

# Expecting Revival

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Please consider donating to this work in the San Francisco Bay Area online at [ChristChurchEastBay.org](http://ChristChurchEastBay.org). Good morning. I'm Maddie Duhan and I'm part of the Women Reading Women group.

Today's scripture readings are from the book of Joshua, chapter 4, verses 20 to 24, and the book of Judges, chapter 2, verses 8 to 10, as printed in the liturgy. A reading from the book of Joshua.

And those twelve stones which they took out of the Jordan, Joshua set up at Gilgal. And he said to the people of Israel, When your children ask their fathers in times to come, what do these stones mean?

Then you shall let your children know, Israel passed over this Jordan on dry ground. For the Lord your God dried up the waters of the Jordan for you until you passed over, as the Lord your God did to the Red Sea, which he dried up for us until we passed over, so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the Lord is mighty, that you may fear the Lord your God forever.

[ 1 : 18 ] A reading from the book of Judges. And Joshua, the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died at the age of 110 years. And they buried him within the boundaries of his inheritance, Abtinath-Hirehs, in the hill country of Ephraim, north of the mountain Gaash.

And all that generation also were gathered to their fathers. And there arose another generation after them, who did not know the Lord or the work that he had done for Israel.

The grass withers and the flowers fall. If you are just tuning in, today's your first Sunday at Christ Church, we welcome you. And just as context, I've returned from a four-month sabbatical that was given to me by the church just recently.

And during that time, God gave me this one word, revival. And the simple prayer, revive us. And I want to go back today to the definitions that I gave you my first Sunday back at the beginning of this month.

This is from a pastor in London who died about 40 years ago. His name was Martin Lloyd-Jones. And he said that revival is a visitation from on high, a great religious awakening, the unusual outpouring and manifestation of the Spirit of God.

[ 2 : 40 ] A church historian named Edwin Orr gives this definition. He says, revival is a movement of the Holy Spirit bringing about a revival of New Testament Christianity in the church of Christ and its related community.

And the result of this outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the result of this awakening to New Testament Christianity in the church, is that people find themselves saturated with God.

Over and over, people describe themselves as saturated with God. Now, if you're here today and you say, I think I have enough of the Holy Spirit. I think I've got this New Testament Christianity thing down.

And I am more than saturated with God. This sermon series is probably not for you. But for the rest of us. We're talking today about expecting revival.

And I'd like to try to raise our expectations for revival. God commanded the children of Israel to take 12 stones out of the middle of the Jordan River and set them up at Gilgal so that they would never forget.

[ 3 : 53 ] And they would always remember this mighty act of salvation that happened there in that place. That they would always remember God's wonderful works. And in the same way, we need help to learn about revivals.

We need help to not forget and to remember these great times that God has brought to his people, both in Scripture and in church history, where God has come down in a powerful way.

We don't want to forget these things lest we end up like this generation described in Judges chapter 2 that we just read. There arose another generation after them who did not know the Lord or the work that he had done for Israel.

What a tragic crisis among the people of God. And is that not a description of the cultural moment we're in? There's so much we don't know about the Lord.

There's so much we don't know about what he's done for his people. And so I want to point our attention to these events recounted in Joshua chapter 4 that speak directly to this theme of revival.

[ 5 : 01 ] And what I want to say today is that we need reminding that the Lord's hand is mighty for those who cry out to him.

And first of all, we need reminding. God did something exceptional. God did something unusual, something striking and sudden and extraordinary.

First of all, just by delivering the children of Israel from her enemies, the Egyptians, who had enslaved them and forced them into harsh labor for 400 years.

And God, boom, he delivered them. And then after that, the Lord divided the Red Sea and they went through on dry land. Of all the mighty acts of salvation in the Old Testament, this is the foremost event.

And here they are now after the wilderness for 40 years. They're looking on the other side of the Jordan River. They can see the land that God promised to Abraham, this land that they've been longing for, this land flowing with milk and honey.

[ 6 : 12 ] And the problem is, how are they going to get to the other side? How are they going to cross through this river, especially when it's at flood stage? And you can go home and look up YouTube, Jordan River flood stage.

And you'll see, and you can just imagine, this ancient river was much wider, much deeper, much stronger flowing whitewater rapids. This is an impossible situation.

This river cannot be crossed. But God. But God came and he divided the waters.

