

The Religious System's Fight Against Revival: A Threat Is Coming to the Church

Revival is a serious threat to the prevailing church structure, as it will put at risk every comfort zone we know.

The reformation that revival will facilitate will cause quite a resistance even from many of the most devoted believers due to some significant threats to their comfort zones.

It's important to understand that a religious spirit is the force behind anything that might resist a costly revival.

Religion is: man's attempt to use God to get what he wants

Jesus threatened the church of the day—so the church killed him. They got what they wanted.

Today, it's normal for many to attempt to use God or to use the church to get what they want. They want life to be comfortable and convenient. They want the church experience to be a certain way. They might shop around until they find the spiritual experience that meets their desires and demands. If people aren't careful, they can unwittingly embrace a spirit of religion while minimizing the cost, the cross and the mandate to surrender all for the sake of kingdom advance.

As revival approaches, here are some of the issues we will have to wrestle through:

- **All traditions are at risk:** Traditions have the power to void the Word of God (Matt. 15)! It's no wonder God is so intent on resolving this issue. The coming reformation will impact many traditions that have become signatures of church as we know it. It's imperative that

we don't resist the change that will affect the days and times we gather together, the style of worship we've become familiar with and programs. The coming church will look nothing like the church we know today. Kim Clement said recently, *"The church as we know it is being abolished."*

- **Pastors will have to face the risk of losing people, money and their reputations:** The pressure for church growth, and the temptation to compete with other pastors and churches for the best ministry, is pretty extreme. Additionally, drastic change to the familiar church experience will be a serious threat to pastor's salaries and retirements. The fear of loss will hit many. If people who are unwilling to buy into such a drastic change and such a zealous experience decide to leave the church, their money leaves with them. Further, if people leave the church, accusations of pastoral failure will start to fly. Reputations will be lost. The question is, is a move of God more important than security and position?
- **Local church missions will have to adjust:** When revival lands, it will probably land in a single location. That location most likely won't be our specific church. This means that local church leaders will have to have open hands and be quick to release the people in their church to participate at a high level in the revival. The pastors will need to lead the people out as they join forces with the greater city church. When I went to the outpouring in Lakeland, Florida, I was saddened that no church marquee gave any indication that they were cancelling some services so they could participate in the revival. Not one. I wonder if the threat of that revival caused them to lock everybody down and keep them far from that tent where the fire of God chose to manifest.
- **Investment will increase radically:** The time, money and

focus required to steward a revival is off the charts. Cares of life must finally be dealt with and preparations to spend day after day and dollar after dollar must be made. Lesser priorities will have to take a back seat to the coming “all hands on deck” season.

- **Acts 2:46:** “And continuing daily with one mind in the temple”
- **We will have to release control:** The Holy Spirit is going to manifest in such bizarre and extreme measure that those who are nervous about such environments will be tempted to shut it down.
- **Acts 2:12-13:** “They were all amazed and perplexed, saying to each other, ‘What does this mean?’ Others mocking said, ‘These men are full of new wine.’”
- **Most people don’t like change, and that is a problem:** Leaders tend to shy away from alienating the people they are leading, but a crisis is coming. The change that’s coming to the church will cause most to vehemently resist. Will we as leaders respond to God or man? Peter, interested in man ahead of God, unwittingly renounced the great change and cost of the cross, and Jesus gave him one of the strongest rebukes in Scripture. Peter was embracing religion, the desire to use God and eliminate the cross. This religious disposition is a serious risk to revival.
- **Mark 8:31-33:** “He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said this openly. And Peter took Him and began to rebuke Him. But when He had turned around and looked at His disciples, He rebuked Peter, saying, ‘Get behind Me, Satan! For you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.’”
- **Sharp yet love-filled prophetic messages must be preached:** In Acts 2, direct and prophetic teaching was a direct result of the outpouring. The days of sloppy

grace and tickled ears must come to an end.

- **Acts 2:36-37:** "Therefore, let all the house of Israel assuredly know that God has made this Jesus, whom you have crucified, both Lord and Christ. When they heard this, they were stung in the heart and said to Peter and to the rest of the apostles, 'Brothers, what shall we do?'"

The systems that we have developed are about to be destroyed as God paves the way for the coming church. The revival that's nearly here will be both great and terrible. It won't be a series of nice meetings, but rather it will break a lot so that the love and abundant life of Jesus can be felt in much greater measure.