

What to Do When We Hear Rumors of Revival

What will we do when we hear about a move of God in our region? Will we reject it, resist it, doubt it—or will we run and see and serve with passion?

I need to begin by explaining my personal views on revival. I must do this so you understand what my perspective is when I deal with false reports of revival and how to respond to true moves of God in a region.

I understand this is nothing more than an opinion, but I don't personally believe the United States has experienced legitimate revival since Azusa. We have experienced various very powerful moves and visitations of God in places like Brownsville and Smithton, and some might argue that the impact is greater than I am understanding.

I have been powerfully transformed by such moves of God and I in no way am attempting to diminish what happened there. The reason for the distinction is to bring clarity to just what we are contending for. I believe a move of God must shift history and change the spiritual landscape and culture of the region it is in order for it to be called revival. Simply, revival radically changes entire cities and nations.

There are over 19,000 cities in our nation and none of them are experiencing the biblical normalcy of revival. God has done all that is necessary for us to be living in revival as a nation every day of our lives. Revival isn't a special kiss from heaven as much as it is God's church stepping up and living according to the grace and power of the Holy Spirit that has been available for over 2,000 years. I've often said that we should be trembling in the shock and awe of the presence of God day and night. Churches should be full of

people who are praying and groaning in the Spirit day after day. Salvations, healings, signs and wonders should be normal not unusual.

I believe the following passage describes clearly what is biblically normal—and what a sleeping, naturally minded church would consider unusual:

“Afterward He appeared to the eleven as they sat at supper, and He reprimanded them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen. He said to them, “Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved. But he who does not believe will be condemned. These signs will accompany those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover. After the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven and sat at the right hand of God. Then they went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen” (Mark 16:14-20, MEV).

The eleven were overtaken by unbelief and hardness of heart. Sound familiar? They were driven by the same attitude that drives many today when reports of a move of God in a region are given. Just as they didn't believe those who had experienced the resurrection power of Jesus, today's church is quick to scrutinize, dismiss and reject such reports with a very suspicious spirit. More on this in a bit. Let's continue looking at a movement of revival.

Jesus appeared to the disciples, rebuked them and gave them an all consuming mandate—Go all over the world, preach the gospel to everyone, cast out demons, speak in tongues and heal the sick. The promise of protection was given to them if they obediently responded to the orders of their Commander. Harm

will not come to them.

This is revival! The American church needs a rebuke! We need a visitation of Jesus and we must say yes to every command of God to carry and release life and healing to the nations!

The True Heart of a Berean

"But their words seemed like fables to them, and they did not believe them. But Peter rose and ran to the tomb. Stooping down, he saw the linen clothes lying by themselves. He departed, wondering in himself what had happened" (Luke 24:11-12, MEV).

Belief and expectancy will result in running as a result of any news that God has moved with great passion. Doubt will always result in resistance, staying away and embracing suspicion.

I often hear about the concept of being a Berean from some who may be considered heresy hunters. Those who are deeply suspicious of any report of a fresh move of God often attempt to disguise their unbelief and mocking spirit with a religious cloak. They say, *"I'm just being a Berean."*

People driven by a false Berean attitude hear a report of a possible revival or outpouring and their immediate response is to discredit it. They pull out Scriptures that supposedly renounce any new move of God and declare the participants to be misguided at best, heretics at worst. Others may take a less direct approach by holding back, waiting to see if it passes muster.

That, my friend, is not being a Berean.

I agree that we must be based on the Word of God more intentionally than ever in history. There is too much foolishness out there today in the name of revival. The answer is a people who are sensitive to the Holy Spirit and firmly

grounded as students in the Bible.

However, I don't agree that our immediate response to a potentially fresh outpouring of the Spirit of God should be suspicion! This attitude can affect even the most godly of people. It's all too easy to immediately doubt that such a move could be anything more than overreaching hope, hype or sensationalism.

I propose we all have the heart of a true Berean.

