

(Christian History) 19. the Historical Phenomenon of Revival

by David Guzik

Revival is a work of God among believers that restores life and vitality to the church, marked by a remarkable sense of the presence of God, unusual interest in the things of God, and a great work of conviction of sin and cleansing among God's people.

Scripture: Matthew 5:16, Acts 2:42, Romans 12:10, Ephesians 4:32, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, James 1:22, 1 Peter 3:15

Topics: "Revival History", "Spiritual Awakening"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the transformative experience of John Wesley, who found personal salvation after visiting a Moravian chapel on Aldersgate Street in London. This encounter ignited a passion in Wesley, leading him to preach throughout England and establish religious societies inspired by the Moravians. The speaker also mentions a remarkable conversion story of a tribal chief who destroyed idols and witnessed a powerful work of conversion among his tribe. Additionally, the sermon touches on the third great awakening, with some considering it to be the greatest revival ever, and highlights the impactful preaching of George Whitfield and the role of John Wesley in the movement.

Transcript

In the last two lectures that we spend on this series, I want to give attention to a subject that's really been of interest to me over the last five or six years. I've just developed a deeper and deeper interest in it in that period, and it's the subject of the historical phenomenon of revival. When I hear the word revival, a lot of the associations that come into my mind is some sweaty evangelist working in a crummy tent with a sawdust floor and screaming at people to get right with God, and just sort of that kind of thing.

But really, if you take a look at it, the idea of revival can be understood in two senses. Of course, the term can be used to refer to a week or longer series of meetings, a special series of meetings that a church would have. But in a historical context, revival should be understood as a phenomenon that restores life and vitality to the church.

In this sense, revival is not conversion or awakening. Those are the outflow or partners of revival. You see, you can't revive something unless it's already been alive once, right? And so revival, most pointedly in its most technical definition, it is a work that God does among believers.

If you really want to get technical, you can make a distinction between revival that happens among believers and awakening that happens among unbelievers. And this is sort of an idea. Now, I believe it's the same outpouring of the Spirit that can result in this work of revival among believers and the work of awakening among unbelievers, but I think we need to be distinct in that terminology.

Revival, that is a true outpouring of the Holy Spirit of God, a true awakening is an amazing thing. It's not the same as a good or an effective evangelistic crusade or campaign. Now, praise God for good and effective evangelistic campaigns and works.

I mean, we're very thankful for that. Those are good and fine in their own right. But revival is different.

Revival often sees, number one, a remarkable sense of the presence of God. This is sensed by both the converted and the unconverted often. Secondly, we can say revival is marked by an unusual interest in the things of God to the neglect of otherwise normal activities and duties.

When I was a boy, I think I was about, oh, I must have been about 14, maybe 15 years old when my family moved from the Inland Empire in Southern California to Ventura. And I loved living in Ventura. And it was the first time that I ever lived around the beach and people who surf.

And when you're around people who surf a lot, you kind of learn something about the surfer subculture. And I, myself, being a surfer, I mean, I understood something about it, something of this attitude, where basically every really good surfer that I ever knew in my life--and I can't say this is a law, but it's just kind of a general principle--every good surfer that I ever knew in my life had a period in their time, a period in their life, where basically their only real concern in life was surfing. Oh, they might go to school.

They might have a job. But those things would immediately be put on the back burner when the surf was up. And so, I mean, you kind of got used to it.

There would be a particular guy at work. Well, why isn't he at work today? Oh, there's a good swell in. And people, oh, oh, okay.

You know, now people wouldn't like it. The guy may very well get fired from his job for that. But they understood the equation.

This guy to this life, surfing is more important to him than work or school or whatever. So when the surf's up, other things in his life get put on hold, and he devotes himself to the surf. That is analogous to what happens in a season of revival.

People are so taken with the presence of the Spirit of God and the activity of the Spirit of God that they feel that everything else in their life is unimportant by comparison. It's sort of for this reason that times of revival can't go on forever, because people just neglect everything else in their life just to be in this unique outpouring of the presence of God. Third, revival sees an evident urgency for getting right with God.

Sinners seek the evangelist more than evangelists seeking the sinner. Fourth, times of revival see a great work of conviction of sin and cleansing among God's people. And then finally, there is a high level of experience and participation from lay people.

Revivals may have an element of leaders in the Christian community being involved and prominent and such, but at their core they usually tend to be lay movements. Just the common people are being used of

God in a wonderful and a remarkable way. Now when you study the phenomenon historically, and might I say there's a lot of debate about the list that I want to show to you right now.

