

Praying for Revival - quietly

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[0:00] If you would take your Bibles and go to 2 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians chapter 4.

I was going to sneeze. Allergies acting up? Oh yes, got to love that. Got to love that wind. 2 Corinthians chapter 4, if you're visiting with us, you pull out that black Bible in the chair in front of you and go to page 141.

2 Corinthians chapter 4, 2 Corinthians 4. I'm going to read the first seven verses. So I'm doing a message about praying for revival this morning.

Next Sunday, I'm going to do a message on dealing with conflict in a gospel-centered way. I'm going to take a look at how the gospel intersects with how we deal with conflict with people.

And then, three weeks from today, one, two, no wait, two weeks from today, one, two, right? Two Sundays from today. We'll start in the book of Acts. And I don't know how long we'll be in the book of Acts.

[1:22] I'll let you know in a couple weeks. But today, praying for revival. 2 Corinthians 4, 1 through 7. I'm going to read. 2 Corinthians 5, 1 through 8.

2 Corinthians 5, 1 through 8. 3 Corinthians 5, 1 through 8.

4 through 9. 4 Aha. 5 through 9. 5 Corinthians 5, 1 through 9. For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake.

5 Corinthians 5, 2 through 8. 5 through 9. 6 through 9. 8 through 9. 7 through 9. 12. 7 through 9. 8 through 10. 7 through 10. 8. 8 through 11. 10. 8 through 10.

11. 11. 11. 9. 10. 11. 1. 11. treasure in earthen vessels. That the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves.

[2:49] So why are we doing this praying for revival? What is this all about? What is the mentality? What are we doing when we do this?

Why does revival come? Maybe there's questions that you're going through your mind about revival and so what I did is I pulled together nine key questions about revival and that's what we're going to look at this morning.

And we're going to pull some things even from our text in 2 Corinthians chapter 4 verses 1 through 7. Nine key questions, key questions about revival. What are some things that we would ask about revival?

First of all, what is revival? What is it? We've gone through this before when I preached through this in December of last year, the third Sunday of December, fourth Sunday, I preached through revival. And we asked this question as well. What is revival? What does it mean when we're talking about revival? Revival, according to Tim Keller, it is the intensification of the ordinary operations of the Holy Spirit.

[4:01] It's not something we manufacture. It's not something we conjure up. Nor is it the extraordinary working of God.

It's the intensification of what we know. The intensification of God's normal grace in the gospel. For example, let's say that once a month somebody comes to Christ.

Well, if that's intensified, then it would be five times a week someone comes to Christ. Now, there's no glamorous type stuff, but it's the normal operation of God, but it's intensified.

So as an example again, if there's one person coming to Christ a month, for example, then it'd be five people a week. So there's an intensification of God's working amongst us. That's what revival is.

By the way, if I go too fast with these questions, feel free to ask me for my notes. I can send them to you. I can print them off. I can email them to you. No problem. The intensification of the ordinary operations of the Holy Spirit.

[5:10] That's what revival is. That's what we mean by that. So what are we asking God to do then? An intensification of His normal operations is what are we asking Him to do?

This. God would move in this church, in this city, in Jerome. The ministry's been happening there. In the Verde Valley.

Our state, our country, our world. So it goes, like that. So that we will see our own joy and praise renewed.

Sleepy Christians would wake up. Nominal Christians repent and trust in Christ. And non-Christians will be saved as well. That's what we're asking God to do.

That God would move amongst us here first. And then we'll come out to Cottonwood, Jerome, the Verde Valley, in our state, in Arizona, in the country, throughout the world even.

[6:12] God would move. And then what would happen is our own joy and praise will be renewed. We'll see sleepy Christians actually wake up and nominal Christians who are not real Christians at all will actually come to Christ.

and pagans flat out rejecting the gospel, they respond as well. Third question.

Why do we pray for revival? Why? What's the purpose? According to our passage, because the evil one blinds people to the truth of the gospel so they may not see the glorious sun and so Paul says in verse 4, in whose case the God of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glorious Christ.

People won't see Him. They're blind to Him. They're blind to understanding of that. They're blind to the truth. And the sad part of that can even happen amongst Christians.

We're not listening. We need God to open our minds to understand His truth. That's why we pray for revival. Fourth question.

[7:34] What conditions may make revival favorable? What conditions may make revival favorable? Leon Scrum said this, A revival movement and the prayer that necessitates it is undeniably catalyzed by pressure or persecution or brokenness or a collapse or a tragedy.

For instance, right before the Second Great Awakening you had this thing that happened in our history.

You might be familiar with it. It's called the Revolutionary War. Okay, that was a joke. Nobody got that. When comparing the Revolutionary War 1775 to 1783 1775 to 1783 when you compare the Revolutionary War to the population of the colonies the war was at least the second deadliest conflict in American history ranking ahead of World War II and behind only the Civil War.

There are major sufferings brought about by the Revolutionary War especially with disease. many parts of the country were ravaged by the Revolutionary War.

People were ripe for revival. There was such devastation. They were ravaged. They were broken. As one writer says this he says there was quote dark times low conditions a falling off.

