

# Six Movements Of Prayer

by Bill Elliff

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*This sermon emphasizes the preparatory work of God for revival and spiritual awakening, focusing on the importance of voices being sent, desperation deepening, repentance being restored, unity building, spiritual activity increasing, and ultimately, the anticipation of Christ coming. The speaker shares personal experiences of revival and highlights the need for humility, prayer, and turning from wicked ways to invite God's presence and revival.*

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**Scripture:** Isaiah 57:15, 2 Chronicles 7:14, Philippians 2:2, 1 Thessalonians 5:19, John 1:29, Revelation 2:4, Luke 3:2

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## Description

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## Transcript

Thank you, Bill. It's yours. All right.

Well, it's a joy to be with you this morning, and I look forward to this whole weekend, but I'm really excited to talk with you about some very important things. We're going to walk through really six movements of prayer this morning, based around six very important things that will hopefully help educate us a little bit more about the ways of God. God has his ways, just like you have your ways, and the ways of God in revival and spiritual awakening, which all of us listening are longing for and praying for, are very distinct.

They're very, in some ways, predictable, because he has moved in certain ways all down through human history. If you see something wonderful in life, there was always something previous, right? I have eight children. They're all married, and we were together with all of them and their grandchildren, 37 of us the last week, and a few of my girls are with child, some one about to deliver in a month.

If you see a brand new baby, you think that's so wonderful, so beautiful, but I want to tell you that mama can tell you there was nine months of previous, right? There was pain and struggle and fatigue and then labor, which is intense, all before that giving of that life. In the same way with physical life, the same is true

with spiritual life, and the same is true with the birth of revival and spiritual awakening. God is always previous.

R.B. Jones was in the Welsh revival. He was a pastor. Twenty years after the revival, some men were trying to debunk the revival, saying it wasn't real, and Jones wrote a book, a beautiful book, called *Rent Heavens*, some of its hidden springs and prominent results.

In that, he made this statement, though every revival ultimately culminates in a form which attracts the attention of all. No revival is of sudden origin. Behind the startling outburst is a process, which sometimes goes on for years, a purifying and preparatory process.

It was so in connection with that of 1904. I was reading recently in Luke 3, and if you have your Bible, I want you to open it there with me, Luke chapter 3, and we're going to read part of it in just a moment, in the story of John the Baptist. As I was reading that one day, I thought, you know, the revival is when God comes with his manifest, his visible, unmistakable, recognizable presence.

In fact, Richard Owen Roberts says, I can summarize revival in one word, God, God coming, God placed back on his rightful place in our hearts, in our churches, in our nation. I realized that the greatest moment of the manifest presence of God we've ever known was the coming of Jesus, right? John was sent to prepare the way, the preparatory work for the manifest presence of God. As I looked in this passage in Luke 3, I saw five or six things, and I began to compare them with what we know historically of revival.

It seems like these things are always present in the preparation of God for revival. I want you to look at this because our job is to cooperate with him, right? Like Henry Black, he used to say, we find out where God is moving, and then we join him. We don't want to be working at cross purposes with God.

Now, look what it says. Let's begin in verse 2. In the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John, the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness. And he came into all the district around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make ready the way of the Lord, make his path straight.

Every ravine will be filled. Every mountain and hill will be brought low. The crooked will become straight, and the rough roads smooth, and all flesh will see the salvation of God.

So it began saying to the crowds who were going out to be baptized, to him, you brood of vipers, I challenge you to start your message that way this Sunday. You brood of vipers, who warn you to flee from the wrath to come. Therefore, bear fruits in keeping with your repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, we have Abraham for our father.

In other words, we're good. For I say to you that from these stones, God is able to raise up children to Abraham. Indeed, the ax is already laid at the root of the trees.

So every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. And the crowds, now listen to this in verse 10, the crowds were questioning him saying, then what shall we do? And he would answer and say to them, the man who has two tunics is to share with him and has none. He who has food is to do likewise.

Some of the tax collectors also came to be baptized and they said to him, teacher, what shall we do? He said to them, collect no more than what you've been ordered. Some soldiers were questioning him saying, and what about us? What shall we do? And he said to them, don't take money from anyone by force or accuse anyone falsely, be content with your wages. Now, while the people were in a state of expectation and all were wondering in their hearts about John as to whether he was Christ, John answered and said to them all, as for me, I baptize you with water, but one is coming who is mightier than I, I am not fit to untie the thong of his sandals.

He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. And then in verse 18, so with many other exhortations, he preached the gospel to the people. Now, I want you to notice with me about six primary things that God did here through John to prepare for revival and awakening.

