

Revive Thy Work -Part 1

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[0:00] I know I've preached on revival a fair bit lately, and it's a recurring theme in the Word of God, so it's a recurring sermon in this church, if you like, that we should ask God to revive us.

I think that's a good thing to pray, to believe. The Bible talks about the last days of perilous times. Truly, we're living in such eventful days, you could say, in this chaotic world, bent on self-destruction. We see the one of whom we speak today, the living God. That's who we want to put our heart's affection on, the Lord.

And to know he's coming soon, when everything's falling apart, we know the Lord, the living God, is coming. As a people, Australia, let's face it, we've forgotten God. This pagan nation called Australia is in trouble today. There's trouble.

Not just COVID, but much, much more than just that mere plague, but the sense of that plague of sin, of God forsaking. Why? Why is this so? Australia is in trouble because, in a way, you look at the churches. What is the state of the churches of our nation? Australia's in trouble because our churches are in trouble.

The fault lies at the feet of the professing churches of our nation because apostasy prevails, not just our nation, but worldwide. See some telling news articles about the state of churches across the world. It's a widespread spiritual darkness.

[1:35] Our nation is in trouble. Our nation is in trouble. Our nation is in trouble. Our nation is in trouble. Our nation is in trouble. Our nation is ripe for destruction and something is terribly wrong. And friends, something is so wrong with the church that God is sick of the church. See that in Revelation 3, 14, where our Lord addresses the church at Laodicea.

And he says this, verse 14 of Revelation 3, God forbid that we would be such a church. God forbid. Our Lord expresses disgust. Our Lord expresses disgust with the church, this assembly, this congregation of Laodicea. His disgust. And elsewhere it talks about his disgust with the so-called solemn assembly and their efforts at worship, which he calls vain and noise.

God forbid we should ever be such a church. What is going on in churches these days? Sometimes it's like a circus show, blending worldly entertainment and the atmosphere of a nightclub.

You can see video clips of churches that are actually turned into an actual circus performance. God forbid. God is sick of that.

[3:15] Christianity is in a sickly shape when that's what is called Christianity. Christianity. We know it's not true. Christianity. Australia.

We've forsaken God as a people. And judgment is at the doors. It's a good time to reflect on the state of the church. What it is now and what it could be.

What God wants it to be. What is the condition of the church? I know someone gave me a phone call lately and they're falling asleep in the phone call. I could hear him yawning at me.

And there's a sense where the church is a bit like that. You know, you talk about yawning and everybody starts yawning. Don't do that, please. Now you'll all be self-conscious and trying not to yawn.

But the state of apathy, isn't it? The state of unconcern, of spiritual slumber, of a paralysis. The church is asleep. Yeah. Sound effects there.

[4:12] There's an appalling neglect of spiritual things. Honestly. And it's sad, isn't it? Truly it's sad. People don't know their Bibles. They're absent from Bible study.

There's a prevailing prayerlessness. There's a carelessness, a worldliness, a deadness. And it saps the stream. A deadness. That's Australia today.

That's the complacent, cosy Christianity we settle for sometimes. Don't we? As a nation. No wonder our nation is in trouble. And in this era of crisis, we need to shake ourselves from spiritual slumber. Maybe, you know, we almost need a cold water splashed in the face. As it were, we need something to shake us, to wake us. What is our condition meant to be? What does the Bible say the church ought to be?

It tells of the church of the living God. It talks about a separated people. A holy, undefiled people. The church of the Bible. The classic Christianity.

[5:09] Historic Christianity. That's what we need to get back to, don't we? To get back to that. So we need revival. I put to you the life of God. That's my theme today.

We think of the living God. He's the one who makes us alive. He keeps us alive. He gives us life. He breathes his life into us. He is the very source of life. Our nation is in trouble and we need the living God.

We need him. The church is meant to be God's great instrument in this world for the evangelization to reach the souls. It's meant to be a sense of blessing for the world.

Yet sadly, how? We have fallen. How can we restore the sacredness of the church? We see the cry of Habakkuk the prophet in Habakkuk chapter 3 verse 2.

And that tells us there about him. Habakkuk 3 verse 2. You might want to turn there. Here we go.

