

The Place of the Word of God in Revival

by Bill McLeod

The Word of God is essential for revival and spiritual growth, and it must be preached and taught to others.

Duration: 34:37

Scripture: Matthew 28:19-20, Mark 16:15, Luke 24:47, John 20:21, Acts 1:8, Acts 2:38, Romans 16:25-27

Topics: "Scriptures"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of missions and giving. He encourages the audience to read various passages from the Bible, including Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, John 20, Romans, and Acts, to understand the significance of missions. The speaker highlights the need for Christians to give cheerfully and generously, citing the biblical verse that says to honor the Lord with one's substance and first fruits. He also mentions the example of George Mueller, who dedicated his life to missions and gave generously to support the work of Hudson Taylor in China. Overall, the sermon emphasizes the need for Christians to have a burden for missions and to give willingly and joyfully.

Transcript

What I'd like to do this afternoon is help you to understand the place of the Word of God in revival. I think it's very important, and I'll demonstrate why. I was holding meetings in Toronto in a certain church, and a month before I came, a team of people who had experienced revival in their home church came to this church, and they shared.

And there was a tremendous response Sunday morning. Probably 60, 80 people came forward Sunday evening, 40 or 50 people came forward. And I was there, as I say, a month later, and when I called for testimonies, I couldn't get a single testimony.

Not one person had anything to say. And talking with one of the deacons, he said, oh, we had our Pentecost a month ago, you know. And at the same time, I was speaking to a group of pastors in Toronto, and one of the pastors in the discussion afterwards said, when we had a revival team come to our church, it was not the same church, it was another church in Toronto, he said several weeks ago, and he said, right now the church is as flat spiritually as the church could possibly be.

He said, I can't even preach on revival now, they don't want to hear about it. So then I made inquiries as to what went wrong, and here's what happened. The people who came shared their experience, how they met God in revival, and what God had been doing in their life, gave an invitation.

People came forward, and they cried, and they prayed, and they met God, but they had no instruction, and just sort of died. And we need to watch this carefully. You know, on the day of Pentecost, when Peter preached, ever notice his sermon? His sermon is one half, about one half quotations from the Bible.

He put as much Bible into it, Scripture into it, as he possibly could. And that's normal. When it comes, if you look at all the sermons, or sermonettes, in the book of Acts, you'll discover that there's a great deal, not so much they're not expounding the Scriptures, as they're perhaps pounding the Scriptures out.

I mean, they're quoting the Word of God. Now people say, what about Mars Hill? And I've read this and heard it a number of times, that Paul did not quote one single Bible verse. Well, I want to correct that.

He did. He quoted from Psalm 9, verse 8, when he said, God will judge the world in righteousness. He said that in Acts 17, that's a quotation from Psalm 9. And I went through that sermon of his very carefully, and found there were around twenty-five different things Paul said at Mars Hill, that are based squarely on the teaching of the Word of God.

It was not a Jewish congregation that knew the Word of God and were familiar with it. They were a group of Gentiles that probably knew nothing at all about the Word of God. And Paul accommodated himself to that.

But he did not neglect the Word of God. The Welsh Revival suffered in some respects afterwards because, during the Revival, there was practically no preaching of the Word of God at all. It was mostly singing.

Now Finney was one of the greatest revivalists, most of us would agree, in the history of the Church. And I think he overstated the case, but here's what he said. He said he never knew a singing revival to amount to anything.

I think he was prejudiced against this because of some experiences he had in churches over the years with the choir and whatnot. But this is what he said. What is my need? Is my need to be born again? Let's say it is.

Paul said, from a child you've known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith, which is in Christ Jesus. James said, 118, of his own will, he begat us, that is, he brought us to the birth by the Word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures. And Peter said, being born again by the Word of God, which lives and abides forever.

What is my need? To be clean as a Christian believer. Christ said, now you are clean through the Word which I have spoken unto you. And Paul said in Ephesians 5, Christ loved the Church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word.

By the Word, he said. What is my need? To stop sinning. Thy Word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee.

