

Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, October 17, 2012 – First Baptist Church Buda
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study

GETTING READY FOR GENUINE REVIVAL

“All About Revival... What it is, what is isn’t and how to experience it?”

Romans 12:1-3, Romans 8:5-8

“Urgently do we need a revival of personal godliness. Sanctified men are the salt of society....”
- Charles Haddon Spurgeon

“Revival is a new beginning of obedience to God.”
- Charles G. Finney

“Revivals are among the charter rights of the Church . . . a revival means a heartbroken pastor. A revival means a church on its knees confessing its sins - the sins of the individual and of the Church - confessing the sins of the times and of the community.”
-E. M. Bounds

“Have you noticed how much praying for revival has been going on of late - and how little revival has resulted? I believe the problem is that we have been trying to substitute praying for obeying, and it simply will not work.”
- A.W. Tozer

“A revival does two things. First, it returns the Church from her backsliding and second, it causes the conversion of men and women; and it always includes the conviction of sin on the part of the Church. What a spell the devil seems to cast over the Church today”
- Billy Sunday

“You never have to advertise a fire. Everyone comes running when there's a fire. Likewise, if your church is on fire, you will not have to advertise it. The community will already know it”
- Leonard Ravenhill

“Revivals begin with God's own people; the Holy Spirit touches their heart anew, and gives them new fervor and compassion, and zeal, new light and life, and when He has thus come to you, He next goes forth to the valley of dry bones... Oh, what responsibility this lays on the Church of God! If you grieve Him away from yourselves, or hinder His visit, then the poor perishing world suffers sorely”
- Andrew Bonar

“A true revival means nothing less than a revolution, casting out the spirit of worldliness and selfishness, and making God and His love triumph in the heart and life.”
- Andrew Murray

“When Holy God draws near in true revival, people come under terrible conviction of sin. The outstanding feature of spiritual awakening has been the profound consciousness of the Presence and holiness of God.”

– Henry Blackaby

“Revival is the visitation of God which brings to life Christians who have been sleeping and restores a deep sense of God's near presence and holiness. Thence springs a vivid sense of sin and profound exercise of heart in repentance, praise, and love, with an evangelistic outflow.”

– J.I. Packer

“Revival cannot be organized, but we can set our sails to catch the wind from heaven when God chooses to blow upon His people once again”

– G. Campbell Morgan

“We want a revival to come just in our way. You never saw two revivals come just alike. We must let them come in God's way. People are ashamed to admit they need a revival.”

– Mordecai Ham

“When I pray for revival I pray first for the most radical thing: The utter devotion and allegiance of your hearts to Christ. That you would love Him so deeply and long for Him so passionately that His coming would be your great hope, and death would be gain, and life would be for Christ and His kingdom.”

– John Piper

How often do we see "REVIVAL" banners stretched across the front of church buildings... like the one hanging in front of our church right now? Or see printed invitations to attend "Revival Meetings" at a particular special location... like the one you will find advertised this week in our local paper promoting our revival meeting that starts on Sunday? But those things are not guarantee of real "REVIVAL" taking place. You can't plan, manipulate, or strategize revival... you just can't. It doesn't come because you plan series of meetings, or because you invite the best revival team to show up. It doesn't come because you invite large numbers of people and advertise effectively. ***We want revival, but do we really understand what we want or are asking for?***

Real Christians do want desperately to experience a genuine outpouring of God's Spirit in revival within the Body of Christ as a whole, but few really understand the personal preparation needed for a revival.

I. WHAT IS REVIVAL REALLY?

A. What Revival Is Not?

We have already mentioned some of what revival is not, but that is probably the place to begin in accurately understanding revival. We must clear up some misconception if we are ever to get at the real thing.

If you talk to 10 different Christians, you will get 10 different definitions of revival. Here are 5 different erroneous views of revival.