These are six things we must do and we must cooperate with God. And again, I'll remind you in this next hour, I'm not telling this just to share a message. We're going to pray.

And so these are exhortations to you to get ready to pray. And we'll give you a moment to do that in just a second. The first thing that always happens before revival is, number one, voices are sent.

They asked John who he was. He said, well, I'm just a voice. It says, this account is in all four gospels.

And in John 1, 6, it says, there came a man sent from God, whose name was John. In other words, God sent this man, right? And he had a message. And what was John to do? Well, John 1, 23 says, I am a voice.

The only thing I'm to do is I'm just a voice. I'm just to speak. And you say, well, how did he become a voice? Well, this Luke 3, 2 says, the word of God came to John, the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.

Now, this is what we need in our day, right? We need men that are sent from God who see themselves not as this celebrity or not as I want my name known, but just a voice. And that voice is preparing the way for the manifest presence of God. And it needs to be men who could say, we could say about them, the word of God came to that man.

Now, what did he say? That'd be important to say. Well, his message, if you'll notice in this passage, was a message of repentance. In other words, John was saying something is terribly wrong, and there needs to be a massive spiritual adjustment in your lives.

Secondly, it was a message of judgment. If you don't turn, judgment will come. I was asking Richard Owen Roberts one day, I said, you know, I guess at any moment on a scale of one to 10, when we think of the judgment of God, the remedial judgment, judgment that leads to a remedy versus the final judgment of God, I guess we just gradually move in our sinfulness as nations, and we don't know where we are.

And we could be at a four, we could be at a seven. I asked Brother Roberts, I said, where do you think we are? You've watched it for over 80 years. He said, I believe we're at 9.9. And one of the great indicators of this, God has never allowed a nation to survive that sacrifices children.

He's just never done it because he can't tolerate it, and he shouldn't tolerate it. So there is this message of repentance, a message of judgment, but also with John, and I love this, is a message of hope. One is coming.

He will baptize you with fire and power. He's going to burn up the chaff. So in preparation for the coming of the manifest presence of Christ, he always seems to raise up voices.

Many of you know the story of Evan Roberts, who was a Bible college student, and he knelt at an altar where his friend, Seth Joshua, was preaching and said, Lord, bend me. For months afterwards, God would wake him up at one o'clock in the morning. It was so sacred, he hardly ever talked about it.

And for two to three hours, God would speak his word into this young college student's heart, and he gave him a message. It had four points. He had really one primary sermon that he preached, and a vision of hope that 100,000 people were going to come to Christ in a short period of time, which is what exactly what happened in the Welsh revival.

And one of the fascinating things to me, and I've been a student of revival for almost 50 years, 10 to 15 years ago, you couldn't find many pastors that were talking about revival. You couldn't see many books about revival awakening. Now, every godly pastor I know is saying we've got to have revival.

We must have spiritual awakening that springs out of revival. They're all talking about it. So for the next moment, I'm going to give you just a couple of minutes.

I want you to turn to the one you're with, if there's somebody there. If not, just pray out loud right where you are. And I wonder if you would pray that God would raise up voices, that he would raise up voices, that the voices would be strong, that they would have the word of God, that message of repentance and judgment, but also hope would be given.

And I want you to pray for voices that you know, men that you know that God is using. I want to invite you to pray for your pastor. So for the next moment, I'm just going to give you a minute or so.

Would you pray right now for voices that would prepare the way for the coming of Christ? Let's pray. Father, how we desperately need men sent from God with a word from God. And I pray, Father, for bold, unashamed words, preaching, teaching.

I pray that not only for our pastors and our pulpits, Father, I pray that for every man and woman that names the name of Christ, that we wouldn't be a silent majority, Lord, that we would speak the word of God with boldness and prepare the way for the Lord in your name. Amen. So first of all, God raises up voices, but secondly, we see in this passage that desperation deepens and a cry begins to erupt from true believers.

It's interesting. And from those apart from God, it's interesting in Luke 3, note that I've never seen this until not too long ago in Luke 3, look in verse 10, the crowds were questioning him saying, what shall we do? And then in verse 12, the tax collectors came and said, teacher, what shall we do? And even the soldiers came and were saying, and what about us? What shall we do? Now, I don't know about you, but during the last couple of years, have you heard that question from people? I don't know what we're going to do. Things are getting so dark.

Things are going down during COVID. Oh my goodness. What shall we do? I've never seen so many as a pastor and friend to many pastors in my life now at my stage of life.

In the spring, I never saw so many pastors that were just confused. Our normal means are gone. We think we can't really minister, which is never true.

It wasn't true and it's not true right now in Iran. It's not true in the persecuted places of China. The gospel is still going forward, but it took us back.

