

Steps to Personal Revival

by Bill McLeod

Personal revival is a biblical concept that involves seeking a biblical understanding of renewal, recognizing one's need for renewal, and working with the Holy Spirit to stir up the gift of God within.

Duration: 47:28

Scripture: Romans 12:1

Topics: "Personal Revival"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of having a deep and meaningful relationship with God. He expresses his desire to have a vital walk with God and to lead others to Jesus Christ. The preacher refers to the story of Jacob in Genesis chapter 32, where Jacob prayed fervently for God's blessing and protection. He encourages believers to have genuine and heartfelt prayers, rather than just going through the motions. The preacher also highlights the need for Christians to live a life that glorifies God and to stir up the gift of the Holy Spirit within them. He challenges believers to not be ashamed of the gospel and to actively share it with others. The sermon concludes with a reminder of the vast number of languages that still do not have the Bible translated, emphasizing the urgency of spreading the Word of God.

Transcript

Did you know that the kings of Israel were instructed in the law of God to write, to handwrite a copy of the word of God? Did you know that? Do you know why they were supposed to do it? It says that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren. Do you know what that tells me? It tells me that exposure to the word of God, proper exposure to the word of God, will do something to the self-problem in my life. My heart will not be lifted up above my brethren.

I've been asked to speak tonight on steps to personal revival or to personal renewal, and that's my subject. I'm not suggesting a text. I would think the first step towards a personal revival or renewal is just for me to see that this is really a biblical teaching.

Because there are many Christians who do not really honestly believe that the concept of renewal in a Christian's life is valid. They say they don't really see it in the word of God. And I know that many Christians feel this way because some of them have been honest enough to come and tell me how they felt.

Does the Bible really support this? Does the Bible really teach it? Well, my answer is yes. Now I'm going to give you two New Testament examples, and then we'll move on to something else. First of all, in Romans chapter 12, a portion of scripture that most Christians know very, very well.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God. And to understand that phrase, you have to go back into chapter 11, where Paul tells us how God has had mercy on the Gentiles, the non-Jewish world, now through the gospel. And that's the mercy of God, because for hundreds of years, the word of God was confined almost exclusively to one nation, but that's been changed.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice. And the next word is the word holy, which tells me I have to deal with my sin when I present my body to my God. Acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable, or as one translation I think says, your spiritual service.

And then notice this. And do not be conformed to this world. There are powerful pressures at work to make the Christian conform to the devil's world system.

He says, be not conformed to this world, but be you transformed by the renewing of your mind. And there is a renewing of the mind that results in a transformation of the Christian. Because remember, Paul of course is addressing believers here, and he's telling them there's a transformation that's possible by a renewing of your mind.

And I would think it's impossible to deny then that here in Romans chapter 12, we have clear biblical teaching concerning necessity and need and possibility of renewal. Personal revival, personal renewal. 2 Thorsen's Scripture, 2 Timothy chapter 1. You may remember that in 1 Timothy 1.5, the word of God says the goal of our instruction or the end of the commandment is love of a pure heart and a good conscience and a genuine faith.

Now Paul picks part of this up in 2 Timothy chapter 1 and he tells Timothy, this preacher to whom he's writing, he says, Timothy, I'm persuaded that you've got a genuine faith like your mother had, like your grandmother had. But Timothy, there's something wrong in your life. I don't know where Paul got this information.

Did he sense it in his spirit? Had somebody told him that Timothy had cooled off? Did God reveal this to Paul directly? We don't really know. But there's no doubt at all that Paul wrote 2 Timothy to Timothy and began by urging Timothy to seek a personal renewal. He says, 1 and verse 9, Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God.

And there's a hint there that Timothy was becoming somewhat ashamed of the gospel and of his association with Paul, who was perhaps the least popular person in the entire Roman Empire. And so he says to this young preacher, Stir up the gift of God which is in you by the putting on of my hands. What is this gift of God? The next verse tells us it's the Holy Spirit.

