

A Hindrance to Revival

by William McCrea

The sermon emphasizes the need for revival and identifies unbelieving hearts and unconcerned believers as the main hindrances to revival, calling for prayer, faith, and intercession to overcome these obstacles.

Duration: 36:57

Scripture: Nehemiah 1:4, Isaiah 59:14-16, Matthew 6:33, Mark 16:16, Luke 18:8, Acts 1:6-7, Hebrews 11:33-37

Topics: "Revival", "Spiritual Indifference"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the lack of concern and tears among believers for the cause of Christ and the affliction of God's people. He highlights the indifference towards the sweeping sin and debauchery in society, particularly among young people. The preacher laments that believers often show little concern for lost souls and the judgment that follows. However, he also reminds listeners that God's hand is not shortened to save and his ear is not heavy to hear prayers. The sermon concludes with a call for believers to have faith and overcome the hindrances to revival.

Transcript

Let's open our Bibles, please, in the book of the Acts of the Apostles, in the chapter number 1. The Acts of the Apostles, the first chapter, and we commence reading at verse number 6. Acts chapter 1, commencing to read at verse number 6. When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power. Isn't it amazing that somehow, that no matter what happens, that we asked, as it were, just very earthly questions. Now, they were more interested in the kingdom being restored to Israel, Israel getting its power and knowing real power than they were the power of God.

And the Lord Jesus said, Ye shall receive power, verse 8, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven, as he went up, behold, two men stood by him in white apparel, which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? The same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

Then returned they unto Jerusalem, from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a Sabbath day's journey. And when they were come in, they went into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, and Philip, and Thomas, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication with the woman, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

Amen. And we know that God will add his blessing to the reading of his precious Word. For Jesus' sake, Amen.

Now, last Lord's Day morning, we were asking the question, Why Revival Tarras? And we were looking in the book of Jeremiah, in the third chapter, in the Spirit of God, I believe, spoke to our hearts, and we were challenged through his precious and his holy Word. I want us to continue further this morning, and I want us to conclude this message into thinking, Yes, why does Revival Tarras? What are the hindrances to Revival, and God answering my prayer for Revival? And I want us to consider this morning just how that we can get that gracious movement of the Spirit of God among God's people, which is Revival. We have been singing the hymns concerning Revival over the hilltops, sweeping this way, Lord, sweeping this way, a mighty Revival sweeping this way.

And yet, my friend, we have to be honest before God, there is no mighty Revival that has swept this way. We thank God for the moving of the Spirit of God, and God forgive us if we would be churlish, and we would be forgetful of the blessing of the Lord. And God has blessed us.

And many of God's people have been blessed. Many of God's people have been revived, even in the midst of the gospel visitation, for there's nothing thrills the soul of the child of God more than hearing the old gospel of Jesus Christ preached with power and with blessing, and with, indeed, precious souls coming to know the Savior. That thrills, that revives the heart of God's people.

It encourages God's people to keep on praying. And, friend, if God can answer prayer, and God can complete families in Christ and close loved ones in with the Savior, then, thank God, God can send us Revival. God can send a mighty stirring across this whole countryside where God's people will repent of their sin, where God's people will turn again to God and know a visitation of God in their soul, and then that God would take us forward to reach the lost.

Because, friend, let me tell you, that's the fruit of Revival, when we reach the lost, because God having stirred our soul and given us a greater love for Christ and the things of Christ, then, indeed, we will want that others know Jesus too. We will want to reach them. We will want to reach moms and dads.

We will want to reach sons and daughters. We will want to see all of our families completed in Jesus Christ when God has stirred our soul into a tremendous burning fire of love for our Lord and our Savior, Jesus Christ. Let me ask you this morning, is the fire burning in your soul? Is the fire of God burning in your soul? Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost has come upon you.

Is it not true that we have witnessed so many times, friend, and we have, as it were, come to the verge of bringing forth, and yet we haven't had the childbirth? We have, my loss, the power to deliver. Oh, that God would give us, whenever Zion travails, she brings forth children. And that's what we need.

We need to see the bringing forth of children, that not only do we feel the pains of the childbirth, but that we might see the newborn child, and that we might rejoice in what God is doing in our midst. Oh, that we

might see the blessed movement of the Spirit of God. Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost has come upon you.

