to their high, they had their temple and they had their worship places and all that, but they had Baal also.

So maybe think of it like a Saturday was to Jehovah and maybe in the evening before we go to bed, let's do Jehovah. But let's do Baal in the workplace when I'm with my friends and when those people, so Samaritans visit and we can make a business deal with them. Let's talk about Baal.

Because you know, these friends of ours, they don't want, we don't want to be so extreme that we're only talking about Jehovah. Let's have a compromise. When our friends come over to visit us, let's talk about Baal.

Because they're into Baal. It's limping. And Jesus said, Luke chapter 16.

Let's begin verse 10. Yeah, Luke 16 verse 10. He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much.

And he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much. Therefore, if you have not been faithful in the use of money, unrighteous wealth, who will entrust the true riches to you? Do you see how you handle money will determine whether God will give you the riches of the kingdom? And if verse 12, if you have not been faithful in the use of that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own? What is he talking about here? Think about it. That which is another's is money.

Money belongs to this world. It's another's. It's not yours.

Even if it's sitting in your bank account, it's somebody else's. Let it belong to this world. What's yours is the riches of heaven.

And read it again. If you have not been faithful in somebody else's things, which is the money in your bank account, how can God give you that which is your own, which is the eternal riches? And then he says, no servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other.

And let me tell you, you either despise money and love God, or love money and despise God. That's it. Let me make it clear again.

You either love God and despise money. It's not my words. Please know I read this verse so you see it in your mind.

You either love God and despise money, or you despise God and love money. You only fall into one of those two categories. Please understand, I'm not here to hit you over the head or condemn you.

I'm convicted, brothers and sisters, that Jesus gives me just two options. There's no middle ground. There's no limping.

Do I have a little bit of interest in money? Yeah, you know, I have to use money. How am I gonna get food? And all these rationales and justifications for allowing the love of money to remain in my life. The love of money is the root of all form of evil.

If you find that you're defeated with lust, there's a good chance you love money. That's it. If you find that there's a coldness in your marriage, there's a good chance you love money.

If you find there's a lack of fire and zeal in your life for the things of God, there's a good chance you love money. Plain and simple. It's because you're limping.

And Jesus says, even though to you it might look like you're sometimes with me and sometimes with money, in my eyes, you're 100% with money. You despise me when I see that love of money in you. My love for God is tested in my attitude toward money.

And that's why, you know, that this test doesn't happen here. I'm almost certain that none of you feels the love of money right now. I don't.

Right now, money is the last thing on my mind. I'm comfortable that heat is at a good temperature. I've got enough clothes.

I'm very comfortable here. I ate this morning. I had a little bit of coffee this morning too.

I'm good. Love of money is the last thing on my mind. That's why the longer we stay here, the more we avoid that test of the love of money.

Which is why we're gonna end this meeting at some point and say, now, let's see, if we have just been fooling ourselves about our love for God. Let's go to work tomorrow morning and when we're in the midst of the world where their God is money, let's see if we really are serious about loving God. That's the revival I want, where my love for God is tested.

Because I tell you this, it's gonna be tested when Jesus comes. And I fear for the many Christians who were presented a gospel that was this limping. You know, there were other prophets in the time of Elijah.

Prophets that said, yeah, yeah, keep your bail. It's all right. Just make sure you do your Sabbath, give your tithe and all that stuff.

Fulfill your obligation. Keep your bail private. Just don't make it too obvious.

And this is the same thing that's going on today. And God is looking for Elijahs. God is looking for a church in the spirit of Elijah to prepare the way for the coming of Jesus Christ.

That's my burden, brothers and sisters. That's our burden as a church. That's our burden as elders.

I can assure you of that. If we're strict, if we're firm, if we're loving, if we're kind, if we're compassionate, it's because we wanna be ready for Jesus, that's it. We don't want anybody that sat at RLCF to get a shock when Jesus comes.

And I believe by God's grace, we won't. Because God will give us, will teach us from his words. So Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday is more important.