[6:09] Habakkuk 3 verse 2. How can we restore the sacredness of the church? Habakkuk prayed this prayer. He said, O Lord, I've heard thy speech and was afraid.

O Lord, revive thy work. In the midst of the years, in the midst of the years, make known. In wrath, remember mercy. O Lord, revive thy work.

Habakkuk prayed that prayer. God's wrath is about to fall. We see this nation is ripe for judgment. We plead for mercy. In a time where wrath is our deserts, God, we beseech you.

Remember mercy. Have mercy on us, Lord. We need to have that prayer. Lord, have mercy on this nation. We need a revival. Prayer, the prayer of Habakkuk.

O Lord, revive thy work. I put to you today, we need revival. We need revival individually, one by one.

[7:17] I need revival. We need a radical reconsecration, a fresh change, a refreshing of zeal, of passion, of action. Revival is our greatest need.

A refreshing of spiritual life. I'm not talking true Bible revival, as in the days of Josiah, of Nehemiah, of Jonah. Revivals.

It's a biblical thing. We can believe God for it. And every revival in the world rested upon the word of God and its proclamation with power.

Every time we see a destruction of the idols and a restoration of true worship and gladness and joy in the living God. I've been encouraged by reading some classic books of yesteryear about Christianity, of old time, what it can look like, what it did look like.

Now, I've seen, for example, some video documentaries of people such as Adoniram Judson going to the nation of Burma, leaving the comfort of the West to take the gospel to a nation in darkness.

[8:33] And some of these books of biographies of men and women of God of old, they can stir our hearts today. What God has done, he still can do.

And where God did work in revival, God still can because he is the living God, the living God. Revival. It's God's life.

It's his work. Real revival. Down through church history, we see these outpourings, these awakenings, mighty awakenings in churches, in communities where many people were saved. The whole nations experienced these waves of God's blessing, of his amazing saving work. In people's lives. O Lord, revive thy work.

It's a good prayer to pray. We need revival. Andrew Murray said this, a true revival means nothing less than a revolution. Casting out the spirit of worldliness and selfishness.

[9:32] And making God and his love triumph in the heart and life. Revival means revolution.

Revolution. What does that mean? It means the destruction, the overthrow and thorough replacement of an established government or political system.

Now, I'm not saying we should charge into Canberra and into Parliament House and unseat the government. But there is that need to see a change, isn't there, in our nation?

That radical, persuasive, pervasive change. That sudden, marked change. Australia needs change. It needs the reviving of God.

That's what it means. A revolution. And the church of God, too. We need revival, I put to you. Each one, individually, before God. Revival.

[10:31] It's an awakening, a visitation, a refreshing. A people saturated with God. Revival means lost power is restored. To revitalise.

Vance Havner said revival is simply New Testament Christianity. The saints going back to normal. Revival means the new life from God. His outpouring, a quickening of life.

God's people getting revitalised. A divine visitation. Evan Roberts had a watchword. He said, bend the church and save the world. He prayed. 11 years he prayed for revival.

And he saw a mighty visitation of God in Wales. That was 1904. God bent the church back into shape. Friends, we're in desperate need of revival.

This is not just some theoretical concept. I'm talking honestly today. We need revival. We need revival. We, here, in this building, in these four walls, we need revival, don't we?

[11:31] And let's rise to our own responsibility that we are the church. Let us seek him with that prayer. Oh, Lord, revive thy work. Let it be your heart cry today.

Lord, bend the church as we seek him. I put to you some four features of revival that are evident in the scriptures and in church history when revival came. Things to think about, to contemplate, to seek God for that work of God, of the living God in us.

We can seek the same life, the same God, the same work, his work in us, his people. The first feature of revival, I note, is this, prayer.

Prayer is the first feature of the work of God. I pray that my finger will make this work.

There, prayer. We must get back to the upper room. We must have a praying church. Many churches have replaced the upper room with the supper room.

[12:36] You know, it's all about whether you've got a good barista in some churches, isn't it? You've got to have the right flavours of coffee to attract people.

We try to attract sinners with hot food instead of red hot sermons. It's the wrong emphasis, isn't it? We try to engineer things by human effort and we neglect to pray.

O Lord, revive thy work. Pray that. We need a revolution of prayer, of believing prayer, of prevailing prayer, of fervent prayer, of agonising prayer, of a travail of soul.

