

Revival

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[0:00] Isaiah 57 verse 15 it says, For thus saith the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, His name is Holy.

! I dwell in the High and Holy Place, with Him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

Reviving. Revival. I dwell in the High and Holy Place, with Him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

A reviving. Revival. Isn't that something we want? Isn't that something we need? Revival. Revival. It needs to live again. To live again.

It's a time of quickening, of an impartation of life, a refreshing, a restoration, a renewal of spiritual life of devotion. Revival. It's the presence of God.

[1:22] It's God showing up. God amongst His people. God amongst us in power and glory. Revival. There's lots of talk about it.

Especially in these days. Some make claims of it happening just because there's some bizarre things going on. But what does the Bible say revival is? Revival is.

And what is revival all about? Revival. In the Old Testament, revival or reviving is a military term. And it pictures a person or a military unit that's completely surrounded by the enemy and has no way of escape.

In the moment of greatest despair, God intervenes and rescues the people completely. What a picture. I know some people tonight were saying they're going through a bit of a battle.

It's been a bit of a battle. I can identify with that. I can identify. Sometimes it feels like you're just getting pelted with all kinds of missiles from every direction and you're feeling totally flagged and worn down and worn out.

[2:33] It's a battle zone sometimes. But revival is when God shows up. When we're surrounded by the enemy and God shows up and He intervenes in that time of despair, in that time of desperation, God shows up.

In the New Testament we see this reviving, this revival as a term of awakening from sleep. Now some of you might need doubt tonight too.

I know there's some people saying the air con was a bit warm before and I'll just keep an eye on you there Barry. Because Barry's right there in the... He's in the comfort zone. When we get in the comfort zone we can nod off.

And we need to be awakened. We need reviving. So we'll be ready to intervene if Barry starts to nod off there. Revival in the New Testament has the sense of lulling to sleep.

Where someone is lulling to sleep in their devotion and their commitment and God intervenes and awakens him. God intervenes and shakes us up and wakes us up. He revives us.

[3:37] There's a revival. A reviving again. A spiritual awakening is the sense of the spiritual term of revival. Revival. Who needs revival tonight?

We all do. We all do. Revival means a bringing back to life of a restoration of consciousness, a restoration to use, to usefulness, to regain effectiveness.

We need that as Christians. We all need to be sharpened and brightened and awakened and stirred. Revival needs to be biblical.

The revival we need is not a shift away from faith to feelings. A shift away from the word to experiential manifestations that might be questionable.

The revival we need is not a false fire but the real. The real thing. The real thing. It's not a neglect of the Bible but a reception of the Bible.

[4:39] Like Martha, she was occupied with all kinds of things. She was busy, busy occupying herself with other things, with petty things. Maybe

it might seem necessary things, yet things other than sitting at the Saviour's feet.

And the revival we need is not a neglect of the Bible but a reviving, a refreshing of that love for the word, for the truth. In our text that we've started with here, there's a sense where it's a renewed consciousness of eternity, of holiness and of sin.

These three things we'll look at shortly. In Nehemiah 8, at the time of reviving of the people of God, in the book of Nehemiah, chapter 8.

It says that the people, verse 1, they attended to the word. They attended, as in attending, but more importantly they attended to the word. And verse 2, it says, all them that could hear with understanding.

So it was the men, the women, the children, the young people. All those who could hear with understanding. The Lord says to us, numbers of times, let him who has ears to hear, let him hear.

[5:56] God wants us to have ears that are attentive. There was firstly, in this revival time of Nehemiah, there was an attention to God's word. An attention to God's word.

We need to be where we can attend to the word. You might be able to attend to the word in your car. You get a good MP3, DVD, or whatever they're called, MP3, CD, to play a Bible on cassette, or Bible on CD.

I'm going to get up at the times here. Bible on CD, or Bible on MP3. You might be able to plug it in and listen to the word of God. Be attentive unto the book of the law. The ears of all the people were attentive to the book of the law.

There was an attention to God's word. There was an appetite for God's word. We need to get hungry for it. We need to hunger for it so much that we can't but not be where the word is.

So we can get the word and feed our soul. Feed your faith and starve your doubts to death. An appreciation for God's word. What did they do in Nehemiah 8? They did just what we did earlier.

[7:03] They stood at the reading of God's word. Why did they stand? In reverence for the reading of the scriptures. Out of respect and love for the word of God. So we see there was an attention.