Yeah, Sunday's also important, I tell you that. But the rest of the week is actually more important because that's where your love for God is tested. We live in a Christendom that believes that my love for God is tested by how loud I sing or how long I sing I love you, Lord, and I worship you and I give everything to you and I praise you and all that stuff.

That might be, but you can't test the love of God sitting here on a Sunday morning. It's absolutely God's word. It's absolutely true.

And I've seen that in my life because I tell you, there were times in my life where I, this was it. I thought I loved God so much because of how I sang or how I felt in the meeting. And I went home to the same defeated life.

Day after day, week after week. And then God said, you're barking up the wrong tree. You're chasing something else that other preachers have presented to you.

And they're making you feel guilty for not chasing after that. Read your Bible, brothers and sisters. Read your Bible, children.

Look for what God is really interested in. And you'll see it's there. Let Jesus be your example.

Let God be true and every other man a liar. Let God's word be true. So my love for God is tested in my attitude towards money.

The second thing, God hears the prayers of those who fear him and want his name to be honored. God hears the prayers of those who fear him and want his name to be honored. Go back to 1 Kings chapter 18.

Children, who had the longer prayer meeting, Elijah or the prophets of Baal? The children know it. Unfortunately, many Christians in the world don't know it today. Yeah, the prophets of Baal prayed for 12 hours.

1 Kings chapter 18. Now again, please don't misunderstand. Some people will say, hey, your meetings are pretty long at RLCM.

You know, most people are used to the 59 minute meeting so that I can get back to my football game. You know, so we're not saying that the big issue is the timing. Yes, our meetings are long.

We spend almost all day together. That includes fellowship and all that, but we're not assessing God's presence by the length of the meeting. That's the point.

1 Kings chapter 18, verse 21. No, 1 Kings 8 verse 25. Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, choose one, he let them go first.

Choose one ox for yourselves and prepare it. First for you, first for you are many and call on the name of your God, but put no fire under it. Then they took the ox which was given them and they prepared it and call on the name of Baal from morning until noon.

So what is that? 6 a.m. maybe, 9 a.m., I don't know. Started about 6 a.m. That's usually when they started the clock in those times. So it's about six hours of praying.

That's a long meeting. Praying, praying, praying, singing. Okay, nothing happened.

So they figure we must not have, a meeting must not be long enough. So let's keep it going. Saying, oh, Baal, answer us.

See, what is this? It's saying, no, none of us is actually praying, oh, money, oh, Satan. No, we're not praying that. We're praying, oh, Jesus, but it's another Jesus.

A Jesus that allows you to still love money. A Jesus that still allows you to love yourself. You're saying, oh, Jesus, answer us, but it's Baal because God sees you if you're limping.

Even though you're taking the name of Jesus, God hears it, oh, they're praying to Baal. Because I see the limping. I see they really love money deep down there.

Oh, Baal, answer us, but there was no voice and no one answered. And they leaped about the altar, which they made, dancing around the altar. It came about at noon that Elijah mocked them and said, remember when the children did that play? Good, good memory.

Elijah mocked them and said, hey, call out with a loud voice. You're not crying out loud enough. Your God is occupied or gone aside or is on a journey or personally asleep or needs to be awakened.

So they cried out with a loud voice, verse 28, cut themselves. Have you seen extreme revival where you start to cut yourself? That's how zealous you are. It's here, 1 Kings 18.

And lances until the blood gushed out on them. When midday was passed, they raved, raved, until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice. There was no voice, no one answered, no one paid attention and they gave up.

And Elijah said, hey, we're not gonna sit here overnight. That's it. 12 hours, no answer.

So you know the story. Elijah prepares the altar. And I timed Elijah's prayer.

It took me about 30 seconds. This is a man who's in touch with God. He reveres God.

He fears God. And he has only one desire, not, oh, the revival's happening here, or this or that. Lord, I want your name to be honored.

I want your name to be honored. I don't care what they do with me. I want your name to be honored.

So Elijah says, verse 36, the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, Elijah the prophet came near and said, oh Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, today, let it be known that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant. And I have done all these things at your word. Answer me, oh Lord, answer me, that this people may know that you, oh Lord, are God, and that you have turned their heart back again.