This list could be debated by a lot of different people. Some people could say that there were more great revivals than this. Some people would say that there were fewer great revivals than this.

People don't use the same terminology, the same names, and so you might be doing your own research on the subject and find something quite different from the list that I'm putting before you right now. But I think it's important that I've, look I've just gone through it and this is the list that I've come up with from my research, talking about six notable periods of revival. The first one I would call the first great awakening from 1727 onwards.

That was marked by Herrnhut, that's a place in Germany where the revival started, by Wesley, by Whitfield, and by Brainerd. Again that's not meant to be an exhaustive list at all, that's just a few highlights, I'm leaving out a ton of course. Secondly we could talk about the second great awakening, that's from 1792 onwards, Jonathan Edwards, James McGrady, camp meetings, the second great awakening.

Third you have the resurgence of 1830. Now you might ask what in my terminology is the difference between an awakening and a resurgence? I would say this, before an awakening the spiritual tide is very low. Do you understand what I mean by that? There's a very low level of spirituality.

But I would say that the tide doesn't necessarily go out before a resurgence. In other words, the society, the culture, the church is still sort of riding on the effects, oh diminished of course, but it hasn't bottomed out. It's declining but nowhere near the bottom when it has another resurgence back up.

That's the distinction I would make between an awakening and a resurgence. So that's the resurgence of 1830 marked by men like Finney, Darby, Mueller, and great missionary effort. Then number four I would put the third great awakening, between 1857 and 1862.

That's marked by prayer meetings and William Booth and Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Then fifthly you would have the resurgence of 1880. Again another time where it didn't really bottom out but it just sort of surged up again.

That would be marked by Moody, Billy Sunday, and Andrew Murray. And then finally I put number six, the Welsh and worldwide revival between 1904 and 1910 marked by Evan Roberts and the Pentecostal movement. I sort of give this a different title because in some ways it was a resurgence.

You could say that the tide never really went out between the resurgence of 1880 and the Welsh and worldwide revival, but the Welsh and worldwide revival is so unique that I sort of gave it its own name. Now what we're going to do in this particular lecture is pay attention to this first great awakening and sort of look at the history of it because I think there's lessons in that first great awakening that are very instructive for us. And so if we want to focus in on the first great awakening we could take a look first of all just with an overview.

In that period, 1727 onwards, you know maybe you're thinking for five years, ten years the work really had itself in strength. First of all there were 150 new congregational churches began in a 20-year period. 30,000 were added to the church between 1740 and 1742.

The moral results were equally noticeable. Nine university colleges were established in the colonies. You know these are the days when Harvard and Yale and these other very old Ivy League colleges in the American colonies were founded.

The wild frontier society in America was, for at least at that time, thoroughly Christianized. An early missionary desire began to emerge. Well how did it happen? How from a historical context did this awakening happen? And I know one thing you could say is you could just say, well it was the Spirit of God.

And of course it was the Spirit of God. I don't mean to diminish that one bit, but yet it's interesting to see the details of how the Spirit of God moved throughout history. And so to learn that, we have to go back actually much earlier than 1727, back to the time of the rise of Pietism and a man named Philip Jacob Spenner.

Now I've mentioned Spenner in an earlier lecture without giving you really any explanation of him, but you have to understand first of all his times. He was born in 1635, which would have put him approximately towards the end of the Thirty Years' War. So he was a boy when the Thirty Years' War was ending.

And it's hard to underestimate what a trauma the Thirty Years' War was upon Europe in general and Germany in particular. It's estimated that, again, that anywhere from 20 to 33 percent of the German population was left dead by this generation of war, famine, plague, and disaster that came upon the continent. Now though the peace meant the end at last of significant European religious wars, at the end of the war Germany and all of Europe was at a very low spiritual state.

Well God used this man, Philip Jacob Spenner, to make a difference. He was born in sort of the western region of France, excuse me, that would be the eastern region of France, the western area of what today is Germany, and he was wonderfully converted during his university studies and eventually he became a pastor in Frankfurt in the year 1666. At Frankfurt he reformed religious instruction by preaching on whole books of the Bible.

Again, what a wonderful thing we see. Isn't it remarkable as we've gone through these many lectures in church history how often we see God moving in a remarkable way when preachers just start preaching the Bible. Anyway, at Frankfurt he reformed religious instruction by preaching on whole books of the Bible, restoring the confirmation service, and by setting aside days of fasting and prayer.

