

# From Ruin to Revival

by Alan Cairns

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of humility, prayer, and repentance in order to bring us from ruin into revival, as promised in 2 Chronicles 7.*

**Duration:** 54:39

**Scripture:** 1 Kings 8:35, 2 Chronicles 6:29, 2 Chronicles 7:13-14, Psalm 51:17, Joel 2:12-13, Matthew 6:33

**Topics:** "Revival"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the need for repentance and prayer in order to receive God's blessings and restoration. He describes a dire situation, comparing it to a drought in the Middle East, and urges the congregation to understand the significance of God's promise to relieve their backsliding and revive them. The preacher references biblical examples, such as the deliverance of the nation of Israel from exile in Babylon, to illustrate how God has fulfilled this promise in the past. He concludes by urging the congregation to humble themselves, pray, seek God's face, and turn from their wicked ways, in order to experience God's forgiveness, healing, and revival.

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## Transcript

Returning to God's Word this morning in the second book of Chronicles, chapter 7. Second Chronicles, chapter 7, and we're going to read together just a few verses. Verses 1 and 2. And then verse 12 to 16. Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord, and the priests could not enter into the house of the Lord because the glory of the Lord had filled the Lord's house.

Verse 12. And the Lord appeared to Solomon by night and said unto him, I have heard thy prayer and have chosen this place to myself for a house of sacrifice. If I shut up heaven, that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people, if my people which are called by my name shall humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attempt unto the prayer that is made in this place. For now have I chosen and sanctified this house, that my name may be there forever, and mine eyes and my heart shall be there perpetually. Amen.

And then the Lord will add His own blessing to this passage from His own precious Word for His name's sake. I want this morning to direct your attention to two of the most famous verses in Scripture. 2 Chronicles 7, 13 and 14.

If I shut up heaven, that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people, then especially the words of this great fourteenth verse, if my people which are called by my name shall humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land. There was high excitement in the city of Jerusalem when at last the temple of God was ready for use. Solomon, the richest of all the kings of Israel and Judah, employed all his wealth to ensure that the dedication of the house of the Lord exhibited all the splendor and all the beauty that the temple of God deserved.

No temple had ever been built so perfectly, so carefully, under such divine direction, and no temple had ever exhibited, therefore, all the features of glory and beauty that the temple of the Lord in the reign of Solomon exhibited in Jerusalem. Its new stone shone brightly under the eastern sun. Its brazen doors dazzled the eye of the beholder as the sunlight reflected off it.

The gold and the gems for which Solomon and the whole nation in his day was famous, those gold and gems garnished the whole place so that wherever you went in that temple, it was a witness to the majesty and to the glory of the God in whose name and for whose worship Solomon had erected it. The priests offered sacrifices of sheep and oxen without number. The Lord filled the house with the pillar of cloud that was the emblem of His special presence.

And then the king ascended a special platform. Falling upon his knees and lifting his hands to heaven, he led his people in prayer. Let me just stop off for a moment and say that happy indeed is the people whose leader knows the God of heaven, whose leader in every day of crisis as well as in every day of great triumph can come out before the nation and not simply pay lip service to religion.

Not use religion as some sort of a political vote getter or ploy, but can earnestly and honestly, powerfully and effectively lead his people to the throne of grace in prayer. That's how it was with Solomon. What a prayer it was that Solomon prayed.

I would commend to your attention the sixth chapter of 2 Chronicles. If you would learn to pray, here is a prayer that in many ways is a model. If you would learn to do business with God, then here is an insight into how you may do real and lasting, important business with God, worshipping the Lord as the faithful covenant God of Israel, praising Him for the fulfillment of His promise in David, his father, and now in his son.

Solomon pleaded, not with so many words merely, but with a heart that was earnestly yearning for the things that his words expressed. Solomon pleaded that the Lord would look with special grace upon this temple that he had built, and that he would particularly open his eyes to the people who worshipped there, and open his ears to the prayers that were offered there under all sorts of circumstances so that whenever God's people came to pray either in or toward this temple, God in heaven would hear and answer prayer. Very particularly and with prophetic insight, Solomon prayed in verse 26 of chapter 6, when heaven is shut up and there is no rain, and you must understand in the climate of the Middle East, he is describing a disaster in proportions that we Westerners could hardly really get into our hearts and heads.