It kind of, as my granddad would say, discombobulated us. And we said, what shall we do? And I think we look at our nation and we've tried this approach and this approach and this approach. None of those things are turning our nation fully.

And we cry out, what shall we do? And this leads to desperation. I am a leader in a movement called One Cry, which is a nationwide call for spiritual awakening. And one of the things we've noticed as we have studied this and written about it is there's a cycle, you know this cycle if you study the Bible much, that God's people walk with him and then we always fall away.

There's always that Revelation 2 moment where we lose our first love. And when we do, God brings discipline or judgment. Now, this is a wonderful thing because without that, we just go on our way farther and farther.

But judgment, I've often said, is like pain to the human body. You put your hand on a hot stove, you realize I've got to get it, I've got to make an adjustment or I'm going to be in trouble. That's a good thing that God has put in the human body.

The judgment of God comes to us saying something is wrong. You have walked away from me. And when the judgment becomes intense enough, there's a little phrase that's found all through the scripture at the bottom of that cycle, we could say, and it says something like this, and all the people cried out.

Now, cry is used, that word is used very specifically in the scripture, different from the word supplication or the word intercession or the word prayer. You see, a cry indicates I don't know what to do. And Lord, I am turning to you in desperation.

And so when we get to that place of desperation, God is moving us back to himself and to the revival and awakening that we desperately need. So we begin to cry out. So I'm going to ask you in prayer right now, just for a few moments, I'm going to ask you to cry out to God.

Now, listen, I often help people with this, this way. If you had a daughter and she was a wonderful daughter, and I said, would you pray for your daughter? And you'd pray, Lord, help my daughter, help her to do well in school, help her one day to find a good godly husband. Those are great prayers.

I'll pray that every day. But let's say your daughter went on a mission trip. And if you'll excuse the intensity of this illustration, and she was abducted by terrorists.

We heard in the Republican convention just a few nights ago, the story of a couple whose daughter, this is exactly what happened to her. And let's say that you heard that she was raped and abused over and over and over again. And then I ask you, would you stand up and pray for your daughter? How would you pray? Well, it would not be a nice little Sunday school prayer.

You would cry out in desperation. And I don't think we understand how, what's happening to the bride of Christ in our nation right now, and what's about to happen if we don't see revival and awakening. So for just a moment, I'm going to ask you to really cry out to the Lord.

We're in a prayer meeting. This is a solemn assembly today. It's not for you just to hear some messages.

It's for you to participate with God. And the one thing that he says will move his heart. So right now, I'm just going to pause for a moment.

And I'm going to ask you to just cry out for the revival in the church and the spiritual awakening among the lost that we so desperately need. Are you ready? Let's cry out. Father, we thank you that you are bringing us to desperation.

Lord, I even thank you for your sovereign purposes in the COVID crisis. Lord, you've stripped us of all of our idols of entertainment and sports and all these other things. You've reduced it to the bare minimum.

You've quarantined us in our homes, getting back to time with our families. Lord, you are bringing us to the end of ourselves. And I pray, Father, you wouldn't stop until it has its intended purpose, Lord, to bring us to desperation, to cry out for the one thing, Lord, that we may need more than anything else.

And that's you. Lord, we need you. We don't need a plan.

We don't need, Lord, economic prosperity. Lord, we need God. And we cry out for God.

Lord, please come and send a reviving to your church. Although right now, Lord, we can't see. We don't know what's happening, Lord, among so many because of the inability or unwillingness, whatever, to meet.

Lord, we don't know what all you're doing. But Father, I pray that a great spirit of desperation would happen across our land and that Christians everywhere would be led to cry out for you and for your coming in power to our nation. You've done it before.

And Lord, we ask you to do it again in Jesus' name. Amen. So in this progression revival, voices are sent and desperation grows and a cry starts erupting.

And then third, repentance is restored. In Mark's account in Mark 1 5, it says this, all the country of Judea was going out to him. All the people of Jerusalem, they were being baptized by him in the river, confessing their sins.

Now, we all know our favorite verse about revival, that great promise in 2 Chronicles 7 14. Let me just remind you what it says. If my people will humble themselves and pray and think badly about their sins.

Is that what it says? If my people will humble themselves and pray and talk about the terrible sins of the nation and of Hollywood and of Washington, is that what it says? No, if my people will humble themselves and pray and say it with me, turn from their wicked ways. You see, turning is repentance. Turning means I've been going in one direction and God so convicts me of my sin that I'm willing to turn with no regrets.