20, 30 seconds, and the fire fell. Verse 38, then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt offering. You see the difference between a prayer from a man that's actually in touch with God and long prayers.

Now, I believe in long prayers. I spend a lot of time in prayer throughout my day. Any free moment, I turn my thoughts towards the Lord.

If I can, when I'm falling asleep, I try to turn my thoughts towards the Lord constantly. Prayer is a continual thing, but Jesus, it says, prayed all night. Yeah, there is such a thing as all night prayer if it's needed, but it's being in touch with God.

My dear brothers and sisters, if, and children, if you're in touch with God, God may only want you to pray a 30-second prayer. And if God wants you to pray a 30-second prayer and you're praying a 30-minute prayer, there's something wrong. I want you to know that.

You can't pride yourself in the fact that you prayed for 30 minutes. If God said, I was hoping that you could have the answer in 30 seconds, like it was for Elijah. So come in touch with God.

I think about it like plugging in a fan to an outlet. If the fan is plugged into the outlet, you push the on button, it comes on. There's no running the crank and all that stuff.

If you're doing that, you didn't plug it in. If the fan is plugged into the socket, it will start. And if you're in touch with God, now you may have to keep praying and you may have to intercede.

You may have to wrestle against the powers of darkness for some time, but God is already hearing it. I wanna pray such prayers that God hears my prayer from the very first word that I prayed. You know that? Not, oh, I was praying and praying and praying and finally I got to, after three hours, finally I got to the point where God started to hear my prayer.

Why? Because it took me that long to get in touch with Him. But if I'm walking in communion with God, there's no sin in my life. I've repented of all of it.

I'm walking with Him, I'm in communion with Him. Prayer is a part of my life. Then there's a need for something.

The moment I start talking to God, I'm in touch with Him. And if it is His will that He should have me pray for three days, then I'll pray for three days or three hours or 30 minutes or 30 seconds. See, this is why when Jesus, you know, remember when they came down from the Mount of Transfiguration, they came down and then there was a demon-possessed boy that the Father brought to the other nine disciples and they couldn't cast out the demon.

And then Jesus cast it out immediately, 10 seconds. You know, in some cases it says a word. Cast out the demon, gone.

And then they're like, Jesus, we've been praying for three days or whatever. Like, what happened? What's the difference between your prayer and our prayer? Was it the words we used? Wasn't our longer prayer more meaningful to God than your 10-second prayer? What he was saying there is, you know, this kind goes out with prayer and fasting. A lot of people have interpreted that to mean that before you cast out a demon, you must go and pray and fast and then come to the demon.

Did Jesus go and pray and fast? The demon was right there in front of Him. There's no time to pray and fast. He had been praying and fasting in His spirit throughout His life.

Whenever the Father said, fast this meal, take it off. For what? Because there's something coming down the road I want you to be ready for. Yes, pray, remain in the spirit.

Pray at all times, fervent. Pray in the spirit at all times. Pray in the spirit at all times.

Then when the prayer that's needed is a three-second prayer, God hears you from the very first word. This is the life I want. This is the prayer life I want where I'm in communion with God and my dear brothers and sisters, it's not just for a few.

He wants all of us to be so in touch with Him that the prayers we are praying are effective prayers. Verse, yeah, and so the Lord answered with fire. So God hears the prayers of those who fear Him and want His name to be honored.

That's what Elijah said. Let them know that you are God, your Lord. The third thing I want to say is true worship.

This word worship is used a lot in Christendom and sadly is misused. Most people haven't really studied the New Testament. I'll tell you the reason many people think worship is something else is because they haven't seen the difference between the New Covenant and the Old Covenant.

Worship under the Old Covenant was different from worship under the New Covenant. Just like foods that you could eat, cleanliness was different under the Old Covenant than what you have under the New Covenant. We don't think of ourselves as holy because we avoid shellfish, right? If I said holiness is shellfish, then you'd be like, no, that's Old Covenant, man.

But when I tell you that worship is the singing and praising in long hours, you say, yeah, that is. That's Old Covenant. What is worship in the New Covenant? In fact, it's more important that you know what New Covenant worship is than that you know what to eat.