We have a drought here for a month or two, three or four months. In South Carolina, we for a few years there had little rainfall, and here and there water was being shut off. We had terrible, terrible difficulties.

You couldn't water your lawn. You couldn't wash your car in certain places. That's not what Solomon was talking about.

He wasn't really worried merely about the chariot wheels. He was worried about deeper things there. The heaven shut up meant death on a grand scale.

So he says, when heaven is shut up and there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee, yet if they pray toward this place and confess thy name and turn from their sin when thou dost afflict them, then hear thou from heaven and forgive the sin of thy servants and of thy people Israel, when thou hast taught them the good way wherein they should walk, and send rain upon thy land which thou hast given unto thy people for an inheritance. If there be dearth in the land, if there be pestilence, if there be blasting or mildew or locusts or caterpillars, if their enemy besieged them in the cities of their land, whatsoever sore or whatsoever sickness there be, then what prayer or what supplication soever shall be made of any man or of all thy people Israel, when every one shall know his own sore and his own grief and shall spread forth his hands toward this house, then hear thou from heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive and render unto every man according to all his ways, whose heart thou know'st, for thou only know'st the hearts of the children of men, that they may fear thee to walk in thy ways so long as they live in the land which thou gavest unto our fathers." A great prayer with a great response. Immediately the king had ceased praying.

The fire of God fell from heaven upon the sacrifices that were upon the altar. And then the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord to such an extent that the very priests of God could not stand to minister in the newly consecrated temple. At the end of all this great feast, the people went home, happy in their heart that God, the God of their fathers, had visited His people.

And Solomon also went home. And then, for the second time in his brief reign, the God of heaven appeared to him by night. You remember the first time was at Gibeon, when as a very young king he cried to God for mercy in giving him wisdom.

At Gibeon, God promised him wisdom and wealth and a long life. Now he appears to him the second time after the dedication of the temple. And he says, verse 12 of chapter 7, I have heard thy prayer.

And he condenses the answer into these glorious words, If I shut up heaven, that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people, here is my promise. If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, I will forgive their sins and I will heal their land. That was a promise indeed, a glorious promise for Solomon's day.

But it was a promise that the children of Israel were going to need to rely upon again and again in the days to come. And it's a promise that has always been one with a sweet attraction for the whole church of Christ. Many, many, many are the times when we feel our own need to come to 2 Chronicles 7 and 14 and lay hold of the promise of God in these words.

Lift them up to the Lord and obtain from Him the fulfillment of His promise. You see, Solomon's God is our God. Solomon's temple is a glorious type of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is God's final tabernacle among men.

Solomon himself upon that raised platform, lifting up his hands to heaven, reminds us of our greater King, who is on high interceding for all his people. Solomon's land and nation and people are the spiritual counterparts of the church of Christ, as that church serves Him in every nation of this world. And thus, the Lord's promise to Solomon is His promise to Christ and through Christ to His people.

For us in our day, this promise then has a very wonderful, real, personal, spiritual application. And I want you to watch it very carefully, because it is something that every one of us, and we together as a church, desperately need to feel fulfilled in our experience in these days. The Lord promises to relieve the blight of backsliding, and to restore and revive His people when they truly turn to Him in repentance.

Now let's get that, if you remember little or nothing else of what I say today. Learn the import of this promise for the church of Christ today. The Lord promises to relieve the blight caused by our backsliding, and to restore and revive His people if and when they truly turn to Him in repentance.

When you read the page of Scripture and the page of history, you discover that the Lord has done this very thing again and again. He delivered this nation of Israel from their exile in Babylon. When they were in Babylon, they hung their harps upon the willows.

They sat down mourning and weeping, defeated because they were in bondage. But then came the fulfillment of the promise. When Daniel, the man of God, understood by the prophecy of Jeremiah, the promise of God that he would revive and restore his people, Daniel set his face to pray, and God heard that man's prayer, and he went back to this promise.