God has not given us, he says, for God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound or a disciplined mind. Stir up the gift of God. Timothy, a preacher.

One translation says rekindle the fire. Another translation says stir in the flame. I was preaching down in Argentina and my interpreter said, in our Bible, in the Spanish Bible it says, Revive the gift of God.

I was interested to discover that. Revive the gift of God, Timothy. The Holy Spirit living in your heart is not a spirit of fear, but of power, of love, and of a disciplined mind.

But something had happened in Timothy's life and he needed this appeal for personal revival or renewal. And I think this, along with the other scriptures we gave and others we might adduce, gives a strong biblical basis for the doctrine of renewal. Call it what you want to call it.

I remember being so blessed. I think it was a year ago that Ralph or Lou suggested to me I read or I listened to that tape by Jack Hiles. I think the title was Anointed with Fresh Oil.

From the text in the Psalms, I shall be anointed with fresh oil. I was wonderfully moved as I listened to that tape. Some of you have heard it.

Most of you probably have not. But very briefly he tells I was a preacher in Texas and nothing was going on. Nobody ever got converted.

Nothing ever happened in the church. And his father, who was an alcoholic, used to attend the church and Jack said the only preacher that his father ever heard was himself. And then one day his father dropped dead, unconverted.

And Jack Hiles became so concerned about his own lack of spiritual power that here's what he did. He went to his father's grave and he threw himself across his father's grave and he told God, he said, God, I'll not leave this place to eat, to drink or do anything until you give me power to preach the gospel. And I believe it was three days or so later that God touched his life.

He went from that place, preached the gospel. Eighteen people were converted in the first meeting. Now Jack Hiles didn't try to put a name on it.

He said, call it what you want to call it. I simply say that God anointed me with fresh oil. It was a renewal.

And then he tells how many times in his life subsequent to that initial experience, the same thing has happened again. Moody is to say, remember, that we are leaky vessels and we need to stay under the fountain all the time. So here's Paul saying to a preacher, Preacher Timothy, you need a renewal.

Stir up, rekindle, revive the gift of God that is in you. I often think we think too much of church revival and not enough of personal revival. And even if we happen to think of personal revival, we don't think in terms of me really having anything to do with it.

We say, well, that's all in the hands of God. That's not the way the Bible presents it. Think of Proverbs 1.23. God said, You turn at my reproof.

Behold, I will pour out My Spirit unto you. I will make known My words unto you. And that's personal revival.

If God pours out His Spirit on me, that will result certainly in a personal revival. But God doesn't do that until I turn when God reproves me. Now think of something here that Billy Sunday once said.

You may have heard it. People used to accuse him of preaching too hard. And they said, You know, Billy, you preach too hard and you rub the fur the wrong way.

He said, I don't. Just let the cats turn around. Well, you know, really, that's Proverbs 1.23. God says, You turn.

And if you turn when I reprove you from My word, then I'll pour out My Spirit on your life and My word will come alive in your heart. Oh, listen, how often Christians say, the Bible really doesn't do anything for me. I read it.

I fall asleep reading it. I get nothing out of it. I don't understand it.

It doesn't speak to my heart. What's wrong? I don't know how often Christians have said that to me when they got honest. Now, I don't doubt that in this crowd tonight there are many people that would have to say if they were honest that that's their own experience.

The Word of God does nothing for them. If that's so, then you need a renewal. You need a revival in your heart.

And if you turn to God when God reproves you through His Word, then God has promised He'll pour out His Spirit unto you and He'll make known His Word unto you. Stir up. Revive the gift of God.

I can't revive myself. That's not what He's saying. But I can work with the agent of revival.

Remember in that song that Edwin Orr wrote, O Holy Ghost, revival comes from Thee, and the Spirit of God, the agent of revival, lives in every Christian's heart. So if I want a renewal, then the Holy Spirit wants that renewal. And as we work together, it will happen in your life, it'll happen in mine.

So I would think the first step to a genuine renewal is just to realize this is a biblical doctrine. It's taught in the Word of God. I would think then the second step to renewal would be this, that I see my personal need of renewal.