Now, we've had repentance with regrets before, right? We get in a service somewhere and God really speaks to our heart and say, Lord, I want to turn from that prevailing sin, that that dogs my steps. And so we make a commitment to turn, but there's a little string going out to that pet sin. And we say, but boy, I really enjoyed that.

It really gives me some satisfaction. And it's a matter of hours, sometimes minutes before we turn back to our sin. What Paul wrote to the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 7 was, I'm praying for repentance with no regrets.

I'll tell you something. Years ago, my mother made me eat liver. She thought we needed a good dose of dried blood every week, I guess.

And I understand it's probably healthy, but I can smell it to this day. I despised it. I would gag.

And when I went to college, I said, I am repenting from liver with no regrets, no regrets. And you know what? I have not eaten one bite of liver because I saw what it was. And when we really see our sin for what it is, what it does to the reputation of Christ, what it means to God, when we look at the one who created us and brought us back at Calvary, and we just spit in his face and say, I'm going to do it anyway.

When we see what sin really is, we repent with no regrets. And I'm going to ask you a very important question. We quote this verse, 2 Chronicles 7, 14, a lot.

Are you turning? Is there a greater level of repentance in you this year than last year? Are you having such a profound change of mind about things that once were valuable to you that are silly and unprofitable and sinful that you are willing to forsake them and go in the other direction? I want to do something in prayer for us for just a moment. I want to read just a list I prepared one time years ago of sins. And I want to ask you right now to bow your head and close your eyes wherever you're watching.

And if any of these speak to your condition, I want you to just acknowledge it before God. Lord, that's me. Are you ready? It's a long list.

Are you ever guilty of pride? Just tell the Lord, yes, Lord, that's me. Are you ever guilty of bragging, of making sure you're known, of taking credit for success? Do you love human praise? Do you have a secret fondness to be noticed or a love of supremacy or love of reputation or desire to achieve regardless of the methods? Do you draw attention to yourself in conversations? Do you make sure that it all gets turned back to you? Are you ever aware in your life of anger, of impatience, of a touchy, sensitive, defensive spirit? How about resentment and retaliation when you're disapproved of or contradicted or sharp, harsh words, rudeness, sarcasm, a stubborn, unteachable spirit? Do you have an arguing, talkative spirit? Are you contentious or an unyielding, headstrong disposition, a driving, commanding spirit, a desire to control most circumstances and people, a drive to win every argument, to always be right or come out on top? How about inflexibility, things have to go your way, unapproachableness, resenting or resisting the authorities God has placed in your life, in the home, at work, at church, resisting or rebelling against God's providence or ways as he seeks to develop your life? Do you have a desire to criticize and pick flaws, particularly when you're set aside and unnoticed? How about this sin, gossip, criticism, focusing on the failures of others, unkind responses or spreading strife, being envious or jealous of others, withdrawing or ignoring others out of a secret desire to retaliate, lack of real love? Is there anybody in your life, Jesus said love even your enemies, is there anybody that you don't love? You treat people as objects, not as people. We're praying now, we're repenting now.

Are you ever conscious of dishonesty, of lying or exaggeration, evading or covering the real truth, leaving a better impression of yourself than is strictly true, covering up your real faults, defensiveness and unwillingness to accept responsibility for your sin, pitching blame, it's her fault, it's his fault if he wouldn't do this, which is just a technique to not repent? Are you ever conscious of fear? Fear is the opposite of faith and without faith it's impossible to please God. A man-fearing, man-pleasing spirit, passivity, worrying about whether everything will come out all right, a lack of quiet confidence in God, of faith, a lack of gratitude, doubting God's goodness, worry and complaining in the midst of difficulty. Would you ever be aware of laziness, just wasting time, often with the internet, television, games, etc., gluttony,

overindulgence, drunkenness, being a stumbling block to others because of your habits, abuse of drugs and including prescription drugs, a tendency to trust medication more than God or moral impurity, lust, pornography, adultery, fornication, incest, abortion, sodomy, just a few more.

Are you ever aware of materialism, of loving things more than you love God or others, just wanting more, buying things you don't need? Here's one, not giving. God calls this robbing him of his tithes and offerings. Are you ever aware of unforgiveness? Do you have bitterness or hatred toward those who've hurt you? Are you not forgiven them yet? Are you having an unwillingness to clear your conscience with others, bigotry or prejudice or harbored hurt? Do you have any formality or spiritual deadness, a lack of concern for lost people, not sharing your faith, which is the reason that we're still here on this earth, dryness and indifference, lukewarmness or apathy, insensitivity towards others, an unwillingness to serve, kind of a consumer mentality, a desire to be served, hypocrisy, disobedience to the simple promptings of God, lack of time in his word, prayerlessness.