5 Things Revival is Not:

1. **Annually Scheduled Church Meetings** – We have already talked about this one, but some define revival as a scheduled meeting that happened in the local church annually or bi-annually where a guest preacher and sometime a guest singer come and hold nightly service for a period of time.
2. **Extreme Emotional Expressions** - In the minds of some, revival is associated with such ecstatic manifestations as speaking in tongues, holy laughter, animal brayings, and people keeling over and being "slain in the spirit" during a church service.
3. **Large Mass Gatherings** - Some associate revival with such commotions as ecumenical stadium rallies, faith healing meetings and Christian rock concerts.
4. **Evangelistic Outreach Events** - Some associate revival with "getting people down the aisle," obtaining quickie professions of faith, or running buses and bringing a lot of children to Sunday School. Some see revival as being focused mainly on outreach to unbelievers.
5. **Reserved for Another Time** - Some say that revival is "not for today" and that it is wrong to try to have revival until after the Rapture, after the Holy Spirit and all true churches and believers have been removed from the planet.

Everyone has a different agenda, and will tend to see the concept of revival in terms of whatever advances his agenda. If his or her agenda fall in line with one of the above 5 misconceptions about revival he or she will likely miss it.

B. What Revival Is?

1. **A Definition of Revival** – Webster’s Dictionary gives several definitions of the word “revival” that may be helpful in trying to determine just what is meant when we speak of revival in spiritual or religious terms.

5 Understanding of Revival from Webster’s Dictionary:

- (1) **The act of reviving or the state of being revived**
 - (2) **REVITALIZATION, RENEW, RESTORE**
 - (3) **To return or restore to consciousness or life**
 - (4) **To become or make active again**
 - (5) **To bring back into use**
2. **A Biblical Definition of Revival** – Is it possible to develop a Bible-based theology of revival? The word "Revival" does not appear in the King James Version of the Bible. The words "revive," "revived" and "reviving" do appear on a few occasions and these rare appearances may help us define “revival” Biblically.

10 Biblical Characteristics of Revival:

- (1) **Biblical revival always begins with God’s own people** – This goes without saying given the great revival passage that we all know and quote, **2 Chronicles 7:14**, *“If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sins, and heal their land.”*

- (2) **Biblical revival creates a deep seeded joy in the hearts of God's people** - Psalm 85:6 says, *"Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?"* Here we have a clue - true revival results in God's people rejoicing in Him. We have a similar concept in Nehemiah 8 where revival resulted in God's people rejoicing, *"And all the people went their way to eat, and to drink and to send portions, and to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them."* (Nehemiah 8:12).
- (3) **Biblical revival results in people experiencing God's mercy and salvation** - True revival results in people experiencing God's mercy and salvation, Psalm 85:7, *"Shew us thy mercy, O LORD, and grant us thy salvation."*
- (4) **Biblical revival may generate numerical growth for the body of Christ** - True revival, as recorded in the Book of Acts, results in numerical growth for the Lord's churches... sometimes 5,000 at other times 3,000. For the great revival brought to the city of Ninevah by the preaching of a reluctant prophet, Jonah, perhaps as many as a million people turned to God in true repentance. There should be a word of caution at this point... because when a lot of people get emotionally worked up, make professions of faith but never show up in the church, let alone become faithful members of the body of Christ, this does not qualify as true scriptural revival.
- (5) **Biblical revival may generate a great thinning out of the body of Christ** - Numbers are great if the Lord gives the increase, but there will be times when the faithful proclamation of the Word results, at least for a time, in a loss of numbers. Remember the words of John 6:66 and this after the great out pouring of God Spirit in the feeding of 5,000 (more like 15,000) and Jesus walking on water... John 6:66, *"From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him [Jesus]."* On occasion, revival may temporarily result in a decline in membership, as those who are false believers are winnowed out of the membership. The revival in Acts 5 resulted in at least 2 members lost due to premature death (Ananias and Sapphira), and as a result, *"Great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things. . . . And of the rest durst no man join himself to them."* (Acts 5:11, 13).
- (6) **Biblical revival will cause changed lives** - When people are affected by true revival, their lives will be changed, like Zacchaeus, who said, *"Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold."* (Luke 18:9). Revived folks will seek out those that they have wronged, and get things right.
- (7) **Biblical revival will bring a deep hungering for God's Word and Biblical truth** - True revival results in deeper Bible study and devotion to sound doctrine. When God's Spirit fell at Pentecost the days that followed were marked by a great hunger for God's truth, God's Words... Acts 17:11 speaks to this, *"They received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so."* (Acts 17:11). Revival should be based on the preserved Word of God, not on a subjective emotional feeling or the hysteria of mass movements and crowd psychology.
- (8) **Biblical revival will have residual impact on those outside the body of Christ in the community at large** - True revival creates an impact that will be

Did you notice that dreadful scripture address? John 666

felt in the community, beyond the walls of the church. In Acts 17:6 we read, *"These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also."* (Acts 17:6).