There was an appetite. There was an appreciation. And also there was an affirmation of God's word. An affirmation. They stood in reverence and respect when God's word was read.

And in verse 6 it says that at its reading the people answered, Amen, Amen. You might want to get excited tonight and say Amen.

That's good. An appreciation of God's word. An affirmation of God's word. Revival. So genuine revival, it springs from the word of God.

Not a neglect of the word of God. In some quarters they barely open the word of God. We ought to get in the habit of carrying the Bible. Bring the Bible with us to church if we can.

[8:03] Try to pay attention to it. Have an appreciation for it. And give an affirmation of it. Amen. You're getting the hang of it now. So genuine revival, it springs from the word of God.

And we see in this text of Isaiah 57 verse 15. I put it to you in three dimensions we could see in this text. Three dimensions of revival.

Isaiah 57 verse 15. For thus saith the High and Lofty One, The inhabitant eternity, whose name is Holy, I dwell in the High and Holy Place, with Him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

Firstly we see the dimension of His Highness. His Highness. God is His Highness. His Royal Highness. Our King.

Our Great God and King. And revival comes when He is high and lifted up. When He is high and lifted up. When we see God's presence.

[9:15] When we see the glory of God at work amongst His people. When we see God's gracious workings amongst the people of God. The spirit of revival is evident when God is truly lifted up.

Lifted up. Amen. The spirit of revival is evident in a church that is truly Christ-centered. Where Christ is the focus. Christ is the center point.

A prayer powered church. A church devoted to His praise. Our world is suffering today. A dread famine of a hearing of the Word of God.

For us to recognize His Highness. His workings. We need His Word. He is high and lifted up. Believers today we call to exalt Him. To exalt Him.

With stringed instruments and organs. With trumpets. With a loud voice. Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord. We call to exalt Him.

[10:14] To lift Him up. And He is our King. His due honour. His due praise. Where the word of a King is. There is power. Ecclesiastes 8 verse 4. We've got the word of our King.

The Lord Jesus. Our God and King. We need the words of His Highness. Our King. We must have biblical truth. That's where sometimes we can stray from His will.

When we stray from His word. We must discover a hunger for the word of God. Revival comes from a quickening. From an awakening. From a reviving by His Spirit.

From His word. In Psalm 119 verse 107 it says. I am afflicted very much. Quicken me O Lord according to thy word.

Quicken me O Lord according to thy word. In other words revive me. Make me live. Make me alive. Through your word. The great need of our world.

[11:14] Is to develop biblical thinking. Biblical thinking. So that instead of the conditioning that we bear us with. By the world. There is a washing of the word.

You know. In a good way. We need a brain washing. A brain washing. Because our brains. This great matter up here. Gets filled with things that it should not be filled with.

Yeah. But fill your mind instead with the word of God. The high and holy one. The high and lofty one. Where does he come?

He comes to a valley of dry bones. Ezekiel saw the valley. He looked out at this valley. He had this vision of this valley.

And it was full of dry. Dead. Dusty old bones. It was a state. Where all human power and ability.

[12:12] Was gone. And the word made everything change. In Ezekiel's valley. And friends. If you are feeling like. You are some dry. Dusty old. Stale.

Rotting. Old bones today. The word of God. Speaks to you. The word of God. Speaks to you. The word of God speaks to you. And he makes us live.

He makes us live. We see that God can bring a revival. In a graveyard. In a graveyard. If God can do that in a graveyard. Can't he do it in Elizabeth? Can't he do it in Adelaide? Can't he do it in Adelaide? Yes he can.

A revival in a graveyard. That's what we see. That Ezekiel came. It was a desperate condition. There was no hope. No chance for these dry bones. To ever become alive again. But what made the difference. Was the divine word. The prophet gave the word of God.

And it became a dynamic army. A desperate condition. A divine word. A dynamic army. A change of life. A change of life.

[13:07] A change of life. A change of life. A change of life. A change of life. A change of life. A change of life. A change happened. In Ezekiel's valley. Because. God.

Moved. It was the high. And lofty one. There was no hope. Of man doing anything. Those dry bones. Couldn't have. Organised. Uh. Themselves.

Out of a paper bag. As the saying goes. They couldn't have done anything. To help their condition. The work must be his. He must regenerate man. It's God. It's his highness. His highness.