He set up small groups within the church where pastors and laymen met to study the Bible and pray together for mutual edification. Now does that sound reminiscent to you of what Luther wanted to see way back in his day, 150 years before the time of Spenner? Well of course it does. Luther had in mind this believer's service where you would just gather together the people who really were converted and really wanted to go for it in their relationship with the Lord.

Well Spenner actually put it into place. So Spenner saw these small groups as what you might call a church within the church, which would help the pastors in his spiritual duties and return the church to the spiritual level of early Christian communities. He wrote the book Pious Desires in 1675 and he set forth the basic pietistic doctrines or the basic pietistic philosophy.

This is where they were. Number one, the central importance of Bible study. Number two, the restoration of the priesthood of all believers.

Number three, the true faith expressed not in knowing but in deeds of love to one's neighbor. Number four, avoidance of theological disputation. Number five, emphasis upon the spiritual life and devotional literature in ministers.

And then lastly, preaching that should awaken faith and its fruits in the hearers. His emphasis on the new birth and especially the way he lived it out in his life effectively undermined the attitude of sort of scholastic orthodoxy in German Lutheranism of his day. To be honest, in his day German Lutheranism had become far too academic, far too just interested in theological disputes and discussions and they weren't bringing the Bible down to the common man.

Now after Spenner, the man who succeeded him, August Hermann Franke, was the informal leader of the pietistic movement. He was born in Lübeck and he studied at Erfurt and Kiel and became the professor of Hebrew at Leipzig in 1684. He was converted in 1687 and he began to conduct Bible classes at Leipzig which led to a revival among both students and townspeople.

When the faculty of the university objected to his religious work he left the university and eventually became a professor at the University of Halle in 1692. He helped to make Halle a center of piety and missionary enthusiasm. He also established a Bible society.

Now Spenner, Franke, and the pietistic movement all had a very significant influence on the next man we want to consider, Niklas Ludwig Count von Zinzendorf. Again we talked a little bit about his history in a previous lecture, let me just repeat it, that his father was a high government official in Saxony but his father died when Zinzendorf was only six weeks old. So he was brought up by his grandmother who was actually a friend of Jacob Spenner and a follower of pietism.

So Spenner had a great influence on Zinzendorf through the grandmother. When he was 10 years old Zinzendorf was sent to Augustus Franke's school at Halle. He and five other Christian boys founded a club that they called, as I said before, the Order of the Grain of Mustard Seed where they pledged themselves to good works and to spreading the gospel.

So he studied law at the universities of Wittenberg and Utrecht and on 1719, during this grand tour of Europe, he saw this painting in the art gallery in Dusseldorf that changed his life. This painting of Jesus titled Eche Homo, Behold the Man, and underneath was written, All this I have did for you, what are you doing for me? So again he decided to leave his job of government service and give himself the full-time Christian service. Now he got connected with a group of people named the Moravians.

Who were the Moravians? Well the Moravians, excuse me, Moravia is a region in central Europe located in what is today the eastern part of the Czech Republic. It takes its name from the Morava River that runs through the region. It's just to the east of Bohemia which a hundred years before Luther was the location of a substantial reformation work under the leadership of John Hus.

We remember John Hus, we remember what happened to him. Well when John Hus was cruelly martyred at the hands of the Roman Catholic officials, you know, his followers didn't just disappear off the face of the earth. After the death of John Hus, those who followed his teachings organized what was called the United Brethren, and this group influenced Luther.

He clarified his own evangelical position through a study of the Moravian confessions. During the 16th century they spread beyond Bohemia and beyond Moravia into Poland, into East Prussia, into Hungary.

But the intolerance of the Thirty Years' War fell heavily upon the Moravians.

They were persecuted, they were killed, life was very bad for these Christians of this movement during this time. Their organization was crushed in Bohemia, crushed in Moravia, and the remaining members fled like fugitives from Moravia onto the estates of Count von Zinzendorf in Saxony. Now joined by other believers from Bohemia in association with some German pietists, they worshiped at the Bertelsdorf Lutheran Church under a pastor named J. A. Rothay.

