

Revival
Acts 2
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October 1990
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*The following was less a sermon than it was musings on the subject of revival.
The notes are truncated and thus there is no record of how the sermon was
ended.*

Today I want you to have a holy dissatisfaction with the status quo.

The town was small, not quite 1000 people. Though in times past there had been quite a regard for religious things, by the time he became pastor of the little church in the town, it appeared that most regard for the Lord had waned to nearly nothing.

Even among those who attended the church there appeared to be little regard for Christ and His Word.

Sinfulness prevailed especially among the young people . Oh, it was among the older ones as well but the young people were so public about it.

Many of them seemed addicted to drunkenness, fornication, foul speech, and inappropriate parties that went on into early morning.

There seemed to be no concern for family and they rebelled against authority in their hearts if not in their actions.

They would come to church but pay no attention and in fact disrupt others by their games and talking.

But later in that year, the pastor began to notice a change in those young people. Little by little they seemed to change. The crudeness, the immorality, began to lessen. They began to pay attention in public worship; they seemed to have a greater religious concern.

From the pulpit the pastor urged them to stop some of the things they were practicing and they listened and stopped.

The parents met together to discuss how they could better control their children and made some plans but soon realized that they didn't need to exercise the plans because the young people were bringing about reforms by themselves.

In April of the next year two deaths occurred in the town that brought nearly everyone to a renewed sense of what is truly important.

One young man became ill and died within two days.
Another young married woman became deathly ill and was greatly frightened that she was not a Christian.
Before her death though, she came to have complete assurance of her relationship to Christ and she let everyone know it.

Her testimony had a profound impact on the whole town.

That fall the Pastor suggested to the young people that they meet after Sunday evening services to discuss how to live as a Christian and to pray.

So many of them did so that even the adults began to meet for the same purpose.

By December it became apparent that the Spirit of God was beginning to move in unusual ways:

Five or six people who had formerly resisted Christ became convincingly converted.

One was a young woman whose life was so apparently ungodly that when she repented and turned to Christ, the whole town could not deny the power of Christ to change a life.

Almost immediately, the topic of conversation around town, in the shops, offices, and homes was of Jesus.

Truly the whole town could talk of little else. Other conversations seemed trite by comparison.

People met in homes to pray and talk about the Lord.

There was scarcely a single person young or old that was left unconcerned about the great things of eternity.

And many formerly unsaved in the town became Christians -flocking to Jesus

By the Spring of the following year, the town was full of the presence of the Lord.

There was great joy in many homes as loved ones trusted Christ.

Parents rejoiced over children who were changed.

Wives rejoiced over their husbands and husbands over their wives.

The pastor said that the worship services were changed.

Everyone seemed alive, and earnestly intent on worshipping.

The singing was changed - it came from the heart!

When the young people met they couldn't help but talk about the excellency of Jesus, the greatness of His love, the perfection of His grace to save and His will for their lives.

That town had experienced a revival!!
That town was Northampton, Massachusetts.
The pastor was Jonathan Edwards
And the years were 1733-1736

Oh, God may we experience such a reformation, renewal, revival!
God, you did it then, you can do it now!

If God's Spirit should be poured out on US in unusual measure, what would it look like? In fact I would like to make the question more personal: If God's Spirit should begin to do an unusual work in you, what would it look like? **If genuine Revival - a spiritual coming to life again - came to this Church - how would it impact you?**

1. CONVICTION OF SIN

Remember Acts 2:37 it said that during Peter's message, "They were cut to the heart" - these people were convicted of sin. They suddenly knew beyond any doubt that they were sinners and that their sin was detestable in the sight of God.

They not only felt guilt for their sin they felt sorrow for it - grieved that they were offending the God who made them and loved them.

If Revival came to you would it mean "conviction of sin"? Would you be "Cut to the heart"?

How many in our midst profess to be "born again" to be Christians but whose lives deny it? How many in our midst profess to be trusting in Christ but have been hiding sin in their lives for years?

If Revival came, conduct that now seemed acceptable would become to us unbelievably wrong. We would no longer rationalize our way into some activities, and excuse others as okay and say of activities, " It doesn't really matter."

We would be so sensitive to how God feels about our actions that we would confess our sins and put aside everything that did not obviously meet with his approval.

Our private indulgences (those little or big things that we know are wrong but don't want to give up) would suddenly seem to us to deserve the full wrath of God. Sins that we have long hid would be revealed.

And being forgiven for those things would be far more important to us than our reputations.

I can remember so well, as I believe I have told some of you before, when I served a church in Minneapolis a number of years ago, how I lied to a woman.

A woman who worked for me was very difficult and no one wanted her to return to her teaching position in our nursery school. In my efforts to see her removed, I told her that there was no position for her in the next year, implying that the position was abolished, when in fact I had hired someone else. Two days later her husband confronted me with my lie and I denied it. That night, the Holy Spirit's hand of conviction was so heavy on me that I could not sleep. I tried to dodge it, tried to rationalize it, tried to ignore it - but He would not let me loose. I was finally so crushed by that conviction that I cared more about finding forgiveness for my sin than I did for my reputation.

A revival would bring conviction of sin.

2. And with the coming of conviction would also come **a new appreciation for the cross of Christ.**

That cross that has to so many of us become passé - little more than a theological symbol - would become for us very precious.

For in the Cross we would see our Lord who died for us and made it possible for us to be forgiven.

Regarding the lie about which I just told you, I so well remember the great sense of relief as the burden of my sin was lifted upon my confession to God and the woman against whom I had sinned. I wept with the sweet knowledge of the forgiveness of my sin.

Oh, God may I be so sensitive that **every** sin weighs on me until I find the repentance and then forgiveness that is offered in the Cross of Christ.

Oh, God pour out your spirit upon us that we would all be so sensitive to sin - the sin in our lives today.

I believe that if Revival came - we would be "broken" people.

I know that doesn't sound comfortable - and it wouldn't be, but I am so glad that when God breaks a person he rebuilds them.

And so what else would revival mean?

3. **A will to do God's will.**

When I test my own heart I find that though I desire to God's will I also want to do my own. And my will often crowds out God's priorities. In revival I believe that I and many of you would find our hearts so changed that we would desire nothing other than what Jesus wants of us.

4. A love for God's Word.

Oh I have an appreciation for the Bible but I don't find that I love it and crave it - I can go days without doing more than just routinely reading a few verses.

In revival I believe that I would, as it says in Acts 2:42, be devoted to the Word of God - I would crave that time reading and studying the Bible because in it I would see my Lord and come to know Him better.

5. Prayer would become precious.

Prayer can be such a chore. Too many times I have to struggle to even go through the motions of prayer. I don't pray with expectation or passion. In revival I believe I, along with many of you, would have fallen so in love with Jesus that we could hardly wait to have that quiet time to be with Him. Prayer would be a delight, a lifeline.

6. Holiness would be our desire.

Now holiness can seem like a remote and irrelevant issue. I find myself contented with my conduct (shabby as it is in God's eyes). In revival, a desire to be like Jesus and to live every part of my life pleasing to Him would become a prime objective in my life. Holiness would not be optional but essential.

7. Evangelism would become a joyful compulsion not a burden.

Now for so many us "telling others of the Love of Jesus" seems like a nagging obligation that we can usually ignore. We feel guilt about it from time to time but don't really do anything about it. In revival, we would have a passion for people that would long to see them know the Saving Lord we know. We would truly love people, even those we don't know, and want more than anything in the world for them to experience God's love, forgiveness, and control of their lives.