And they went through, not on wet ground, but on dry ground, just like they did at the Red Sea. And God commanded them after that. But he said, take 12 stones from the spot where those priests stood in the middle of the river with the ark of the Lord's covenant, the symbol of God's presence.

And I want you to take those 12 stones and set them up on the other side at Gilgal. Why does God command them to do this? Verse 21, it says that your children are going to ask their fathers in times to come, what do these stones mean?

[ 7 : 26 ] And I think we're in a similar position today as we consider the wonderful works of God in revival and the ways that God has shown his mighty hand, the ways that he's come down and he's acted in power to awaken and enliven and quicken his church.

And what I'm wanting to do through these sermons is cause us to ask the question, what do these stones mean? What is it all about? What in the world are you and Andrew talking about?

What are these events that have happened in the past? Why do they matter to us? What in the world is this revival in the 16th century you call the Reformation?

What is this revival that happened in the 18th century called the Great Awakening? What exactly happened in 1857 on Wall Street in New York that changed the face of the church in the United States?

What happened in 1904 to 1907 in Wales and all the way to India and China and Korea that changed the 20th century church?

[ 8 : 34 ] We don't even know about these things. And the stones that we're trying to set up. They're meant for the children of Israel to ask the question, what does it all mean?

What do these stones mean? We don't know what happened. And these sermons on revival are meant to be like stones that cause us to ask, what is this? And why is it relevant to us today?

Now, you would think with an event like this in your history, there'd be no need to remind people. It's extraordinary that we even need these stones of remembrance and memory.

And you would think that, you know, here's these two impossible events that God made possible.

The dividing and the crossing of the Red Sea and the dividing and the crossing of the Jordan River.

There's no way people are going to need to be reminded in some sort of visible, external, objective way that this happened among their people. But God knows us better than we know ourselves.

[ 9 : 37 ] Right? He knows that we're made of the dust. He knows that we're common human clay. He knows that our human nature is corrupted by sin.

And therefore, we so easily forget the truth. That even an unforgettable event can be forgotten. That even this thing that happened could come to somehow not be imprinted on the minds and impressed upon the consciences of the next generation.

And so God says, put up some stones and get the attention of the people and provoke them to ask the question, what does all this mean for us? You guys tracking?

So the Bible is like a set of stones for us. The Bible is meant for us to come along and to open it and to read it and there to encounter the power of the living God.

This God who's revealing himself. This God who's doing mighty acts. This God who's saving people and showing that his hand is mighty. And yet so many people in the church today are just walking by those stones.

[ 10 : 46 ] They don't know what they mean. And they're not even asking the questions. And if we would just allow these stones of scripture to stop us in our tracks.

If we would take the time to say, what does it all mean? We too could experience the power of the living God who reveals himself through those stones. Our communion table is like a set of stones. The Lord knew that in our sin we might forget even the death of the Son of God for us. His agony and his shame and all that he endured on the cross as our substitute to atone for our sins and bear the judgment of God in our place.

How could we forget this? How could we forget this mighty act of God that demonstrated his eternal love for us? But Jesus knows us better than we know ourselves.

And so he commands us, break bread. Drink wine. Do this in remembrance of me. He's setting up a visible, external, objective memorial, a tangible reminder lest we forget.

[ 11 : 58 ] What does this Bible mean? What does this table mean? What do these stones mean? And I want us to set up some stones of revival in this season at Christ Church.

Stones that could be signposts for us to the history of God's mighty hand coming down to awaken his church. And I pray that as we do that subsequent generations, our children and their children and their children's children would be going along casually one day.

And they would suddenly come across all these stones. And they would have awakened within them a new interest, a new curiosity to say, Mom, Dad, what is the meaning of all this for us?

And that we might have the great privilege of telling them these stones serve as a testimony that the presence of the living God came down among us and performed a great miracle for us.

We get to remind them of the facts, of the central event that once happened, that Christ was crucified to save sinners like us.

[ 13 : 13 ] That's what the stones mean. That's what the Bible means. That's what this table means. That's what every revival in the history of the church means. And we need reminding.

We need reminding. And we need reminding that the Lord's hand is mighty. We need reminding that the Lord's hand is mighty.

Look at verse 21. It says, When your children ask their fathers in times to come, what do these stones mean? Then you shall let your children know that Israel passed over this Jordan on dry ground.