Do you see that in your life? I remember hearing a schoolteacher say one time on an afterglow meeting, I sing the song, he said, My Jesus, I love Thee, I know Thou art mine. But I don't guess I love Him because I never talk about Him. Would you people pray for me? And we prayed with him and he was counseled with and God touched his life.

He sat down and another schoolteacher got up and said, I'm a schoolteacher also like this other man, he said, and my life's exactly the same as his. I guess I don't love Jesus because I never talk about Him to other people. Would you pray for me? And his wife shot up beside him and she said, and I'm just like my husband.

Would you pray for me? Are you like that? Have you ever witnessed to your unconverted neighbor? Do you have a concern for unconverted people with whom you work? A concern that leads you to pray for them? A concern that leads you to share Christ with them when opportunities present themselves? If you do not have this burden in your heart, then you certainly, definitely need a personal renewal because in 2 Timothy chapter 1 this was all connected, remember? Be not thou there for a shame of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me as prisoner, but be thou partakers, partners in, partakers of the afflictions of the gospel. And you can never do away with that. There are afflictions connected with the preaching of the gospel and we have to become partakers, partners in those afflictions if we're ever going to amount to anything for the glory of God.

Partakers of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God who has saved us and called us with a holy calling not according to our works but according to His own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. A well-known Christian author, some while ago he and his wife got concerned they had so many unconverted relatives. So here's what they did.

They made a list. And they came up with a list, I think it was 38 names of close relatives who were not Christians. What can we do? They decided they would pray believingly for each of those people every day.

And when they could, they would present the gospel to them. Six years later, 27 of them were Christians. Bernard Palmer is the man I'm talking about.

Now that's very interesting. Supposing they hadn't bothered. What would have happened? I very much doubt that 27 of them would have been converted six years later.

Somebody has to have a burden. Do you share God's burden for the world? Or is your world the United States or Canada or maybe North America or maybe South America? What is your burden? God's is the world. There are people in many countries of the world today that are hanging on to life by the skin of their teeth.

They've never heard the story of Jesus Christ. And they maybe never hear it until the Church of God is revived. That is until you and I are renewed in our spirit by the power of God's Spirit and we begin to share and the circles of blessing begin to move out.

Three percent of the Indian nation, 640 million people, three percent only profess the Christian faith and that includes Catholic, Protestant, everything. And there are no doubt scores of millions of people in that land that have never, ever heard the gospel of Jesus Christ. After 1,900 years of the Church on earth, are you concerned? Ever waken in the middle of the night with a burden on your heart for China, a country they say there's probably one billion Chinese in the world, including those outside of China? Ever have a burden for those people? Never waken up in the middle of the night with tears coursing down your cheeks and your heart deeply, deeply burdened for China, maybe for Russia? If you do not have experiences of this kind, you probably need a revival in your heart because revival has to do with a program of God and God's program has to do with the entire world.

Jesus Christ said in the gospel of Luke, they shall come from the east, the west, the north, and the south and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. To a lot of Christians, you know, God is just a cozy thought. The gospel is just a fire escape out of hell.

Jesus Christ is just a name in a book. It's like a dream. And there's no reality there.

And sad to say, like the chairman of a certain evangelical church said one time, told me about it after God straightened out his life, a month before we began the meetings, he said to his wife, I'm carnal and I know it and I enjoy it and I'm not changing. Well, by the grace of God, he did change. But there are thousands of Christians that don't change, don't want to change.

They're carnal. They maybe know it, but they enjoy it and they have no intention of changing. And wives, here in North America, we dollar ourselves to death.

Do you realize there's over 2,000 languages into which no part of the Bible has yet been translated? How many Bibles do you have in your home? How many translations do we have in English? Is it 150? I heard that figure, I think, somewhere. And yet there are over 2,000 languages that have no part of the word of God whatever. Because we spend our money basically on ourselves.

And our interest seemingly runs only about as far as the circumference of our own family or church. And people, we need heaven to wake us up to see things as God sees them. Oh yes, we need a renewal, whether we know it or not.