So I just want you to picture in your mind, here at Zinzendorf's estate, known as Herrenhut, in what is today the eastern part of Germany, almost to Poland, there at this place known as Herrenhut, you have a collection of believers, but a diverse group of believers who are essentially refugees from all over the place. Zinzendorf, being a Christian, being a godly man, he's sort of invited, you know, come, you can come and work on my land, if you'll do the work you can come, and so you had this very eclectic group of believers gathered together there at Herrenhut. And when you get together such an eclectic group of believers, what happens? Well, they fight a lot.

And that's exactly what happened. You see, they got into heated public controversies, and even though Zinzendorf did the best he could to sort of be a spiritual leader to them, they ended up being godly, but fighting all the time. There were followers of Hus, there were followers of Luther, there were followers of Calvin, there were followers of Zwingli, there were followers of Schwekenfeld.

It seemed like a hopeless problem with arguments and divisions among this diverse group of believers, all called together to live together virtually in one community. They had heated public controversies. It seems that they argued about everything.

They argued about predestination, they argued about holiness, they argued about baptism. It seemed like this community would not hold together much longer. Now Zinzendorf did the could.

He tried to lead them to agree to seek out and emphasize the points on which they agreed, rather than to stress their differences, which really was a wise course. Hey, people, look, we're fighting all the time. Let's take a couple weeks out and just talk about the things that we agree about.

So Zinzendorf had a personal interview with each individual adult resident of Herrenhut. And so on May 12, 1727, they entered into a solemn covenant with Zinzendorf to dedicate their lives just as Zinzendorf had dedicated his life to the Lord Jesus Christ. And each one said, I will be dedicated in my own calling and in my own position, because obviously they recognized that they didn't have the same calling necessarily as Zinzendorf, but yet they were just as called by the Lord.

The idea was that everyone in the congregation should be totally committed to the Lord. Then they organized elders among them to lead times of Bible study and prayer. This eventually culminated in a meeting on August 13, 1727, although that day was both preceded and followed by extraordinary praying.

For example, in the July before Zinzendorf spent his time ministering to a group of nine schoolgirls who were between nine years old and 13 years old of age, he started to teach them in a class because he saw that they behaved very properly on the outside. You know how girls that age can be very proper and nice on the outside. But he saw that he did not detect any traces of spiritual life within them.

And no matter how much he spoke to them about Jesus, he never saw a response. And so here was this gifted, wealthy, young German nobleman on his knees, agonizing in prayer for a group of little schoolgirls.

This shows you the heart that Zinzendorf had, how desperately he really wanted to reach these people who lived and worked for him on his estate.

On July 16, Zinzendorf poured forth his heart in prayer and tears. This had a striking effect on everybody else that was in the meeting, and many began to pray in a way they had never prayed before because they saw him pray with such passion. On July 22nd, several of the brethren agreed to meet together on their own, to meet together up on a hill called the Huthberg, to pour out their heart in prayer and in hymns.

On August 5th, Zinzendorf spent the whole night in watching and in prayer in a group of about 12 to 14 brethren. At midnight, they went back up on that hill just on the property there known as the Huthberg. They had a large prayer meeting there, again, marked by great passion in prayer.

On Sunday, August 10th, Pastor Rothe, during the service at Harenhut, felt himself overwhelmed by the wonderful and irresistible power of the Lord, and that feeling, for some unexplainable reason, just spread out throughout the whole congregation. In this frame of mind, they continued until midnight in prayer and in singing, in weeping, and in supplication. But on August 13th, three days after that remarkable Sunday experience, they experienced what was the most outstanding outpouring of the Holy Spirit yet.

What took place at that service can only be described as an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. This is what one Moravian historian says, quote, The Holy Ghost came upon us, and in those days great signs and wonders took place in our midst. So great was their hunger for the Scriptures in those days following that service on August 13th that they gathered daily at 5 a.m., at 7 a.m., and at 9 p.m. for services.

One observer noted, quote, Self-love and self-will, as well as all disobedience, disappeared, and an overwhelming flood of grace swept us out all into the great ocean of divine love. On August 26th, twenty-four brethren and the same number of sisters met and agreed that they would pray from midnight to the next midnight together in prayer, dividing up the hour portions by lot amongst themselves. In other words, they got together, twenty-four brothers, twenty-four sisters, they sort of handed out lots, all right, you're going to pray from one o'clock to two o'clock, you're going to pray from three o'clock to four o'clock, all the way along the line.

And so they decided to do this. This led to a practice that they started on August 27th, 1727, and the number of intercessors soon increased from twenty-four men and twenty-four women to seventy-seven people. Even children were awakened and planned similar meetings among themselves.