Before the stop at Berea, Paul preached about a powerful fresh move of God at Thessalonica. I believe heresy hunters are actually more like the Thessalonians than the Bereans:

"According to his custom, Paul went in, and on three Sabbaths he lectured to them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus, whom I preach to you, is the Christ." Some of them were persuaded and joined with Paul and Silas, including a great crowd of devout Greeks and many leading women.

"But the Jews who did not believe became jealous and, taking some evil men from the marketplace, gathered a crowd, stirred up the city, and attacked the house of Jason, trying to bring them out to the mob. But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some brothers to the city officials, crying out, "These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also, and Jason has received them. They are all acting contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus" (Acts 17:2-7, MEV).

There was an urgent and immediate rejection of the report of resurrection power. Let's contrast this with the pure hearts of the Bereans:

"The brothers immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to

Berea. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with all eagerness, daily examining the Scriptures, to find out if these things were so. Therefore many of them believed, including honorable Greek women and many Greek men.

“But when the Jews of Thessalonica learned that the word of God was preached by Paul at Berea, they came there also, stirring up the crowds” (Acts 17:10-13, MEV).

This is a powerful passage of Scripture!

The Bereans were more noble than those in Thessalonica. This is an important point! Why were they more noble? When they heard the report of a powerful, transforming, new move of God that would change everything in their lives, they received the word with *all eagerness*!

Their response was not scrutiny, unbelief, jealousy or resistance. They were excited to hear the news! They were so impacted by the potential of such a report that they immediately dove into the Word with the hope of confirming—not disproving—the life altering revelation!

But then, in verse 13, we see the unrelenting Thessalonians actually traveling to Berea to gather people to them in opposition to what God was doing there.

I hope you are truly ready for revival. This is what it looks like. The resisters will show up in force.

The question that needs to be answered is, which camp will you be in? Are you a scrutinizing Thessalonian or an eager Berean?

What About False Reports?

As I have already stated, I don't believe we have seen an actual revival in over 100 years. I also am very careful not to label something revival or an outpouring if it is not. I

want to be a true Berean, searching the Word and honestly determining whether something is an outpouring—or if it's something different.

The reason this is important is because our response to it will be shaped by what is happening, or is reported to be happening.

If there is a very real fire in an apartment building, it makes all the sense in the world to put all of our resources, time and energy into an immediate and urgent response. Lives are hanging in the balance! But, if there is a false report about a fire, people and equipment are diverted away from availability into crisis response—where there is no crisis. Legitimate emergencies will then be under resourced due to the false report.

When I moved my family to the Detroit, Michigan area seven years ago I did so for only one reason—to prepare for revival. Detroit was poised for a move of God and my assignment was to serve with everything within me.

Shortly after arriving, my spirit began to be somewhat disturbed as I heard truly amazing, godly people announce that “revival is here” or that it is near or that it can't be stopped.

I began to wonder just what definition of revival people were using. I knew before I ever decided to move to Detroit that revival was not near, but we had everything we needed as a region to get to work and give ourselves to the long, costly process of building a city fire. Unfortunately, the premature reports of revival were compromising the efforts. If revival was here or near why would we need to gather the laborers? Now we can relax and wait. Premature reports can kill a move of God that requires extreme participation from the city church.

The false report was that revival was there. The true report was that revival was possible.

Now, I agree that we might be able to say at times that the spirit of revival has arrived, or that there is a greater grace to believe for revival. We might be able to announce a local move of God or even an outpouring in a church. But, revival is a very special word. It must be reserved for something so gloriously cataclysmic in the spirit and in the natural that even muttering it causes a holy hush.

While in Detroit we experienced some absolutely stunning moves of God that are completely undeniable. We saw a visible mist of God's presence three separate times. After a prophecy about a very unusual manifestation of God's glory landing on a young lady, people were rushing to see gold dust coming up out of her scalp—just a week later! Another young man had anointing oil manifest on his hands during most every service for an extended season. People's lives were being changed dramatically. Yet, there is no way I would even begin to presume we were in revival—but the spirit of revival was definitely there (meaning, God was moving in a way on a small scale that would be representative of full blown revival).