My people, called by my name, have humbled themselves. They have prayed. They have sought my face.

I will hear their prayer. And God restored Israel under Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah, to the land of promise and the land of blessing. He did it again in the days of John the Baptist.

To some extent, at least. He certainly did it again in many lives. In the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, he did it again in many places through the ministry of the apostles.

In church history, we find that after a thousand years of the most abysmal and satanic darkness upon the earth, when Christendom had become more like hell than heaven, when superstition had replaced true religion, when God was unknown and Christ was unpreached, and the gospel was buried under all the rites and ceremonies of a godless papacy, then God heard the prayer of some who knew Him. And God sent a wave of blessing that we call the great Protestant Reformation. What it was, was God fulfilling 2 Chronicles 7 and 14.

And indeed, it's not at all coincidental that one of Luther's great works was on the Babylonian captivity of the church, a captivity from which he saw a great portion of that church relieved and brought back. In the great evangelical awakenings of the church in Britain and in America and in many other parts of the earth, God fulfilled this promise when His people sought His face in true repentance. He's still willing to do the same today.

There is a message of hope for every individual backslider, just as there's a message of gospel grace for every individual sinner. There is a message of restoration and revival for every church that wants to do business with God. In other words, if we are not blessed, it is not because there is no blessing available.

It is because of sin that keeps us even from desiring it. Let's carefully then look to this text of Scripture and note the Lord's terms for bringing us from ruin into revival. There is a divine order in the text, and this will set forth the Lord's terms.

You'll notice the order is the humbling of God's people. If my people which are called by my name will humble themselves and pray, there is the humbling of God's people. Then there is the hearing of their prayers.

And then finally, there is the healing of their plague. Now, those three things are in a specifically ordained divine order. I feel that very often, just as sinners want salvation without repentance, they want Christ while they're still holding on to the world, they want heaven while they still walk the road to hell, and we know that's impossible.

We are quick to tell the unconverted man, you must repent and be converted. And if you repent not, you'll all likewise perish. Oh, we're quick to tell the sinner, repentance, the humbling of the heart to receive Christ and Christ's own terms is the way into life.

And of course, that's right. We'd be lying if we were to tell a sinner anything else. But even after our eagerness to tell the sinner that, how many Christians want the hearing of their prayers before the humbling of their heart, and they want the healing of their plague even before the making of their prayers.

There is a divine order here. Let us look at it very carefully. First, the text speaks of the humbling of God's people.

If my people which are called by my name shall humble themselves and pray and seek my face. There's the first great condition, term of blessing, the humbling of God's people. Now, as I read this text in its context, there are two things about which Christians need to be humbled.

One, they need to be humbled because of the condition of the land. And two, they need to be humbled because of the condition of their heart. That's what this text makes clear.

When I talk about the land now, I'm not merely talking about America. You could well indeed be humbled because of the state of affairs in America today. Anybody who can look out on this great nation with equanimity and feel no pang of heart because of what's happening in this land is either blind or dumb, mentally dumb.

There's much that would need to humble us about the nation. But the spiritual counterpart of the nation of Israel is not the nation of America. The spiritual counterpart of the nation of Israel is the church of Jesus Christ.

And when I talk about being humbled because of the condition of the land, it is not the political or economic or social condition of America that I'm talking about. It is the spiritual condition of the church of Jesus Christ. We would do well to be humbled because of the condition of the church.

You look at the text in its context, and you'll find that God had shut up heaven. There's dirt. The heavens shut up.

No rain, no refreshing, no sign of the present blessing. As rain is necessary for growth upon the land, so the heavens open, they're necessary for growth among God's people. There is no germination of the seed.

There is no sign of new life. When you look across the church of Christ today, there is a great dirt here in this nation. Men are doing their best to cover it up.

They're doing their best. It's like people going out into a desert land where there are no flowers, and they're planting plastic flowers. It may make it look a little better, but it doesn't change anything.