That twenty-four-seven prayer meeting lasted for one hundred years. For one hundred years there was twenty-four-seven prayer at Harrenhut going on as an outbreak of this revival. You see, the Moravians were something new, at least in their day.

No, it's not new in the history of the church, but it was new in their day. People with the passion and commitment of monks in a cloister, but they were married and worked and lived normal lives. This was a fellowship of Christians, of clergy and of laity, of men and of women, marrying, raising families.

They had the heart of monks and monasteries, but they had the passion to spread the gospel. And not just a few within the group, but the group as a whole. And so they had a huge influence because of their missionary efforts, as we noticed in a previous lecture when we spoke about the modern missionary movement.

But before the end of the eighteenth century, the Moravians had begun missions in Russia, in India, in the Nicobar Islands, in Seljan, among the Indians in the English colonies in North America, in the Danish and British West Indies, in Suriname, in Central America, on the Gold Coast, in South Africa, among the Laps, in Greenland, and in Labrador. More than a hundred missionaries went out from this little village in the next twenty-five years. Now the Moravian evangelist Peter Bowler preached the gospel in the colony of Georgia, right? That's in the United States, or it wasn't the United States there, it was the British colony of Georgia.

And then he went on to plant the Moravian Church of London. Now again, you have to understand something about the social conditions of London in that day. England was desperately in need of revival.

In the city of London, for example, one house in six was what they called a grog shop, a place where a man could drink gin until he was drunk, and it would only cost him a penny. The rampant use of alcohol led to incredibly widespread crime everywhere. Men and women were not safe from these drunken fiends.

A favorite amusement was to go up to a guy who was passed out drunk and squeeze the victim's nose flat on his face and then to bore out his eyes with your fingers. The prisoners were pricked with swords or made to dance around with swords thrust in their legs. And those who were responsible to keep law and order in the city failed miserably.

Criminals were more likely to get away with their crime than to be caught, tried, and punished. The city was kept in constant terror by the immorality, by the crime, by the violence. It was in that kind of community that Peter Bowler went to plant a church.

Now, one of the practices of the Moravian brethren was to celebrate a love feast, a potluck supper you might say, before celebrating communion. And so on December 31st, 1738, New Year's Eve, the Fetter Lane Moravians came to church for their annual watch night service. They were going to stay up and watch in the new year, stay up all night praying and just being with one another.

They had a very warm, normal service. And as the evening passed and the morning of the first day of the new year began, the group began praying. And as they continued praying on that day, January 1st, 1739, the power of God came mightily upon the group about three in the morning.

The responses to this outpouring of the Holy Spirit were varied. Some people fell to the ground, awestruck and overwhelmed with the very presence of God. Other people were just filled with an unexplainable feeling of joy as they experienced the presence of God.

Everybody was caught by surprise. But when they sort of recovered a little bit, they all joined together in a hymn. This was the beginning of the evangelical revival in England.

You see, one man greatly used in that revival was George Whitefield. Churches closed their pulpits to him, so he started preaching out in the open air. His critics said, well, here you are, you're out preaching in the open air.

You brag that you don't need a church. You brag that you can just go and preach wherever you want. Well, it's easy for you to go among these church populations and do what you do.

Why don't you go preach among the coal miners of Kingswood? Now, Kingswood was a rough coal mining town near Bristol without a single church. Thousands of people, but no church in Kingswood. People

thought it was too rough there.

So Whitefield, a courageous man, took him on. On a Saturday in February, he began preaching to 200 Kingswood coal miners in the fields near Bristol. Within a month, 20,000 people were braving the weather to hear him preach.

Thousands were converted. Whitefield turned the work over to a man that he had met at Oxford University, a man that the Moravian Peter Bowler had first met on a ship traveling from Georgia to England. The man's name, whom Whitefield turned the work over to, was John Wesley.

Again, Whitefield's work was so dramatic and so broad, and his manner of speech was so wonderful. They said that when they would sail to America in sort of a group of ships, that Whitefield would stand at the front of the front ship, and he could preach so mightily that all the ships behind him could hear. He could speak with his voice to thousands of people at one sitting.

Benjamin Franklin was a huge admirer of George Whitefield. Benjamin Franklin said that he wished he had the talent to say Mesopotamia the same way that George Whitefield did. He was an incredibly powerful, dramatic speaker who really drew people to the Lord.

