

Revival ■ A New Wineskin

by Trevor N Vosloo

This sermon emphasizes the importance of seeking a sustainable revival that continues over time. It discusses the need for a new wineskin to receive the new wine of revival, highlighting the critical role of prevailing prayer, faith, and experiencing a new depth of Calvary in surrendering to God. The sermon also addresses the necessity of changing perceptions about revival, truth, and having a new view of God to truly experience revival centered on Jesus Christ.

Scripture: Luke 11:9, Mark 9:24, Galatians 2:20, Psalms 85:6, John 3:16, Colossians 1:27, Ephesians 1:3, John 8:58, Psalms 119:18

Topics: "Sustainable Revival", "New Perspectives on God"

Description

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Transcript

When I normally get asked to speak on revival, I normally am led of the Lord to speak on either the need of revival, or obstacles to revival, or personal revival. But this time the Lord has led me in a different direction a little bit, and rather to share with you that which the Lord has taught us in our seeking God for revival. We have been seeking God for revival for a little while now, and the Lord has shown us many different things, and taught us many lessons.

And as in our seeking God for revival, we are seeking Him for a sustainable revival. Something that can be sustained, and not just be a revival of that day, but something that continues. And I'm going to give you a little bit of what the Lord has taught us in that walk.

The question should be raised, why did we start seeking revival in the first place? What led us to that? In 1997, we had a big outreach into the city of Johannesburg. We had 96 meetings over six weeks. We had top preachers from all over South Africa and from the United States preaching at this outreach.

We handed out 240,000 leaflets inviting people. We handed out on the streets 40,000 Gospels of John to people. We saw the Lord save hundreds of people, and we praise Him for that.

But however, we were not satisfied. Because the Word of God says to us, what you sow, you should reap 30-fold, 60-fold, or 100-fold. And we never got that return.

Furthermore, when we look at the New Testament church, those who came to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, they remained with the Lord. They didn't fall away along the way. And we found that those who came to know the Lord started falling along the way.

Furthermore, we encountered sin. Sin makes life complicated, sorrowful, and bitter. We saw in sinner and Christian alike a web of sin and iniquity that no amount of counseling could resolve.

We knew it would only be by a mighty moving of God could something be cleared up there. And so we sat and looked at the Scripture and saw where we were and where God wanted us to be were pulled apart. We knew the problem was not with the sinner, they did.

The problem lay with us. And from that, we started seeking God for Holy Ghost revival. We set ourselves out to seek it.

We canceled most of our preaching and went only to prayer and to the Word of God. I want to start off by stressing something to you about revival that is very critical in your understanding of revival. That is this, the seeking of revival is more important than the revival itself.

You see, in the seeking of revival, it is where God prepares you and gives you the new wineskins to receive the new wine of revival. And therefore, the walk of revival is critical, that we walk it wisely, we walk it in the fear of the Lord and humbly before Him, lest we don't get the new wineskins and we are unable to retain that which God has given us. So we found that in our walk that the Lord wanted to work in us new wineskins.

And the walk was really the preparation of us for what God wants to do. We learned that there are three clear and distinctive areas that are needed to prepare to experience revival. And today I'm going to share just on the one of those three areas, mainly the preparation of ourselves through our own walk with God.

We are old wineskins wanting new wine. We must be prepared to receive the new wine of revival, otherwise both will be lost and spoiled. Seeking of revival is costly.

The regetting of new wineskins is a painful experience. That is why few people are prepared to pay the cost. They can somehow get by without revival, because as soon as they start seeking God for revival and encountering the cost, they say the cost is too much, the old wine is better, it's easier to drink.

So today I want to just share with you a little bit from our experiences of getting new wineskins. Now I've divided it up into three sections, and the first part I want to look at is the new wineskin of the right concept of revival. The right concept of revival.

We had to change our perception and understanding of what revival is in this walk with God. And I want to share some of the things God taught us. First of all, revival is not an objective in itself.

Revival is not an objective in itself. This is a critical consideration. If it should be, our focus would be on an experience.

