

Conviction: The Key to Revival

Revival depends on repentance. Repentance requires conviction of sin. Bringing conviction of sin to individual men and women is a vital aspect of the Holy Spirit's ministry.

Many believers have written and preached and taught about the multifaceted ministry of the Holy Spirit but I believe that His ministry of bringing the conviction of sin has often been neglected.

Revival Results from Conviction

Watch out when the Spirit comes into your world with conviction "concerning sin and righteousness and judgment" (John 16:8, ESV)!

His conviction is irresistible, both positive and negative senses. He will put His mighty thumb down hard on your self-important sin and He will cause you to see it as you have never seen it before – as utterly offensive in the light of the perfection of your Creator.

He will also supply you with supernatural grace so that you can respond properly, even to a crushing revelation. For your sake, and far beyond what you deserve, He brings the overwhelming love of God to bear against your sin, forgiving you and pulling you up out of it.

He doesn't come to destroy you; He comes to save you.

Your sin is what would, sooner or later, destroy you because nothing about it can ever put your feet on the path of salvation and true joy.

The Holy Spirit comes at just the right time and in just the right way to convince and convict you of this truth. He

supplies you with all of the raw material for saving faith and then He molds it together for you.

He does this not only when you first bow to the lordship of Christ in your life but all along the way, as needed.

Sin has killed off something within you and He revives you. You were dead in your sin and He raises you from the dead.

When He comes like this, your emotions become inflamed with a combination of remorse and alarm and repentance – along with incredible relief and eager submission.

Nobody can come through the fire of the Holy Spirit's conviction passively or with clinical objectivity. It is an emotional experience. You are so sad and then you are so glad. You are laid low and then you are raised up high.

Revival! Revival means the recovery of life to something that was dead or seemingly dead, such as the revival of a drowned person.

If you think about it, you realize that "revival" can never apply to situations where there was never any life in the first place because it means coming back to life. Dead bodies were once alive and they can be revived by God. Long-gone dreams can be restored and revitalized. Long-neglected truth and obedience can come back into circulation.

Apathy and inattention can be reanimated. Faith and commitment that have been on life support can be reinstated and energized.

In the historic church, revival means that new life surges into the body of Christ. Faith is renewed and joy springs up. With the prompting of the Holy Spirit, people begin to work together again as a body. Everything seems fresh and exciting. Emotions run high.

You can't expect to have a revival without emotion.

Emotions animate people. Thus when God sends revival to reanimate the church, people will express their joy – or their alarm, if they don't happen to like what they see. Either way, when revival hits, no longer can they remain the “frozen chosen”!

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The people of God invite Him to come and bring revival, regardless of what that may look like. Revival of life can become messy, just as life itself is messy. With the psalmist, people ask the Holy Spirit to come and clean house. “Revive us again!” they cry out:

“Restore us, O God of our salvation, and cause Your anger toward us to cease. Will You be angry with us forever? Will You prolong Your anger to all generations? Will You not revive us again, that Your people may rejoice in You?” (Ps. 85:4–6, NKJV).

They are praying, “Pull out the stops, Lord! Shake us and purify us and terrify us and carry us with You into battle! Have mercy on Your people. We need You desperately!”

“Oh, that You would rend the heavens! That You would come down! That the mountains might shake at Your presence—as fire burns brushwood, as fire causes water to boil—to make Your name known to Your adversaries, that the nations may tremble at Your presence! When You did awesome things for which we did not look, You came down, the mountains shook at Your presence. For since the beginning of the world men have not heard nor perceived by the ear, nor has the eye seen any God besides You, who acts for the one who waits for Him” (Isa. 64:1–4, NKJV).

“Lord, I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, Lord. Repeat them in our day, in our time make them known; in wrath remember mercy” (Hab. 3:2, NIV).

Such prayers have always worked. In both the Old and the New Testaments, testimony of God's faithfulness follows closely after the plea for revival:

"If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land" (2 Chron. 7:14, NIV).

"Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that he may send the Messiah, who has been appointed for you—even Jesus" (Acts 3:19–20, NIV).

These verses, along with many others, have been prayed throughout generations as the "forerunners" intercede for revival.

Their prayers go ahead of revival, breaking open a territory for God. Conviction falls on people as they become aware of their sinful, hopeless conditions and their urgent needs to "get right with God."

How can the vast chasm be bridged between an all-righteous God and corrupted, selfish men and women? Only by the conviction and subsequent action of the Holy Spirit who brings the kingdom of God to earth and, with it, renewed life.

On what important transaction does revival depend? Repentance, which follows the conviction of sin.

God's people, whether individually or corporately, cannot be revived unless they abandon their death-dealing attachments to sin. Once the Holy Spirit brings conviction and they respond wholeheartedly, then revival can be planted and new growth can flourish.

Revival comes in response to hunger for God and for holiness.

Are you hungry for revival? Then allow the Holy Spirit to do

His deep, abiding work in you and respond to His conviction in true repentance.

He will surely come!

Prayer of a Passionate Heart

“Father, I come to You in the fear of the Lord. I receive Your Word that tells me, ‘Be holy, for I am holy.’ I ask You, Holy Spirit, to point out to me the hard places in my heart. Send a revival into my life, my family’s life, my church, my community and my nation. Convict me and all of Your chosen people. Convict us of sin, righteousness and the judgment to come. Cleanse me from sin. Draw me nearer to You. I want to live my life in a way that is pleasing to You. So I ask that You would send Your powerful Spirit of conviction upon me and upon those I pray for. Manifest Your holiness and bring me to Yourself. In Jesus’ perfect name, amen.” {eoa}

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