But anyway, he turned this work, started at Kingswood, over to this remarkable man, John Wesley, whom he met at Oxford University. John Wesley was a young Anglican minister who went from England to the American colonies to minister to the Indian natives and to other colonists. But the experience exposed his own spiritual need.

You see, he went to America to be a missionary, but he ended up finding out how much he needed the Lord. Wesley's story about encountering the Moravian believers on the ship sailing across the Atlantic is really illustrative. He says, at seven o'clock, I went to the Germans.

I had long before observed--now again, this is on the ship going across the Atlantic, okay? There's a group of Moravian believers on the ship, and Wesley is encountering them. At seven, I went to the Germans. I had long before observed the great seriousness of their behavior, of their humility.

They had given a continual proof by performing those servile offices for other passengers, which none of the English would undertake, for which they desired and would receive no pay, saying it was good for their proud hearts. And their loving Savior had done more for them, and every day had given them occasion of showing their meekness, which no injury could move. If they were pushed, struck, or thrown down, they rose again and went their way, but no complaint was found in their mouth.

Here was now an opportunity in trying whether they were delivered from the spirit of fear, as well as that of pride, anger, and revenge. In the midst of the psalm wherewith their service began, the sea broke over the ship, split the main sail in pieces, and covered the ship and poured in between the decks, as if the great deep had already swallowed us up. A terrible screaming began among the English.

The Germans calmly sung on. I asked one of them, Were you not afraid? He answered, I thank God, no. I asked, But were you not your women and children afraid? He replied mildly, No, our women and children are not afraid to die.

Later on, a Moravian bishop, a man named A. G. Spangenberg, spoke with Wesley on the ship. He said, My brother, I must first ask you one or two questions. Have you the witness within yourself? Does the

Spirit of God bear witness with your spirit that you are a child of God? Wesley said that he was surprised, and he didn't know what to answer.

He observed it. The Moravian could see that Wesley didn't know what to say, so he continued on. The Moravian asked him, Do you know Jesus Christ? Wesley replied, I know that he's the Savior of the world.

The Moravian said, That's true. But do you know that he saved you? Wesley said, I hope he has died to save me. He only added, Do you really know for yourself? And Wesley said, I do.

But he said they were vain words. He wasn't really being truthful. Wesley said this, I went to America to convert the Indians.

But oh, who shall convert me? Who? What is he that will deliver me from this evil heart of unbelief? I have a fair summer religion. I can talk well. Yes, I believe myself well.

No danger is near. But let death look me in the face, and my spirit is troubled. Nor can I say to die is gain.

All of that changed when John Wesley visited a Moravian chapel on Aldersgate Street in London, when he heard and understood and applied the message of the gospel to his own life and received personal salvation. And it was an amazing work. Wesley then was like a man set on fire, going all throughout England, preaching in an incredible way, setting up religious societies, in some ways very much modeled upon the passion and the heart and the ideas of the Moravians.

This revival that began at Herrnhut in Germany spread all over the world. But I shouldn't say that it was mostly refined to Germany, excuse, and then all of Europe. And then we could say the American colonies as well.

But Wesley, Whitfield, Herrnhut, these people were absolutely radical, not only in bringing a religious revival, but in changing their society. Remember I talked about how dark it was in London and how immoral. Well, I'm not going to say that it became heaven on earth, but it improved so radically, and the light began to shine once again in England, that many people think that the evangelical revival, which is what British people call this First Great Awakening, many people think that the evangelical revival is what actually saved England from something very similar to the French Revolution in those days.

Well, this was the first of what I regard to be the great revival movements throughout history. I'm going to give you an overview of some of the subsequent religious revivals. First of all, we can talk about the Second Great Awakening, 1792 onwards.

Now, this began in a time of great spiritual and moral decline after the American Revolution and after the French Revolution, when the spread of rationalism and Enlightenment thinking was speedily taking over the entire intellectual world. Most people don't know that, that after the American Revolution, there was a severe spiritual decline. As a matter of fact, it was so severe that there were serious people who wondered whether or not the United States would still have a Christian people, because religion seemed to decline so much, and the forces of ungodliness and secularism seemed so strong that it seemed like Christianity was definitely on its way out, on its way towards extinction in these years after the American Revolution.

But this remarkable awakening began as a movement of prayer among denominations. Jonathan Edwards was one of the people who really fanned this passion for prayer into flame. And as it began as this movement of prayer, it had a huge impact.