Our objective can only be the glory of God and a just reward on Calvary. Otherwise we're going to be skewed in our walk, we're going to want an experience and not God glorified. Rather, revival is God's

ordained method of bringing glory to His name.

That is the critical understanding. You can go to book rooms today and there's books on how to, there's Christian books on how to do so many things and so many techniques about how to get the best glory to God's name. However, in the word of God, He's clearly and explicitly detailed for us His ordained method and that is revival.

That is the way He's laid before us. The next concept that you need to change about revival is what revival is. Now I'm sure over these days you're going to hear different people giving you different explanations of revival, which is good because it helps us to get a picture and a broader picture of what is revival.

Two of my favorites is the one by Duncan Campbell, who said it is a people saturated by God. The other one is, I don't know who gave the quote, but he said it is one of my favorites, eternity invading time. Whatever you want to describe it, revival boils down to this.

It boils down to Jesus Christ glorified by the Spirit of God. You see the Spirit of God has nothing to offer us outside of Christ and that Christ crucified. He comes and makes Jesus a reality.

Revival is the Holy Spirit manifesting Jesus Christ in our midst. Up in East Africa they had a revival many years back and in that revival someone wrote and said, what role does gifts play in revival? They wrote back and said absolutely nothing. It's about Jesus Christ walking in our midst and that's what revival is.

And this is critical if you want to know revival, you need to know you are seeking a person, the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, manifested, glorified by the Spirit of God. Next we need to change our understanding and our perception of the sovereignty of God. God is sovereign.

He'll give revival when he wants to and how he wants to. But, but, God has set sovereign conditions upon you which he will give. You see too often we blame God's sovereignty for the lack of revival.

We say oh God is sovereign, he'll give it one day. So we blame God's sovereignty for our sinful behavior. We blame God's sovereignty for our lack of desire and desperation to knowing God.

Yes he is sovereign. I know we've been seeking God for many years and we have not had a breakthrough. He is sovereign.

But he sets sovereign conditions upon which he will act. He said if my people then I will. And we can move within the sovereign conditions and have a sovereign working of God in our midst.

So I've said so far, revival can't be our objective. It is a method. Our objective is always the glory of God.

I spoke about what is revival. Revival is Jesus Christ manifested, glorified by the Spirit of God. And I spoke of the sovereignty of God that he is sovereign and sets sovereign conditions.

But the next change in our concept of revival, which he brings about those new wineskins, which ties into the sovereignty of God, is that we believe and want revival and expect it somewhere out there. You know somewhere out there God is going to bring revival. That's not scriptural.

You, Jesus, wrote seven churches to seven letters. Not a general letter to the church in Asia. He was specific and told the churches specifically to put right what is in their church and if they put right what is in their church, he would visit their church.

But one of the great hindrances to revival is praying for it to be somewhere out there. Oh God, send us global revival. Oh no brother, you're going to start where you are.

Gypsy Smith, that great evangelist, he was once asked and said, how can I experience revival? He said, go home brother, close your bedroom door, draw a circle on the floor, climb inside the circle and tell God to revive everybody in that circle. You'll never have revival if you're thinking it's somewhere out there. It's a pie in the sky, the proverbial rainbow you'll never find.

You've got to start where you are. You've got to start right where you are. But you see, God is sovereign.

That means he might break through somewhere else. But you see, as you're meeting his sovereign conditions in your life and in the church, you've said, as Stephen Alfred said in his book, *Hard Cry for Revival*, he says, we set our sails to catch the wind of revival. I want to tell you, if you are preparing and working in your church for revival, it might not break there first, but you can be guaranteed it will flow there as you prepare.

The next aspect of revival, which we need to change our perception, is we need to see revival as an imperative. Most people see it as something nice to have. It would be good if we could have revival, isn't it brother? Yes brother, it's great.

But we never do more than that. It's only when we say, we cannot go on without revival, will we have it. But you see, if you're looking at God's sovereignty, as he'll give it sometime, and if you're looking at it somewhere out there, it'll never become a necessity where you are.