That's who. to look upon, to rely upon. Sister, look to the High and Lofty One. Look to Him tonight. Find His grace. Find His strength. Brother today, find the High and Lofty One. Look to Him. Look to Him.

Look to Him. We must come under the dominion of the King. For thus saith the High and Lofty One that inhabited eternity, whose name is holy, I dwell in the High and holy place. With Him also there is a contrite spirit to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the spirit of the contrite ones.

[14:20] The first dimension is of His Highness. The second dimension is of His holiness. Of His holiness. He is the one whose name is holy. It's His very name.

He is the Holy One. The Holy One. His holiness is what we need for revival. Friends, we're living in a day in a world that says good is evil and evil is good.

That is what our world is telling us. That is what our leaders are telling us. We need rather to find a definite measure of right and wrong. Of true and false.

Our world delights in an abounding of sin. we need His holiness. The Holy One. By God's grace, the High and Lofty One whose name is Holy comes by and visits people just like you and me.

And He makes His residence with us. He steps down from the height of glory. His Highness comes down and makes Himself lowly to come by and visit you in your very home, in your very heart and makes His residence amongst us.

[15:39] He steps down, He wraps Himself with a robe of flesh yet without sin. His holiness. He is His holiness. We heard about a man calling himself His holiness or people calling Him such this morning.

And there's churches that are led by people who people call His holiness. But friends, there's only one who is good. One who is holy and consider His holiness tonight.

His holiness. What's more? He grants His holiness to you and me that we can be like Him to cling to Him. His holiness can be your holiness today by His peace, by His mercy.

Fire begets fire. The Holy One makes a holy church. As we draw nearer to Him, He draws near to us and as a result He changes us from the inside out.

We become more like Him to know Him to be like Him. Revival is when His holiness, our God, comes and visits with us and there's a change.

[16:48] Revival means someone put a new beginning of obedience to God. It takes a definite commitment, a determined decision. holiness.

What does it mean for us now in the 21st century? A preacher said, people do not drift towards holiness. Apart from grace-driven effort, people do not gravitate towards godliness, prayer, obedience to the Scriptures, faith and delight in the Lord.

We don't gravitate towards it. It's got to take grace-driven effort. Not fleshly effort, but grace-driven effort. We love Him.

We want to please Him. Holiness comes from Him, from a fear of Him, a love of Him. And holiness is a mark of genuine revival.

I read today that the Scriptures give five names for Christians, five names for Christians. Saints for their holiness in Christ.

[17:52] believers for their faith, witnesses for their testimony, disciples for their knowledge, and brethren for their love of each other.

That's beautiful, isn't it? Saints, believers, witnesses, disciples, brethren, saints for their holiness in Christ. The word saint means holy one.

You don't have to wait for a pope to make you a saint after you're dead. They can't do that anyway. But Jesus can make you a saint today. There's saints here already.

We don't have you on a stained glass window, Daniel, but you're a saint. God says you are. You're made holy. We've seen the dimensions of His holiness.

We've seen the dimension of His holiness. Now, for a third aspect, a third dimension, we've seen His holiness, His highness, and the divine dimensions, you could say, and now for a human one.

[18:53] A human one. Thank God that eternity comes and visits with humanity. That's the amazing reality today, that the high and lofty one, the one who inhabits eternity, He dwells in Him that is of a contrite and humble spirit.

So the third dimension is our humility. God can't work unless we bow down. God cannot revive a heart that is hardened and rebellious.

He must break it and we must be broken. A heart broken, a spirit broken, a contrite heart. God is interested in hearts.

God is interested in hearts. one preacher said, my grand point in preaching is to break the hard heart and to heal the broken one.

You know, there's people of different conditions here today, potentially, to break the hard heart and to heal the broken one.

[20:07] I don't know the state of your heart here tonight. Maybe you're a believer, your heart is broken. You've had a hard week. Maybe you're

going to have an even harder one next week.

Now, I wouldn't wish that on you, but sometimes we need the healer of broken hearts to just come and serve the pain and hold us close to his heart. Well, your heart might be hard tonight. It might be rock hard, hardened, a conscience hardened, rejecting God's convicting power, wanting to hang on to your sin, not wanting God to change that which you cherish, which you know is wrong. Will our hearts be hardened or softened? Will our hearts be cold or will they be warmed with that heavenly glow? Will we let God's spirit change and be that truly contrite and humble spirit? Hearts can be transformed. The Bible says that our hearts can be purified by faith. That's an amazing truth, isn't it? Human hearts can be purified by faith.

