

The Greatest Hindrance to Revival in the Church Lies Here

It's clear that many churches have closed or have considerably shrunk in size since COVID-19. Reasons range from "church-goers are still scared to return," to "they prefer watching live feeds."

But why have bold churches experienced tremendous growth? This issue is much deeper—it's crystal clear that people are hungry for the truth.

As a church in California located in Los Angeles County, I understand the enormous challenges of pastoring in these dire times. But, if the truth be told, the COVID crisis simply revealed the foundation of many churches as well as the heart of many pastors. But thank God there is hope!

Pastors, I'm writing this to you to encourage you to be bold as you lead your congregation through these difficult and challenging times. But this boldness won't come naturally, it will come supernaturally. It will have a cost: "Life-giving preaching costs the preacher much—death to self, crucifixion to the world, and the travail of his own soul. Crucified preaching only can give life. Crucified preaching can come only from a crucified man" (E.M. Bounds).

As I was working on my newest article, A Measure of Revival in Our Bondage, the thought came to me to tailor it to pastors and Christian leaders and to re-release it with that theme in mind. Here are some of the points:

The Fire of the Spirit is Contagious

On October 25, 2021, we began having church every night at 6

pm for two straight weeks. At times, the atmosphere was overwhelming – a full altar, dozens of baptisms, the demonic realm being crushed and countless lives changed, both in person and through livestream. As the old-timers used to say, “God heard our cries and showed up!” The key verse for us was Isaiah 64:1, “Oh, that You would rend the heavens! That You would come down! That the mountains might shake at Your presence.” (You can view the services [here](#).)

Speaking boldly is no longer optional, it’s essential. That’s the missing ingredient today. God is no respecter of persons, status, or achievement, but He is a respecter of principles (Acts 10:34). If you seek Him with all your heart you will find Him. Then you will be better equipped to lead your congregation to the Fountain of Living Water once you have drunk deeply. The fire of the Spirit is contagious.

This doesn’t mean that your church will grow; it could shrink, but it does mean that you’ll now have the power of the Spirit resting upon your life. Churches filled with the Spirit do the works of the Spirit. Jesus said that “whoever believes in Me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father” (John 14:12 NIV). If your church doesn’t look like the New Testament church, are you sure that you’re truly “having church”?

Death is for a Graveyard, not a Church

The Christian life is to be living and vibrant, not dry and dead. It begs the question: “Where are the rivers of living water that Jesus spoke about in John 7:38?” When it comes to experiencing a spiritual awakening (revival), it can’t be worked up, it must be brought down from heaven.

In Lev. 9:23-24, the glory of the Lord appeared to all the people and the fire came down and consumed the burnt offering. God brought down the fire, but the responsibility fell on the

leaders to keep the fire burning. They were to remove the waste but not the fuel. The same holds true for you and me. We must remove the waste of pride and add the fuel of humility.

Ignite your church with prayer meetings and worship nights. Humble yourself and lead the way and find comfort on the altar as you cry out to God for boldness. The two-week event described above was over a decade in the making as we persisted in seeking the heart of God. He truly is a “rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (Heb. 11:6). When God chooses to give us a measure of revival in our bondage, worship, humility, and obedience is the fuel that keeps the flame going.

The Beauty of Brokenness

The beauty of brokenness is that humility crushes pride and ushers in the presence of God. Moses spent years on the backside of the desert as God broke and prepared him. Joshua’s humility no doubt came from lingering in the presence of the Lord. Isaiah was completely broken when he cried, “Woe to me! ... I am ruined! ... my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty” (Isaiah 6:5). Jeremiah collapsed and cried out for humility in the people, “My soul will weep in secret for your pride” (Jeremiah 13:17).

The Psalms are saturated with the brokenness of David, and Jesus’ disciples had to be crushed like olives so the anointing oil could flow. Paul had to be knocked to the ground and his eyes blinded by the glory of God before true humility became a mark of Paul’s ministry.

Do you sound like a voice “crying in the wilderness” because you’ve been touched by God, or a voice whining in the wilderness because you’re dying spiritually? You can change that today.

We Provide the Sacrifice, He Provides the Fire

When you lose intimacy with God, you lose boldness and the Spirit's fire. Return to Him, and He will return to you (Zechariah 1:3). The strength of your church is in its purity and spiritual power, not in its numbers. God doesn't need a majority—He is the Majority. We are not CEOs running a business, we are watchmen warning a nation. Prayer can no longer be a footnote at the end of a sermon; instead, prayer and worship must guide the church in these critical times.

How can you receive a measure of revival in these dire times if there is no desperation? God can't pour into your heart if it's already full of self: Self-willed. Self-sufficient. Self-made. Self must die in you before God can really live within you.

The greatest hindrance to revival is within your own heart. It's time to break up your fallow ground and seek the Lord while He still may be found (cf. Hosea 10:12). Again, although we can't work revival up, God can bring it down from heaven if we prepare the soil of our hearts. We provide the sacrifice—He provides the fire.

Listen here to the sermon, *A Measure of Revival in Our Bondage*. {eoa}

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