That's the situation today on a broad scale. Now, here and there, thank God, there are people and places in blessing. But there is a great dirt across the land that has turned the present land into a wilderness.

What we have described in this dirt is the very reversal of the blessing of Pentecost. What happened in Pentecost? The heavens were opened. The blessing of God came down.

The Holy Spirit fell upon the church in all its fullness. What is described here is the opposite. It is the removal of the gracious presence of the Spirit.

It is the obscuring of the Spirit's power. It is the hiding of the hand of God, not the manifestation of it. There is a dirt that has reversed our blessings into curses.

Then there's a desolation, the locusts devouring the land. You know, in the natural realm, there is still, even with all man's advanced technology, there is no human answer to the plague of locusts. In countries like in the African continent to this day, an entire economy can be wiped out overnight as that plague of locusts just spreads across the land and they leave nothing, absolutely nothing in their trail but desolation.

By the time the airplanes come out and all the other modern gadgets that men have to kill them off, they have been and they have gone. Desolation. The land stripped.

I remember that while the locusts, speaking of Solomon's land, were literal, they have a spiritual significance. The book of the Revelation may speak of them literally, it may speak of them spiritually, it may speak of them as both. But certainly there is the typical meaning that they are the armies of hell that spread across the spiritual landscape, stripping it, devouring it, the enemy flourishing while the cause of God's church lies in desolation.

There is death, there is desolation, and then there is disease, pestilence among the people. Pestilence among Christians. Disease.

It's a sad thing to consider sometimes how far Christians can fall, how unclean they can become. The pestilence of moral impurity. It's at epidemic proportions even in the professing church today.

The pestilence of worldliness. Now I want to be very, very clear. We've got to be honest with ourselves.

If you wash yourself every day in the open sewer of this world's moral filth, you can be absolutely certain that pestilence is going to be upon you. No health, a spreading plague. Remember that the promise of the Lord to Israel when they entered into the promised land was that I will lay none of these diseases upon you.

That was his promise. In that physical land there was physical health. God had said that there would be none that would cast its young.

There would be no spontaneous abortion among the human or the beast population. What a miracle. Said all these plagues, these pestilences, these diseases that are in the nations round about, I will lay none of

these diseases upon the nation of Israel.

So long as they walk with God, they'll be a people who are holy and they'll be a people who are healthy. They were God's earthly people in God's earthly land. There is a spiritual counterpart.

It is possible for this church to be different from every other church if every other church were to go into apostasy and the plague of wickedness and impurity. We can still be different. We don't have to go the same way.

It's possible for you to be different. The promise is none of these diseases, none of these pestilences, none of this mark of spiritual and moral impurity and wickedness. I'll keep you from it.

But, oh how we need to be humbled because of sin. That barrier has been breached. How often have we quoted the man who said, I looked for the church and found it in the world, and I looked for the world and I found it in the church.

You find wickedness of unmentionable proportions, dearth, desolation, disease. We need to be humbled because of the state of the church. Now let's bring it right down to the local church.

We need to be humbled because of the state of our own church. It's always easy to talk about the church, great worldwide amorphous conglomeration of people. It doesn't really get to touch our own particular consciences.

Oh how we need to think of our own church. Where are we spiritually as a church? Where are we when it comes to knowing the blessing of heaven, the refreshing, the growth, the life, the power, the victory of God the Holy Spirit? Where are we when it comes to being a separated people who are different in an age of pestilential impurity? We are different in kind and different in life. How we need as we think this church and many others like it with all the potential in the world and yet nowhere with God.

We need to be humbled for the condition of the church. But we need to be humbled because of the condition of our own heart. In chapter 629 Solomon said, When every one shall know his own sore, the writer of the Kings used the word plague.

Know the plague of his own heart. You see, it's not only the sins of others that have plagued the church. It's our sins.

You remember the prophecy of Joel in chapter 2 verses 12 and 13. He says, Therefore also now saith the Lord, Turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting and weeping and mourning, and rend your heart and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God. Don't go through the motions.

Don't go through an act. Don't try to fob God off with a little bit of Hollywood or Broadway. No, come with a heart that is really seeking the Lord because you've got to see the plague of your own heart.