Is my need to overcome Satan? Am I struggling in this area? John wrote, young men, you are strong and the Word of God abides in you and you have overcome the wicked one. What is my need? Revival? Read Psalm 119, eleven times, there is a connection between the Word of God and God's quickening or reviving power. I will never forget, he wrote, thy precepts, for with them thou hast revived me.

There is a place called Mendoza in Argentina, I had a crusade there many years ago. Eight months after I got back to Canada, I got a letter from a man who went through the crusade and said in his letter, all those Bible verses you gave never meant a thing to me. But he said, the other night God wakened me and for hours he bombarded me with all those hundreds of Bible verses you gave us and God powerfully revived my spirit.

God's Word so desperately needed. Do I need to be free? David wrote, I will walk at liberty for I seek your precepts, your teachings. Do you wish you could praise God more? The Bible says a lot about it and Christians sometimes complain, well I have trouble doing that, I just don't feel like praising God.

Seven times a day, David wrote, do I praise thee because of thy righteous judgments? Remember Psalm 119 verse 13, it talks about the judgments of God's mouth and that's what David is referring to there. Seven times a day, he was able to praise God because of God's Word when he thought of it. What does my need, to have more joy? Thy words were found, Jeremiah wrote, and I did eat them and thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart.

I rejoice, David wrote, at thy Word as one that finds great spoil. Many times for myself when reading the Bible, I just have to stop. The joy of God touches my heart.

Jesus once said, in this do not rejoice that the spirits are subject unto you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven. That's enough to make me to praise my God and a thousand other things besides. More peace, great peace have they who love thy law and nothing shall offend them.

You want peace? Get into the Word of God, let it speak to your heart. Don't read it carelessly, read it carefully. Before you read it, ask God to speak to your heart.

He's the author, He's the interpreter. George Mueller said he learned more of the Word of God in three months than he learned in three years when he learned who the teacher was. And the teacher is the Spirit of God.

Do you feel a lack of love in your heart? You tolerate people, you don't really love them. We are taught of God, Paul said. We are taught of God to love one another.

How? By precept, by command and by example. Precept, 1 John 4, 7. Beloved, and the word means divinely loved ones. Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God.

And everyone that loves is born of God and knows God. He that loves not, knows not God. Would you get to heaven on that basis? You know, in 1 John, there are many places where reality in the Christian life is tied to having a heart filled with love.

Precept, command, and this is his commandment, John wrote, that we should believe on the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, which all we evangelicals manage to do. And then it says, and love one another, as he gave his commandment. He didn't say, and these are his commandments, although he gives us two.

And that tells me that the Holy Spirit is saying, you can't have one without the other. When Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus and the church at Colossae, he said to both, almost identical words, the meaning certainly identical. He said, since we heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and of the love which you have to all the saints, it has to go together.

Example, 1 John 3.16, Hereby we perceive the love of God, because he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. More faith? Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. There's no point to pray for faith and then neglect the Bible.

There are 4,000, pardon me, 7,487 promises in the Bible. I have encountered them, Herbert Locke here has, and he has a book called All the Promises of the Bible. I have it in my library.

All cataloged, indexed, all the work is done. But promises are used by God to create faith in men's hearts. And we have a wonderful example of that in Romans chapter 4. It says that Abraham, he did not stagger at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God, being fully persuaded that what he had promised, he was able also to perform.

I will cry unto God Most High, unto God that performs all things for me. He's the God who performs in answer to faith. And faith must be rooted in the Word of God.

You know, George Mueller, busy man that he was, was he busy? With Henry Craig, he was co-pastor of a church that had 1,200 people in fellowship. Well, that'd be enough to keep him busy the rest of his life. No, no, that's one of the things he did.

He fostered an organization, found an organization called the Scriptural Knowledge Institution, which sent money, literature, and men around the world in missions. He gave more money to Hudson Taylor for the work in China than any man or organization ever did. But his main business was looking after 2,000 orphans on Ashley Downs, just outside Bristol, England, a staff of several hundred.

How did he get all this done? He said, if I don't spend three hours a day in prayer, I can't get the work done. And on top of that, he spent an hour with his wife praying every day. And on top of that, dear people, he read the Bible through from cover to cover 200 times.