[21:20] Hearts can be set ablaze, set on fire for God. He wants humble hearts tonight. Revival begins with repentance. There's lots of talk about revival but it's only when we really humble ourselves that God can deal with the greatest need that we have.

Because one of the biggest problems that we all can suffer, I'm speaking for myself, is a prideful heart. We can have a prideful heart. I know for myself, I can have a prideful heart. And that's when we stand in God's way, don't we? When we think we can do it in our own strength, when we're prideful, when we're carnal, when we will not yield, when we will not let God have his way.

Stubborn, unbending hearts. An obstruction to revival. Let us pray that God will draw us closer to have a conviction, to be willing to pay the cost, to realise our inadequacy, our need. We can't go it alone. We can't go it alone, friends, today. It must be God's way. We must see the sinfulness of sin, the ugliness of it, the sin that brings condemnation and separation.

[22:39] It's a call tonight for personal responsibility. There's a personal responsibility. Of course, we know God's sovereign, God is all-powerful, it's absolutely God.

But there's a responsibility on each human soul to be receptive, to bow before his almighty grace. The one who inhabits eternity can come and dwell with humanity. Even Aussies, even Australians, even Filipinos and Pommies, wherever you're from. The one who inhabits eternity can come and dwell in human hearts. And people of different cultures and backgrounds. The difference is humility.

Humility. What did the people of God do when God moved? They humbled themselves and prayed. [23:45] They forsook their idols. They tore down the altars of the idols. They tore them down. They forsook the false gods. And there was a renewing of love, a renewing of devotion, of prayer, of stewardship, of surrender.

Will we take the place of a servant and that place of humility? Will there be a tenderness of heart or a half-heartedness, one or the other? For revival to come, we must deal with our hearts.

Let God deal with your heart tonight. Let God deal with your life. Let it be that there might be a crucified life, that there might be a resolve tonight, to make a resolve.

We don't have to wait until January the 1st to make a New Year's resolution. There's not really much credence we can give to such things because they usually last only a week if they're above your day.

But make it a resolution, a biblical resolution. You know, Jonathan Edwards is an old time preacher and he made some resolutions. I'm resolved.

[24:56] I'm resolved. You can look that up on the internet. Look up Jonathan Edwards resolutions. I'm resolved to do something for God. I'm going to make a resolution. Maybe a resolution could be, I'm going to revive, God helping me, revive my first love.

Make today a turning point. To forsake the idols, to destroy them, to smash them to smithereens, those things that take away his place. The word speaks about idols in a heart.

And sometimes the idols can, it's almost like mistletoe growing on a gum tree, you know, becomes part of the tree. Needs to be torn from the heart. The idols that are in our hearts, tear them from your heart and smash them to pieces today.

let's not be half-hearted. Let's decide, resolve, to be a people whose hearts will be renewed. One thing that struck me in preparing this message was that this generation is the generation that will

reach this generation.

You know, there's old-time creatures, revivalists and reformers of old. They're dead and buried and gone. But we are the Christians of the 21st century. We are the Christians of the now, of this city.

[26:21] And how can the people of this city be reached? By people such as we. The people of this city. The people of this generation. You know, it's God's work but it's people that he uses, isn't it?

People just like you and me. So we must be willing to be used of him. Let's not hold back. When opportunities come, it's this generation that is here to reach this generation.

And will we remain dormant and dead, dry bones in the valley? Or will we be raised to life? Will we hear the word of the Lord?

Will we hear the divine word and become that dynamic army? He promises revival if we will but meet the conditions? Now, some think they can engineer a revival or conjure it up or manufacture it or, you know, advertise and promote it and launch it.

But revival is not a man-made thing. It's not man. It's thus saith the high and lofty one, the one who inhabits eternity. His name is holy.

[27:31] I dwell in the high and lofty holy place with him also that is of a contrite spirit and humble spirit to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

As much as he inhabits eternity, it's beyond space and time, it's beyond our concept of the present and the past and the future. He's forever. He inhabits eternity but he also dwells in the heart of the humble.

And friends, it's about that condition of our hearts today that we all need to come honestly before him. Amen.