

“About Three Thousand Souls”

Sermon Notes

➤ **Revival is not something that we can work up, revival is what happens when the Holy Spirit comes down**

**Nevertheless, Pentecost teaches us how to prepare for it...*

1. We want our ‘Lists of 5’ to be pierced by the Word, so let’s preach Christ and pray for conviction (v.37)

2. We want our ‘Lists of 5’ to be called by the Lord, so let’s issue a crystal clear invitation (vv.38-40)

3. We want our ‘Lists of 5’ to be added to the church, so let’s prepare our fellowship for multiplication (v.41)

Next Week: Acts 2:42-47 - “And They Devoted Themselves”

Community Group Study Guide

For the Week of July 16th - 22nd

Getting Started

1. In his outstanding book *When God Comes to Church: A Biblical Model for Revival Today*, Ray Ortlund Jr writes: “Revival is a season in the life of the church when God causes the normal ministry of the gospel to surge forward with extraordinary spiritual power. Revival is seasonal, not perennial. God causes it; we do not. It is the normal ministry of the gospel, not something eccentric or even different from what the church is always charged to do. What sets revival apart is simply that our usual efforts greatly accelerate in their spiritual effects. God hits the fast-forward button. And this blessing spills out from the church to wash over the nations with an ingathering of many new converts to Christ.”¹

Based on this description, have you ever experienced revival in any sense as Ortlund describes it? If so, please share with the group. If not, do you long for this sort of blessing to visit our church, our community, the Twin Cities, this nation, and the rest of the world?

Digging Deeper

2. One of the clearest gauges of the desires of our heart is the content of our prayers - particularly our *petitions* - to God. How often do you pray with the sons of Korah in Psalm 85:6 “Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you?” Have you *ever* prayed like this before? What might be the effect on our congregation if we made this petition a regular feature of our prayers individually, in our families, in our community groups, and in every aspect of our lives together?

¹ Raymond C. Ortlund, Jr. *When God Comes to Church: A Biblical Model for Revival Today*. Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI. 2000. p.9.

In their book A God-Sized Vision: Revival Stories That Stretch and Stir, after tracing the history of revival in the church of Jesus Christ, authors Collin Hansen and John Woodbridge offer a handful of shared traits common in revival. Read carefully through each of these five aspects of awakening in the lives of God's people and discuss what you believe are some concrete applications and next steps we might take in order to become a people more hospitable to revival in our day.²

3. Persisting in Prayer

“Often, at least a handful of faith-filled believers engaged in heartfelt prayer for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit in order to experience revival. Sometimes they prayed for years before they saw revival. Others were driven to prayer almost as a last resort. They had tried and failed to do ministry in their own power. They realized the task before them was too huge or that their efforts using various means and methods had failed. They finally acknowledged they could not continue to serve without the Lord’s blessing and power.”³

4. Repenting from Sin

“When God’s presence becomes evident in a revival, repentance from sin swiftly follows...Awareness of God’s holiness impels believers under conviction of the Holy Spirit to seek Christ’s forgiveness. Sin’s horror becomes unbearably evident. The sin could be as simple and insidious as pride and trust in our own efforts. But God could be waiting for us to confess before he reveals his plans...make no mistake, true revival will expose sin you never noticed. The process will be bitter, but God’s grace will soon taste sweeter than ever before.”⁴

² Notice, we didn’t say ‘five quick steps to have a revival by Friday’. It simply doesn’t work that way. Revival is a sovereign gift of Almighty God. However, we are wise to consider what has marked the church during such outpourings of God’s Spirit because we want to be expectant and welcoming when and if it comes.

³ Collin Hansen and John Woodbridge, *A God-Sized Vision: Revival Stories That Stretch and Stir*. Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI. 2010. pp. 182-183.

⁴ *Ibid*, p.183.

5. Preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ

“During the transatlantic awakening of the eighteenth century, John Wesley, George Whitefield, and Jonathan Edwards preached the gospel of Jesus Christ to whoever would listen, whether in churches, open fields, or town squares. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, their preaching breached man-made defenses. They emphasized the doctrine of justification by faith alone, which they believed to be lost in much...preaching of their day... We need pastors who will teach the faith once delivered to the saints and evangelists who will communicate it passionately and clearly. Reformation might just be the thing that recovers the gospel in our churches and unleashes the power of God to stir the affections. Indeed, if reform does not accompany revival, the awakening will dissipate with fanaticism.”⁵

6. Acknowledging God’s Authority in Humility

“Christians throughout history have emphasized the importance of walking humbly before God and neighbors...[and] pride [is] the primary error that clog[s] the advance of awakenings. Pride, a stubborn enemy of God, was the first sin that came into the world and will be the last one to leave. [Ironically] Those who are eager to see the gospel advance are particularly prone to pride. A humble person whom God chose to use in ministry could become proud about success and popularity, succumb to a critical spirit, and in turn lose the Lord’s full blessing...[At the same time] A humble Christian is more apt to seek reconciliation with estranged brothers and sisters in Christ... Reconciliation between antagonistic Christians often seems to open the door to revival...When we are weak, God is strong. When God is strong, we worship. When we worship, the world notices. When God sends revival once more, the world won’t be able to ignore it.”⁶

7. Serving God with Boldness

“With a firm belief in God’s care, many revival leaders fearlessly entered perilous circumstances. They were not content to serve as chaplains to the status quo...This holy boldness, granted by the Spirit, gains strength when we remember what God’s strong arm has done in the past. The Lord is not intimidated by Chicago or Cairo or any other city or country. He really does hold the nations in his hands. History tells the story. Nations rise and fall, but the Lord endures forever. Christ is building his church. ‘This is what God can do. This is what God has done,’ Martyn Lloyd-Jones said. ‘Let us together decide to beseech him, to plead with him to do it again. Not that we may have the excitement, but that his mighty hand may be known and his great name may be glorified and magnified among the people’.”⁷

⁵ Ibid, pp. 183-184.

⁶ Ibid, pp. 184-185.

⁷ Ibid, pp. 185-186.