For the Lord your God dried up the waters of the Jordan for you until you passed over. As the Lord your God did to the Red Sea, which he dried up for us until we passed over. So that all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the Lord is mighty.

That you may fear the Lord your God forever. You know, we too want to remember these times and these events where something amazing happened.

[ 14 : 17 ] Something wonderful happened to revive God's people. And it's not just something that happens, you know, only once in an utterly unique event.

And you'll notice a series in our own text here that what God did at the Red Sea, he did again at the Jordan River. That God moved at the Jordan River exactly as he did before at the Red Sea.

And the same thing happens in revival. It's not just something that happens once. It's something that happens serially and repeatedly down the centuries of the church. In the same way, with the same patterns, and the same characteristics, God does here what he did over there.

And just as God worked in the same way at the sea as he did at the river, so the Holy Spirit has come down at different times in the life of the church. And he's shown his mighty hand here and

here and here in the exact same ways that we too might know that the hand of the Lord is mighty. I want us to think for a moment about the past just 300 years of the church. And I want us to think about these revivals that have happened over the past few centuries that have caused us to see that the hand of the Lord is mighty.

[ 15 : 36 ] Think about the great awakening that happened in the 1730s and 40s. We know that before that time, the state of society was deplorable.

And we also know that the state of the church was dead. And God decided to send the Holy Spirit down. And when the Holy Spirit came down, he converted and created some of the greatest preachers since the time of the apostles.

And it was through the preaching, the renewed preaching of the gospel, that whole churches, whole cities, whole nations came alive to God in that time in a mighty way, in a way that showed that the Lord's hand is mighty.

Historians tell us that, you know, this awakening had a huge part to play in the United Kingdom and her colonies, not descending into the kind of revolution that swept through France in 1789, that we were spared of that kind of violence and that kind of social chaos.

And that rather what sprang up from that awakening was the trade unions movement. Right? That people, as the Holy Spirit came down, and people were given a new identity, a new nature, a new sort of dignity in Jesus Christ, they began to demand better education and better working conditions.

[ 17 : 01 ] And we know that also out of this revival, the abolition of slavery movement rose up. William Wilberforce and his whole cohort of abolitionists are a result of this revival.

It would have never happened. This wide-scale liberation from bondage, liberation from oppression would have never happened had the Holy Spirit not come down in power at this time.

What do these stones mean? They mean that the hand of the Lord is mighty, to do mighty things. If you fast forward to the revival in 1857 to 59 in the United States, the United Kingdom that spread throughout the world, that revival began in a lunch hour prayer meeting among business people on Wall Street, of all places.

And that lunch hour prayer, it began with one person. One person who went and started to pray by themselves. And then eventually that one person became six people.

And then eventually that six people became 10,000 people praying every day at lunch in the heart of Wall Street. And what happened was that revival started to move from city to city, from college campus to college campus.

[ 18 : 23 ] It came all the way here to the College of California that in just a few years' time would become named the University of California at Berkeley. And people, when they described that revival, they called it a year of the right hand of the Most High.

Where God showed that His hand was mighty. And then if you fast forward to 1904 to 1907, the revival in Wales that swept to India and China and Korea, that revival began by people saying, Lord, bend us.

Lord, bend us. Lord, send your Holy Spirit now for Jesus Christ's sake. And they prayed and prayed and prayed until the Holy Spirit came down.

And it changed whole peoples and whole nations. You can ask Miriam Kim about her grandfather who suffered greatly for the gospel in Korea.

And I believe it's coming straight out of her family having roots in this revival that changed that nation. Now, what I'm trying to say to you is that the hand of the Lord has been shown to be mighty at the Jordan River exactly as He showed it to be mighty at the Red Sea.

[ 19 : 54 ] And what I want us to see is that the Lord works in the same ways, in the same patterns, and with the same characteristics through all of these times of revival when He shows that His hand is mighty.

And just to list a few of these characteristics that we see in each of these revivals, number one, every single one of them is a repetition of the day of Pentecost.

That the Holy Spirit comes down on a whole number of people together and they become aware of a presence and a power that's above them and beyond them.

They become aware of the majesty and the might of God. And they begin to sense that no human being is presiding over this meeting. That in fact, it's the Holy Spirit who's presiding, who's leading, who's directing, who's guiding.

And because of that, people begin to become awake to spiritual things. Things that maybe they've heard a thousand times before, but were never really real to them.