200 times, 100 times on his knees, if you please. And his life was just saturated with the Word of God. When he was 70, he began making world tours.

And God greatly used him in churches around the world. Charles Spurgeon said he learned so much about faith from George Mueller. He loved to spend time with him because he said he has faith like a little child.

God said it, I believe it, that settles it. Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees and looks to God alone. Laughs at impossibilities and cries, it shall be done.

And cries, it shall be done. And cries, it shall be done. Laughs at impossibilities and cries, it shall be done.

Do you wish you prayed more than you do? Well, when you stop to remember that there are 1,500 references to prayer in the Bible, and probably 600 prayers, then you can't read the Bible without being challenged to pray. You read something like this, I will therefore let men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting. Or be anxious for nothing but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.

Or perhaps, I exhort therefore that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks be made for all men. Evening and morning and noon will I pray and cry loud, and He'll hear my voice. And on and on.

Prayer, what else do I need? Anything else you can think of? Do I need to be a successful soul winner? Remember Philip, in the book of Acts? He got clear guidance from God. God said, join yourself to this chariot. There were probably many chariots bumping along that road.

He didn't know where to go, what to do, but God had led him there. So he goes beside the chariot, he's moving along, he's trotting along beside. He hears a fellow reading out loud from the book of Isaiah, chapter 53.

And he said to the man, do you understand what you're reading? He said, how can I, except some man should guide me. And he asked Philip to come up, and so Philip jumped up in the chariot, and it says, he began at the same scripture and preached unto him Jesus. Spurgeon, walking along a beach one night, a beautiful starry night with a friend.

And Spurgeon suddenly said to his friend, give me a scripture verse, and I'll preach you a sermon. So the fellow thought, I'll get a tough one. Ah, he thought of a verse in 1 Corinthians 15.

He got the verse from looking at the stars, really. Star, one star differs from another star in glory. He gave him the verse.

He said, Spurgeon stepped back, and for half an hour, he preached like there was 10,000 people hanging on every word. The fellow said he'd never heard anything like it. And it was all about Jesus, the morning star.

Spurgeon was full of the Word of God. Somebody said his blood was Bibli, and I could believe it, having read over the years many of his sermons. Do I need light? The entrance of Thy Word gives light.

It gives understanding to the simple. Thy Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. When I need a light, I should know where to go.

And if I've been spending the kind of time with the Word of God I should have been, I may not even have to go directly to it. It'll come to my mind. You know, in Deuteronomy 17, the kings of Israel were instructed that they were to handwrite a copy of the Law of Moses.

When I compared the Law of Moses with the New Testament, it's not quite as long as the New Testament, maybe two-thirds. I was so challenged by that, I decided to write up my own copy of the Bible. It took me about two years to do the New Testament, because I only did this kind of work when I was at home.

I was so blessed by that. Well, I've got Proverbs done now, and 40 chapters in the Psalms, and some other portions in the Old Testament. I plan on finishing the whole thing.

Now, I didn't dare write mine out because not even an angel could decipher my handwriting. So I used a typewriter. I'm sure they were invented for people like me.

Well, what a blessing, you know. When you're doing something like this, you have to notice absolutely every word, every sentence. I would challenge you--Dale Wheeler's doing this.

He's done all of the major books of the Old Testament handwriting, not using a typewriter. He's working on the New Testament as well. People, it's a great thing.

I would challenge you to think about it. Start with a short book, like 2 John or 3 John, then go to 1 John, then 1 Peter, 2 Peter, and shorter books like that, before you get into longer books like Hebrews or Romans, or into Acts and the Gospels. It's a great experience.

The kings of Israel were supposed to do this so that their hearts would not be lifted up above their brethren. Pride. And a few other reasons given there in Deuteronomy chapter 17.

Do you need counsel? Thy testimonies are the men of my counsel, David wrote. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory, Psalm 73. Who is a wonderful counselor? You know, in the Hebrew, there's no comma between wonderful and counselor.