And here then, this is what follows, and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. Then the fires of evangelism will burn, when the fires of revival burn in the hearts of the child of God. Why is it that God's people this morning are so laid back, and the world is going to hell? Why is it that souls are so laid back, and their families are going to hell? Friend, they need revival.

They need the reviving of the Spirit of God. They need God to revive the dying embers and the coals that were once alight upon the fire. Oh, that God would put the bellows underneath the coals and light the fire again.

Oh, that God would blow with His wind upon us. Oh, that God would sweep across this congregation. Oh, that God would sweep across the sparrows and sweep across this province with a gracious movement of His Holy Spirit.

But friend, listen, if those fires are not burning in our hearts, then I ask the question, why are they not? If God is not answering our cry for revival, friend, what are the hindrances? If we haven't seen the gracious outpouring of the Spirit of God, which I know that God desires to give to His people and pour out upon His people, what's wrong? What's wrong? What are the hindrances? Why aren't we seeing the gracious movement, the mighty movement of God's Spirit in this our day and generation? Can I give you some answers to that question this morning? Why? Well, first of all, I believe that we haven't seen the gracious revival that God, I believe, desires to give us because of unbelieving hearts. Unbelieving hearts. Turn your Bibles with me, please, to Matthew's Gospel, chapter 13, a just little study.

Matthew's Gospel, chapter 13. And let's look at the Scriptures, friend. There's a little verse there in verse 58, the last verse of Matthew, chapter 13.

And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief. Why did Jesus Christ not do mighty works there? The Word of God says that He did not many mighty works. Now, He did mighty works, make no mistake about it.

But the Bible says He did not many mighty works. Now, we have seen God working. And we bless the Lord for what God has done, and we praise His name for His gracious goodness to us in what He has done for us.

But friend, let me tell you, is this all that God wants to give to us? Is this all the blessing that God wants to pour out upon us? I believe the answer is no. I believe that God is much more than this. I believe that God wants to pour out upon us of His blessing.

I will pour water upon him that's thirsty. And that's not a few drops. That's not a sprinkling.

I want to tell you, He wants to totally immerse you. He says, I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and I want to give floods and pour floods upon a dry land. It's floods pouring water upon them.

God wants to do great things. But the Word of God says He did not many. Not many.

Oh yes, He did some, but He didn't do many. And what was the problem? What was the hindrance? What was the thing that stopped it, friend? What was the hindrance to God doing many mighty works here? And the answer is very simple. The Holy Ghost doesn't leave us in our understanding and leave us in the dark.

No, He says, because of their unbelief. What was the hindrance? Their unbelief. Let me ask you a question this morning.

Do you believe that the church needs revival? Do you believe that this congregation needs the revival of the Spirit of God, friend? And then could I ask you another question? If you believe that God desires and that this church needs revival, then I ask you this question. Do you believe that God's able to send it? Do you believe that God's willing to send it? Or do you not see, first of all, the need? You know, there's some of God's people, and let me tell you, they're just sailing along nicely. You know what they're afraid? They're afraid of God sending a revival and a stirring in their soul because their wee life would be turned upside down.

And make no mistake, it will. If God sends revival, friend, our wee lives will be turned upside down. You see the things that take our attention, the things, my friend, that we have got to set our minds upon.

I tell you, God's going to do a revolution in that. There will be a mighty revolution. And you see the things that we think are important, that we think, my friend, are the beginning and the ending of everything.

My, when God visits us and when we get a vision of what God can do, I tell you this, God will turn those things and sweep them away. Because many of those things we could do without. And as a matter of fact, many of those things would be blessed without.

And here we find that the God says, He didn't many mighty works because of their unbelief. Do you believe that we need it? I believe that with all my heart. We need revival.

Revival, my friend, revival and reviving of God is the only answer. The only answer. In a parched, in a dry, in a thirsty land, and many of God's people are parched and dry.

Let me tell you and be honest, there are many of God's people sitting in this house of God this morning and the Bible is dry to you. Be honest. The Bible is a dry book to you.