You'll never see it as an imperative to no revival. And when you make it and you understand that it is an imperative that I can't go on without it, you're going to find, dear brother and sister, you're going to find revival in the book of Genesis. Right the way through to the book of Revelation.

You're going to find the Bible breathes revival. It oozes out of every page. You're going to find, it's not something that you have your prayer list and then tag on revival.

Oh no, revival praying preoccupies you. It consumes you. And it is an imperative.

A.W. Tozer rightly said, and I might have the percentage wrong, if the Holy Spirit was withdrawn from the church, 85% of what's going on in the church would continue. Because we're so used to getting by without it. But if you want to know revival, you've got to set your goal and your eyes upon meeting with God.

But new wineskins is also costly. And I want to share just a little bit of that cost that is involved in having new wineskins. This is why many people fall by the wayside.

I'm not going to deal with the cost of dealing with sin today. Nor am I going to deal with the cost of restitution and those kind of things which are critical. I want to rather bring to you three different kinds of costs.

That you'll need to be prepared to pay. The first one is the cost of prevailing prayer. The cost of prevailing prayer.

Prayer costs time. It costs energy. It is exhausting.

It is more tiring to pray for an hour than to preach for an hour. It is a tiring thing. But you and I will not know revival unless we prevail in prayer.

Now in our prevailing for prayer, it is not to convince God about revival. Our prevailing is not convincing a God who is not willing to give. Oh no, it's not like that.

I want to tell you, you consider the word of God. The word of God gives us the revival promises. And the promise of God is His declaration on how He operates.

And He promises in the Old and New. In the Old Testament there He says, I will pour water upon him that is thirsty. In the New Testament He says, He who believes on Me, as the Scripture says, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

But not only that, the word of God describes it to us. What else is a bride without spots or wrinkles? But a church walking in revival. What about how Paul describes the church? Full to the fullness of God.

There is a church on fire for God. Not only does the word promise it, but it describes it to us. Furthermore, the cross of Jesus Christ purchased revival for you and me.

When He said it is finished, He said it is finished that you and I can know the outpouring of the Spirit of God. The cross purchased it. And the cross demands it.

The cross of Jesus Christ demands revival. What about Christ? Does He not deserve it? Did not the Father promise Him and say, You shall see the travail of your soul and be satisfied? Tell me, do you think Christ is satisfied the way we live today? Do you think He is satisfied with the bride that we are? Oh no. God is persuaded to give revival because of His Son Jesus.

What about grace? Grace designed revival. Revival is not a reward for being a good Christian. Revival is not green grass getting greener.

It is for the weak, the failing and the feeble. Grace designed it. So I want to tell you when you look at these things, The Word, the cross, Jesus and grace.

You can see God is absolutely persuaded about revival. So why do we have to prevail in prayer? I want to tell you very simply why we have to prevail in prayer. Because you and I need to be convinced.

You and I need to be persuaded about revival, not God. He is persuaded about it. His Word is breathing it.

Christ deserves it. The cross demands it. But it's you and me who are not persuaded.

The greatest hindrance to revival is unbelief. That's the greatest thing. We don't really believe.

And the time of prevailing prayer is where God gives us the new wineskins. Where we become absolutely persuaded, thus saith the Lord. When I started off I said to you, When we started seeking God for revival, Where we were, where God wanted us to be was a big gap.

And I will speak of that again. But in our seeking for revival, we started on this progression in our prayer. We started off with our need for revival.

We were persuaded of our need of revival. And that's how our prayer started prevailing before God, Out of need for revival. But that prayer started changing, And we became to the place where we said, We can

have revival.

Because you see, that is a progression in prevailing prayer. From a need, we started seeing the willingness of God, The provision in the cross for revival. Then we can get to the third stage of praying, Where we can say, we shall have revival.

Why? Because God is giving new wineskins. The second cost of revival, I've called it the cost of faith. I said our biggest obstacle is unbelief.