Now, what is the plague of our heart? What's our own sore? Well, you know your heart today. And if you don't, if you go before God, He'll soon make you know it. But generally, I can think of this.

This has been true of Israel. It's true of the church. We tend to be unmindful of the Lord's blessings.

We take the past for granted. Then we have little esteem at the moment for the blessing of God. Here's the hypocrisy that so often marks the church of Christ and you and me in particular.

We look back and we talk about the blessing of God and the life of Abraham, and the life of Jacob, and the life of David, and the life of Solomon, the days of the apostles. We talk about Jonathan Edwards, and we talk about Whitefield and Wesley, and Spurgeon and Moody. What a blessing it is to talk about the blessing of God in their lives.

But we show peculiarly little interest in having the same blessing of God in our own lives. We pursue other things as we ought to pursue that one thing that is needful. We put the energy, and the time, and the effort, and the talent, and the ability that God has given us, we put it into lesser things.

I tell you it's grieving to God for a people with their lips to talk about the supreme glory of God's blessing, and yet to relegate it to a place of practical unimportance. The truth is we're just as spiritual, or should I say as little spiritual as we can get away with. The truth is that if we can get by without prayer, we get by without prayer.

If we can get by with as little praying as possible, we get by with as little praying as possible. We have an external religion. We do this, and this, and this, and then we say to God, we hope you're satisfied.

That's the reality of the situation. Oh, how we need to be humbled for the state of the church, for the part that we have played in bringing it there, the state of our own heart. There's got to be a humbling of God's people, and then there'll be the hearing of their prayer.

You see, prayer must be made. It always comes back to this, you know. Doesn't matter what's happening in the church, ultimately the answer's going to be on our knees.

Now, we all pay lip service to that. We all believe it. But the hardest thing in the world to do for you and for me is to develop a real, and a consistent, and a biblical, and an effective, and a relevant prayer line.

And we know it. Yet the answer is always going to start on our knees. The answer's not in a book.

Now, the book might drive you to your knees. But you can read all the authors in creation. The answer's not in those authors.

It's not in their experiences. Do you ever notice what happens in the church when it's not in revival? There are more lectures in revival. There's more histories of revival.

You find that there is a dissecting of what God has done in the past to bring revival. But all that tells me is that we haven't a clue about revival. That's all it tells me.

The answer is not in looking back to what happened to Whitefield and how Whitefield preached. I believe he was one of the greatest preachers the world has ever seen. I believe that only God now knows how great a preacher he was.

As he said to the people who were taking it down in writing, you can't put thunder and lightning on paper. But even if we could get the great shermans of Whitefield, we wouldn't have the key to revival. The key to God's answer to England's ills and America's ills in those days was in the secret place of prayer where men really made their prayers unto God.

That's where it happened. That's the start of prayer. Prayer must be made.

Prayer was made in Acts 12 of the church unto God for fear. Not just said, mind you, but made. Not just recited, but agonized over.

And then it must be made toward the temple. Solomon says if they pray toward this place, that temple, as John Bunyan so graphically pointed out in his series of messages on the subject, is a type of Christ. We must learn afresh to plead the merit of Christ.

We must learn afresh in prayer that it's not just the words, it's not just the tears, it's not just the emotion, it is the ability to plead the merit of Christ. True prayer directs God the Father, look on the man at thy right hand. For his sake answer prayer.

We have God's promise here. He says, my eyes shall be opened, my ears attend unto the prayer that's made in this place. I have chosen and sanctified this house.

Jesus is the one whom the Father has sanctified. He is the one in whom God meets with us and through whom God blesses us. Therefore, prayer must be made, but it must be made toward the temple.

It must be made on the merits of Christ. And it must be made with an earnest seeking of the face of God. Notice this, if my people which are called by my name shall humble themselves and pray and seek my face.

There's no redundancy of words there. Praying, but he goes further into the depths and meaning of real prayer. It is a seeking of God's face.

We come to the place, if we're ever going to be blessed of God, where we say, I must see the beauty of God in the face of Christ. Lord, show me thy glory. I can't live without the sight of Christ.