- (9) **Biblical revival is for now... today** - True revival is for today. *"Now is the accepted time: behold, now is the day of salvation."* (2 Corinthians 6:2). Nowhere does the Bible say we have to wait to get into the next dispensation before we can have revival.
- (10) **Biblical revival comes when God sends it** - We must wait upon the Holy Spirit and on the sovereignty of God as we seek true revival. *"The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."* (John 3:8)

It is hoped that these brief, inadequate, preliminary notes on the subject of revival will give us some idea of the meaning of true revival, and will encourage us to seek revival in our congregations and personal lives.

3. **A Christian Definition/Understanding of Revival** - A number of years ago in a book entitled *Revival* by Richard Owen Roberts, I read the following definition of revival, which I believe is one of the very best Christian definitions/understanding of revival that I have ever heard express (by the way if you have the opportunity to read "Revival" by Richard Owen Roberts).

2 Good Christian Definitions of Real Revival:

- (1) *"Revival is an extraordinary work of the Holy Spirit producing extraordinary results."* – Richard Owen Roberts, *"Revival"*
- (2) *"GOD in the midst of His people."* - While that phrase above conveys the fundamental concept of revival, I have come to the conviction that one single word describes revival better than any other — that word is 'GOD.'

There is a very precious sense in which revival is literally God in our midst... the midst of our people... Why? Here are some reasons:

3 Reasons Revival is best defined as God in the midst of His People:

- (1) **His manifest presence produces all that is desirable in revival** -
- (2) **The absence of His manifest presence accounts for all that is undesirable during the seasons of moral and spiritual decline that precede revivals** -
- (3) **Revival is a time when heaven comes closer to earth than at any other time in the lives of men and women** - If one considers the greatest attraction of heaven, is it golden streets? Is it the tree of life? Is it the presence of angels? Is it fellowship with other redeemed? NO! The greatest allure of heaven is the absolutely unbroken presence of God.

II. HOW DO I REALLY EXPERIENCE REVIVAL?

- A. A "Revived Mind" is Essential for Experiencing Genuine Revival (Romans 12:1-2)

In this portion of Scripture, the Apostle Paul tells us that we must have a “renewed mind”... I’m calling it a revived mind in order to think properly as Christians. Let’s look at what he has to say in **Romans 12:1-2**, *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.”*

Paul’s 2 Fold Call to Believers:

1. **Become a living sacrifice** – Paul pleads with believers in Rome to first present themselves to God as living sacrifices. Under the Old Covenant, God accepted the sacrifice of dead animals. But because of Christ’s ultimate sacrifice, the Old Testament sacrifices are no longer of any effect (see Heb. 9:11-12). For those in Christ, the only acceptable worship (“reasonable service” in KJV) is to offer themselves completely to the Lord. Under God’s control, the believer’s yet-unredeemed body can and must be yielded to Him as an instrument of righteousness. A true servant submits himself/herself... also his/her wants, wishes, desires to the master (boss). Essentially, sacrifices himself/herself to the one to whom he or she belongs.
2. **Be transformed (changed)** – Second, Paul calls for believers to be transformed and he tells us how... through the renewing... reviving of their minds. I have to say that this is a call for real revival.

Observation: We understand the first concept well enough. We must die to self, live for Him! Revival is a fresh calling to just such a recommitment of our lives. **The second concept of being “transformed” leaves us scratching our heads. How easy is it for you to transform yourself? Impossible! Right?** Yet, Paul knew that they had to break free from the world’s anti-Christian thought forms, operational methods, styles, and techniques, and must we if are truly going to begin to live our faith fully and be truly surrendered servants of Christ. Paul also understood that such a radical break could only occur as a result of a radical transformation that flows from within. In other words, in order to live differently, they had to begin thinking differently. Right thinking precedes right actions.