I want to give you an example from the Bible, from the Old Testament if you please, of a man who sought and found a renewal. His name was Jabez, J-A-B-E-Z. His biography, not like Joseph's, Joseph's biography occupies 13 chapters in the word of God, and there are other references to him as well.

This man's biography takes exactly two verses in 1 Chronicles, verses 9 and 10. But oh, it's just loaded with spiritual truth. I want to share it with you for a few moments.

It begins by saying Jabez was more honorable than his brethren. That was his character. We'll come back to that in a moment or two.

Then it says his mother called his name Jabez, which meant sorrowful, because she said, I bore him with sorrow. It was a difficult birth when Jabez was born. But as his character developed and he and his mother saw this, that this son of hers was a better son, more concerned about the things of God than her other children were, I'm sure she didn't mind the fact that she had a particularly difficult time with his birth.

Abraham had to wait a hundred years. At least he was a hundred years old before Isaac was born. Do you think he minded? After Isaac was born, when he discovered, if he did not know it before, that an Isaac shall I see be called.

Then I think of Isaac married to this girl, Rebekah. And she had twins. Jacob and Esau did not know she was carrying twins.

And so she did the right thing when you don't know what's going on. Ask God. She did that.

She asked God. And God said, two nations are in your womb. Now it says prior to that that the children struggled together within her.

And listen, when there's a great struggle in a Christian's life, there's a double blessing coming. That's the spiritual teaching I find in that particular story. A double blessing is on the way.

And I'm sure later on when she saw what God did, well, through Jacob, not so much through Esau, and yet he had a certain place with God as well, as the scripture clearly indicates. I'm sure she forgot all about the times when the children struggled together within her. Then I think of Jacob and Rachel.

They were childless. And Rachel said to Jacob, give me children or else I die. And he said, oh my God.

She might have said, give me children and I will die because that's what finally happened. She died in childbirth. But the child they waited so long for, years on end.

Do you remember his name? His was Joseph. Do you think they minded waiting all those years when they saw who Joseph was and what God did through him? The clearest picture of Jesus Christ that we have

anywhere in the Bible, I would think, next to the actual historical records of the Savior. And who was the child that took her life? She called him as she was dying, Benona, the son of my soul.

But her husband called him Benjamin. Do you think she minded when the centuries rolled by and all of a sudden, a man called Saul of Tarsus, of the tribe of Benjamin, became the greatest apostle and missionary that the world had ever seen? It was worth dying for Benjamin to have Saul of Tarsus later on. People, we don't know what God is doing.

We're children of eternity and need to live that way. Hannah had no children. She waited for years.

And the other wife in the home, Tanina, she had a number of children. And her adversary, that is, Hannah's adversary, provoked her soul. And then finally, God gave her Samuel.

Do you think she minded waiting all those years to have one of the greatest prophets? What about Zacharias and Elizabeth in Luke's Gospel, chapter 1? Why they were old and well-spoken in years and had no children. And God gave them John the Baptist. Do you think they minded waiting all those years to get the kind of child that God gave them? There may be many difficulties in life.

If they're not due to my sin, maybe I'm really walking with God. And the difficulties are bound on every hand. Listen, God is allowing it for your good and mine.

Now to get back to Jabez again. It says that he was more honorable than his brothers. You know, sometimes this may be a sort of a cultural thing.

In his case, it was not. For example, in Crete, as we find in the book of Titus, the Apostle Paul said, The Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons. This witness is true.

Wherefore, rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith. When Cretans became Cretans in those days, they carried some of these cultural problems along with them. My wife and I were in a certain country.

One of the missionaries said, People from this country can stand and look you in the eyes and tell you three big lies in a row. Sometimes even Christians will do it. It was a cultural thing.

That does not mean they were not guilty. Rebuke them sharply is the word of God, that they may be sound in the faith. But not so.

They had the same parents. I mean, Jabez's brethren had the same parents as he. He was a better person because he wanted to be.