It's better that you avoid shellfish and really worship in spirit and truth. So true worship is following Jesus in the everyday things. True worship is following Jesus in the everyday things, every day.

You know what happened after this revival on Mount Carmel to Elijah? He got depressed. You read about it in 1 Kings 19. This was a man whom God used to stir up the people and they were like, okay, God, it is a fire came down.

You read in the very next chapter, he's hiding himself in a cave, depressed, and said, Lord, I'm ready to commit suicide. That's Old Covenant. The stirring and the fire coming down from heaven and all that, and then the next day or two days later, you're like, ah, I'm sick of this life.

I wanna go die. And this is my fear. I tell you, as I've thought about the young people, and I'm so blessed that there are young people who wanna seek the Lord in these colleges, but I fear, I fear lest the leaders are misleading them.

And this happened in Lakeland, Florida a few years ago. Happened some years ago even before that in Brownsville and other places. And again, I'm not here to judge anyone else except that I take heed to myself that the move of God that I'm looking for is a move that doesn't leave me depressed days later, weeks later, months later, or even years later.

And I tell you, every emotional stirring of God, every emotional stirring has the possibility of that end result as it was for Elijah. Look at what he says in 1 Kings 19 verse three. He was afraid because Jezebel was chasing him, was gonna chase him, 1 Kings 19 verse three.

Verse 11, no, sorry, verse, yeah, verse four. Elijah went a day's journey into the wilderness, sat under a juniper tree, and requested for himself that he might die. He walked a long ways into the wilderness, says, I'm done with life, sat under a tree and says, Lord, die, let me just die.

You see the result of a temporary emotional stirring. And again, the move of what happened on Mount Carmel was genuine. But Elijah, let's not, Elijah, he's upheld even in the New Testament as one of the greatest.

He got to come on the Mount of Transfiguration. But this was an old covenant standard that they could come up to, a stirring that left you dry sometime later. And Jesus says, no, if anyone drinks the water that I give them, they will never thirst again.

I wanna tell you a little bit of a testimony. 1992, I'd been in the United States for a few, about a year or so, and I was in a church that had a revival of some sort that was very similar to what's going on now. Young people were stirred, and I was stirred as well.

Long, long meetings, prayer circles, and people gave their lives to the Lord. And I'm not gonna say if it's genuine or not. That's up to the Lord.

He'll be the judge of that. And I sought the Lord. There was something within me.

It latched onto a burden and a hunger within my life and a thirst within my life. But I wanna tell you, because the setting was such an emotional stirring, there was so much emotion around that, and long meetings overnight, late into the night. We'd go back, we'd go back.

I remember we'd go back to our dorm rooms after the meeting would end, and there too, there would be little prayer meetings that would break out, and it felt great. And I thought God was really moving in my life. And I wanna tell you exactly like it happened for Elijah.

Three days later, I had such depression. I had such discouragement. I backslid so horribly.

Worse than before. And I wondered about that. I thought about that.

Lord, you know my heart. I was genuine. I was seeking you.

I wanted you, and I thought even that you met with me and all that, and it ended up like that. No, I'm thankful I'm here today, but I'll tell you what brought me back was this book, was the steady, faithful teaching of the word of God, the emphasis on repentance. Sometime after that, a few weeks later, God opened the door, even through my own failure and mistakes for me to go back to India and be in Bangalore for four or five months, and did such a work of breaking in me, such a work of crushing in me, and broke me, took opportunities away from me, and I was angry at God.

I remember that time, there was a time when I felt like God had me in his hand like a rag doll and just kept beating me against the ground. This was the picture the devil was trying to paint in my mind of what God was doing in me, of how God was treating me. And yet I see that that was such a precious time.

I wonder how different the story would have been if I'd stayed in those circles, or if I'd stayed in that movement where there was a lot of emotional stirring. And I thank God in his mercy, he sent into my life teachers, including my parents, first of all, my brothers and others around me, to be strict with me, to be firm with me, people who really were in touch with God to show me the reality of who God is and not to be drawn away by these emotional stirrings, but to seek God, to seek God. And my dear brothers and sisters, it's my responsibility then to do the same for you.