B. The Natural Thinking of Today’s World is Prohibitive of Experiencing Genuine Revival (Romans 8:5-8)

The first step to experiencing genuine revival is to understand the characteristics of the what keeps us from experiencing it. Our ability to identify them will aid us in ridding ourselves of these destructive traits. In this passage the Apostle Paul gives us some characteristics of the natural mind that pull us away from our faith walk and actually speaks to our need for revival and he contrast them with the renewed or revived or spiritually minded. As we consider them, honestly evaluate your own thinking and see if any of them apply to you. These may indicate your need for revival.

4 Indicators of A Need for Revival:

1. **Living more controlled by the flesh rather than by the Spirit (v.5)** - What I want... my wants, desires, wishes are dominant in my thinking. Why is this

dangerous? Left to our own devices the unrestrained we are capable of anything. Paul give us a list of these fleshly behaviors in Galatians 5:19-21 it's not a pretty picture, *"The acts of the sinful nature (flesh) are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery (unrestrained self-indulgent immoral behavior); idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like."* Listen, don't ever think that it can't happened to you. Each of us can fall and fall hard if we aren't careful... so renewed mind is key.

2. **Experiencing a deadness or dullness that can no longer perceive spiritual things (v.6)** – Williams Barclay says, "To allow the things of the world completely to dominate life is self-extinction; it is spiritual suicide." The worldly mind doesn't think like a Christian. Paul simply says, "The mind of the sinful man is death..." I other words there is a deadness, a dullness, a blindness. That is why we say that when we get to the place where our prayers are hollow and our Bible study is empty and we don't get anything out of the preaching and teaching of God's Word anymore it is a sign we need revival. Christians can become so caught up in the world that a deadness, a dullness and callousness can result. We need revival@!
3. **A sudden dislike or disdain for the things of God (v.7)** – How do you feel/react to spiritual things? One in need of real revival has gotten to a place where they don't enjoy spiritual things. They don't enjoy church and church talk. They don't like to hear about God, or the Bible, or spiritual things? The concept of God, and church, and spiritual things is uncomfortable... why? Conviction, guilt, confrontation with lifestyle. If it is real they have to deal with it and adjust their life to it.
4. **A sense of dread toward God... something is wrong (v.8)** – When we come to the place where have this sense of dread that something is wrong, something is missing and we feel inside that God is displeased with my life that could be a telling sign... you need to check yourself out. Verse 8 says, "Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God."

C. **Listening/Hearing God and Heeding His Voice is Required for Experiencing Genuine Revival (Romans 12:3)**

Paul mentions some mental obstacles that attempt to obstruct, even block out, God's directives and counsel to us.

2 Things That Will Keep us from Hearing and Heading God's Voice in Revival:

- A. **Pride** - Thinking to highly of yourself. Pride goes before the fall and keeps many a man and woman from adjusting their life to God's voice and what He desires to do in their life. Revival will only come to that life that will kill his or her pride and humble themselves in brokenness before God. Paul says don't think too highly of yourself.
- B. **Dishonesty** - Failing to think soberly of yourself. Folks, we are all just sinners saved by grace. The honest truth, we were all lost when God found us. The truth is, we were in need of a Savior when God found us. We must be honest about ourselves. If you are to experience real revival you must get honest with yourself about yourself.

III. REAL REVIVAL STARTS IN THE HEART AND MIND

Genuine revival starts with an inward stirring of our hearts and minds by God Spirit. Our behavior and motives... the way we live our Christian lives will never become Christ-like until our hearts and minds begin the process of revival. This means that genuine revival starts when inward change, mental, spiritual transformation begins... and not until! So how can we begin to heart/mind-revival process and see it to its completion? There are two essential steps:

2 Essential Steps in the Heart/Mind-Revival Process:

- A. Experiencing a genuine revival of heart and mind begins with a decision** – You must decide that you want God to change your heart and mind – to invade your fortress and destroy its barriers. It can all begin with a simple, but sincere prayer... “Change me, Lord.” “Lord, send a revival and let it begin in me” and then be willing to really let it begin in you.

- B. Continuing to operate from a revived heart and mind on a daily basis** – Going through the transformation process of a revived heart and mind is exactly that – a process. Our minds do not easily surrender to that invasion of God. Indeed, the war will only be won through our personal struggles in many daily battles. But take heart! God has promised us that the total victory is ours in Christ. This doesn't remove our struggles, but it gives us the hope and power we need to continue the fight.