You don't get an excitement whenever you open that book. It's a dry book to you. You see, your prayer time, be honest before God, friend.

Let me tell you this, you're not under permitting because, let me tell you, even when you do come, it's dry to you. It's dry to you. Do you know why? Because your heart's dry.

There's a drought there. You need the water of God upon your soul. Let me tell you, that book's not dry.

That book is the answer to every need of your soul, friend, and my need too. In that book is pure wisdom. Praise God, it not only tells us how to live, but praise God, it shows us how to die and have peace for life and peace for death.

Glory to God, peace for all eternity. And yet, men and women, they'll turn to the books of time and they'll turn to the pages and the magazines of time and they'll sit for hours delving into them much of the gossip of the world, friend. And yet, God says, I have a word for you.

And yet, you don't want to hear it. And the truth is that many of God's people don't want to hear it, friend, because, let me tell you, if they really did hear it, it would really touch their soul. It would change their lives, it would change their way of going on.

They just couldn't continue the way they're going, friend. But the sad thing is this, many are not willing to let go and let God. Unbelieving hearts.

Do you believe that God's able and willing? You see, there's a difference. Do you believe that God's, first of all, able to send revival? And I believe that there's people here today and you say, oh, you know, preacher, that's a stupid thing. Yes, God, if he wasn't God, or if he wasn't able, then he wouldn't be God.

But listen, do you believe that God's willing to send it? And you see, some people, you know, they have a theology which tells us that in actual fact, there won't be revival before the Lord comes and takes his people home. Let me tell you, friend, I don't believe one word of that. I don't believe one word of that.

I believe that God is willing to send his revival in this, our day and our generation. I don't believe that God wants his children limping home to heaven. I believe that God wants them to go home rejoicing.

I believe that God wants to take his people home in victory. But there's a barrier, there is a hindrance to the moving of the Spirit of God and doing the mighty work of revival. And that is unbelief.

Unbelief. Mark's Gospel, chapter 9. And in that chapter 9 of Mark's Gospel, in the verse 23, we read these words. And this is what the Holy Ghost says, verse 23.

Jesus said unto him, Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out and said with tears, Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief. He was honest.

He was honest, friend. He knew that lurking in his heart there was a non-belief. And here was a father whose child was being torn asunder by the devil.

And the devil was, my, just, he was tearing him apart and he fell on the ground and was wallowing in the mire. And my, he brings him to Jesus and even throws him into the fire and into the waters to destroy him. Boy, the devil will try to do that.

He'll try to destroy you. But if thou canst do anything, have compassion on us and help us. If thou canst do anything.

Boy, how weak his belief was, wasn't it? And Jesus said, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. Do you believe that God will send us for a revival, friend? Do you believe that God will breathe upon us? You know, blessings come by faith. By faith.

By faith. You read the Scriptures. By faith, Abram believed God.

By faith. Caleb, even at an old age, when he asked God, Give me this mountain. Glory to God, even in his old age, friend.

He wasn't afraid of the enemy that was there. He wasn't afraid of the giants that were there. He was willing to conquer the mountain.

Why? Because he knew when God was with him, he could do all things. Bigger than all of my problems. Bigger than all of my fears.

God is bigger than any mountain that I can or cannot see. Paul, remember the old boat was tearing apart. The old ship was just about to tear to pieces.

And it did. But Paul had been before the Lord. And God told him he would bring them all safe to land.

You know what Paul said? He stood up before the old boat fell apart. And he said, Listen, don't fear. You know what God has told me? God has told me he's going to bring every one of you, every man, safe to land.

And this is what he says, And I believe God. I believe God. Do you, friend? Do you really believe him? Do you believe that God can bring you through in this hour of testing? Do you believe that God can give you grace in the hour of need? By faith.

By faith. You know, read that 11th chapter of the book of Hebrews. And we read these words.

Listen, this is what faith can do, friend. Let me just read you one verse. Listen, the world wasn't worthy of them.

But let me tell you, they overcame through faith. Through faith. Through faith.

They stood like Paul and said, I believe God. As we think about the hindrance to revival, friend, that he could do not many mighty works there. Why? Because of their unbelief.

Lord, we need to pray, God, increase our faith. Lord, give us a faith that will not shrink. A faith that will not let thee go.