That if God moves in your life emotionally in a stirring way, that's wonderful, that's great, but let it drive you to him. Let it drive you to follow Jesus in the everyday things. And that happens after you walk out this door, I wanna tell you that, not while you're here.

I want the life, and then shortly after that, you see that Elijah, so again, he says, take my life. You get down to verse 16. Finally, God says, okay, it's time for Elisha.

The ministry's over. Elijah did have, I think there was Naboth's vineyard, and then the situation with how he handed over the mantle to Elisha, and he was taken up in a chariot of fire. But really, the last public ministry you see with Elijah is one of the last things you see is him saying, I wanna die, I wanna, kill me, Lord.

And God's saying, okay, fine, it's time for somebody else to take over your ministry then. Now, that was the Old Testament. Let's not get on them.

There's a certain standard they could attain to, but there's a much higher standard, the standard of Jesus Christ, who never was depressed for even one day. There's the example of Paul, even though he was pressed and beaten and flogged. I mean, Paul was persecuted much more than Elijah was.

And yet, Paul says, in all these things, we overwhelmingly conquer. And that's the glorious gospel of the new covenant that we're called to. And one of the things, the other things about that time was that this emotional and wanting to, I was more interested in going to the meeting than in going to class.

I was still in college at the time, and I didn't wanna go to class anymore. I just wanted to go to the meeting. Does that sound spiritual to you? A young man who's 19 years old, more interested in going to a meeting than going to class.

I tell you, it was another Jesus. The Jesus that I know today was saying, Sanctus, go back to class. I have a purpose for your life that's 30 years down the road that I'm sitting here in front of you today.

I have a plan for your life that's for you to finish. And I want you to go back to your class and finish your studies and find a way so you can be employed and provide for your family so that you're not dependent on somebody else for money to serve me. Go back and finish your classes.

That's what my dad told me. Skip the meeting, go do your homework. So children, when your parents tell you that you can skip the Wednesday meeting, do your homework, there's something in that.

Jesus wants you to do your homework. Jesus wants you to go to work tomorrow and work hard. Does it mean that he's not there? That's the lie the devil wants you to believe, that he won't go with me.

I need to be in the meeting and stay here and skip school and skip my work. No, Jesus wants to go with you in the workplace because that's where it will be tested if you really want worship. Where you're giving your body as a living sacrifice daily in the workplace, at home with your wife, with your husband, with your children.

This is what's pleasing to him. You know that verse Romans chapter 12? I urge you, Romans 12 verse one, I urge you brethren by the mercies of God to present your bodies. Think of, use the word life.

Present your life, your everyday life. That's what bodies means. He doesn't want to burn up your physical body.

He wants your everyday life. That's what bodies means. I urge you brethren by the mercies of God to present your everyday life, Sunday through Saturday, a living and holy sacrifice, which is pleasing to God.

This is what's pleasing to God. It doesn't say anything about singing or praying or praising or anything. Your life as a living sacrifice, this is what's pleasing to God.

This is worship. This is new covenant worship. You know, I was thinking Jesus doesn't call us to, but when Jesus called the disciples, he says, hey, I want you to praise me.

I want you to sing to me. No, he says, I want you to follow me. Follow me.

This is the call from Jesus even today. And this is the call that the, you see this even in the book of Acts. You know what happened after the revival on the day of Pentecost, Acts chapter two.

We know how the stirring happened there, how they spoke in tongues and the noise, the rushing wind came. We know all about that, but you know what happened a few hours later? You read about in Acts chapter two, in the end of the chapter, Acts two, after Peter preaches the gospel, the sermon that he preached in this powerful event, they asked, what shall we do? Verse 37. And he says, verse 38, repent, be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

We already talked about that. And verse 40, with many other words, he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them saying, be saved from this perverse generation. Don't look like the world.

You can't have God and money. So then verse 41, those who had received his words were baptized. And that day they were added about 3000 souls.