For the glory of God, I think, is the story unfolds. Remember the Bereans? They were more noble than those in Thessalonica. Was that a cultural thing? I don't know.

But we find they were more open to the word of God than the people in Thessalonica were. Therefore, many of them believed. You know what happened to Jabez? People, listen, he got sick and tired of a whole humdrum type of Christianity.

Trotting off to church every Sunday with a Bible or whatever, nothing ever happening in the church, nothing happening in his own life or family. He just couldn't live that way. Some Christians are very happy that way.

And so it says he called on the God of Israel. He wanted something to happen in his life. He didn't want to stay the way that he was.

He wanted life to count. And I have no doubt the Spirit of God had been working in his heart, maybe making him aware of the brevity of life and the sureness of a fast approaching eternity. Or maybe God had been speaking to him about the glory of God and he could see his life was not glorifying God.

And so he prayed. And his prayer begins thusly, O! There's not enough O in our praying. I mean, we say our prayers, we rattle it off, but there's no heart in it, no tears on the floor.

And many times after we're through praying, we can't even remember what we prayed about. Not so here. I know there's a thing called conversational praying, and I have no particular argument with that.

I think there's a big element of truth here. But at the same time, if I understand that particular teaching right, they're overlooking something else in the Word of God that's extremely important. They tell us, for example, you should not use the name of God over and over again when you're praying.

Just use the name of God once and He'll be listening. You don't have to call Him God twice in one prayer. If that is true, then why did David, in 1 Chronicles 17, in that short prayer of his, use the name of God 17 times? Why did Daniel, in Daniel chapter 9, in that very short prayer of his, why did he use the name of God and Lord 18 times? O God, hear! O Lord, hearken! O Lord, forgive! This is how he was praying.

That wasn't some little peanut prayer, that was a watermelon prayer. O God, I can't live this way! God, I want to change. I'd rather die than go on this way, without power in my life, without joy or blessing.

You remember what Paul said? But they, measuring themselves by themselves and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise. But that's what goes on in the average evangelical church. We look around and say, well, everybody's the same as me.

Is that good? Would you want everybody to be the same as you are? In most cases, I think the answer would have to be no. Don't measure yourself by somebody else. Measure yourself by the Word of God.

I think what Sam Jones used to say, he was a famous Southern Methodist evangelist, he said when a Christian wants to justify living at a low level, he finds a Christian that's colder than himself, lays him on the floor, lays alongside him and says, hey, you guys, look, I'm just as tall as he is. That's what we do. But remember, the Word of God has something to say about it.

O God, O that Thou, and we might say if God doesn't do it, it'll never happen. Remember Paul's prayer in Ephesians chapter 3, 14 to the end? For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, God has to do it, to be strengthened with power by His Spirit in the inner man. Isn't that a prayer for revival? I think it is.

If I am empowered or strengthened by the power of the Spirit in the inner man, certainly that's some kind of a renewal. And Paul was praying for that in Ephesians chapter 3. O that Thou wouldst bless me. Is it wrong to pray for personal blessing? Not if you're stumbling and falling, not if you have no victory over sin.

But the wisdom that is from above, do you have it? The wisdom that is from above is for us pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, without hypocrisy, and the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace to them that make peace. Do you have that kind of peace

in your soul? It isn't wrong to pray for God to bless me if my life isn't right. After all, why is this story in the Scripture? Whatever things were written aforetime, Paul said, were written for our learning.

What did we learn from the story of Jabez? We learned that one thing among other things, it's right to pray for myself when my life is not right. When Simon the sorcerer, you know, asked to have this gift offered money to get the gift of the Holy Ghost so that on whomsoever he laid hands, others might receive the Spirit, what did Peter say? To make your money perish with you, to destruction you and your money. I think one translation says that he asked for prayer.

But Peter said to him, Pray to the Lord. Pray, God, if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven. There's times, people, when we need to pray for ourselves.

Oh, God, that you'd bless me. Do you know what the next word is? It's that word, indeed. God is trying to lead us Christian people to that place where we have this kind of burden in our soul.