The prevailing prayer is for us to become convinced about revival, Amongst other things. But you see, our faith needs to be purified. And in the purifying of our faith, We find that our motive is tested, And our desire is tested.

And I want to tell you, in our walk for revival, It has been the greatest cost. It's cost more than repentance. It's cost more than prayer.

It's cost more than restitution, which we paid. Because you see, the cost of faith, Is to have everything turned contrary to your faith. You'll find your circumstances will be contrary to your faith.

You'll find that people will be contrary. You'll find we found even our finances fell apart. And we coined the phrase, naked faith.

Stripped of everything, but standing on the word of God, And saying this is what God said, He's giving no other leading, And we will stand alone on the word of God. That cost your brother and sister. It cost more than you can imagine.

You only know that cost when you start to pay it. But it's a necessary cost to have that new wine skin, To retain revival. The third cost of revival, Is a cost of a new experience of Calvary.

It's not only knowing sins forgiven, But death to the sinful nature. A death to the sinful nature of this flesh, This great sinful eye, As a reality in our lives. Not as lip service, not just saying, Oh I'm crucified with Christ, Yet going out and living in the flesh.

You see, we are all born eye specialists. Let me explain it to you. If I had my camera here today, And I took a photo of you all, And we put it up on the screen, Who would be the first person you look for? Because we are eye specialists.

We live for ourselves, isn't it? What is Christianity? It's abandoning ourselves and becoming living on God. One of the things if you want to know revival, Is to know in a reality, The sinful nature put out of action, Through the cross and through the working of the Holy Spirit, In your life. That is costly.

Imagine if we could have a dead body up here today. We could kick it, isn't it? It wouldn't object, isn't it? We could wipe our feet on it. We could bury the body upside down, And it would not complain.

It's lost all rights, interests, and self-defense, isn't it? And that is a picture of what it is, If we are dead in Christ. It's about turning the other cheek. Not turning the other cheek, but inside, Rebellious.

But it's in reality, Knowing the death made real in my life. Before there was a Pentecost, There was a Calvary. And before you're going to know a Pentecost in your life, You need to know a Calvary in your life.

You need to know the full working of the power of the cross in your life, Or else you'll never know revival. God cannot trust the flesh with the Spirit of God. He can only trust one who has died in Christ, And risen again in Christ.

You see, Before we can have the rewards of Calvary, Which is the Holy Spirit, We need to submit to the judgments, And the demands of the cross. What is the judgment of the cross? The cross writes you and me off. It writes off all my sin, But it writes off all my good works, As filthy rags.

The cross wipes me out. You have to submit to that. You have to submit to the demands of the cross.

The cross demands your life, Your will, Your all. This jacket's not mine, It's Jesus's. He can do with it what he wants.

That's experiencing the cross. Where it's no more me, It's all him. And giving it all over to him.

That is what it is about. Andrew Murray rightly puts in his book, Abiding in Christ, Often, Answers to prayer come as a greater revelation of who Jesus is. And that's dying to self, That Christ can be everything.

So, so far we have looked At some of the perceptions of revival we need to change. We've had a look at some of the costs of revival, And we looked at the cost of prevailing prayer, Of faith, And, excuse me, Of Calvary. But in closing, I want to deal with another two perceptions Of our understanding that needs to be changed To know revival.

And these two Is truth, or we could say doctrine, And our view of God. I want to touch on those very quickly today. First of all, Our view of truth.

I want to say to you today, You know the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Saviour, And are preaching the true gospel of Jesus Christ. You have all the truth you need to know revival. You don't need more truth.

You don't need an extra revelation. You don't need some bright light, You've got all the truth. Because revival is not something in addition To the gospel.

But however, There is a trouble. The trouble is twofold About the doctrine and the truth we hold. The one is, We have become hardened to the truth.

We know the truth. We just say it off the heart, isn't it? We just recite it as facts. Christ died yesterday, I died with him, that's right.

Praise God. But we've lost its meaning. That is the problem.

We've become so hardened and insensitive To the gospel of Jesus Christ. Because we preach it, We read it, we live in it, That we miss it altogether. The other problem is we have with the truth which we hold, Is that we sometimes Emphasize only certain things At the expense of others.