[9:28] And the Second Great Awakening the First Great Awakening happened in the 1740s. The Second Great Awakening lasted for 25, 30 sometimes people say even longer than that. So what may make revival favorable and short?

It will take a collapse of some sort. Maybe it will be an economic collapse. Maybe there will be a social collapse.

Maybe there will be a collapse of military. Whatever it is people will see the futility of this life and be broken.

Maybe there will be some tragedy major tragedy like Katrina Hurricane Katrina maybe it will be something like that. But as Leonice Crump said it's undeniably catalyzed by pressure.

Another question. What special means were used to promote these revivals? The First Great Awakening. The Second Great Awakening. The Welsh Revival which happened toward the turn of the 20th century.

[10:49] None. Nothing. Nada. For all my Spanish speakers. Nothing. I told you about this book last time.

Revival and Revivalism. The Making and Marrying of American Evangelicalism. Ian Murray says this. The spiritual leaders they were united in the belief that God has appointed the means of prayer and preaching for the spread of the gospel and that these are the great means in the use of which he requires the churches to be faithful.

There are no greater means which may be employed at special times to secure supposedly greater results. It's therefore the Spirit of God who makes the same means more effective at some seasons

than at others.

There's nothing you can do that can manufacture revival. people. It's just a simple process of prayer and preaching. Praying and proclaiming God's word.

That's it. He says this. But in the case of the second great awakening nearly all the preacher's prominence at the outset had already been laboring for many years.

[12:05] a considerable body of men for a long period before the second great awakening preached the same message as they did during the revival but with vastly different consequences.

The same men the same actions performed with the same abilities yet the results were so amazingly different. there's nothing you can do that can manufacture this.

You can't conjure it up. He says later on thus what characterizes a revival is not the employment of unusual or special means but rather the extraordinary degree of blessing attending the normal means of grace intensifying the normal things.

There were no unusual evangelistic meetings no special arrangements no announcements of pending revivals pastors were simply continuing in the services that they conducted for many years when the great change began.

So it's simply God's word and prayer. So we're not going to have some evangelistic meetings for a week.

[13:23] We're not going to do that. Or as Rick Danielson was saying that there was a church they had revival meetings for a week they said revival meetings all week except for Tuesday.

So you can't have revival on Tuesday but you can have revival the rest of the week. God doesn't work that way. It doesn't happen like that. We're not going to have some special type meeting special type things that's not going to take place.

prayer. It's just a simple process of God's word and prayer. Listen to what prayer. E.M. Murray says this. On the subject of means something needs to be said more particularly on prayer.

As with the truth that is preached prayer has no inherent power in itself. So if you pray there's no power in you praying. It's not it doesn't conjure up something.

And so with preaching it has to be God's spirit working. On the contrary true prayer is bound up with the persuasion of our inability and our complete dependence on God.

[14:32] Prayer considered as a human activity whether offered by few or many can guarantee no results. But prayer that throws believers in heartfelt need of God with true concern for the salvation of sinners will not go unanswered.

Prayer of this kind precedes blessing. Not because of any necessary cause and effect but because such prayer secures an acknowledgement of the true author of the blessing.

And where such a spirit of prayer exists there's a sign that God is already intervening to advance his cause. So see friends we just throw ourselves upon God and we plead with them and ask him.

And we realize we depend upon him totally and we realize there's no absolutely no way that you when you speak to someone about the gospel your neighbor your relative your friend your co-worker somebody there in Jerome or just down the street from you there's no absolutely no way they will respond to Christ unless God works in them.

Right? There's no way. it doesn't mean we don't stop speaking it doesn't mean we don't stop giving them the gospel but we speak there must be a growing concern among us as Christians to pray that we see our desperate need for God and that desperate need should turn us back to God's enduring sufficient word his truth question number six how did it affect Christians in the church at that time the second great awakening how did it affect Christians it says this every true revival begins in the church and a proof of the genuineness of the work as it does not leave believers where they were before they are filled with new wonder joy and praise with a new sense of the privilege of serving

[16:50] God and with renewed energy that comes from being constrained by the love of Christ what Christians had thought impossible in former years was now attempted with a faith and sacrificial abandon that was to astonish the world so there's a deeper praising of God a deeper joy in God a deeper sense of the privilege of serving God ministering to others we relish in the gospel I'm forgiven in Christ isn't this amazing there's such joy that comes over us there's such there's such delight that comes there's such pleasure that comes when we remember the gospel and that just pours out towards others that's how it affects us and it actually begins with us it begins here with you with me with us that's how it affected

