

REVIVAL: Praying for Characteristics of Historic Revival

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As we look ahead to the National Prayer Summit, hosted by my good friend Aaron Winter, let us examine the inspirational characteristics of historic revival, whether it be personal or national, from one of the most famous passages penned in the entire Bible found in Psalm 85. Many prayer warriors have stood on the walls reminding God of His Word from Psalm 85:6, "Will You not revive us again, that Your people may rejoice in You?" (MEV). This is what the nation needs right now.

When revival reaches its fullness, it stirs the individual, which impacts the family, which revives a congregation to spread unity, inspiration and the fire of God to influence a city or region, which in turn releases societal changes before the kingdom of God comes on earth. Revival is the hunger for change. That is one of the most concise statements of showing the sequential effects in the momentum of revival.

What Is Authentic Revival?

Revival is defined in a variety of ways. In my studies, I have used multiple sources to procure the needed results. Let's look at a few of these definitions:

- Revival is bringing something back to its earlier state, as an act of restoration.
- Revival is a return, a recall or a recovery to life from

death.

- Revival restores truth that has been forgotten.
- Revival brings a holy stop to apathy and carelessness.
- Revival is to recover from a state of neglect, oblivion, obscurity or depression.
- Revival is a renewed attention to religion, and an awakening of spiritual matters.
- Revival is necessary to counteract spiritual decline and to create spiritual movement.
- Revival is the wave that carries faith from one generation to another.

There are many great pleas for revival in the Bible, God's Word. I have found three primary Scripture passages that have been used by many intercessors throughout time. These are Psalm 85:1–6, Habakkuk 3:2 and Isaiah 64:1–4. These revival Scriptures are an excellent starting point, as we aim to align our intercession at the National Prayer Summit to move the heart of God and stir our own heart to experience revival breakthrough.

5 Characteristics of Historic Revival

We are going to start our venture to gaze upon five characteristics of classic, historic revivals. While we value renewal and refreshing, there is a deep hunger for something more. We want to see the outpourings of the Holy Spirit go deeper, be more penetrable and sustainable, to bring authentic revival, reformation and awakening to the nation.

Each revival has a distinct and strong personality or characteristic. Authentic revival includes the church being returned to its original condition, producing evangelism and discipleship and empowering believers into positive societal changes. So, let's take a look.

1) Passionate Denunciation of Sin.

James 4:4 (NIV) reminds us that sin is the enemy—not our friend. “You adulterous people, don’t you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.” This is New Testament apostolic teaching—straight forward. George Whitefield in the 1700s preached like a lion and people were compelled to listen whether they wanted to or not. We too need to impress upon people to know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God. In today’s hyper-grace culture, people are tagged, “You have a religious spirit” if preaching or discussions are too candid. But the passionate denunciation of sin is one of the characteristics of revival.

Holy violence was often a characteristic of historic moves of God’s presence. The grace of God is characteristic of authentic moves of the Holy Spirit. Otherwise, this becomes legalism and the law. But when it is the passionate pursuit of the character of God empowered by grace—it produces transformation. Classic characteristics of revivals include people coming forward and repenting of sin.

2) A Revelation of God’s Holiness.

First Peter 1:16 says, “Because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy,” (MEV). Jonathan Edwards preached under this conviction in the 1700s. It was said that Edwards was consumed with the extraordinary sense of the awful awareness of the holiness of God—not wanting to do anything that would not please God. Again, I understand there could be a tightrope here if holiness is not grace-empowered.

3) Deep Awareness of the Love and the Mercy of God.

If listed sequentially, this characteristic would be number one. Romans 8:35–39 encourages us with these words: “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: ‘For Your sake we are killed all

day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter.’ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, neither angels nor principalities nor powers, neither things present nor things to come, neither height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord,” (MEV).

The lovingkindness of God draws us to repentance. It was said of St. Francis of Assisi, as well as the protestant Bible teacher-evangelist D.L. Moody, that they only preached about the love of God. Can you imagine that? Their only topic was the love of God. Amazing.

I love reading about the life of David Brainerd, a missionary to the First Nations people of America. He would stand in the snow, in the cold, and preach with conviction the love of God, the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. He told them that the Lord Jesus Christ is a kind and compassionate Master to the First Nations people. He would be moved upon with deep distress, pleading with his tears for the people to accept the everlasting mercy of God.

4) Heightened Consciousness of Eternity.

The nation needs a revelation on eternity. In recent years, I have attended a Spirit-filled evangelical church, and it is the first one I have attended in well over 30 years that gives at least a three- to five-minute presentation of the Lord Jesus Christ at the end of every message. They don’t assume that everybody in the house is walking with Jesus—or knows religion, but has a relationship with Jesus. I have witnessed with my own eyes more people come to faith in the past five years than I have actually seen in a church in well over 25 years. The basic reason, a heightened consciousness of eternity.

One time I was ministering in Argentina. I was absolutely

fascinated with one church's service that actually included a five-minute segment during the message when a staff evangelist would get up and share the Gospel. They would do an invitation right then, and when people would come to the Lord Jesus, they were taken aside and offered counsel, prayer, welcome to God's family, etc. The impact was amazing! I thought that was a wonderful, novel idea.

Classic revival declares the reality that there is a real heaven, and a real hell. Can you tell me the last time you heard a teaching on hell in church? You probably can't. You know what? That's sad, and one of the reasons why we don't experience true, authentic revival.

Today we need to return to the revelation of the eternal judgment of God and the reality of heaven and hell. One of these days I am going to compose a series called "Eternity: The Realities of Heaven and Hell." We tend to teach one side of this or the other. Rarely is eternity taught like a two-edged sword of the Spirit.

5) Experiential Conviction of Sin.

John 16:7–8 says, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away. For if I do not go away, the Counselor will not come to you. But if I go, I will send Him to you. When He comes, He will convict the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment," (MEV). One of the primary ministries of Holy Spirit is to convict. Convicting the world concerning sin, righteousness and judgment ties into conscious awareness of eternity and judgment to come. The Holy Spirit will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment. That is God's job, part of the amazing work of the Holy Spirit. He convicts, He convinces humans of our condition of sin, our need for righteousness and the reality that we will each stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

Once again, our nation needs a pure move of God like what

happened in the United Kingdom in 1859 when it said men staggered down due to the wounds to their conscience; or in 1790–1800, in the rough frontier of Kentucky when people would cry out for mercy at conviction. Experiential conviction would fall on them.

Consider the Hebrides Island revival when there was a five-mile zone where people would come into an open portal, an open heaven and be convicted of sin; turning themselves in to the police department to make amends. Let us echo the prayer of Evan Roberts of the Welsh revival, “Send Your Spirit now, more powerfully, for Jesus Christ’s sake. Amen!”

Let’s Pray Together

Glorious Father God, send revival into our nation in Jesus Christ’s great name. Restore the classic characteristics of revival into the foundation of America once again, including the experiential conviction of sin and the necessity of living a life of holiness. Give the nation a revelation of the realities of heaven and hell. Send more of the power of Your Holy Spirit to Your church, and release an outbreak of revival that is marked by signs and wonders and miracles, and according to Your Holy Word—revive America again. We thank You and praise You, in Jesus’ great name. Amen and amen!

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