And those other things is often what is missing. The psalmist prayed in Psalm 119 verse 18, He prayed and said, Open my eyes, That I can behold the wonders in thy law. Paul wrote and he prayed for the church at Ephesus, And he wrote there in Ephesians, Open the eyes of their understanding.

And that is what we need. We need the eyes of our understanding Open to the truth which we hold. Remember the two on the road to Emmaus.

They walked with Jesus. Their hearts were on fire For God. But they never saw Jesus.

Until it says there in Luke, He opened their eyes And they saw him. I want to tell you at times our hearts burn Of the word of God, isn't it? He's on fire for God. But we're missing Jesus.

We don't see him because we've become blinded To these truths. Jesus in Mark chapter 8, Verse 22 to 26, He heals the blind man. Took the blind man out of the city, Spat on his eyes and put his hand on him And prayed for him.

And he said to the man, What do you see? And he says, I see men As trees walking. That's what we are like in many Cases, isn't it? We've got the truth, we've seen the truth, But it's as trees, men as trees Walking. And Jesus touched him again.

And he could see. One of our great Things we need to do, and I challenge You, dear child of God, Is to go home. Go back to your teachings And say, Lord, open my eyes In you, to your truth.

I said to you, We were in a gap, yeah? Oh, there, and this is where God wanted us to be. How did God bridge that gap? Simply By opening our eyes To Jesus. He showed us how to cross that gap.

It was nothing new. There was no new teaching. There was no new doctrine.

It was God Just placing the emphasis on his word Where it should be. Next, we need to change And have a new view of God. That's where revival begins.

There's a new vision Of God. Like Joshua had when he looked on the city of Jericho, and the captain of the host Came and met him. Like Isaiah had when he entered The temple of God.

Like Paul had on the road to Damascus. We need an encounter and a new vision Of Jesus Christ And who he is. You see, today, many of us Have a pocket-sized Jesus.

He's so small. We become ashamed of him. Oh, we've got to offer all The right worship services, otherwise They don't come, because Jesus is not Attractive enough.

We've got to try to add things to the gospel By offering wealth and health And these things to try and attract Because somehow we think Jesus is not Good enough. He's not enough. We have not seen him.

That's all we need. John 3 Verse 16, the most famous verse in the Bible But the most Unbelieved verse in the Bible. It's not believed by The sinners, otherwise they wouldn't be sinners.

But it's unbelieved by the church Of God, because they say Yes, they gave me Jesus, but now I want Everything else. And we've missed it. We've missed the issue.

We haven't realized that the Godhead Dwells bodily in Christ. We've missed the issue that Paul says in Colossians, Christ, Our life, he is our life. There's not something in addition to Jesus.

It is him. He says in Ephesians, we are blessed with all Spiritual blessings, where? In Christ. In Corinthians He says, in Christ All the promises, all 38,000 Of them are in the Bible.

Oh yes and amen to you. In Christ. He's your Strength, he's your redemption, he's your Sanctification, he's everything We need.

In John chapter 8, verse 58 He says a great Thing about him, a revelation of himself. He says, I am. And he leaves it empty for you to Fill in.

He says, I am Everything you need. You need health. He says, I am your health.

You need strength. He is your strength. You need hope.

He is your hope. You need joy. He is your joy.

It is Jesus And him only. And that is why Andrew Murray rightly said Answers to prayer come Often as a greater revelation Of who Jesus is. Revival is after All The Spirit of God Manifesting Jesus Christ.

My favorite verse For revival Psalm 85 verse 6 It says Wilt thou not revive us again That thy people may Rejoice in Thee Where do we rejoice in as Christians nowadays? In our style of worship. In our entertainment value In the church. In our good works.

In our service for The Lord. In our experience with God. We rejoice in all these Things.

But when God comes And meets with us in revival, we Again start rejoicing In the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. And that's revival. And that's what we need to get back to Is to see Jesus As he really is.