Prayer is the heart cry of revival. David cried that same prayer. David cried just that same way, that he would pray for the living God.

The living God. Having trouble with my finger here. Maybe someone could just take over, can you? Can you guys, can you control the sides from here?

[13:44] I've just got a problem with it. Sorry, everybody. We don't want this to distract. We'd rather just throw it away. There we go. My prayer. David's prayer was this, Psalm 84, verse 2.

My heart and my flesh cryeth out for the living God. He had a heart cry for revival. Prayer acknowledges our helplessness and our dependence and faith that God is in control.

That's the kind of prayer we ought to pray, isn't it? My heart, my flesh, my soul crying out. That God is in control. That God take control.

Prayer says we rely on God. Prayer is that overflow of our acknowledging we depend upon Him.

It's been truly said the greatest power entrusted to man is prayer power. But how many of us are untrue of the trust whilst this strangely omnipotent power put into our hands lies so largely unused?

[14:50] The greatest power entrusted to man is prayer power. Think of the power that is a power you can tap into. The power of prayer. We need as a church to have that spirit of prayer for the Spirit of God to make intercession through us.

A fresh communion with Him. How? We must pray. So be in prayer. I put to you, be in prayer for God's work within you, within your family.

When we join in prayer, God does that work, that supernatural work. Pray to learn how to pray biblically, with urgency, with desperation.

A man called Whitfield prayed. As we know, Whitfield, George Whitfield prayed that the Lord would make him an extraordinary Christian. That's a good prayer, isn't it? It might be a prayer.

You'll be careful to pray. Maybe he will make you an extraordinary Christian. And he did. What a prayer. That's a prayer we can pray. Whitfield was an extraordinary man.

[15:55] He preached an average of ten sermons a week. God mightily used him. God answered his prayer. Another good prayer someone prayed is this. O Lord, teach us how to humble ourselves and to get out of thy way.

It's a good prayer, isn't it? Sometimes we get in God's way, don't we? In other words, we don't want to be an obstacle to revival ourselves. It's been said that some people are just like barnacles on the old gospel ship.

And it were better that some leave. Let's not be a barnacle. Let's get on board the ship. The gospel ship. Amen. Let's be in prayer. How we need to pray?

To get out of God's way. So he can do his work. Lord, revive thy work. It's his work. Get out of the way. Let God do it. Pray. Tap into God's strength.

Why are there so many weakly Christians? Because we've not tapped into the power of prayer. Someone said this about prayer. Prayer is weakness, leaning on omnipotence.

[16:56] That's good, isn't it? Our weakness is omnipotence. All powerful. When we come to pray, we rely on God and we show our dependence on him.

That's where God can start to move in our lives. Here's another quote from Jonathan Edwards. Another mightily used of God. He said this, Nothing sets a person so much out of the devil's reach as humility.

Humble yourselves and pray. O Lord, revive thy work. Amen. Pride can be a barrier to God's work. We must remove it. We've got to crucify it.

Let go and let God. Don't get in the way of God. Prayer helps us to find his will. It's been said, another quote, Prayer is designed to adjust you to God's will, not to adjust God to your will.

Some use God as some kind of like a shopping list they go, and as if he's at our beck and call, as we command God, as some laughingly or blasphemously try to do.

[18:00] We are meant to be finding his will and doing it. And so it's more, wait on the Lord, like young Joseph. Seek after God. What do you want me to do?

I'm listening. Find him. Travail. Tarry. Wrestle in prayer. Our hearts crying is for revival. That the living God would do his work.

Lord, revive thy work. It may take a sacrifice on our part to pray. Don't be put off. Here's a good quote again here. When the sacrifice is complete, the fire will fall.

Maybe that's what we have to be, isn't it? A living sacrifice. When the sacrifice is complete, the fire will fall. Maybe we don't see the fire fall because we fail to pray.

So it's clear we need prayer. Number two, the second one here, next slide is power. The next feature of revival that stands out to me is this power. We're often too man-centred in how he acts as a church.

[19:05] You know, and I can be guilty of trying my hardest to do everything that I can humanly do. But what we must have is what God can do.

What the heavenly can do, not what the humanly can do. We've got so much machinery that we can miss. What is God's work? That's what we must have. Oh Lord, revive thy work.