I can't live this way any longer. I must have a vital walk with God. I must have strength enough to lead other people to Jesus Christ.

I must have the reality of Jesus Christ in my life. The Word of God must live to my soul. Prayer must be meaningful.

I can't go on this way. God, I'd rather die. Bless me indeed.

Ever notice in Genesis chapter 32 the story of Jacob at Jabbok? When he heard that Esau was coming with 400 armed men, Jacob got afraid. He could see that the following day he might lose his life. And so, he was at a place called in one of the Psalms, wit's end cornered.

Then are they at their wit's end. The Hebrew language says all their wisdom is swallowed up. They don't have another trick in the bag.

They have nowhere else to go. They've got nothing else to try. If God doesn't come through, they're sunk.

And that happened to Jacob. First of all, he prayed a little prayer, standing on the promises, Lord, you made promises to Abraham and Isaac, our fathers. And he prayed, you know, standing on the promises.

Didn't do anything for him. After he finished that little prayer, standing on the promises, he was just as shaky afterwards as he was before. He tried to appease his brother by sending presents ahead.

He tried three or four strategies. None of them satisfied his heart. And finally, it says, he ran out of ideas.

Jacob was left alone. He didn't have another idea. He didn't have another dollar in the bank.

He didn't know what to do. So he began to pray. And he never prayed like this in his life.

He wrestled with an angel of God for the whole night. And even when the angel of God touched his thigh and his hip was out of joint, and the angel said, let me go because the day is breaking, as if God was not interested, just as if God wasn't going to answer, he said, Jacob said, I will not let you go except you bless me. It's like a Syrophenician woman.

When she said, have mercy, my daughter has a demon, Jesus answered her, not a word. She kept on crying. The disciple said, it's embarrassing.

Send her away. And Jesus Christ said, it isn't right to take the children's bread and to cast it to dogs. Isn't that a no? No, not really.

It's just a trial of faith. And she said, truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their master's table. And Jesus Christ said, O woman, great is your faith.

Be it unto you even as you will. And her daughter was healed in that exact hour. Jacob wrestled with that angel of God all night long.

And it comes to a point of absolute desperation. God, bless me. I won't let you go until you bless me.

You can call that what you want to. It's biblical. And we need to come to the end of our own resources.

And sometimes God orders things in our life so we get to that place. And then we look up. I remember I led a man to the Lord one time.

I said, what's the problem? He was sitting on the floor. The night before, he decided to take his life. So he got his deer gun, went up in the attic of his house, intending to blow his brains out, and found himself sleeping in bed the next morning.

To this day, he doesn't know what happened. He's a full-time Christian worker today. But when I talked to him, I said, what's the problem? He said, the problem is this, that there's no way out but up.

And I had the joy of leading him to Christ. But that happens also in Christians' lives. No way out but up.

No way but God's way left. The way of the Lord is strength to the upright. Did you know that? Walking in God's will gives you power.

The way of the Lord is strength to the upright, but destruction to the workers of iniquity. They can't walk in God's way. We Christians may.

We should. And so then the angel said to Jacob, Jacob, you know that word meant supplanter or deceiver. That's the kind of character being a real, right-scheming Christian.

Oh, he knew how to make money. He made it, I guess, by the thousands. Ran up against a fellow called Laban that was trickier than he.

And they had a battle of wits for maybe 20 years. But that night, none of this helped him. The angel said, your name is no more Jacob.

It will be called Israel. And that word means prince of God. He said, as a prince you have power with God and with men you prevail.

And next day when Esau saw Jacob, his heart melted. The murder went out of his soul and he ran to meet him and fell on his neck and kissed him because the power of God touched his life. What a beautiful story.

Oh, God, that you'd bless me indeed. And enlarge my coast. Did he want more property? More money? No.

He wanted more influence with people. As in 1 Thessalonians 2 where Paul said, What is our hope? What is our joy? What is our crown of rejoicing? Are not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at

His coming? You are our glory and joy. Invest your life in people because people, listen, people are forever.