So for just a moment, would you ask for God's, not only his forgiveness that's been purchased on the cross, but his cleansing. And would you ask him, Lord, would you give us, help us see these things as you see them in such a way, Lord, that we will repent, that we will turn, Lord, from these sins and turn towards you in Jesus name. Amen.

So as we, God prepares us for revival and awakening, voices are sent and the message begins to come, desperation deepens, a cry erupts, repentance is restored. And then here's a fourth thing that always happens in revival, unity builds. The Bible says in Mark's account of this, all the country of Judea was going out to him and all the people of Jerusalem.

I'm just a real, I just really believe the Bible, don't you? I believe even the words of the Bible and they're all inspired by God. And so when he says all, means all. When he said the whole country was coming, I think it means everybody was making a trip out to see John the Baptist at one time or another.

Now, this was unity. In genuine revival, there's not a canned unity, a forced unity, an administrative unity. There's such desperation that people come together across all lines and begin to cry out and work towards revival.

And I know you've noticed this. This is one of the fascinating things right now is that in the last few years, all kinds of people, Doug Small was telling me about a year or so ago, about nine different streams of the Pentecostal movement that had never united, were uniting together. I know in the town in which I live and in Central Arkansas and Little Rock, there are all kinds of people from all kinds of different spiritual tribes, not laying aside our theological convictions, but uniting together about one thing.

We need God through Jesus Christ our Lord. And we're going to join arms together and cry out together that he would come in an amazing way. And this is happening all across the country.

And unity is powerful. Do you know why that even today, when the US military is crossing a bridge, they break cadence? And the reason is in one of the world wars, I can't remember which one it was, in France, there was a group of a battalion of soldiers that were crossing a bridge across a high ravine. And the unity of their steps in cadence created a wave, a sound wave, some way that destroyed the bridge, and over a hundred men fell to their death.

Well, we've learned something about unity. Unity is powerful. I mean, in any direction, it can be powerful for evil.

It can be unbelievably powerful when God is bringing us together. And again, I love what a good friend of mine, Mark Rogoff said when God was moving in Grand Rapids where he was, he said, it's not that we are doing away with our differences, we are prioritizing our differences so that we can unite together all true believers in Jesus' name and cry out for revival and awakening. So unity comes.

And then number five, and then we're going to pray together again, spiritual activity increases. So Mark 15 says, all were going out, they're being baptized, they're confessing their sins. In other words, I don't think there was anybody in Israel at this time of John the Baptist couldn't say, you know what, something's happening.

Things are going on. And it was all before Jesus came. It was the preparatory work of God getting ready for the manifest presence of Jesus Christ.

In the Welsh revival, if you study it, there was a great revival in the 1850s, 1859 in Wales, but in that cycle, it waned. The discipline of God began to come. And in the 1890s, people began to cry out again to the Lord.

The Keswick style conventions began to happen in Wales because the pastors were saying, where is the teaching about the Holy Spirit? We've forgotten about the Holy Spirit. And so multiple conventions began to be raised up. God began to raise up young pastors like Seth Joshua and Evan Roberts, a group of four young pastors, I love this story, were seeking the Lord together and praying together.

And they called F.B. Meyer, a great Bible teacher of that day and said, would you come to our region and speak to us about revival and awakening? And Meyer said, I can't come, but there's a meeting in Landenrood, and I want to encourage the four of you to go to that meeting. So these four went to this meeting, that these meetings were springing up, these conventions, these solemn assemblies, if you would, were springing up all across the nation and they went and were marvelously changed. And those four young men became great champions of revival that was going to break forth in 1904 and 1905.

Now, one of the most encouraging things to me right now that we can rejoice in and join in is the amount of spiritual activity among desperate believers that is happening across our nation. Of course, COVID has in some ways made that go underground. We don't know what's happening.

We don't really know if when things return a little bit to normal in terms of gathering together, if we're going to see there has been a silent explosion that's happening underground or if people have turned the other way. But before COVID happened, amazing things were going on. Pray 714 went all over the world.

You know about the retired pastor who called the people to pray on a mountain. He was hoping he'd have 100 pastors. And before it was all over, 260,000 people had signed up to pray on that day a few days in May before the National Day of Prayer.

The National Day of Prayer, one of my dear friends, Bob Bakke, was telling me when they looked at statistics, this didn't just go to millions. It potentially went to billions of people because the number of outlets that broadcast it. There are all kinds of spiritual things that are happening.

Dave Butts, who is the head of the National Prayer Committee and is on our OneCry team and a dear friend, Dave Butts said to me about a year ago, he said, Bill, we can statistically prove that we believe there are more people praying right now in America for revival and awakening than any time in our nation's history. And I believe that's true. In fact, he said to me, you know, we may be in revival in the beginning stages of revival because Jonathan Edwards said prayer doesn't just bring revival.