But then there's a second reason. Here's a second hindrance. Turn to Isaiah chapter 59.

We read it this morning, friend. We read it. And I'm sure as you read this passage of God's Word and you can see the sadness of the day where judgment was turned away backwards.

In verse 14 it says, that justice standeth afar off, and truth is fallen in the street, and equity couldn't enter, yea, truth faileth. Verse 15, and he that departed from evil maketh himself a prey, and the Lord sought and displeased him that there was no judgment. But then mark verse 16.

And God saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor. You see, not only unbelieving hearts, friend, hindrance to revival, but unconcerned believers. Unconcerned believers! What a picture is here before us! In the midst of such apostasy! In the midst of such darkness! In the midst of such decay! In the midst of such departure and falling away! What does it say? He saw that there was no man.

And then it says this. He wondered. He wondered.

What did he wonder about, friend? He wondered in the midst of all of this, that there was no intercessor. Do you know what that meant? Nobody cared. Nobody cared.

Friend, let me tell you, we live in a dark day. We are seeing sin on every hand. We are seeing laws passed and brought unto the statue of a friend, that indeed grieves the very heart of God, and ought to grieve the

heart of man.

But the sad thing is this. God doesn't wonder at the evilness of man's heart, because God saw that the evilness of man's heart was only evil continually. God knows the depravity of the heart.

God knows. He has already told us that from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot there is naught but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores that have not been bound up, neither have they been modified with ointment. God knows about the depravity of man and how depraved that man is.

And man left to himself will bring depraved laws into existence and put them onto the statute book. But here's what God wondered at, not of the depravity of man, but there wasn't a believer to care. There was no intercessor.

Nobody cared about the darkness and about the apostasy and about the sin. God saw there was no man. What does it say? I looked for a man to stand in the gap.

What does God say? I found none. I found none. Friend, let me tell you, it wasn't only a tragedy, what a condemnation of the heart of God's people, that nobody really cared.

When you turn to the book of Nehemiah, and there in that first chapter of the book of Nehemiah, friend, we find that Nehemiah was in Shushan the palace. In verse number 2 of chapter 1, Nehemiah, then Hanani, one of my brethren, came, he and certain men of Judah, and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem. They said unto me, the remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach.

The walls of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates are often burned with fire. And it came to pass when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven. There were those that were left, they had escaped the captivity, but all was not well.

The remnant, they were in great affliction, the remnant were held in great reproach. And the walls of that mighty city of Jerusalem, those walls were broken down and are now in rubble. And once where the mighty walls stood, there was much rubbish there, and the gates of the city were burned with fire.

And here's Nehemiah, friend, let me tell you, and he's in the comfort of the king's palace. God had blessed him and God had honored him. And he's in the comfort of the king's palace, and he's a servant to the king.

But when he hears about the reproach, and he hears about the burning of the gates, and he hears about the rubble of the walls. And he hears about the affliction of his brethren, and the reproach that the people of God are in. The Bible says that he sat down, and he wept, and he mourned certain days.

Let me tell you, this wasn't a few wee tears, but he mourned certain days. Friends, let me tell you, you and I, as we look at the cause of Jesus Christ, and we see the great departure. And the great apostasy that's in every hand, and men that used to stand for God, and they've gone to the modern versions, and they've gone to the perversions of the scriptures, and they've gone away from the old gospel ship.

And they used to preach with power, and they used to preach with zeal, and they used to preach with love in their hearts for the souls of men and women. And they've gone away from the old path. Does it break your heart? Does that break your heart this morning? The way that the cause of Christ is, does that break

your heart? Does that make you sit down and weep? When was the last time before God, friend, you dropped a tear over the cause of Christ? When was the last time that you shed a tear over the affliction of the people of God, and the darkness of the sin of this generation? When was the last time that when you realized that there is a sweeping in of awful sin and debauchery, and our young people are being swept away in the tide of iniquity? When was the last time you sat down and cried, and mourned before God, and fasted before God, and prayed before the God of heaven? You know what God saw? Nobody really cared.

Unconcerned believers. Let me tell you, friend, we held three weeks of gospel mission, and there were believers that showed little concern for the lost souls of men and women. That's true, and that breaks the heart of God.