Sid Lowe Baxter In his book Entitled Going Deeper He writes about Jesus And I want to read to you What he has written Because I feel It is so Incredible. Now I won't read All of it. I'll just pick up Halfway through.

Speaking of Jesus and he says this In infancy He startled the king In boyhood He puzzled the learned In manhood he ruled even The forces of nature He taught with an originality And authority A simplicity and a profanity Outmatching all others He never confessed Sin and never once Betrayed the slightest consciousness of it His life and character Was such that friends and foes Alike were one in Testifying to his moral flawness He healed the multitudes Without medicine and without money He never wrote a book yet there are More books about him today than any other He never wrote a song Yet he has furnished the theme of more Songs than all others Combined. He never Founded a college yet all the schools Together cannot boast as many Students as he He never practiced medicine yet he Has healed more broken human lives Than any other physician ever known He never marshaled an army Yet no leader ever Drew more volunteers Ready to sacrifice Everything gladly for his sake Great men have Come and gone yet he lives on Herod could not kill him in Childhood. Satan could not seduce Him in manhood.

Though he voluntarily Lay down his life even death could not Destroy him. He lives in the Present. The contemporary Of every generation He is the only being In the universe at present with An immortal human body He is the risen reigning Returning lord and his first Coming as saviour will be crowned by his Second coming as sovereign He is the ever living ever Loving everlasting saviour Who saves to the utmost all who Come unto God by him That is my master The most wonderful thing of all So as far as it concerns Me individually Is that this glorious master Died for me As my Substitutory sin bearer Then rose from the dead to be my ever Living saviour.

How strange If I do not love him Is it to be wondered at if I love him Far more earnestly than any Israelite bondman of Olden time ever loved His most generous and considerate Hebrew master? Is it To be

wondered at that all of us In our millions who know him as saviour Love him as our dearest Possession? Is it to be wondered At that Peter should write Unto you therefore which Believe he is precious Nay, let me avow it again I love my master I will not die It's a new vision of Jesus To see Jesus as he Rightly is Is to see him As all I need Today What new wineskins do you need? What is there that God has Shared in your life? Are you prepared to pay the cost To have a new wineskin? Are you prepared to pay it? To say you don't need Revival is to say you don't need Jesus Because it's him Glorified And I want to tell you Not only do we need revival But we can Have revival and we shall Have revival As we trust him Will you not Respond today to God However he has spoken to you Maybe today you want To just humble yourself anew before him Maybe you need to repent And say Lord I realise Anew how small I've seen you Just confess that to him Maybe today you've realised One of the things you've not seen Is an absolute necessity You've been getting by without it And content to get by without it And today God has made you realise The importance and the imperative of it Maybe today You realise You've got the truth but you've become hardened To it Won't you humble yourself and say Lord Open my eyes in you To the wonders of the world I want to tell you I sat with the Lord and I said Lord I believe you died, I believe I died with you I believe you rose and I rose with you I believe you ascended and I ascended and seated in you And I said Lord I believe it, I preach it, I teach it But tell me what does it mean When God Opened my eyes My ministry has never been the same Maybe you've been looking For revival somewhere out there You have not taken it For granted In my church Maybe you've just made Jesus very small I want to give you an opportunity As we close in prayer To quietly just respond to God In your own hearts before him I'll give you a minute or two And then I'll close in prayer Dear Heavenly Father We just Humble ourselves at your feet And say Lord we are but old wineskins Wanting new wine Won't you do Lord In each one of us as is necessary The work that we can be A new wineskin For the new wine of Revival That you want to give We thank you Father We don't have to Convince you about revival We are privileged To lay hold of your willingness To give revival And I pray Lord That you'll continue This work in our lives And change us And do a work of Grace in us We thank you For your son Jesus Who is ever waiting To restore us And to cleanse us We thank you Father Lord as we part We pray that your spirit Will continue to speak In Jesus name Our brothers On Leonard Ravenhill And in the words of Leonard Ravenhill I trust this message Has not just challenged you But changed you God bless

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