It's not wonderful comma counselor. It's wonderful counselor, mighty God, everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Jesus Christ has the answer, dear people.

In the book of Job, there's a section that goes like this. It says, and I mentioned that in one of the pre-service meetings, He never, He never takes His eyes off the righteous. That can be comforting or disturbing, depending on how I'm living.

What a thought. He never, never, ever takes His eyes off the Christian believers. He goes on to say, but with kings are they on the throne.

And it goes on to say, they are exalted. And we are exalted in Christ, seated with Christ. And then comes an if.

And if they be bound in fetters and held in cords of affliction, then what? Then He shows them their work and their transgressions that they have exceeded. And He opens their ear to discipline. And He commands that they return from iniquity.

Don't tell me God isn't talking to you about your problem. People say, I've prayed fifty times about this and God doesn't say a thing. I don't believe it for one moment.

What is happening is, God is speaking, but He's saying things I don't want to hear. So I turn my ears off and then pretend God is not speaking at all. What did it say? He shows them their work and their transgressions.

He shows us and He commands that we return from iniquity. If we obey, we're blessed. If we don't, we're cursed.

What is my need? Do you have a need for wisdom, personal wisdom? Well, we can think of James 1, 5, 8, if you lack wisdom, ask of God. But David wrote, he said he had more wisdom than his adversaries because God, He said, He put it this way, Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than my enemies, than my teachers rather. I have more understanding than the ancients because I seek your precepts.

Precepts, that's in Psalm 119 also. Wisdom, if you read the Bible, if you know the Bible, you're a wise person. You've got wisdom enough from the Word of God to last you through all of life.

Precepts, commandments, examples, as we said before, they're all here. You know, sometimes we run around the country. I wonder why it is that in North America, we probably have 30 times as many psychiatrists and psychologists as they have in any other Western country.

Why is that? Why is it that in North America, in comparison, for example, to Japan, for every 300 lawyers they have in Japan, we have 10,000 in Canada and the United States. I ask the question again, why is that? There's something peculiar about our society. There's something wrong about our society.

And we Christians are caught up to quite an extent in some of these problems when we need not be. I say again, we've all the answers we need in the Word of God. If we would come to our God, if He's waiting to do this, if He does indeed show us our work, if He does indeed show us our transgressions, then He expects us to deal with them.

Because after all, you know, the first book of the Bible, Genesis, ends with the phrase, a coffin in Egypt. That's not very inspiring. And the last word of the Old Testament in Malachi is the word curse.

But the New Testament, Jesus came. Jesus came. And Paul wrote that God has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things, in Jesus Christ.

Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law being made a curse for us, for it is written, cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree. He did this, Paul said, so that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles. That we might receive the promise of the Holy Spirit through faith.

Through faith. What is my need? To have a missionary burden. Then read Matthew chapter 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, John chapter 20.

The last chapter of the book of Romans and other places in Acts. And if I can read all of this and not get burdened permissions, then there's obviously something wrong. What is my need? To give more? Billy Sunday used to say, some Christians put a nickel on the collection plate and then they sing, God be with you till we meet again.

Do you have trouble giving? Do you grudge to give? You do it, but all you can think of are a hundred things you could spend that money on. God loves a cheerful giver. Again, the Bible says, Honor the Lord with your substance and with the firstfruits of all your increase, so shall your barns be filled with plenty, and your presses shall burst out with new wine.

I have a book in my library, it's an old book, it's called The Whole Tide. The author was a man called Thompson. He gave some interesting case histories in there.

One was a man, not a Christian, who heard about that. You know, the only place in the Bible where God says, Prove me, is in Malachi chapter 3. God says, Prove me, it's a challenge, a dare. You tithe, I'll respond with blessings.

There won't be room enough to receive it. And this sinner read or heard this and decided to test it out. And he started giving a tenth of his income to the church.

His business was so blessed, he became a Christian in less than two months. I can understand that. Sometimes people say, Well, wait a minute, God doesn't honor sinners.

Well, what about Cornelius? He was praying. God heard him. Some very nice things were said about him, even before he became a believer in Christ.