God, revive thy work. Take over, Lord. Lord, revive thy work. It's old-time power we need. Not just any power, but the power of the almighty God.

The living God. A revolution. A change of government, as I talked about last week. A new power and authority takes over. That's what we need. We need God to take over.

Amen. So in revival, the next one here we see King Darius was talking to you about the deliverance of Daniel from the den of lions. Next slide is Daniel 6 verse 26.

[20:05] It says that King Darius said this, I make a decree. He saw Daniel's deliverance from the den of lions. He says, I make a decree that in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel.

For he is the living God and steadfast forever in his kingdom. That which shall not be destroyed. And his dominion shall be given even unto the end.

He saw, Darius saw the deliverance of Daniel. And he saw the living God in his power to save. Friends, we have a powerful God, don't we? Who can shut the mouths of lions and we can come under his rule, know his power.

Even in such as we. We can know his rule in our hearts and lives. We can know his peace. He's the one who makes us alive. He's the one who gives us the breath and he takes it away when he sees fear.

And friends, this church needs the spirit to breathe life. He makes us alive. It's the power of Pentecost. That God could flood us with his power. That inrush of the divine life.

[21:11] The breath of heaven. The indwelling Holy Spirit. The spirit filled life. And that's as we yield. His power can take over. So let's resign.

And let God take charge. That we would humble ourselves. That he can do something in you. In me. It says we confess Jesus as Lord. There's power from on high.

God's outpouring. Every believer can have a personal Pentecost. As such that we can be full of power. By the spirit of the Lord. As it says there in Micah as well.

3 verse 8. And so we know at Pentecost there was a real inrush of power. Of purification. The power of God. That wonderful reality.

We can draw on the omnipotent. The all powerful. One preacher said. Our Lord said go ye. But he also said tarry ye.

[22:09] There's a tarrying. There's a waiting on God. For his strength. There's another quote. There's nothing the church of God needs today. So much as spiritual power. And there is nothing which we can have.

So easily. If only we are prepared to pay the price. Pay the price. Spurgeon knew about revival. His church had constant revival. And he said this. Without the spirit of God we can do nothing. We are as ships without wind. We are useless. We must mobilize the church.

And know the power of the living God. A great man of prayer. E.M. Bounds said this. What the church needs today. Is not more machinery. Or better not new. Organizations. Or more novel methods.

But men whom the Holy Ghost can use. Men of prayer. Men mighty in prayer. The Holy Ghost does not flow through methods. But through men. He does not come on machinery.

[23:07] But on men. He does not anoint plans. But men. Men of prayer. So we need prayer. We need the old time power. The Holy Ghost power.

Which gives us power to witness. And thirdly. We see. Another feature is passion. Passion. One of the biggest problems in Christianity. Today. Is cooling off.

So cooling off. It's like in these last days. We see. Sin abounding. And the saints slacking. Matthew 24. 12. It says. And because iniquity shall abound.

The love of many. Shall wax cold. Have we grown cold? It's easy to get cold. General Booth said. He was not satisfied to see men converted.

He longed to see them soldiers of the cross. Warriors for God. To think that we could be soldiers of the cross. I was interested.

[24:04] I watched the video. Which I put on my Facebook. About Adoniram Judson. And. It was noteworthy to me. His first convert. was a man who said.

He was willing to die. He was willing to die. To trust Christ. And. That was. He was soundly converted. Wasn't he? Soundly converted.

But we could think. Well. We can so glibly. Say words. But. To be. Willing to die.

To be a soldier of the cross. That's what it. It really speaks to me. That. Thought. And we see the missionary examples of. Men and women of God.

See they were willing to die. You know. That was. It was a one way trip. It wasn't coming back for furlough. Every. Every. A few. Years. It was. It was going one way.

[25:00] It was a one way ticket. To die on the mission front. And. Let's not be idle Christians. But. Join the war effort. To actively enlist. Under the command of our great commander in chief.

There's a sense where. We're called to passion. Passion. To hear his command. And to say yes Lord. Yes Lord.

To enter into this cosmic battle for souls. This spiritual warfare. We're soldiers of the cross. And we need a passion for that. To. To. To go through the.

Toughest of. Fights. We need revival. That's what we need. Oh Lord. Revive thy work. Ask God for that. New passion. That new passion.

