

What Will It Take for Revival to Come?

Lately, I've been studying some of the great revivals. The Hebridean revival took place in the tiny village of Barvas, Scotland, between 1949-1953. The revival began with two elderly sisters. One was 82 and crippled with arthritis, and the other was 84 but completely blind. One night as they sat by a fire, they began to feel burdened for the little church across the field from them that had no young people. While they realized they couldn't go out and recruit young people, they knew they could pray. As they began to pray, one of the sisters had a vision of young people filling the church. The following morning, the sisters asked the local pastor to their house and told him that he needed to get ready because a revival was coming. Pretty bold, don't you think?

The minister asked what he should do. The women gasped as they repeated, "What should you do? You should pray, man!" They proposed a deal to the minister and told him if he would gather his people twice a week to pray in the barn at the end of the village, they, in turn, would pray from their house from 10 at night until 3 in the morning.

Late-night prayer meetings began, and at one point, one man stood and read Psalm 24. He asked the people to confess their sins and make sure their hands and hearts were pure. He reminded the people of the village that they needed to wait in the presence of the Lord for revival. The presence of God filled the barn. Some fell on their faces before the holiness of God, and revival came to Hebrides. (Duncan Campbell, *Principles That Govern a Spiritual Quickening*, Faith Mission Recordings).

A preacher named Duncan Campbell came to the small village and preached the gospel night after night. One of the first

meetings lasted until 4 in the morning. Campbell led countless people in the village to the Lord. He defined revival as “a community saturated with God.”

I want to personally be saturated with the presence of God. I want my community, country and other nations to be saturated with the presence of God. What needs to happen for revival to come to me personally and to my surrounding community? As I’ve been thinking about this, I have a few thoughts.

Revival implies that something is dead. For revival to happen, we need to die. Jesus said, “Truly, truly I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone. But if it dies, it bears much fruit” (John 12:24). The call to die is an integral part of following Jesus. We die to our dreams, our desires and our distractions. We fix our focus on Jesus and allow Him to lead us. We set our hearts on obedience. Honestly, there’s a large cost to following Jesus. It’s not just about a simple prayer to get into heaven. It’s about a life of following hard after Christ and a continual posture of surrender.

Revival comes with significant time spent waiting in prayer. Jesus told a story illustrating persistence in prayer. Luke 11:5-13 is about a friend who goes to a neighbor’s house at night and keeps pounding on the door until the neighbor finally gets up and gives him the food he is requesting. To Jesus, the important thing is time with you. So often, He doesn’t answer right away, because in your persistence He is able to grow your faith. In every great revival, there have been long seasons of persistent prayer. I read recently that “John Wesley woke at 4 a.m. daily to intercede for at least four hours before the day began and increased this to eight hours in old age” (Pete Grieg, *Dirty Glory*, NavPress, 2016). Wow! That persistence in prayer paid off. John Wesley was the leader of the revival within the Church of England that finally birthed the evangelical revival during the 1700s. Friend, if you long for revival, spend some time on your

knees.

Revival prompts confession and repentance. The psalmist David wisely prayed, “Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting (Ps. 139:23-24, NIV). When we get serious about praying for revival, the Holy Spirit will prompt us to let go of anything that hinders a deeper walk with God. I believe we are called to regularly ask God to examine our hearts. We don’t do this to wallow in guilt or shame; we practice examination to regularly move closer to Jesus. In the end, He and He alone is worth everything!

Over the next few months, I’m going to pray for revival—for my heart, for yours, for our country and for our churches. Want to join me? I’d love to hear from you! {eoa}

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