You know, when God visits a neighborhood, friend, judgment follows. But God wondered, nobody cared. Nobody cared.

And the beloved ones, and the first time that God's people will shed a tear over them, it's whenever they're in hell. But it'll be too late then. Unconcerned believers.

But just quickly go to the beginning of that chapter, Isaiah 59. And in Isaiah chapter 59, in verses 1 and 2, notice, listen. Here's an encouragement.

The Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save. Isn't that good? That's good news. God's still in the soul-saving business, friend.

The Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save. And the Lord's ear is not heavy that he cannot hear. Thank God he's still able to answer prayer.

He's able to save and he's able to answer prayer. So what's the problem? Here it is. Your iniquities have separated between you and your God.

And your sins have hid his face from you that he will not hear. Now listen. His arm's not shortened that it can't save.

His ear's not heavy that it can't hear. So what's the problem? Unconfessed sin. And he's writing here to his people.

He says, your iniquities have separated, put a barrier between you and God. There's not the fellowship you used to have. That's why, friend, let me tell you, the book seems dry.

That's why, friend, the prayer time seems pointless. Because you're out of fellowship with God. You've lost the fellowship.

And it says, your iniquities have separated between you and your God. And your sins have hid his face from you that he will not hear. Unconfessed sin.

I'm concluding with this verse this morning. Psalm 66, verse 18. If I regard iniquity in my heart, then the Lord will not hear.

If I regard iniquity. What does that mean, friend? Listen. If I see iniquity in my life, and I glance upon it, and then I harbor it in my heart.

In other words, I don't have it dealt with. I don't deal with it. I don't bring it to the blood.

But what I do, I harbor it in my heart. If I regard iniquity. It's not that I don't know it's there.

I do know it's there. But what I do is this. I am not willing to let go of it.

I am not willing to have done with it. I am not willing to confess it and bring it to the blood of Christ. There's a sin that I want to hold on to.

Instead of repenting off. Let me tell you. If I regard iniquity in my heart.

If I harbor it in my heart. If I know it's there, I glance upon it. But I excuse it instead of dealing with it.

Maybe I practice it secretly. I entertain it. I indulge in it.

But I am not willing to humble myself before God and repent of it and have it dealt with in the blood of Christ. God says, your iniquities, those iniquities have separated between bricks of fellowship. Do you think that God can send revival to your heart, friend, when there's sin which the finger of God has put his finger on? Are you expecting God to revive you? And yet there's things in your heart and life that God has put his finger upon and God has shown you sin.

And you harbor that iniquity in your heart. You regard it in your heart. Are you expecting God to hear it? Let me tell you.

The Bible says, if I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear. The Lord will not hear. Let me tell you, it doesn't take a dictionary to understand that.

It doesn't take an orator to try and expound that. It's as simple as this flame. If I harbor iniquity in my heart, if I excuse my sin, that God has revealed to me.

If I glance upon it and then I continue in it, the Lord will not hear. Unconfessed sin. Friend, that sin has got to be dealt with.

It has got to be confessed. It has got to be repented of. It has got to be brought to the blood of Christ.

It has got to be put away. Do you know why? Because if it's not, your iniquities have separated between you and God. No, rather, that's not the full quote.

Your iniquities have separated between you and your God. You're a child of God with a fellowship broken. And God says that his ear will not hear.

What hinders revival? We have noticed three of them this morning. There are others. May God examine our hearts today.

Unbelieving hearts. Unbelieving hearts. Unconcerned believers.

Unconfessed sin. Oh, may God help us today to confess. Repent.

And turn from. That God may come afresh. For Jesus' sake, let's pray.

Heavenly Father, we thank thee and we praise thee for thy precious word this morning. And yet, Lord, we confess that thy word is as a sword, a sharp, piercing instrument. Thy word is like a hammer.

And, oh God, that hammer crushes and breaks. Thy word is as a fire, and that fire burns. Oh God, give us honesty in your presence today that we might feel the power of thy word.

And, oh God, may we never harbor iniquity in our heart. Wash me, oh Lamb of God, wash me from sin. I pray in Jesus' name.

Amen.

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