It's interesting. The word passion in the dictionary. Amongst the definitions of passion. Is suffering. Because we know that. The passion of Christ.

[25:58] Is his suffering. Is his suffering. Is his suffering. Are we willing to. Be. So passionate. That we will. Go through. Times of hardness.

And. Be stronger still. Yet stronger. How we need that revival. Of a God given passion. That nothing will deter you. That you'll have that heart's cry.

Oh Lord. Revive thy work. That will be your prayer. Revive thy work. In me. In me. In you.

Everyone. That our highest aim. Should be God's. Absolute glory.

To advance his kingdom. May we know that kind of passion. Passion. A holy desperation. A Christ like compassion. That will realize the divine imperative.

Go ye. Our Lord says. He has come to seek. And to save. That which was lost. And his mission. Is now our commission.

[26:58] Paul and Barnabas. Cried out with passion. In Acts 14. 15. They preached in Lystra. And it says. Acts 14. Verse 15. They say. They preach unto you.

That you should turn. From these vanities. Unto the living God. And here were these. Idol worshippers. He said. Paul and Barnabas. Paul was saying. Turn from that. The vanities. To the living God. Anything but the living God. Is vanities. Honestly. Isn't it? The vanities. We expend our lives in.

Versus the living God. What a contrast that is. We need to rekindle a passion. I put to you. Passion for the living God. A passion for prayer. A passion. A holy passion for souls.

As we consider hell bound men and women. I read a gripping truth lately. A quote. Holiness is more about. More than what we don't do.

[27:56] In other words. Holiness impacts us in what we do do. True holiness is not so much about what we don't do. It's about what we do do. The next verse is Luke 6.46.

The Lord says. And why call you me Lord, Lord and do not. The things which I say. Sometimes we. And there are things we should not do.

Yeah. Not discounting that. But what about the things we should do. That we don't do. The passion. Is that missing element.

What we should do. We don't do. Because we don't have the passion anymore. We've grown cold. Cold hearted. Seek God for that burning red hot passion again.

Where wild horses won't drag you away from fellowship. Where you get this zeal. This constraining love. This urging from deep down within.

[28:55] That souls. And the call. To seek and save them. Changes us. Moves us. Drives us. And we'll once a bit closer to God.

To get the passion back. We can have it again. As we pray. Oh Lord. Revive thy work. So friends. We see.

We need revival. Talking about four things. We need a revival of prayer. We need a revival of Holy Ghost power. We need a revival of God given passion.

And another feature of revival is. I'll give you that one next time. In part two. You'll have to come tonight. To find out what that is. So.

Let's pray. Lord. We thank you that we have. A living God. A true and living God. We can turn from the vanities of this life. Of anything but you. Lord.

[29:50] And find. That wonderful joy. And we can have the same prayer. As Habakkuk had. Oh Lord. Revive thy work. Lord. Do a work of reviving. We know the church is in.

This. Lackadaisical way. Lord. We want to get that old time. Power. The Holy Spirit power. Lord. We want to get the same.

Passion. That renewed passion. That renewed. Fervor. That. That new love. That renewed love. Lord. For you. Lord. For. You to do a work in us.

We know we need to pray. Help us Lord. To be a God dependent people. Lord. Do that divine work. Deep down within. We pray if there's any here present. They've yet to get their new life.

They've yet to be born again. That they can know. That. Life. Of God. Inside of them. That they can come to a new life.

[30:49] In Christ. As they trust. Your. Absolute. Full provision. At the cross. For man's sin.

They can know your saving. Lord. As we trust you. We'll know that. Full provision. We'll know that saving grace. And Lord. It will. Give us that new zeal.

That passion. That power. That prayerfulness. That we can be a people of God. Where. We know Lord. Your church needs reviving. We don't want to be like the church of Laodicea.

Lord God. That you would. You would treat them with such disgust. That they would disgust you.

Lord. We want to be a church that you're. Glad.

You're glad in us. Help us Lord. To be humble. To pray. Help us Lord. To get out of your way. Give us.

[31:46] Give us your will. That we might do it. Lord. That holiness is to do your will. It is to do. As well as do not. Lord.

Help us to find the things that you want us to actually do. That we will be such a people. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.