

GOD'S RECIPE FOR A REVIVAL

"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." II Chron. 7:14.

Text makes it plain that God has a people. For them, this is a most timely passage. A revival presupposes a spiritual declension, a falling away from God and a going back into the ways of sin. Backsliding is a sin which is never profitable. No backslider is pleasing God or doing his duty.

A revival quickens the dormant powers of a church into activity. It is a renewal of life; a return from a state of neglect to vigor and activity. It awakens the careless to a sense of guilt and misery; breaks power of world over Christians; imparts new life; floods the soul of the devout with joy and love; banishes malice and envy; leads Christians to do duties; awakens thoughtless sinners and results in their salvation.

This text is a clarion call to come Back To God. This is our greatest need today.

I. The Reason For A Revival.

1. Communion with the Lord.

We are in great need of that. Have not had enough of it. Prayer meeting is often a spare meeting. Communion with Him is our supreme privilege.

2. Conduct of the church Members.

Lacking in Christian confidence and brotherly love. Spirit of worldliness. Cheating, fraud, immorality, vice, etc. Real men are rare. Profess godliness but practice godlessness. Dishonoring Christ. Indifference to religion. Devotion to self-interest.

3. Condition of the lost.

Sinners are perishing; carelessly drifting toward hell. Need to be awakened and led to the cross of Christ.

II. The Receipte For a Revival.

1. Man's Part.

(1) Humility. "Shall humble themselves."

Back to God means back to humility. Humility is freedom from arrogance; holiness of mind; a modest estimate of one's own worth; self-abasement. Humility is the richest pearl of the Christian crown of graces. It is a suit that is always in fashion, never wears out, and is always becoming. It is recognized by man, admired by angels, and appreciated by the Lord. It brings the soul into a position to hear God's voice, be used of Him and receive blessings from Him. Humility enables one to walk consistently, love generously, serve willingly, act meekly, forgive heartily, forbear thoughtfully, and respond obediently.

(2) Prayer. "And Pray."

Back to God means to prayer. Prayer is the deepest impulse of the human soul. It is the reaching out of the heart of man toward the heart of God and communing with Him. It is:--

- a. Communion with God -- our supreme privilege.
- b. Committal to God -- our supreme pleasure.
- c. Cooperation with God -- our supreme purpose.

Prayer is to the soul what breathing is to the body; and we can no more live a strong, healthy, spiritual life without prayer than we can live a good healthy physical life without breathing. Prayer is to the soul what steam is to the engine, gasoline is to the car, and water is to the garden. It is through prayer that we get renewed strength, heavenly wisdom, greater love, and a closer walk with God. Prayer is both a privilege and a duty. "Come boldly into the throne of grace." "Ask and ye shall receive."

Prayerlessness is a sin. It is a reproach to God. It weakens the spiritual life. It keeps us from doing the Lord's will. We need a new conviction concerning the value of prayer. We will never pray as we should until we see prayer as a necessity, indispensable to the life we have undertaken to live. Prayer is a duty we owe to God, to others and to ourselves. It is also a precious privilege--the greatest resource of any life. It is the only lever that releases the power of God. It accomplishes so much. By prayer we harness God's omnipotence to our impotence. Nothing lies beyond the reach of prayer except that which lies outside the will of God. He answers prayer by saying, "Yes," "No," or "Wait."

a. Hindrances to Prayer.

- (a) Neglect.
- (b) A selfish purpose.
- (c) An unforgiving spirit.
- (d) A disobedient life.
- (e) Lack of faith. Acts 12--church praying for release of Simon Peter from prison.
- (f) Lack of submission to God's will.

b. Helps in Prayer.

- (a) Removal of these hindrances.
- (b) A sense of need.
- (c) An earnest desire.
- (d) Faith in God.
- (e) Ask in the name of Christ.
- (f) An attitude of expectancy.
- (g) Persistence.

c. The Prayer that God can answer must:--

- (a) Come from the heart and lips of one who knows Jesus Christ as a personal Saviour.
- (b) Be made in faith.
- (c) Be made to God in the name of Christ.
- (d) Be made in an unselfish spirit.
- (e) Be for the things that are needed.
- (f) Come from a life that is being lived in obedience to God's commands and will.
- (g) Be prayed by one who is willing to help God answer his own prayer.

(3) Supplication. "Seek My Face." "Seek ye the Lord."

Is that what you have come to church for? We must persistently seek God. He

will not force Himself upon us. We need Him and cannot get along without Him. But only those who seek His face can experience the forgiveness of their sins, the cleansing of their souls, and the healing of their hearts.

(4) Reformation. "And turn from your wicked ways."

Back to God means to turn from wickedness. One is wicked when one departs from the rules of the Divine Law. Wickedness means evil dispositions and practices. The wicked ways of Israel were idolatry, covetousness, rebellion, and murmuring. Our wicked ways include: covetousness, rebellion, murmuring, worldliness, dishonesty, inconsistency, indifference to religion, and devotion to self-interest. Before we can expect others to turn to God, we must lead the way. We must make the first move and then God will move. His promises are conditional. He is willing to do His part, but we must do our part first. When duty is done victory will follow. He says in substance, "If you will do this, I will do that." Duty done means victory won.

2. God's part.

- (1) Hear prayers. "Then will I hear."
- (2) Forgive sins--when confessed. "Will forgive sin."
- (3) Heal land. "Will heal their land."

This is His recipe. He has no other whatever. Are you willing to accept and apply it?

III. The Result Of A Revival.

1. The saints will be refreshed.
2. The sinners will be saved.
3. The church will be blessed.
4. The Lord will be glorified.

With a prepared man, a prepared message, and a prepared church we can have an old-fashioned, Holy Ghost revival providing we accept and apply God's recipe for it by believing in it, asking for it, expecting it, and working for it.

Whether this meeting is a success or a failure depends entirely on what we do with God's recipe for a revival.