I can't live without the smile of God. I must walk in the sunlight of thy countenance. Lord, I seek thy face.

In other words, he must become our chief delight. But how little do we know of that. Remember, the Lord put a proposition to Moses.

I think it was really a deep trial of Moses' faith. The Lord was grieved with the sin of Israel. And he said to Moses, I will not go up with them, but I'll let you lead them all and they will have victory.

But I will not be there. You think of that. I'll give you the land.

I'll give you the milk and the honey. I'll give you the great fullness of that land. I'll give you military and political and economic might.

But I will not be there. How many of us would settle for that? How many churches are settling for it? How many Christians are settling for a lot less? Moses said, accept thy presence. Go up with us.

Carry us not up hence. Lord, we could be the richest people on earth. It doesn't mean a thing if we haven't the sight of Christ.

We could be the most populous people on earth. We could be the most revered people on earth. We could have success stamped on every step that we take.

But accept thy presence. Go up with us. Carry us not up hence.

We must seek the Lord so that He becomes our chief delight and our chief desire. And of course, this praying must be with a spirit of true repentance. Turn from their wicked ways.

You can't pray while holding on to the things of self and sin, the world and the devil. The psalmist said, if I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. If I make an idol of sin in my heart and I can't approach the throne of God, while I am thrown sin, the way to the throne is cut off, God will not hear me.

Nothing closes the ear of God against your prayer more than your sin. So if my people which are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, turn from them, here's the promise. Then will I hear from heaven.

I love the emphasis there. Solomon had prayed, hear thou in heaven, hear thou in heaven, thy dwelling place. Now the Lord says, I will hear in heaven.

There's nothing that happens on earth that's too difficult for the God who dwells in heaven. There's no circumstance of life that's beyond the power of the God of heaven. There's nothing on earth can stop him when once he starts to move and work for his people.

And what he's saying is this, forget about the armies that are against you. Forget about the powers that stand in your way. Forget about the impossibilities that block your progress.

If you will get right with God, he says, I will hear from heaven. And let all the devils rage as they will, they'll not stop me. Let all the conglomerate force of the enemy get together, yet they will not stop me.

I'll hear from heaven. Oh, what a thing when heaven hears the voice of earth and moves on earth with the power of glory. There's the humbling of God's people.

There's the hearing of their prayer. And then finally, there's the healing of their plague. It starts with cleansing from sin.

I will hear from heaven. And what will I do? I'll forgive their sin. You know, we need this individually.

You stand today before God. And I tell you, there's not one of us that doesn't need the cleansing that the Lord alone can impart. If you're in this meeting this morning without Jesus Christ, the first thing you need is the application of his precious blood.

You need to be cleansed from sin. You need to be washed truly from your iniquity. If you're in this meeting today as a backslider, you've lost out with God.

You've got enmeshed in things that are detrimental to you and to your testimony. And they bring dishonor to Christ. What do you need? You need the cleansing of the precious blood of the Lamb.

If you're a Christian today and you're seeking to walk in a world that's soiled and soiling, you need the cleansing of the blood of Christ. This church as it views its spiritual impotence, it needs the cleansing of the blood of Christ. We can't be blessed until we're clean.

Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart. We can't be blessed until we're clean. For this cleansing brings us into renewed communion with our Lord.

So you heal the plague of sin with forgiveness. But then he'll heal the blight. He'll reverse the blight.

He says, I will heal their land. The heavens will be opened. The rain will come.

And all the blessing of God will be poured out upon us. Fruit brought forth. Remember what Joel said in Joel 2 and 25.

Here he's giving the Word of Jehovah. I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten. It's one of the most glorious promises of Scripture.

Only God can do that. Think of the time that's been wasted. Some of us today can look back in years that have been like a wilderness.

The locust has eaten. What have we got to show for those years? Anything. I don't think we need to be unduly morbid.

But I think we do need to be honest. If you can look back over the years that have gone and there's nothing to show. Nothing in which God can be honored and glorified.