Prayer is revival. When you see the church praying in unprecedented ways, spiritual activity increasing, that's the stirrings of revival. So we hopefully we're on the front edge of that.

Now, if there's movement happening all around the nation, here's the question for you and me. Are we joining God? I mean, if you're on this call today, it's good evidence that you are, but are we passive or are we aggressively joining with God? And so for just a moment, here's what I want you to do. I want you to cry out for the building of unity among believers, a united cry, and for spiritual activity to increase, particularly during this COVID region when things have gone kind of dark, when things have gone kind of underground.

Okay. Would you pray for increased spiritual activity that the Holy Spirit, even though we may not can see it as much right now, that the Holy Spirit will be turning people's hearts, saving people, bringing people to desperation. All right.

Leading to what we trust will be a great revival and spiritual awakening in our nation. So for just a moment, I'm going to be silent and I want you to pray that unity would build and spiritual activity would increase. And pray for that for your city, for your town, for your circle of relationships and friends and churches.

All right. So let's pray for that right now. Let's pray.

As you're praying, pray for a explosion of unity that people would come and the Bible says they were of the same mind and had the same love. This is what Paul pled for in Philippians 2. Would you pray for an explosion of spiritual unity in your church and the churches around you? Call them out by name. And that spiritual activity, even during COVID, would increase.

Let's pray for that. Would you pray that God would just raise up men and women of like mind all across our nation, that righteousness would prevail. And as we head into this election season, which is we're so divided, so unbelievably divided, that God would raise up a united people who would repent and cry out to God to do what only God can do.

So Father, we pray for these things. And Lord, it's hard for us to know what's happening because we can't see as well as we once could because of the COVID situation. But Father, you can see and you know exactly what you're doing.

And Father, we don't pray just this for the United States or for our city. How selfish would that be? Lord, we sense you are doing something literally all around the world. You have shut down the world in a matter of six weeks last spring, bringing us to the end of ourselves.

And so we pray for your movement and activity and desperation and united cry, literally all over the world. And Lord, what a wonderful thing it would be if we would see a worldwide revival happen. So we pray for that in Jesus' name.

Amen. Well, there's one final thing I want to mention to you, and I want us to pray together. So get this progression, this preparatory work of God, that voices began to come and speaking the word of God to us.

And that as those voices come, that desperation deepens and a cry erupts and repentance is restored, unity builds, spiritual activity increases. And then here's the most important thing that happens, the most important of all, Christ comes. Can you imagine this moment? John the Baptist, all his life, clothed in skins and eating locusts and honey and living a wilderness lifestyle and just preaching his heart out every day, all pointed towards one thing.

And one day he looked up and he said, behold, there he is. It's come, the Lamb of God who takes the way, the sin of the world. And everything changed.

This is revival and awakening, the presence of God, the manifest presence of God. And this is what we long for. Dan mentioned a little something that happened in our church.

I helped in the founding of the Summit Church 22 years ago in and God has given us a wonderful two decades. Several years ago, we sensed that we just needed the Lord in a fresh way. So we call the church to a 40-day time of fasting and prayer.

And the amazing thing was they did it. Sometimes we felt God had initiated this, but sometimes people don't cooperate. But our people just for 40 days, I mean, they really pray, they fasted.

And we didn't see an immediate explosion of something, but there was a spiritual heat in our church. In fact, people would ask me, they'd say, Bill, how's the summit going? And I would say, well, it just feels like there's gasoline on the floor and it's just waiting for a match. In March of that year, one morning, and I don't tell this all the time, but one morning in March, I woke up and I was in that kind of, you know, you're waking up kind of phase and you're lying there in bed and thinking.

And all of a sudden the Lord is directly, as he's ever spoken to my heart, just said to my heart in the way that God speaks to me, he said, I'm coming, I'm coming, I'm coming, I'm coming over and over again. I was so moved. I got up and we had an early morning prayer gathering that we have every Tuesday with our pastors and where we do nothing, no business.

We just pray for an hour, hour and a half. And by the way, that's the key to anything that's coming out of the life of our church, I think. And I tried to tell these men about what had happened.

I couldn't, I couldn't even get it out. I was just so moved. We were in the middle of a series on the Holy Spirit and on April the 4th of 2011, I was preaching on the quenching of the Holy Spirit.