And things are only for a very, very short time. And a man's life does not consist in the abundance of the things which he possesses, but in a true and genuine walk with God. Enlarge my coast, oh God.

I want to have more influence with other people. God's interested in that kind of a prayer. And enlarge my coast.

And that your hand might be with me. That can speak of a number of things. It can speak of security if you're worried about that.

In John chapter 10, My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish. Neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.

My Father who gave them Me is greater than all. And no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand. I and My Father are one.

All right, security. Let's go on from there. Isaiah 1. God said, sanctification.

I will turn My hand upon you, and purely purge away your dross, and take away all your tins. God is able to purge out of your life and My life those areas of sin and self that are wrong. God can do it.

God is just waiting to do it, waiting for your yes to His will and word. And then it may speak of blessing and service. The hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned unto the Lord.

Wouldn't you like to see that? I don't think there's a person in this building that God could not use in the winning of souls in the next 12 months if your life was right, and you were concerned enough to put yourself out for it. God would do it. Oh, Jabez, I'm so thankful, you know, that his story is written in the Bible.

I'm looking forward to meeting him in heaven someday. And if such things are permitted, I'll find out what God did for him after he met God in his time of renewal in 1 Chronicles 4, 9, and 10. That your hand might be with me, and that you would keep me from evil.

Wasn't that part of Jesus' prayer in John 17? I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that you should keep them from the evil. Paul once said, The Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory.

So then, for the kingdom of God's sake, for the glory of God, that I might be kept from evil. And here we are. We struggle with sin.

We fall flat on our face. We've tried and we've failed and we've tried and we've failed. And maybe some of you are not at that point of just giving up.

Jabez was aware of this problem in his life, that you would keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me. You know, a genuine Christian, you can tell him when he sins he's grieved. If you can sin and not grieve, you're probably not born again at all.

If you are born again, you've drifted a long way from your God. No genuine Christian can sin against his God and not grieve over it. John said, 1 John 2, 1, My little children, these things I write unto you, that you sin not.

And if any man sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous. Ever notice Peter's injunction in 1 Peter 2? Talking about Jesus Christ, he says to the Christian, you should follow his steps. And what was the very first thing he mentioned next? Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth, who when he was reviled, reviled not again.

When he suffered, he did not threaten. He committed himself to him that judges righteously, whose own self bear our sins in his own body to the tree, literally to the woods. In order that we, being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness by whose stripes you were healed.

And shame on us that many of us can sin and sin and sin again and think nothing of it. As if this was a normal Christian life. Jabez was green.

Oh God, keep me from sin, that it may not grieve me. And there's a little prayer I pray every morning I may occasionally forget. I'll think of it likely during the day sometime and pray it then.

Here it is. Order my steps in thy word, and let not any iniquity have dominion over me. In Psalm 119.

What a prayer. Order my steps in thy word, and let not any iniquity have dominion over me. So I think it was Michael who said, The Lord, He will turn again.

He will have compassion upon us. He will subdue our iniquities. Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.

He's able to subdue, to take the power and strength out of sin in your life and mine. If you'll let Him do it, God has that power that thou wilt keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me. And what does the account say? And God granted him that which he requested.

God did it all for him. God began to bless him indeed. God began to pour out His Spirit on him.

God gave Him influence with other people. God kept him from evil. God's hand was with him wherever he went, wherever he turned.

And God certainly, living this side of Calvary and Pentecost, certainly today, we could praise and make a prayer like this, our own prayer. Would you? Do you plan on going on the way you've been going on the rest of your life? Sad to say, I suppose, some Christians plan on that because they've never really had a glimpse of the Lord of glory, though how we need to see Jesus Christ. Isaiah saw Him.

If Isaiah had not seen Him as recorded in the 6th chapter of his book, we probably never heard of this prophet. When he saw Christ, John says that Isaiah saw His glory and spoke of Him. About 80 times in the book of Isaiah he speaks about Jesus Christ.