Or very, very little. Let me tell you, the locusts have been eating. But the Lord says, I can not only forgive the sin that caused it.

I can reverse the blight. I will restore to you the years that the locusts have eaten. I'll heal the land.

You'll bring forth fruit. The reign of heaven will be upon you. There will be the germination of new seed.

There will be the production of new life. There will be the flourishing of revival, grace, and power. I'll not only forgive and forget the past.

I'll undo the past. And I'll make the present and the future so blessed, so fruitful, so useful. That the blight of the past will be just hardly a memory.

I restore the years that the locusts have eaten. The devil wants a backslider to think. And he wants a Christian who's just halting on from day to day and week to week.

He wants them to think there's nothing better. He wants a church to think there's nothing better. He can sometimes clothe it in spiritual language.

We're living in the last days. Evil men will wax worse and worse. Just settle back and expect nothing until the Lord comes.

That's putting a spiritual coat on the leprous corpse of sin. Tear the coat away and you'll see what's really inside. The Lord, my friend, says there is something better for you and for me.

For this church. For the whole work of the free church in this nation and in other nations. For every church of God that's willing to be blessed.

He says there is blessing. We've seen our plight. I hope you've begun to feel something of our plague.

But we have reached out for God's promise. Oh, may God enable us today to grasp that promise. For you see, the Lord waits for our penitence and He waits for our prayer.

As we close this meeting this morning, let's ask ourselves one simple question. Do I long enough for the relief of this blight? Do I long enough for restoration and revival? To claim the promise of God? To get on my knees before Him, humble myself, pray, seek His face, and turn from my wicked way and stay there until He proves Himself faithful, fulfills His word, reverses the blight, forgives our sin, and opens the windows of heaven. God's people shall be willing in the day of His power.

We are His people. This is the day of His power. He has not abdicated.

Therefore, with willing hearts, let us come to prove our God. For it is true. He has said it.

If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, will forgive their sin, and will heal their lives. Let's bow our heads in prayer. Let's all pray.

Would you want every head bowed in prayer? Every eye closed? In just one moment, this meeting will be over, and you'll be free to leave and go on your way. I wonder, my friend, where you stand with God today. I wonder, are you here in this meeting without Christ? You've never been washed in the blood of the Lamb.

You're still the old, unregenerate man or woman, unclean, ungodly, unsaved, and unrepentant. I would like to tell you of the love of God in Christ, the grace of God in Christ. You can be forgiven, made a new creature.

Come to the Savior. Don't leave this meeting without calling on Christ. Come and have a word with me.

Let's open the book of God together, and I'll be glad to point you to the Savior. Then, if you're in this meeting, and you are a Christian, but all you've lost out with God, you're far from enjoying the Lord as once you did. There's a way back to God from the dark paths of sin.

There's a door that is open where you may go in. Calvary's cross is where you begin when you come, if I may say in this case, as a backslider to Jesus. Get right with God.

But for this whole church, we can plead this promise today, and the next, and the next, until God opens the windows of heaven, comes down amongst us with power. If I can help you to Christ, sinner or backslider, I invite you to remain as the others leave. Come, let me open the book of God with you, and I'll be glad to point you to the Savior.

Father in heaven, bless thy word to every heart. Write it indelibly upon the fleshy tables of the heart. Lord, we feel the plague of our own heart, the sore of our own soul.

We desire, O Lord, the restoring grace of God, the cleansing power of the precious blood, the sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit. Lord, we long to know that reviving, that healing of the plague of the individual and of the church. O God, send us a breath of revival.

O Lord, wilt thou not open the windows of heaven? Pour us out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to contain it. We cry with Isaiah, O that thou wouldst rend the heavens and come down. Lord, do it today.

Remember the unconverted. Lord, save the lost. Grant that not one young or old will leave this meeting without first coming to the Lord Jesus.

Hear our prayer, O God. Answer our petition and give lasting fruit for the preaching of thy word. Part us with thy blessing and keep us in thy fear.

Be our abiding portion both now and until the Lord Jesus either calls us home or comes again in all his glory. We pray in Jesus' name, amen.

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