[ 20 : 54 ] They begin to feel their power. And the second thing that happens, the second characteristic, when the Lord shows that His hand is mighty in revival, is not only does the Spirit come down, but people become awake to the glory and the holiness of God.

And when they realize the holiness and the glory of God in their midst, people are filled with a sense of awe and reverence, a sense of holy fear before God.

And the third characteristic of these times where God shows that His hand is mighty, is that people experience the utter purity of God.

And that leads them inevitably to a deeper sense of their own sin. To see the ways in their life that they're actually fighting against God. And they begin to say with the prophet Isaiah, as they realize that, they say, woe is me, for I'm ruined, and I'm lost, and I'm unclean.

People begin to cry out from their heart and say, my heart is vile, and I'm utterly unworthy. In fact, I don't believe I've ever done any good at all.

[ 22 : 05 ] We say with the Apostle Paul, any goodness I bring to God is nothing to me. It's just, it's trash, it's garbage, it's dung, it's filthy rags. One of the great hymns that came out of the Great Awakening was this great prayer that said, nothing in my hand I bring, simply to Thy cross I cling.

Naked, come to Thee for dress. Helpless, look to Thee for grace. Foul, I, to the fountain fly, wash me, Savior, or I die.

This great revival that broke out at the Bible conference meeting in Pyongyang in January 1907.

One of the observers wrote this. He said, God came to us in Pyongyang that night with the sound of weeping.

And as the prayer continued, a spirit of heaviness and sorrow for sin came down upon the audience. And over on one side, someone began to weep, and in a moment, the whole audience was weeping.

And man after man would rise, confess his sins, break down and weep and throw himself to the floor and beat the floor with his fists in perfect agony of conviction.

[ 23 : 22 ] And it says that the Christians returned to their homes, taking the Pentecostal fire with them, and it spread to practically every church. Schools canceled classes for days while students wept out their wrongdoings together.

We had our hearts torn again and again by the return of little articles and money that had been taken from us over the years. All through the city, people were going from house to house, confessing wrongs, returning stolen property, not only to Christians, but to non-believers.

A Chinese merchant was astounded to have a Christian walk in and pay him a large sum of money he had obtained unjustly years before. The whole city was stirred. The cry went out over the city. You see, this is what happens over and over and over again when the Lord's mighty hand comes down in revival. We sense the Holy Spirit come among us. And we sense the holiness and utter glory and purity of God.

And we sense within ourselves something deeply wrong. And we begin with a new honesty and a fresh expression to get that wrong out before God.

[ 24 : 36 ] And then what begins to happen as a result of that, another characteristic is that we get a clearer view of the mercy of God. We come to a clearer view of Christ crucified.

Something that perhaps all of our lives we've known in a theoretical way, but we never really experienced his power. And all of a sudden, because of God's mighty hand upon us, we're melted by it.

And we're broken by it. And we weep not only with a sense of sorrow, but with a sense of joy. And we say to ourselves, for God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son that whoever believes in him should not perish, but should have everlasting life.

And that becomes suddenly real to people. It becomes applied to their lives and they begin to sing like Charles Wesley, another great revival hymn.

He said, and can it be that I should gain an interest in the Savior's blood? Died he for me who caused his pain, for me who him to death pursued?

[ 25 : 49 ] Amazing love. How can it be that thou, my God, should die for me? People become lost in praise to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit when the mighty hand of the Lord comes down.

And I would say a last characteristic of these great times of revival is that one thing begins to absorb the church. And the church desires to be together more and more around that one thing. If you could believe it, people begin to want more church meetings. They want to get together so they can praise God more for these things and they can talk more with each other about these things and they can pray more for God to do more of these things. And the church's whole experience of time completely transforms. Whereas before, people had no time to give. Now time is forgotten.

Time gets absorbed into eternity. prosperity. And people want to meet like the New Testament church met daily in the temple courts. They met until midnight.

[ 27 : 00 ] Sometimes they met until daybreak because they couldn't get enough of God. The Holy Spirit reorganizes our sense of time and causes us in these seasons of revival to experience days of heaven upon the earth and we don't want to leave.

life. So what do these stones mean? They mean that God did again at the Jordan River exactly what he did at the Red Sea and why did he do that?

To show us that the hand of the Lord is mighty and that the living God can come down in power among his people. And what do these stones of revival mean?