That's why it's called the 5th Gospel. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Isaiah. It's a beautiful story.

But Isaiah saw Jesus Christ and you and I need to see Him. Oh, the Bible says, thy footsteps are not known. It says God's ways are past finding out.

Yet the Lord Jesus Christ came as a man among men so we could understand God in a different way. Do you love the Lord Jesus Christ? Do you want your life to count for His glory? Are you hiding behind your position in the church? You've got some position of authority. You've been doing this for God.

You've been doing that for God. Did you ever notice in Isaiah chapter 58, the opening verses? There were six good things said about the nation of Israel. It says there were a nation that did not forsake the ordinances of God.

They asked of Me, God, says the ordinances of justice. They take delight in approaching unto God. They fasted.

They prayed. But God said to the prophet, lift up your voice like a trumpet and show My people their sin. And we have a parallel case in the book of Revelation.

The message to the church at Ephesus. There are no less than ten good things said about that church. They were strong for doctrine.

They tried those who said they were apostles and were not and it found them liars. They poured much energy into the work of God. But the whole thing, all ten things were washed out because one thing was wrong.

God said, you've left your first love. You don't have that burning love toward Me. You don't have that burning faith in Me.

You don't trust Me the way you once did. God's not interested in His people going through the motions. Dear people, He wants a heart.

My son, He said in Proverbs, give Me your heart. Maybe you give God two tithes of your income, but have you ever given God your heart? Here's my heart, O taken, seal it, seal it for Thy courts above. That song that Doris sang for us, do you want God to take your feet, make them swift and beautiful for Him, take your tongue so you will sing of Jesus, your King, speak of Him? I really don't know what else to say.

We're going to sing an invitation song in a moment. The prayer room is right around the corner over here. As we sing this song, if God has spoken to your heart, will you go to the prayer room? Maybe there's a serpent in your heart.

Listen, by God's power, take that serpent out and beat it to death in the prayer room. Unconfessed sin, there may be somebody in this room that's got sin in their life that's so bad if you were to print it in the newspaper, the newspaper would burn. Take care of it tonight.

Drag it out. When I was a boy, we lived on a little farm and all you could grow was rocks. I used to like walking down the field in the summertime and find a limestone rock about so big and I would get my thumbs hooked under it and suddenly flip it over so the sunlight would fall in its bed.

And there were centipedes and worms and all kinds of slimy looking slugs and creatures, maybe 20 or 30 of them underneath that rock. And as soon as the light hit them, every last one of them hit for a hole. And if you waited for about 3 or 4 minutes, there was no sign of activity at all.

Then I would take the rock and put it back in its bed, wait for 20 minutes, flip it over, and they're all back up under the rock again. And revival is God Almighty flipping the rock over in the field of your life and mine.

What are we going to do with these worms and these unclean creatures in our life? Are we going to let them crawl back into their holes again? Are we going to put that rock back in its place? Or will we deal with the things that God is talking to us about? Will you deal with them tonight? You may be in Bible school, but your heart may be far from God.

Do you have a clean mind and a pure heart? I said in a meeting one time that some people, their mind is so impure that if they see a cardboard box blowing in front of a wind in a field or an old rusty tin can in a ditch, they can't help but think evil. And after he was a man, he was a businessman, his business was worth five million dollars. He told me this, he said, Bill, when you talk that way about the cardboard box and the tin can, you were talking about me.

That's my life. That's my mind. And so in that particular Christian organization, they asked me to bring a message on blessed are the pure in heart.

Oh, how I prayed about that because I knew the need in the life of this man. There was a happy ending to it. A day or so later, that man came and said, Bill, I've got it.

I've got it. God gave me a pure heart. Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.

Follow peace with all men and holiness without which no man shall see the Lord. Do you have a pure heart? That's the end of the commandment, the goal of our instruction, love rising out of a pure heart. Is God working in your life? Will you continue to hide it? Or will you do something about it? Do you know there's a verse in the Bible, do you know what it says? And now Lord,

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