Sinners may sometimes be earnestly seeking God. That's a totally different thing than a sinner that's walking in sin, loving his sin, hating the Bible, hating God, hating Christ. That's another matter entirely.

Give, Christ said in Luke chapter 6, Give, and it shall be given unto you good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For if the same measure that you meet or give withal, it shall be measured to you again. And then in 2 Corinthians chapter 9, Paul said he was talking about giving, not about farming.

This I say, He who sows sparingly shall reap also sparingly. He that sows bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according to the purpose of his heart shall let him give, not grudgingly or out of necessity.

For God loves the cheerful giver. And the last verse, it is a marvelous thought. It goes like this, the next verse.

And God is able, and God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work. What is he saying? He's saying God is able to give you money to take care of His work. The reason why He doesn't give us more is because He knows we're going to hang on to it.

Give a little here and a little there. And hang on to all we can, because we're afraid that a rainy day is going to come. Don't you suppose God knows about the rainy day that might come? Of course He does.

Are His promises no longer valid when a rainy day comes? Of course they are. Do you want a contrast? In India, I met a young man who was called to be a pastor, and a church had invited him to become a pastor, but he had to wait six months. So I asked some of the questions we sometimes ask here in North America.

I said, where will you stay? Will you have a house, a parsonage or something? No, no, no. He said, no, no. He said, we didn't even talk about that.

He said, they're very poor. And I hope somebody has a room and a house. Under a platform, I've done that before.

Oh, oh. What about your salary? Salary? Well, what will they pay you? We didn't talk about that. They don't have much money, and I never mentioned that at all.

Well, I knew he wouldn't have a car, so I said, will you have a bicycle or a donkey or something to ride around on? No, no. He said, I'll just walk. So I said, how big a library do you have? How many books? And he held it up.

A little tattered Bible falling apart, four by six inches. And dear people, he could hardly wait to go. Do you want a good North American contrast? A pastor was asked to candidate in a certain church.

He came, and he preached, and they liked him. And the board met with him to talk about the details. They came to salary.

He said, well, the church I'm in now are paying me \$45,000 a year, and I cannot live on a dollar less than that. I'm sorry. Well, they really couldn't afford to pay him that much, but they liked him and wanted him, so they called him.

And for months, if not years, they were running in the red, trying to make this up. I say to myself, when these two pastors stand before God, people, how is it going to be? And somebody is probably saying, okay, that's India. We're living in Canada.

True enough? True enough? What about the spirit in the heart of these men? We got some money. We got them a new bicycle. We got them a new Bible.

We got them some books, a concordance. People, he just about fainted dead away. He couldn't believe it.

But these are things we take for granted. The place of the Word of God. If you experience revival in your heart, be very careful.

Do not go by feelings. You must go by faith. There was a girl in New Brunswick.

She sold books on the road for a bookstore, and she experienced a powerful revival in some meetings a friend of mine had in New Brunswick. For six months, people said who knew her, she was absolutely transformed. She was kicking the clouds out of the sky.

Then you know what happened? She woke up one morning, and she was flat as can be. There was no feeling of joy in her soul anywhere. And she thought she had sinned against God, dropped to her knees, and wept and cried and said, God, what is it? And God never said a word.

And she moped around for weeks. Then I had meetings in the area, and she came to meetings and came for counseling, and she was desperate to get these good feelings back again. I said, all right, let's turn to Isaiah chapter 50, and we did.

And I had to read this verse. Who is among you that fears the Lord? Do you fear the Lord? Yes, she said, I do. That obeys the voice of his servant.

Well, I do that, she said, that walks in darkness and has no light. And she said, what? That's me. I should read on.

It says, let him trust in the name of the Lord and stay upon his God. If there are no feelings at all, trust in the name of God. The name of God, dear people, it stands for God himself, his faithfulness, and all that goes along with that.

He hasn't forgotten you. I told her, I said, you've had a feeling walk for six months. God wants you to have a faith walk now.

We walk by faith, not by sight. And so, people, faith is faith, no matter how you feel. What has God said? And we take our stand on what God said.

And then we can never go wrong when this happens.

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