

(Revival Conference 2008 Atlanta) Brent Williamson Interview

by Brent Williamson

This sermon emphasizes the journey of genuine salvation, the importance of humility and brokenness before God, the need for revival through prayer and seeking God's presence, and the call to return to the core message of the cross and the kingdom of God. It highlights the historical impact of revival, the role of prayer in revival, and the urgency for a true awakening in the church today.

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 7:14, 1 Corinthians 1:18, James 5:16, Matthew 6:6, Mark 1:15, Psalm 51:17, Acts 3:19, Ephesians 5:14, Luke 10:27, Malachi 3:6

Topics: "Genuine Salvation", "Revival through Prayer"

Description

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Transcript

My name is Brent Williamson, and I'm 36 years old. I was born and raised in Dayton, Ohio. I was saved in my early 20s, but then I had a false salvation when I was 19 years old.

And what happened when I was in that church, and I wanted to share this because this is something of a passion and a burn upon my heart, that when I was going to a church and the pastor called me to the front and prayed over me and had all the elders and everybody there praying over me. They said, after the prayer, Brent, do you accept Jesus? Well, I said yes, because I was embarrassed and I had nothing else to say, but yes, everybody else wanted me to say yes. So I wasn't born and raised in church, so I thought that was appropriate thing to say, yes, and so I believe I was saved from that point.

And then from there on, I did go back to my old ways. I never experienced a genuine salvation. And so finally, long story short, I ended up back in the old ways.

I got genuinely saved, as I said, in my early 20s. But then from there, I met a godly woman who was born and raised in church herself. Her dad was a pastor.

And then I was called to preach, and I had that burden to preach. And from that point on, I began seeking out God with all my heart and finding out what direction He had for me. And I began preaching, and some opportunities came open to preach in nursing homes.

And so I did. And then from that point, I got privileged and honored to meet a godly man. I was roughly about 24 years old, and I wasn't pastoring yet, just beginning my ministry.

And I walked up to him, and I can vividly remember asking him after he preached a camp meeting. And I said, Brother, I'm a new preacher. What books would you recommend, besides the Bible, to read? And immediately, he wrote down on a piece of paper, and he said on that paper, E. M. Bounds, R. A. Torrey, and A. W. Tozer.

And I can still remember seeing that piece of paper. And I looked at that piece of paper, and I said, What books? And he said, Every one of them. And from that point on, I read every book I could possibly get my hands on.

And then from that point on, I got introduced to a man named Leonard Ravenhill. And Leonard Ravenhill was someone that really changed my life, even though at the point, Leonard was passed on and went with the Lord by that time. And I had a friend of mine who said, I have found a book that's 200,000 books.

I can remember him saying it today. And I said, Really? He said, Oh, yeah. He said, If you see this book, you've got to get it, Brent.

And he said, It's Why Revival Terry's by a man named Leonard Ravenhill. I said, I've never heard of him. He said, If you see it, get it.

And one day I was in a bookstore, and I bought it, and I saw it. I wasn't looking for it. And I remember vividly that I got to the third page of that book, and I was on my face before God.

And it changed my life from that point on. And from that point, I began seeking the deeper life and what God would have me to do. One of my burdens I have, and I guess a frustration, is the fact that the youth of today, and a lot of people today in church, do not know what revival is.

They have no idea what revival could produce, or has produced in the past, or what God is capable of doing, if we call out unto him, if we cry to him, if we humble ourselves. And in one instance, or many instances, in the historical accounts of revival, just not in the book of Acts, or we get into the Old Testament, we see Ahab, and we see all these other kings humbling themselves before God, and God begins to move, and God begins to pour out his spirit. And even after the book of Acts, we find instances of historical accounts of revival, when the church humbles herself.

And yeah, we talk about 2 Chronicles 7-14 so many times in revival, but this exactly is the antidote, I believe, is humility, brokenness before God. God longs and loves to see his people broken and humble before him, not pride and arrogant, but humble. And that's what I want to see so bad in the church.

The church is so prideful, so arrogant today in America. She's so far above what God...she's wise. She's too wise.

And she needs to humble herself before God and say, you are the great and mighty God. You are the chief. The apostle Paul says, Christ shall have preeminence over all things in the church, all things.

And we need to get back to that, where Christ is the head, the genuine head of the church. Man is not. The pastor is not.

No man is. Jesus Christ is the head of the church. And we're in a dark period right now in the United States.

And I know right now there is real revivals going on in different parts of the world. China is one of them. China is having great news of God in the underground church.

I've got some brothers out there right now I've been talking with. There is great power over there right now. They're seeing persecution, but they're growing.

They have no Bibles. The pastors have hardly any Bibles at all, but they have the power of God. And they're growing.

Some of these Christians are being shipped out. They don't know where they're taking them to. They're meeting in undisclosed locations at midnight, four o'clock in the morning, just to have church.

