

“We Were Like Those Who Dream”:

Revival Then & Now

Sermon Notes

- **God delights to restore his people time and again, this is the history of revival and we are heirs to its legacy**

**Two exhortations from the history of revival...*

1. Remember he’s done it before (vv. 1-3)

2. Pray that he’ll do it again (vv.4-6)

Next Week: Hosea 14 - “Return to the Lord”:

The Effects of Revival

MEFC Community Group Study Guide

For the week of March 30th-April 5th

One of the resources from the annotated reading list of our current preaching series is a new volume by Michael Haykin titled: Revival: Spiritual Awakening in the Reformed Tradition (2024). Below is the conclusion to the book that he calls “Eight Theses on Revival”¹. Take some time this week to read and reflect on these in your own devotional time, with your family, or alongside your community group.

1. *The History of the Church is a History of Revival and Times of Declension.*

In this respect, the book of Judges seems to be emblematic of the history of the church. There are times of declension when God’s people trust in anything but the Spirit of the Lord to do the work of God. The church in such times languishes in weakness until she cries out to God, ‘Will You not revive us again?’ There follow times of flourishing, when the church is teeming with vigor and power, and there is a conscious dependance upon the might of the Spirit of God.

2. *Revival is a Work Grounded in the Sovereignty of the Holy Spirit.*

Revival - the breathing of new life into the church - is a divine work of grace. It cannot be accomplished by mere human zeal and ingenuity. If it were possible for men and women to revive the church by their own innate energy and will power, what need would there be of the Spirit of God in our midst? The outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples at Pentecost is our model here: wait in Jerusalem, their Lord told them, ‘until ye be endued with power from on high’ (Luke 24:49).

¹ Michael A.G. Azad Haykin, *Revival: Spiritual Awakening in the Reformed Tradition*. Reformation Heritage Books: Grand Rapids, MI. 2024. pp. 147-149.

3. *When God Determines to Revive His Church, He Begins by Stirring up His People to Prayer for What He Will Do*

The fact that revival is a work of the Holy Spirit does not mean that in times of declension, God's people can sit back, do nothing, and wait for the Spirit to act. No, they are called and indeed energized to pray for revival and to repent of their sins and spiritual lethargy.

4. *Times of Revival Are Attended by a Solid Commitment to the Bible as the Word of the Living God, Infallible and Unerring.*

The Scriptures have been created by the Holy Spirit, who has breathed them into existence (2 Tim. 3:16). During those times when His work of regeneration and sanctification is so remarkable, it is unthinkable that the Bible, by which he saves sinners and sanctifies them (James 1:18; John 17:17) should be held as anything but what it is: the Holy Word of God.

5. *Genuine Revival is Always Attended with Faithful Preaching of the Scriptures*

The Word of God is the greatest instrument of conversion and sanctification (Heb. 4:12-13), not human oratory and eloquence, nor the sacraments (important as they are in the life of the church), nor the pattern of worship. It is the Word of God in the hand of its author, the Holy Spirit, that convicts, illumines, liberates, regenerates, and rejoices the heart.

6. *Revival is Accompanied by Theological Renewal, for the Holy Spirit is Ever the Spirit of Truth.*

The Holy Spirit, who is the leading agent of revival, is ever the Spirit of truth (John 14:17; 16:13). When He comes in power to revive His people, He takes them back to the truth of His Word and there is theological renewal and even greater degrees of reformation.

7. *Spirit-Wrought Revival Always Impacts the Societal Context of the Churches That Are Being Renewed and Revitalized.*

Revival cannot be contained within the four walls of Christian congregations. As the hearts of God's people are revived and stirred afresh, they engage in evangelism and mission to those outside of their communities. They engage in good works, which lead to significant streams of blessing.

8. *Revival is a Christ-Centered Experience.*

The central feature of the new-covenant ministry of the Holy Spirit is the glorification of Jesus Christ (John 16:14). As a work of the Holy Spirit, revival then is first and foremost a time when Jesus Christ is set forth in all His glory as Savior and Lord.