Christians in the church at that time and that's how it continues to affect the church today well what do these revivals look like what do they look like a final general observation says Murray arising out of this period has to do with the manner in which the unusual sense of the presence of God was recognized in the churches which experienced these revivals it was not because men saw weeping multitudes unrestrained noise and high excitement that they believed a revival had begun on the contrary such things which are sometimes supposed to be of the essence of revival such things were almost entirely absent in the northeast during the greater part of the second great awakening far from aiming at stirring excitement the preachers sought to avoid it the whole tendency of things was to produce exercises of the calm solemn pungent kind rather than passionate and glamorous excitement he says later as we have seen it was when these pastors were continuing in their oh thank you do I sound that bad yeah dad you stink sorry oh that's nice thank you as we've seen it it was when these pastors were continuing in their normal preaching ministries that revivals began and the first appearance of change was commonly the mysterious influence like the silent dew of heaven which took from men's minds all save the truth that they were hearing congregations were then awed and subdued and it was often the degree of silence and stillness more than anything else which showed that a new day had come see we think about revival with people lifting their hands they're jumping around they're doing laps in the church building go go go go yeah yeah pick him up he fell down go go that's what we think is is revival not so in the great awakening second great awakening in the northeast silence dr.

noah porter describing the revival at farmington connecticut he wrote quote the state of feeling which at this time pervaded the town was interesting beyond description there was no commotion but stillness in our very streets a serenity in the aspect of the pious a solemnity apparent in almost all which forcibly impressed us with the conviction that in very deed god was in this place what do these revivals look like overall in general silence stillness a solemn sense that god certainly was in this place an eager attention to god's word rational deep stillness and not to to offend our charismatic brothers and sisters in christ we love them but what happens is their emotionalism gets in the way and you miss the fact of the stillness and the solemn presence of god which leads to the next question what do these revivals look like there was silence and stillness and that's why this next question is important what do we need to be careful of in these revivals unfortunately revivals in the past collapsed because of a lack of theological depth and training they collapsed because there's no theological depth it was shallow and then what happened is people began to focus upon the phenomena that's why we must if revival does break out we must use revival to teach people the bible and to bring them back to the gospel and not get distracted by the phenomena that may sometimes be associated with revival sometimes it is that's why

Jonathan Edwards in the first great awakening in the 1740s he wrote about the religious affections he wrote about this phenomena that was taking place there's people weeping and crying and wailing and he defended that because that is sometimes associated with revival but we automatically think that's revival not necessarily we must not get distracted by that phenomena because then it could collapse we must take advantage and teach people using revival to teach people the bible and what the scriptures say and focusing upon Christ and the cross and the gospel and forgiveness in his name that's why last time in December remember when we went through Nehemiah chapters 8 and 9 I didn't expositively work through that but I gave you principles that came out from that reading preaching exposition of God's truth his word a larger sense of the awesomeness of God a larger sense of our rebellion against God conviction confession of sin with brokenness prayer which remembers the gospel

God's grace to us and then there's assurance in God and in his promises those things must be encapsulated and must be pushed and even taught when there's revival taking place when revival breaks out we must do that we must show people that preaching of God's word is important a greater sense of his holiness and a greater awareness of my sin and a greater awareness of the cross it must loom larger and there must be conviction and confession and then such assurance in God and in his promises it's teaching people God's word so we must be careful of that which leads to question number nine what's our central message in revival really what's our central message in anything we proclaim Christ Jesus as Lord right there in verse five we do not preach ourselves but Christ

[25:03] Jesus as Lord in verse two Paul says we've renounced the things hidden because of shame not walking in craftiness we don't adulterate the word of God he says but we manifest the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God we manifest truth and

when we preach Christ as Lord that's how do you manifest truth we preach Christ as Lord that's what we do Jesus Christ as Lord we're manifesting the truth of who Jesus is we manifest the truth of the holiness of God we manifest the truth that we are rebellious sinners and we deserve his judgment we should be condemned we manifest the truth that God is a forgiving and gracious and merciful and kind God who sent Jesus God the Son who took on flesh lived a perfect life righteous righteous was crucified on the cross as a substitute for sinners all of the sin was placed upon him

God's wrath was poured upon him for all those that repent and turn away repent turn away from their sin and trust in Jesus alone and God rose brought him back to life he resurrected from the dead and now he is king he's lord of all come and trust in Jesus that's what we manifest that's what we display to people that's the gospel last time we did a message I did a message on revival we all prayed out loud together for God to bring revival to us this time I believe it would be most prudent for us to have silence that we would pray together in quiet solitude for God to work and I don't know how long we'll just kind of just

I don't know we'll play it by ear but what I want us to do is that there will be silence there will be quiet there will be stillness if you gotta get up and go to the bathroom please do that you know go to the bathroom whatever gotta get up something's happened that's fine that's okay let's have stillness let's be solemn and let's quietly in our hearts in our spirits pray for God to bring revival to us and maybe as you're praying pray for that neighbor that you know who doesn't know Christ the friend the relative for people in Jerome we've been ministering to there and I'm going to put this up here on the screen for you this is what we're praying for God will move in this church this city in Jerome Verde Valley our state country our world so that we will see our own joy and praise renewed sleepy Christians wake up nominal Christians repent and trust Jesus and non Christians be saved too so leave that on the screen we can leave that up there Tyler if we can and we'll just have some silence and we'll just be still a few moments and then after whatever amount of time we'll do our time of giving and our last two songs in our closing prayer like we normally do okay so let's have silence pray for

God to bring revival