There it is. There is where God is at right now. We can talk about Mexico.

My father-in-law was in Mexico a number of years ago with this church. And he remembered vividly. And he said, Brent, when I went to a tent meeting they had there in Mexico, these poor Mexicans, it was a tent.

There was no carpet. There was no pavement of concrete. When they came in the church on a Sunday, they all knelt down in their seats on the dirt floor.

And he said, literally, it wasn't grass. It was pure dirt. And every one of them knelt down and prayed.

Not no grandma prayer, but they prayed through before they ever sat down in their seat. And he said, Brent, God came into that tent. He said he remembered praying and worshiping God.

And his hands were lifted in the air. And next thing you know, he looked at his clock or his watch, and it was three o'clock in the afternoon. They just had church for four hours in a blink of an eye.

In every instance of revival, when God shows up, we lose track of time. When people begin watching their clocks and looking at their watches, we know that God's not there. Because when God shows up, we have eternity involved.

When eternity is involved, heaven has come down, and all we're caught up is in God himself. And that's what church should be about, being caught up in Jesus Christ and his glory to glorify him. And Jesus Christ will show up to a people who are humble and broken and long for him.

And that's what revival is all about. And we have, in remembering back in between the 5th century and the 13th century of revival, there was a great darkness back then. There was a dark period where there was very little writings of revival, very little moves of God.

There was a little trickle here and there, but very little. And what I see in my personal belief is that we're in that dark period right now. We haven't seen a real revival.

I'm talking a nationwide revival where the bars shut down, the taverns shut down, where people are longing to go to church, the lights are not shutting off in the sanctuary. People are just mesmerized by the

power of God. All they want to do is be together, praying and seeking the face of God, repenting.

We're not seeing that today. We're seeing the American church coming up with every fancy thing it can find under the sun to draw people to a church. When the most powerful, attractive thing we can find is God himself.

When John the Baptist was in the middle of the desert, he didn't have no highway intersection he located his church by. He was out there in the middle of the desert. And the Bible says regions from all around came to hear him preach.

Why? Because he was baptized with the Holy Spirit. He had the power of God upon him. And that's where we need to get back to is the power of God.

Again, going back with all the historical accounts of revival, we can get past this dark period if we just humble ourselves and cry out to God and ask God for mercy. He's a merciful God. If we just will do that.

One thing we're doing is we're inviting people to come into a building rather than inviting people to come to Christ. If you study history, when God begins to move in a genuine revival anytime in history, they're not pushing people to get into four walls. They're not pushing people to get into a building of what we call the church building.

When revival comes and God comes down in all his glory and power, people are inviting them to the kingdom of God, Jesus Christ himself. If you study the history of Christ, he never tried to get people into the temple. He never tried to get people into a physical building.

He tried and preached the kingdom of God to them. And that's where we're so off today. We're trying to invite people.

And now we call it witnessing the evangelical way today. The American evangelical witnessing opportunity is to say, hey, come to church on Sunday. Well, that's not what Jesus told us to do.

He told us to get them to come into the kingdom of God. We can't save them, but we were told to lead them to the kingdom. Jesus, again, preached the kingdom of God.

And that's our job as Christians to preach his kingdom and lead them in that direction. That is where it all boils down to, is we have to get people seeing God and God himself, not into a fancy building, not into anything else, but God himself. We have to get back to the preaching of the cross of Jesus Christ.

The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 1.19, for the preaching of the cross is foolishness unto them that are perishing, but unto the wise is the power of God. We've got to get back to the genuine preaching of the cross of Jesus Christ. We have to get back to the wrath of God.

We hear love, love, love, but there's a balance there. There is the wrath of God. You mentioned the wrath of God today in the church and you'd be kicked out.

And here just recently in my own personal devotional reading time, I've been rereading some of the sermons of Jonathan Edwards back in the 1700s. And that's some of the historical council revival. And it also sparks my mind about Jonathan Edwards when he preached that awesome message, sinners in the hands of an angry God.

One thing we never hear about, the man spent three days and three nights in prayer and fasting before he ever preached that message. He didn't preach. He preached it from his notes.

I know a lot of us already know this, but the man was anointed by God because he spent time with God. He humbled himself before he even preached that message. And you study history of those old sermons and you never would ever think a sermon like that could ever be preached in the American church.

Because my personal belief is you preach a sermon like that today, Jonathan Edwards or Wesley or Finney or Whitfield, you'd be kicked out of the church. They say you're too hard and you're legalistic. Well, that's what they blamed those guys back then for, being legalistic and too hard.

But we've come to the place where we say the cross is love. The cross also means the wrath of God too. It means love.

Yeah, Jesus died, blood gave his life for us, but he was forsaken of God. He had to drink that cup and that cup was the wrath of God. He drank that cup and he was forsaken.

