

Revival in the Church--a Closer Look

by Tim St. Clair

Revival in the church is a complete takeover by God, marked by a genuine fear of God, supernatural demonstrations of His power, and a deep hunger for His Word.

Scripture: Psalm 85:6, Isaiah 64:1, Acts 2:42-43, Acts 2:45-47, Ephesians 3:20-21, Revelation 4:10

Topics: "Church Revival", "Spiritual Renewal"

Description

Tim St. Clair preaches on the transformative nature of revival, emphasizing that it is not merely an emotional experience but a complete takeover of hearts and lives. He envisions a revival where there is a hunger for God's Word, a genuine fear of God, supernatural demonstrations of God's power, radical lifestyle changes, outpouring of love and generosity, daily fellowship for growth and accountability, joy and devotion to Christ, genuine worship rooted in Scripture, impeccable character and integrity, and continuous addition of new believers to the Body of Christ.

Transcript

"Revival is not just an emotional touch; it's a complete takeover!"

That's how one woman describes the revival that took place in her church several years ago.

What does such a "takeover" look like? If revival were to come to the church in our day, what would be changed? And what about our lives would never be the same?

I believe revival in our day would contain many of the same distinguishing earmarks that we read about when the Spirit of God was first poured out on believers on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:42-47).

1. There would be a tremendous hunger for the Word of God to be read, known, understood, believed, and obeyed ("they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine"--Acts 2:42). Our churches would begin to pattern themselves on the basis of Scripture, rather than on the basis of experience or expedience. Our generation would yearn to know the ways and heart of God, and would once again "tremble" at the Word of God.

2. There would be a genuine fear of God in the hearts of those both inside and outside the church ("fear came upon every soul"--Acts 2:43). No longer would those who profess to be Christians feel comfortable giving God a couple of hours on Sunday morning, and then "shelving" Him for the rest of the week. A God-consciousness would come over our communities, resulting in purity of words, attitudes,

relationships, work ethics, values, and habits.

3. Supernatural demonstrations of the presence and power of God would be commonplace ("many wonders and signs were done by the apostles"--Acts 2:43). Multitudes of people who were previously hardened toward the gospel would come under intense conviction and would be born into the kingdom of God.

Those who are already believers would take radical steps to gain a clear conscience and to practice restitution in their homes, churches, and communities. They would become alive in their witness, speaking out boldly for Christ.

Families that have been destroyed through selfishness, greed, divorce, unforgiveness, and immorality would be transformed, resulting in new love, tenderness, and godly priorities.

Christians who have been involved in sinful habits such as drunkenness, sodomy, bulimia, materialism, gluttony, and immorality would repent and find themselves set free from bondage. Occultic practices would be repented of, and demonic strongholds broken in people's lives. We would see the power of God released to heal broken, diseased bodies, minds, and souls.

There would be an abundant provision of funds and availability of volunteers to take the gospel to "the ends of the earth." History provides ample testimony that most of the great missionary movements have been birthed during mighty movements of the Holy Spirit in revival.

Many believers would find their lifestyles dramatically changed. The cross of Christ, "through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world," would again become central in the life of the church. Various forms of secular entertainment and pleasure that have consumed our time, thoughts, and money would give way to finer things as our perspective changes from the temporal to the eternal, from the earthly to the heavenly, from demanding happiness to desiring holiness, from self-centered living to a God-centered lifestyle.

Our churches would experience an invasion of interest from the surrounding community. Even the secular media would turn its attention to the activity of God. This would not be because preaching has been replaced with drama, nor because sin and hell are no longer mentioned, nor because the church has been re-engineered to become a place where lost people "fit in comfortably." Rather, the world would stop and take notice because the church has become passionately in love with Jesus. God's people would come to church, not to be entertained, but to seek the face of God, and to be nurtured in their walk with Him and with other believers.

4. We would witness an outpouring of love and giving from the heart of God's people to meet the needs of others ("and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need"--Acts 2:45). Widows and the elderly would be taken care of joyfully. Children without parents, singles without families, strangers without homes, and single parents would find support and encouragement from the Body of Christ.

5. Daily fellowship would take place for the purpose of learning, accountability, purity, and growth ("continuing daily with one accord"--Acts 2:46). No longer would Christians go to civil courts to settle their differences; rather, wisdom and conflict resolution would come from within the Body. The church would once again become a house of prayer as God's people cry out for power and provision. Believers would

respond to the instruction and oversight of their spiritual leaders, and spiritual leaders would take seriously their responsibility to shepherd their people and to practice biblical discipline.

6. Christians would be characterized by joy and single-minded devotion to Christ as the supreme "Love of their life" ("with gladness and singleness of heart"--Acts 2:46). As someone has said, "Revival is nothing more than the church falling in love with Jesus all over again!"

7. God's people would express their devotion in both personal and corporate worship ("praising God"--Acts 2:47). Our motive would no longer be to "feel good" or be emotionally "stirred," but to glorify God and magnify His holy Name. We would join the 24 elders and the four living creatures who surround His throne in heaven, falling down before Him and casting their crowns at His feet, as we bow and adore Him. Worship would no longer be a "spectator sport," but would involve the active participation of all the redeemed. The methods we use in worship would not be sensual or worldly, but firmly rooted in Scripture. We would feel more comfortable on our faces in His presence than seated on our pews. And our worship would not have to be artificially induced or jump-started with human manipulation.

8. As the standard of God's holiness is raised, believers would be known in their communities as men and women of impeccable character and unquestionable integrity ("and having favor with all the people"--Acts 2:47). Their lives would exert a positive, wholesome influence both within the church and in the world. Not only would the favor of the people be on believers, but I believe God Himself would smile from heaven and be pleased with their example of godliness!

9. On a regular basis, the Lord would add new believers to His Body ("the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved"--Acts 2:47). These new believers would not be our converts, but His. They would not be responding to human manipulation or dazzling programs, but to the irresistible conviction of His Spirit. And they would not try to go on living with one foot in the world and the other in the church, but would be transformed from the inside out.

Perhaps this portrait seems idealistic or even unrealistic in our modern, post-Christian society. However, God never establishes His standard based on how things are, but rather, on how things ought to be and one day will be!

These are the qualities that marked that first band of believers when the Holy Spirit came upon them. These are the qualities that have marked every group of revived believers down through the ages. And these are the qualities that will once again mark God's people when He decides to "rend the heavens and come down." So let us believe Him to do "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think," that there may be "glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen!"

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