They mean that God has continued to awaken his church again and again and again in the exact same way according to the same characteristics and the same patterns. Why did he do that?

So that you might know that the hand of the Lord is mighty and that the living God has come down among us before and he can do it again. And so that is our simple prayer.

[ 28 : 07 ] Do it again. Lord, do it again here and now. Do it again among us and in our time.

Lord, show us and show the East Bay that your hand is indeed mighty. Don't you want this? If this happened, would it not address almost all of our spiritual and moral issues?

Would it not address pretty much all of our cultural and social problems? realms? If the mighty hand of the Lord was coming down from on high and the Holy Spirit was filling up and presiding over his church and life abundant was being given to God's people without measure and we were living out of a new sense of power and a new sense of awe and a new sense of humility and unity and desire to go and serve people and even suffer for the sake of other people, don't you want this?

It's what God wants and we need reminding that he wants it. We need reminding that the hand of the Lord is mighty and we need reminding that the hand of the Lord is mighty when we cry out to him.

I want to close just with a thought about this that says in verse 24, so all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the Lord is mighty and that you might fear the Lord your God forever.

[ 29 : 42 ] The Lord comes down and he shows his hand to be mighty for two reasons. Number one, that God's people would fear him all their days, that we would recognize him in his glory and his majesty and we would give to him the worship that he alone deserves.

But the second reason he shows that his hand is mighty is that all peoples of the earth would know his power and his greatness. The Lord wants every person in your life to know him.

Every person that you live among, every person that you work with, every person that you play with, he wants every person connected with this church to know him. He wants every person here in the Bay Area to know him.

And we might say, you know, how can God possibly do that? How could he possibly bring revival to Berkeley and to Oakland and to the Bay Area?

How could God make the impossible possible? And what I'm trying to do is show you that he's done it before. He's done it in other places and other times that maybe even were much more difficult than now.

[ 30 : 49 ] And I want you to notice two final details about this text in terms of his timing. When does the Lord show that his hand is mighty? Well, he shows that his hand is mighty after periods of great trial and discouragement.

That in the same way, he's always brought mighty revivals to the church after seasons of great decline and decay. And think about it. God's people had been in Egypt for 400 years in bondage, in captivity, under cruelty and task masters and whips and bricks without straw.

And then the mighty hand of the Lord came down and parted the waters of the Red Sea. After Egypt, God does the impossible. And he does it after the wilderness.

God's people had been in this howling, barren, lifeless wasteland. They'd been experiencing hunger and thirst, been experiencing trials and temptations. They'd just experienced the death of Moses, their great leader.

They're grieving. They're discouraged. And then the mighty hand of the Lord comes down and he parts the waters of the Jordan River. after the wilderness.

[ 32 : 03 ] He does the impossible. And similarly, after the church has been in Egypt and been in the wilderness, after the church has gone through these hard periods, these barren periods in the history of the church where even the people of God have lost their faith in the living God, that is when God sends his revivals.

That is when his mighty hand comes down to awaken and quicken and enliven his church, to build it up and to transform society.

He always does this after periods of great trial and discouragement. Anybody had any reason to feel discouraged over the past few years? That's when he likes to do this stuff.

And notice that the Lord typically waits until the moment of crisis. When our back is up against the Red Sea. When we come to the borderland of the Jordan River and we have nowhere else to go. When the people of God feel hopeless and helpless, then the mighty hand of the Lord comes down. At the Red Sea, we had the mountain on one side.

[ 33 : 14 ] Right? We had a mountain on the other side. We had Pharaoh and his chariots and the army of Egypt coming from behind us and we had an uncrossable body of water in front of us.

We were defenseless and doomed. The people of God were desperate and despairing. A mountain here, a mountain there, an enemy behind us, an impossible barrier before us, utterly helpless and hopeless.

Shut in, shut down. The people of God crying out to him for salvation. And it's always in that moment that God acts.

The mighty hand of the Lord comes down and all of a sudden the presence and power of the living God is in the midst of his people. And he's manifesting the glory and the goodness of God to all the nations.

And Christ Church, I want to invite us to raise our expectations of God. I want to invite us to get down on our knees before God and to cry out to him to send revival, to do it again so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the Lord is mighty and that we might fear the Lord our God forever.

[ 34 : 39 ] forever. In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.