

Revival

It seems many, across denominational lines, are asking God for revival in America. Pastor Gary and I have prayed this prayer as well. Do we mean what we ask? Revival has come, not just from God performing great and mighty wonders, but from the Word of God, spoken to hearers who became believers and from those believers sharing that Word with others. That means that we who ask God to bring revival must be willing to be on fire, visibly a disciple of Christ; a lamp on a lampstand that gives light for all to see, a city set on a hill that cannot be hid either by day or by night.

Really when we pray “Bring revival, Lord”, do we not mean “Wake these morons up, Lord” or “Lord, You do the work and we’ll possibly welcome them when they get into the church building”? When we pray, “Bring renewal, Lord” or “Let the Holy Ghost power come down,” aren’t we really saying, “Here Lord, these are hard sheep to get in the fold. You see what you can do with them” or “Lord, can You take care of this so I am not bothered or unsafe”? We pray this prayer, God starts answering and we begin complaining, “This is hard” or “I don’t want to be bothered” or “The enemy keeps attacking.” We back off the enthusiasm and we sure don’t want to really pay the price revival will cost. Someone else can do it.

As much as ever, the world needs revival. If you believe in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, then you know that He is the only way, truth and life. If you don’t believe that, if you have some other view of Christianity other than that, I’ll save you time: stop reading. You are uncomfortable with taking such a strong stand on Christ, and you therefore won’t agree with anything more I say. But I do stand there. We are nothing without Christ, and He is the only way to eternal life. I also believe in the Bible and its power for today and tomorrow. That said, let’s move forward.

If you want revival, are you willing to give up everything, including your life to get it? You pray for America. If God’s revival plan includes destroying the Republic and sending the church underground, are you willing to pay that price for the souls that will be saved? I’m not saying that’s His plan. I don’t know His plan, but is that a price you would pay? If you want revival, are you willing to put the Kingdom of God first, and trust that “these things will be added unto you” as Matthew 6:33 says? Are you willing to put time, talent and, yes, even your bank account at His beck and call? Are you willing to commit 100% to what He wants, risking enemy attack, rejection by family and friends, even life itself? Do you cling to the Body of Christ around you so that you can be encouraged, built up and strengthened in the faith? Or do you socialize and humor the preacher? Do you bounce from place to place seeking someone who will not speak the Truth of God, but will tell you that your inertia in the Kingdom is godly spirituality?

If we want revival, brothers and sisters, then it starts with us. It starts with God’s place in our lives. It starts with actively seeking Him alone and seeking out the fellowship of

other believers. Maybe you don't go to church because they are hypocrites, or always want money or the preacher is boring or it's not as relaxing as God's natural creation. Church is full of sinners, you won't be the only one there I promise. Should it be? No. Is it? Yes, because it is the hospital where we go when we're sin- sick and in need of the Good News of the Gospel! And some of us, unfortunately, are human so we bring our sin-sickness with us. So, look for a fellowship where the focus isn't on committees and feel-good social events, where newcomers are welcomed into the Body, where more of the work of the church happens Monday through Saturday OUTSIDE the walls of the Church or at least reaches those outside the walls. (I will never forget having to clear through the security gate, in the walled parking lot surrounding a church, to go to a conference focused on evangelism. The church even had its own travel agency. Yet outside its ivory and gold studded sanctuary was one of the poorer neighborhoods in the metro area. God bless them and heal them.) Look for real Christ focus! Don't be swayed by large numbers or small, by great sanctuaries or leaky-roofed wooden sheds. Be swayed by the focus on God and the Cross of the risen Christ. The rest will work itself out. Discipline yourself to get there every week. Listen, take notes, bring your Bible! Then go home and check out whether the Bible agrees cover to cover with what you heard. Scripture does not require a PhD. It requires a searching mind and heart, ready to seek God. I will tell you pastors are human. They make mistakes, or quote off the cuff and quote wrongly – or misspeak in their hurry to get a point across. If you think there's a discrepancy between Word and teaching, go to the pastor. He should either be able to explain or retract. He should be humble enough to say "I am wrong. Thank you for showing me Truth."

The next part of revival involves our time and our willingness to let God use it. You don't have to run to the nearest missionary field (unless that is where you are called), but you may have to get off the couch or Facebook. Myriad opportunities exist to serve others, to stand with others. God has gifted you with talents of some kind. Stop making excuses and admit you have a strength or two. Pick something and get going! Don't be surprised that the enemy attacks. That's what enemies do. God has your back and you won't be uncomfortable forever. A little misery, however, is not the end of the world.

The final part? Your money needs to seek God's Kingdom too. Sometimes that is supporting a local church, sometimes missions, sometimes another organization that does God-things. Note that not all good things promote God's Kingdom. Check them out. See how the money is spent. Give, however, to God's Kingdom because His Provision has given you the money!

Well, do you still want revival? I sure hope so because that's what God's Kingdom is all about! I haven't covered everything here. However, I am confident that if you seriously commit to seeking the Kingdom of God first, all you need to know will be added to you. Amen!