While some great friends are laying down their lives and contending for revival to this day in Detroit, the nation has not yet heard of the *Great Detroit Revival*. It hasn't come yet. The masses have not come to Jesus. Healings are not skyrocketing. Churches are not full. The culture has not changed to one that is marked by the fire and Spirit of God.

Please understand an extremely important point: When a report of revival is sounded, we must dive in and serve—not because we immediately agree that true revival has landed, but because there are people who are hungry for revival gathering together—even though they may be premature in the announcement. If I hear about a move of God in my region, it's critical that I, as a member of the city church, offer myself as a log on that fire, ready to be consumed for the sake of a greater outpouring. We can't determine whether we will support it or not on the front end. Give it time and God will make it

clear whether it's going to continue or not. I gave six years of my life to the call for revival in Detroit. I never felt revival was near in the whole time I was there, even when God was moving powerfully as he did on multiple occasions. But, for a time I did feel we could see it come within a few years if we gave ourselves rightly to it. I ultimately realized that my season was done and others would have the honor of contending further.

The opportunity definitely does remain for Detroit and any other region in our nation to experience revival. This is good news! Detroit is one out of 19,000 cities who have yet to see it come. So is Branson, Missouri.

I am quite undone by the recent meetings led by Marrio Murillo in Branson, Missouri. Of course, I've been wrecked by the power of God, the intense messages and the incredible number of healings and salvations. Last night's meeting was probably the most powerful I've been to in many years. It was indescribable.

But, that's not why I'm undone. After moving to Detroit for the sole reason of seeing revival come to that region, I was honored to be a part of meetings led by Brian Simmons that were similar to what I'm experiencing in Branson. If a Christian could experience déjà vu, this would be it.

Every night for a month my team in Detroit and I cancelled our own agendas, most church services and other activities and gave leadership to the prayer emphasis at the meetings. I knew in my spirit that these services were designed by God to be catalysts to a revival that would impact the entire Detroit region—and the nation. I can't even begin to explain the hunger and passion that I was experiencing. God was moving and revival was a legitimate possibility—if only the church would reorder their lives, show up and contend with everything they had.

In the midst of those meetings a haunting prophetic word was given: If the church of Detroit doesn't respond to the costly call of revival, God will move on to Chicago.

Unfortunately unbelief and a Thessalonian spirit brought the outpouring to an end after just a month. Suspicion and resistance manifested and the eagerness to serve with passion was lacking.

Six years later, in the first meeting I attended in Branson, Mario Murillo mentioned that he felt one of a few cities on the clock for revival now is Chicago. He had my attention. He also mentioned that God would move on from any region that doesn't compel him to stay. The similarities between the two events and the two words was stunning.

The question is clear no matter what city on the earth you live in: will the church of the city respond with great passion and pay the great cost to see revival come? If it's a false report, how will we respond? Will we jump in and contend with people who may be overstating the experience yet are zealous beyond measure for the Holy Spirit to pour out? You do realize that gathering together with a handful of like-minded people and praying without stopping can result in legitimate revival no matter what true or false reports are flying, right?

We must gather together as the regional church. I'll include the last instructions that we as a nation have received for revival—the instructions that led to the last true revival in the United States, Azusa:

"Gather those who are willing to make a total surrender. Pray and wait. Believe God's promises. Hold daily meetings." ~Evan Roberts

No matter the report, we should be doing this in our city. Stadiums should be filled with people who are crying out and contending day and night for revival.

And, keep in mind, when revival does come it will impact a city, not a single church. That's the primary distinction between an outpouring and revival. This means that the church of the city must be unified and in position to serve the regional move of God. A supernatural, holy event in a church is a good thing, but not until the city church gathers and the entire region is rocked by the glory of God can we presume to call it revival.

We must not be like the Thessalonians. We need true Bereans who will eagerly receive the news of a fresh move of the Spirit of God and respond in force.

City shaking revival lies in the balance.

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