And I'd never really studied that passage, but you know, in First Thessalonians 5, it says, don't quench the Holy Spirit. And then it says this, examine everything, don't despise prophetic utterances, examine everything carefully, throw out the bad and hold on to the good. Now there are a thousand different interpretations of what a prophetic utterance is, right? But at the very least we could say it's when God speaks.

So in conjunction, it says this, don't quench the Spirit. When I'm speaking, you can examine it, but you hold on to it and you respond to despise. When you say that word, it means to treat lightly, just throw it off.

Don't pay any attention to it. And I gave this illustration that morning. I said, what if on Monday, as I was preparing for the next Sunday, God began to really lay a message on my heart.

And as the week progressed, it just got deeper and deeper. And I said to our pastors, man, really pray. I sense God really wants to say something.

I said to my wife, and I don't know what's going on, but I cannot shake the burden of this message. And it is turning from, you know, kind of a nice little sermon to a message, I believe, from the Lord. And let's say that I got up on Sunday and every pastor's had this experience and I began to preach and God just came.

And as a pastor, you know, there's those moments when you feel like you're kind of, it's like an out-of-body experience when you're just standing there, but the Lord is just delivering a message to his people. And he has a right to do that, right? He's the head of the church. And let's say I was preaching on praying for lost people and it got quiet in the room.

You could sense the presence of God. And then the service was over and they all walked out kind of soberly. They said, pastor, I've never heard you preach like that.

Man, God really spoke to me. And then let's say that they went to their cars and they went home and they didn't make a single adjustment in their life to do what God had told them to do and pray for lost people. Now, what happened? God was speaking to his people and they despised it.

They treated it and they quench. Quench means you stop something that's already going. The fire of God, the voice of God, the movement of God was coming and they quenched it.

They just stopped it. I want to tell you something. If you're a pastor, you know this.

That happens over and over and over again. What if several thousand people heard a message to pray for the lost and they went out and did it? You think God had any agenda, any purpose in that? Maybe he was going to save people. So I was explaining this about quenching the spirit about halfway through my message.

The Lord said, stop. And I'm preaching and I'm kind of arguing to the Lord and saying, Lord, I've got a really great second half to this message and a great illustration at the end. And the Lord said, just quench, don't quench the spirit.

So I stopped and I said, folks, I've got more here in my notes, but I just sense the Lord has said what he wants to say. And instantly, as if prompted, a retired missionary pops up in his seat and cries out so everybody in the auditorium could hear it. We have got to obey God right now.

And he begins to plead with tears and people began to flood down the altar. They were meeting with the Lord. They were going to other people.

I had placed a microphone down on the floor that only the sound guy and I knew why it was there, because I'd sense what if God really shows up one day, the church is going to need to express itself. So I went down by the microphone to kind of shepherd the microphone, which is a good thing to do as a shepherd. And I was just standing there and I said to the people, look, do whatever God is telling you to just don't quench the spirit.

A little lady came up. She said, can I say something? And people coming to the altar, there's just movement happening in the room. And she shared something that was really sweet.

And I thought, well, that's great. Maybe that's the whole purpose. We're about to end here.

And then another individual came up and said, can I say something? And she said something and the spirit just said, call the people to prayer about that. And then we kind of finished praying. And I looked up and there was a long line of people.

And people were at the altar, people were in line to share, people were praying in groups. It wasn't wild. Nobody was jumping pews.

It was just this very intense movement of the Holy Spirit. And that meeting went past our 1230 hour to 1.30, 2.30, about 3.30 in the afternoon. I sensed it was time for us to close.

But we, by God's providence, had a first Monday prayer meeting that we had started in January, praying for reliable the next night. And I said, folks, just come back tomorrow night. Just don't quench the spirit.

The next night I walked in and the building was packed. And that meeting went for about three and a half hours. All kinds of things happened.

It was just extraordinary. In fact, if I had the time to tell you, people just giving money. I mean, literally over the next days, tens of thousands of dollars just spontaneously was changing hands and people were being saved.

And I remember on that Monday night, one of the sound guys in the sound booth came to the microphone, said, can I say something? He said, I have sat in that sound booth for four years and the Lord had been telling me I need to be baptized. He had been baptized, but it was prior to his conversion and he knew it. And we use a portable baptistry that's up on the stage.

And he said, I want to be baptized. He said, I am so sorry for how I have quenched the spirit for four years. Who knows what could have happened if I had just obeyed God.

He said, I'll baptize right now. He takes off his shoes. He starts walking the baptistry in his street clothes.

And I'm thinking if I don't get over there, he's going to baptize himself. And when he came up from the water, another lady came down and said, me too. And another one, another one in their street clothes.

That's not normal Sunday for us. It was incredible. And just one thing after another, people confessing their sins, getting right with each other, men who had been 40-year alcoholics delivered as 50 people would gather around them and just pray freedom into their soul.