And what did they do? They continually devoted themselves to the apostles teaching, to fellowship, the breaking of bread and to prayer. They went back to the home, some of them, they did live together. But then you skip down to the end of this.

So where does this account end? Not the story. The story is continuing in our time, but go to the last verse of the book of Acts. So the book of Acts to me is the revival through on the day of Pentecost and the genuine revival, wakening up and stirring.

And I said this a few weeks ago that if you need constantly to be revived, there's something wrong with your health. If you keep dying and having to be revived, there's something wrong with you. God wants you to live a life that's physically, first of all, constantly alert.

And spiritually, it's the same way where you're growing. You don't have to constantly been woken up and oh, Santosh died again spiritually. Gotta wake him up, needs a revival meeting.

That's not the Christian life. And you read the book of Acts, you read the life of Paul. He did experience revival on the road to Damascus.

Peter and the apostles did experience revival on the day of Pentecost, but then their graph went up. And they had other times when the Holy Spirit came upon them as needed. But look at, to me, how this is encapsulated in verse or described in the last verse of the book of Acts.

This is now talking about Paul. It says Paul, who is living a life of continually being full of the Holy Spirit, doesn't need constantly to be revived. He's full of the Holy Spirit.

He's effective for God. He's gonna finish his course. He's been pleasing to the Lord.

And look at Paul's life. He stayed two full years in his own house, in his own rented apartment, and was welcoming into his house all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God. There it is, the kingdom of God that Jesus preached when he saw the crowd.

And teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness unhindered. Period. And now the story's continuing through you and I. What is our example? If the Lord allows you to be a part of some movement, some event where he stirs you, that's great.

But do you want the daily following Jesus and taking up your cross that results in you living a life like Paul lived, where he might take you into the deep waters where you're swimming around for a day and a night, or he might take you somewhere else, but towards the end of his life, he's just got his own rented house. He's living there. Anybody who wants to hear about Jesus, he's talking to them.

This is following Jesus every day. Okay, I do want to mention the fourth one, if you'll bear with me. We will never get anything from God unless we are desperately thirsty.

We will never get anything from God unless we are desperately thirsty. I've been thinking about this a lot today. We will never get, this week, we will never get anything from God unless we are desperately thirsty.

You know about the revival on the day of Pentecost. Why is it that God met with those 120 that were gathered in the upper room? I go back to John chapter seven, a verse that we know, well, let's go there together. Why is it that of all the places where people were calling upon the name of God, which they were in the temple, they were in other places throughout Israel, there were people in their own homes, I'm sure, praying to God, and of all the people crying out to God, the Holy Spirit came upon a group of 120, a small number if you think about it, compared to the number of people in the whole world crying out to God, 120 in a small room gathered somewhere.

What was it about that gathering that the Holy Spirit came there? They fulfilled the condition. John seven, verse 37. John seven, verse 37.

On the last day, the great day of the feast, where there was a large crowd again, Jesus stood and cried out saying, if anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. If you're not thirsty, go on with your life as it is, as Christian as it might look. But if you're thirsty, come.

And if reading about how God is moving among some other people results in a thirst in you, then it's a good thing. If it makes you say, Lord, there's a passion that I'm lacking. There's a little bit of me that does need to be revived because I've not been thirsty enough.

A revival to a thirst for God. That's what I'm longing for more and more. A greater thirst for God.

If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. And the one who believes in me from, as the scripture said, from his innermost being will flow rivers of living water. But John records this.

He was talking about the day of Pentecost, the revival that was to come. This, he spoke of the spirit whom those who believed in him were to receive. Perhaps years later, for the spirit was not yet given because Jesus was not yet glorified.

And then Jesus was glorified and the spirit was given. But you see why God poured out his Holy Spirit among those, on those 120, because they fulfilled the condition of thirst. And we pray often in our prayers,

Lord, bless the Holy Spirit.

And I imagine, what does God think of when he say, Lord, pour your spirit upon us? He's looking to see, is this person genuinely thirsty for it? Is there a desperate need for it? Praise the Lord. I know we might have to end the prayer meeting at some point, but because for whatever reason, but when I go, I'm not gonna stop asking you. And my dear brothers and sisters, I hope that as this meeting ends, you will go out these doors or go downstairs for lunch with a greater thirst.

