

Matt Chandler Exposes the Lie That Stops Many Christians From Believing for Revival

Matt Chandler, pastor of The Village Church, says the church needs to stop falling for the lie of Christianity's decline and instead pursue revival. Chandler recently returned from a summer sabbatical and said in his August 25 sermon he'd been thinking about the importance of "fire and form" for the church. He says he was inspired by Australian pastor Mark Sayers, who said if the church was going to be renewed, if it was going to be revitalized, if it was going to see revival, it would need "fire and form."

"God can move in our day with such radical power that things many of us believe are lost can be renewed, revived and reformed," Chandler says. "Now this is hard for many of us to believe. I know that because of how quiet you were when I said it."

But Chandler says to understand the concept of revival, we must first dismiss the lie that Christianity linearly grew, was universally popular in years past, and is now suddenly on the decline.

"There's this idea that there was this time in human history where everybody went to church, everybody believed in Jesus, everybody knew their Bible, and everybody was glad to be a Christian," Chandler says. "Now look at me: That's never happened ever. Ever. So when you believe that lie—and in America, that kind of works like, 'All our founding fathers were Christians, they all loved Jesus Christ,' and that's just not true. Some of them did. Absolutely. Certainly there was a shared moral vision, but most of them were theists. Gosh, one of them cut up the Bible and made his own Bible, right? So you

can't be like, 'Our founding fathers loved the Lord' when one of them took some scissors to the Bible."

Instead, Chandler says, both the Bible and church history show that faith has consistently ebbed and flowed. That's where the concept of revival comes in—the moments when the Spirit suddenly surged and revitalizes a church desperately seeking the Lord. Chandler lists the Great Awakening, the Azusa Street Revival and the Jesus Movement as recent examples of this phenomenon in the U.S.

"If you think there was this day in American where everybody loved Jesus and loved the Word of God and followed after Him, then you're looking at what appears to be the decline of Christianity in our day and age," Chandler says. "And you're like, 'Oh my gosh, all is lost. We're seeing the death of the Christian faith.' ... It never works that way. It's not a straight line in the Bible as well as in Christian history. There is an ebb and flow to the power and presence of God."

Chandler points to 2 Chronicles 7:14 as a useful guide regarding what triggers 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 will forgive their sin and will heal their land."

"Here's what's funny about that," Chandler says. "The key to renewal and revival has nothing to do with things outside of the church. It has everything to do with what's inside of the church. ... So if you are outraged by politics, if you are outraged by this and that, then really, I think, you've placed your hope on the wrong thing. Like regardless of who runs 2020, Christ is the King, and if you put your hope there, you're going to get angry. ... What terrible, fragile things to put your hope in. Nations have come and nations have gone, but Christ has remained constant."

Chandler then lists Holy Spirit manifestations like being

slain in the spirit as an example of revival fire falling. It's a continuation of his comments from 2017, when the Baptist megachurch pastor said he disagreed with cessationists and declared that signs and wonders are for today.

"This passage is saying if you want a movement of God—it's not that God's not moving, right?" Chandler says. "He's moving. There's never been a moment in human history where God's not saving and setting free and breaking spiritual bondage and calling unto Himself. That's not what we're talking about here. ... This movement I'm trying to highlight is like when the cup can't hold the water. Are you tracking with me? Like when you have to rethink everything because the Holy Spirit blows the walls out. ... Renewal [and] revival is when you're like, 'We've got to rent the CAC and just baptize 400 people at a time because wow. People are confessing and getting slain in the Spirit out in the parking lot and coming clean with their sin and disorder, and the Spirit of God is doing things that are rocking everybody's imagination. It's confusing. It's weird. It's wild. But I know you can see the fruit of the Spirit in it.'"

Watch the full sermon [here](#).