

Sermon: Revival

Text: 2 Chronicles 30

Introduction:

I took a class in seminary—back in the 1980's—on the topic of “Revivals.” It was a fascinating study of the world-wide history of revivals, including “The Great Awakening” that took place here in America back in the 1730's and 1740's. . It resulted from authoritative preaching that deeply moved the church members with a convicting awareness of personal guilt and the awesome nature of salvation through Christ. Breaking away from Christianity that “went through the motions”, the Great Awakening made Christianity intensely personal to the average person, as it should be, by creating a deep emotional need for relationship with Christ.

But what, exactly, IS a Christian revival?

Revivals are characterized by a return to the central message of salvation and the study of the Scriptures. A revival that does not rest squarely on the Word of God will fade into futility or turn into a display of emotionalism and sensationalism.

Specifically, revival refers to a spiritual reawakening from a state of dormancy or stagnation in the life of a believer. It encompasses the resurfacing of a love for God, an appreciation of God's holiness, a passion for His Word and His church, a convicting awareness of personal and corporate sin, a spirit of humility, and a desire for repentance and growth in righteousness. Revival invigorates and sometimes deepens a believer's faith, opening his or her eyes to the truth in a fresh, new way. It generally involves the sense of a fresh start with a clean slate, marking a new beginning of a life lived in obedience to God. Revival breaks the charm and power of the world, which blinds the eyes of men, and generates both the will and power to live in the world but not of the world.

Revival, in many respects, mirrors the believer's experience when he or she is saved. It is initiated by a prompting of the Holy Spirit, creating an awareness of something missing or wrong in the believer's life that can only be righted by God. In turn, the Christian must respond from the heart, acknowledging his or her need. Then, in a powerful way, the Holy Spirit draws back the veil the world has cast over the truth, allowing the believers to fully see themselves in comparison to God's majesty and holiness. Obviously, such comparisons bring great humility, but also great awe of God and His truly amazing grace (Isaiah 6:5). Unlike the original conversion experience that brings about a new relationship to God, however, revival represents a restoration of fellowship with God, the relationship having been retained even though the believer had pulled away for a time.

The evidence of revival, a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon believers, is changed lives. Great movements toward righteousness, evangelism, and social justice occur. Believers are once again spending time in prayer and reading and obeying God's Word. Believers begin to powerfully use their spiritual gifts. There is confession of sin and repentance. Amazing stuff!

Examination:

- **Read 2 Chronicles 30**

- How did Hezekiah contact all the people to tell them to come to the house of the Lord at Jerusalem to keep the Passover?
- Who is Hezekiah making the temple available to?
- When were they going to keep the Passover?
- Why were they having it a month late?
- How did the king, and all the congregation, feel about having Passover?
- The proclamation went out throughout all _____.
- What is said in verse 6 that lets us know there were not many people left in Israel?
- Who did Hezekiah tell them not to be like?
- What does stiff-necked tell us about these people?
- Why did Hezekiah want them to come back to God?
- What promise did he make to them about the Lord in verse 9?
- How did they accept the letters Hezekiah sent?
- Who DID come?
- How did the people in Judah feel about the Passover?
- What did the people do with the altars to the false gods?
- When did they kill the Passover lamb?
- Who sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice?
- The sprinkling of the blood was done to atone for sin. What does this mean? How does the blood of an innocent animal accomplish this?
- Why did Hezekiah pray for the people in verse 18? Is there anything we can learn for this?
- How many days did they keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread?
- At the end of the celebration, what did they decide to do?
- How many animals did Hezekiah give?
- Whose time did they compare this to?
- What are the aspects of revival that we see in this chapter?
- What do you believe God is saying to US, today, in the American church, about revival?

Application:

As we saw in the introduction, revivals are characterized by a return to the central message of salvation and the study of the Scriptures. A revival that does not rest squarely on the Word of God will fade into futility or turn into a display of emotionalism and sensationalism.

What are you doing in your life today to prepare your own heart for the Lord's revival? Are you reading the Scriptures? Are you studying the Scriptures? Are you praying for the Lord to move in a mighty way in your own life—and in the lives of those that you love?