And you'll fan that thirst and you will allow that thirst to grow where you want more and more and more and more. And the mark of this thirst is that you never stop asking. And I'll tell you, I cried out that day, back in 30 years ago, and I asked God to fill me with the Holy Spirit.

And I had some kind of an experience. I believe it was genuine, honestly, because I know my heart was genuine. I believe that's the first time I experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

But like I told you, I backslid very quickly. Is it possible to backslide after being filled with the Holy Spirit? Absolutely, I'm living proof of it. But don't let it happen to you.

Learn from my bad example. And I've learned from the mistakes I've made that I want the baptism of the Holy Spirit where I never backslide ever again, never. Do you think such a life is possible? Absolutely.

But I lost my train of thought, but yeah, this is what I was gonna say, that I stopped asking. I had some kind of an experience of stirring and I could check the box saying, filled with the Holy Spirit, and I lost my thirst. And if God sees that you're more interested in checking a box to say that you're filled with the Holy Spirit than thirsty for Him, then He will withdraw and you will dry up quickly.

And who knows what depths you can fall into. I know, I know. Now this love, I wanna close with one more thing on that, and that is this love is a love for others.

This outpouring of the Holy Spirit is a outpouring of love. Romans five, verse five. I hope you know that, that what is shed abroad in our hearts when we receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Romans five, verse five is, Romans five, hope does not disappoint because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit. The love of God has been poured out in our hearts throughout the Holy Spirit. And this is the same thing you read in first John chapter three, verse 11.

First John three, verse 11. This is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. This is the message.

If you wanna know what is the beginning of the message, what is it you've been saying all along? Love one another. And I've been thinking about that. You know, our love, man, is being tested with our wives, first of all.

If you'd ask me, do I love my wife? I'd say, of course I love my wife. I know that I love my wife. But I was sharing with the brothers when we were at our prayer meeting yesterday morning, I wanna love others in the way that meets their needs.

It says, husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her. When Christ loved me, he met my needs. He knew what my need was and he met that need.

That's the love of God towards others meets the need of others. Think about loving your wife in a way that meets her needs. Loving your husband in a way that meets his needs.

Loving your children in a way that meets their needs. Loving brothers and sisters in the church in a way that meets their needs. Loving your colleagues in the workplace, your neighbors.

Not just saying, oh, I love them. And you think you're loving them or the ways in which you think you're loving them aren't really meeting their needs. And I'm especially convicted of this in my marriage where I say, Lord, sometimes I think I love Megan, but am I really meeting her needs? Is she receiving that love? Is that love meeting her in her place of need? This is the love of Christ.

It meets me in my place of need. And how am I to know what my wife's needs are? How am I to know what my children's needs are? How am I to know what your needs are, brothers and sisters in the church, through the power of the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit puts a burden on your heart and says, say this to your wife, do this for your wife. You don't need, you know, men are from Venus, women are from Mars types of books to figure out women.

You know, this is psychology. This is the world trying to use earthly means to figure out how to be better husbands and wives. Get rid of that.

Cry out for the power of the Holy Spirit. Says, Lord, you know my wife. Lord, you know my husband.

Lord, you know my children. You know where they're at. You know the secret thoughts they have at the age of 10 or 13, 16, whatever.

You know what's in their minds, Lord. Will you show me? Will you give me their mind, Lord? Will you show me how, what they're going through and what's going on in their mind right now? And will you give me a prophetic word that will meet their need right where they are? This is the love of God. And if you're not thirsty for it, if you're satisfied with the marriage you have, if you're satisfied with the relations you have with other brothers and sisters in the church, you're not thirsty for it, God will say, okay.

You continue to have that standard of life. But if you want to love your wife and your husband more, you want to love your children more, you want to love others in the church more, you want to love those around you more with the love of Christ, cry out to him for the power of the Holy Spirit. He will meet your need.

Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/3TZRqUvmhIA.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/santosh-poonen/four-lessons-from-biblical-revivals/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net