And we decided, well, let's meet the next night. And we met on Tuesday night. We said, well, we can't stop.

At the end of every night, we decide, should we go another night? Because we didn't want to move ahead of the Lord or lag behind the Lord. That movement went on every night for five solid weeks. It was incredible.

I mean, if just that little, I call it a mercy drop. If just that mercy drop of revival would come to our central Arkansas area where there's 600 churches, we would see 32,000 people come to faith in Christ in five weeks. Now, you say, well, that couldn't happen.

Well, if you think that, you don't know your revival history. During the 1857-58 revival in New York City alone during the height of that revival, 10,000 people a week were coming to faith in Christ. 10,000 people.

During the first great awakening, 15% of the population came to faith in Christ. Just think of the population of your town and what would happen in the next two years, a 15% of the population came to Christ. So this is Christ coming.

We can't produce this. No church alone can produce this. No pastor can produce this.

No government leader or institution can produce this. We need God. And there's one means by which God has said, I will respond to this and come if my people will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways.

You know what I'll do, God says? I will hear that prayer. I will forgive their sins and I will heal their land. So I wonder if just for a moment you would allow me to lead us in a moment of prayer for that very thing, for Christ coming.

Are you ready? Let's pray together. Father, we thank you for the testimony of the Word of God that you went to lengths to put it down in black and white so we can understand. And you gave us the Holy Spirit that would teach us and lead us into all things and help us understand your ways.

And then you sent, Lord, prior to that, Jesus Christ, who provided a way for us to have access literally into your throne room. And so, Father, we're just thankful that you have shown us patterns of your behavior and how we can join in with that. And, Lord, today I pray that this would be deeply impressed in our mind in a way that we would literally never forget it.

And, Father, more than that, we pray, we thank you, Lord. I want to thank you for what we see right now as the preparatory work of your Spirit leading to revival. Now, Lord, don't let us quench the Spirit.

I pray that you would find us, even if we're quarantined, even if we're restricted in some ways, we would aggressively cooperate with the promptings of your Spirit and the illumination of your Word. And, Father, revival is a sovereign thing. We can't bring it.

Lord, we need you to come. And that's why you told us the one thing we should do is to cry out, and we're crying out, Lord. Right now, even on this call, Lord, this is just one group of people who are joining with millions of voices, Lord, literally around the world in unprecedented ways.

And, Father, we pray for a mighty worldwide movement of revival that would lead to tens of millions of people being ushered into your kingdom. And, Lord, we don't pretend to understand the eschatology of all of these things. But, Father, we pray that you would send revival and the gospel would be preached in every nation, and then the end would come.

So, Lord, we pray for this. We ask you. We plead with you.

Oh, God, don't let us miss what's happened even in the last six or seven months of your activity to bring us to brokenness and surrender and humility. And don't let us turn back to business as usual. How tragic that

would be.

Father, we pray that you'd even use this election time, however you want to, to bring us to revival and awakening. We pray, Father, that we would look up and we would say, behold, the Lamb of God has come, and he's taking away the sins of the world. So, Lord, that's our prayer.

And it's not so we can have a nice little 1950s pleasant experience in life and our home and our picket fence and our two cars. Father, we pray for that so that the mission of God in this world would be accomplished and that your church, Father, would be right in the middle of it cooperating with you. And thank you that you've promised to build your church.

You're the one who does that, and we get to be along for the ride. So, thank you. And, Father, we pray that you'd just bless the rest of this gathering tonight and tomorrow and you would use it for your glory.

Thank you for Dan and organizing this and others. We pray your blessing upon his life and work and on everyone who's listening here today. In Jesus' holy, precious name, we pray.

Amen. Well, thank you so much, Dan. Come on and join us, and I'll turn it back over to you.

All right. Thank you, Bill. Appreciate that, brother.

I'm grateful that you was able to share a little bit about the experience that you guys had a few years ago. But that's one of the things, and Ralph Cetera taught me this back when Ralph was in the Louvre as part of the Canadian Revival back in the 70s. And he said, Dan, don't ever forget the power of the testimony and how it bears record for God's glory to fan the flames of revival.

And so, grateful that you could be with us this morning. I want to pray for you, Bill, because I know you have a prayer summit. Is that what you call it? Start Monday? Yeah, this will be a seventh year of a pastor's prayer gathering in Little Rock.

And this year, because of COVID, we're meeting in Little Rock. God has really used this, it seems, to stimulate prayer across our state. Our pastors are learning how to pray.

And this year, it will be there, but it'll also be streamed to multiple sites.

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