And we have to get back to genuine preaching of the cross of Jesus Christ and show people what it really means and what happens when we get nailed to that cross, that old rugged cross. Prayer is a key to revival. I mentioned humility, but prayer has and always will be a key to genuine revival.

Anytime you ever read about revival in all history, you see people praying earnestly. You see people spending time earnestly seeking God for revival. And any man of God that you've ever read about in history, no matter who he was or where his background is from, every great man of God had a great prayer life.

You can study it. I have studied it and you see their intense prayer life. They spent hours with God.

Well, I got the privilege of speaking with Martha Ravenhill. She said, Leonard Ravenhill spent anywhere from eight to 10 hours a day in prayer. We never hear about that kind of stuff.

And I remember what Paul Ravenhill told me. Paul Ravenhill said, he said, Brent, prayer is not measured by time. Prayer is measured by the intensity.

For the Bible says the fervent effectual prayer of a righteous man avails much. It's the intense prayer. And I, one time in my life, I got caught up in making a time in idle.

How much time can I spend with God? It's not about that. It's about seeking God with all of our heart. God is a rewarder of them who seek him diligently, not half-hearted, but fervently and intensely.

Prayer is measured by, again, not by time, but by the intensity. We see men of Leonard Ravenhill spending eight to 10 hours a day in prayer. We see all kinds of men.

I could talk about hours of prayer lives of men that I've studied. We see them spending many, many hours in prayer. But we have to remember also not to get caught up in their time of prayer.

But going back, we have to see it was the passion of their heart for revival or whatever they were praying for. I remember one time when Martha Ravenhill, again, on one occasion told me about Leonard. She said, no one hardly knows what I'm about to tell you about Leonard.

And she said, every person that Leonard prayed for that had cancer was healed, was healed. We all know Leonard Ravenhill was not a prosperity preacher by any means. He's a very humble man of God.

But prayer can do many things because it's through God. And if we seek God with all of our heart, and we find where God is, and that's through prayer. I thought about the parable of Jesus when he said, the man that traveled off to a far-off country, and he's speaking about heaven.

In a sense, in the same way, that's what we're doing with prayer. We're traveling to that far-off country. We're traveling to get to God.

And sometimes we have to pray to pray. We have to pray through. And that's something that we haven't heard about a lot.

They used to do in old times past. But we have to get back to the genuine seeking God for revival through prayer, through fasting. And that's where God is.

God is looking for a man that's after his own heart. And that's a man of brokenness, a man of humility. Ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth was written by the apostle Paul, according to the last days.

We are in that. We've been in that point for many years now. We have so much teaching on revival.

We have so much teaching on faith and holiness and healing. We have so much knowledge, and we're not doing what we've learned. Ever learning, but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

We have everything at this very moment as Christians. We have everything God has designed us to have. We have the power of God.

We have the word of God. We have the prayer of faith. We have everything there if we just go what we've learned and do what God has told us to do.

We don't need any, we don't need one more conference. We don't need one more seminar. That's the last thing we need.

We just need to do what God has told us to do. As Mary said herself, whatever he sayeth, do it. We will never fulfill the great commission until we fulfill the great commandments.

And I hope you take that to heart because that's something that's burning upon my heart. We have to get back to loving the Lord our God. Once a person genuinely loves the Lord supremely with everything in them, then it's going to drive them to go out into the highways and the byways and to witness.

And no longer are we going to be meeting preachers and trying to kick our people out the door to tell them, hey, you need to be witnessing and sharing your faith. There's going to be something natural within them wanting to speak about the first love, and that's Jesus Christ. And that's another revival we need, a revival of witnessing, but it's a revival of loving the Lord our God with all your heart, strength, mind, and soul.

One thing also I wanted to share with a burden of mine is I hear so many people call revival, or we had a revival last Sunday, or we're going to have a revival, or we just experienced a revival in our church, and they have this trickle effect. And because we haven't had a genuine revival in so many years, almost anything, any wind blows through, we call revival. And I remember what A.W. Tozer said years ago.

He said, one hot day doesn't make a summer, and one hot day doesn't make a revival. We need something that's genuine. And again, we've heard it before, but I'll say it again.

It's when the lights don't shut off in the sanctuary is a good sign that God has showed up. And my whole point to everything that I've said today is God showing up is our greatest need. We just need God to show up.

We need genuine preaching of regeneration again. We need to see people genuinely born of his spirit. We need to see people truly praying again.

We need to have that true church, a house of prayer again. We need to see genuine holiness preached again. We still need the love of God more than ever, yes.

But again, we need also the fine balance that God is angry with the wicked every day. And one thing I heard years ago, and I read that blessed my heart, was what Madam Guion said. It was a prayer by Madam Guion.

It's very short. It's very quick, but I hope you can write this down and put it into the tablets of your own heart like I have mine. And she said this, and it was a prayer.

Lord, not some of me and some of thee, but all of thee and none of me is my plea.

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