The Methodists alone in the United States grew from around 72,000 at Wesley's death in 1791 to almost 250,000 within 25 years. That's a huge increase. Now, should I give you just a little bit of a background on the Methodist movement? You could say in one way that the Methodist movement was founded by John Wesley, and that would be both true and untrue, because John Wesley never saw his followers as being separate from the Anglican Church.

In his mind, his followers would always be just sort of like a group of committed believers within the Anglican Church. But after his death, the inevitable sort of happened. There was a parting of the ways, and it established the Methodist movement, both in England and Europe, and then of course in America, under the leadership of some remarkable people such as Francis Asbury.

But the Methodists grew remarkably during this time of revival. It was the founding of missionary societies and great missionary interest. You notice the date on this, 1792.

It's just coming up into that great century of missionary expansion. You could say that this revival provided the fuel for missionary passion and service into the 1800s. There was a tremendous moving of God among colleges in the United States, but there was also a great impact in Scandinavia and in Germany, although it was somewhat later than the impact in the United States and in England.

They had tremendous camp meetings during this time, where up to 25,000 people at a single camp meeting on the frontier were in attendance, and there were many, many people converted. Now, sometimes people wrongly characterize these camp meetings as being wild, out-of-control events. But many of the descriptions of them being out of control are not actually historical, because they're not taken from firsthand accounts, and as well, they're exaggerated.

So I'm sure that, as is often true in times of revival, there may be some sort of uncomfortableness as you see the vitality and the activity of the outpouring of the Spirit of God, but it would be wrong to describe them as just chaotic, anarchic free-for-alls. Another period of revival afterwards, number three, the resurgence of 1830. This has to do with men like Finney and Darby and Muller, and again, a huge missionary interest.

These were the years where Finney had a huge influence in the United States, really promoting the idea of revival, and I would say, really impacting theological perspectives in the United States for a long time after him. It was sort of the days when new ideas about evangelism were being coined. Finney had the idea that you just shouldn't wait for people to feel converted.

You should actually challenge them to believe in Jesus Christ and to put their faith in Jesus Christ and to believe that they were saved when that happened. Darby and George Muller had a large influence in Great Britain and Europe, especially with the spread of what was known as the Brethren Movement. There was a significant impact in Scandinavia, in Central Europe, in South Africa, in the Pacific Islands, in India, in Malabar, in Seljoun.

You know, this is amazing to think about it. You don't often think of it, but in the Pacific Islands, these were years of a tremendous revival in Hawaii. Did you know that in these years, Hawaii was made up of the majority of converted Christians? There was a mighty work of God in the Hawaiian Islands in these years, and it spread to other South Sea islands.

It's really wonderful, some of the stories that come from this era. There's one story of a tribal chief who was converted and wanted to spread the gospel to his entire tribe, but they were all, you know, idolaters. They all worshipped statues and stuff like that.

And so what the chief did, he said, well, I worship a new God now, so I want to get everybody together, and I've got an announcement to break. Bring all your idols, bring them all from the whole village to me at this meeting place. And so they came, and they all set their idols up in the field, and the chief had the idols all arranged in the field, so that they were sort of an audience looking at the chief.

And the chief spoke to all the idols. He said, idols, I want you to know, I've given up idolatry, and I'm a follower of Jesus Christ now. Now, I'm going to tell you something.

I'm going to destroy each one of you idols, but to be fair, I'm going to give you a five-minute head start. So if you want to get away, you run away now, and you can escape me. So the chief waited around for five minutes, and then he walked around and smashed all the idols.

You know, the people were terrified. They thought that the judgment of the gods was going to come upon them, right, because he smashed all the idols. But when they saw that nothing happened, there was an incredible work of conversion among that tribe.

Well, again, it shows you how broadly the movement went in these years. Next, we have perhaps the fourth in our list here, an overview of the third Great Awakening. And this, in many ways, some people, especially the noted revival historian, Dr. J. Edwin Orr, who passed away about 20 years ago, he believed that perhaps this was the single greatest revival ever.

You could have a real debate whether it was this or the Welsh revival in 1904, which we'll talk about in our next lecture, but this third Great Awakening, 1857 to 1862, was a remarkable work. You see, basically, in about one year, one million people were converted, documented. I mean, they know this from additions to church rolls and by statistical analysis and all this.

One million people were converted in the United States in one year's time. Now, that was when the United States had a population of about 30 million. So think what that would be like in the United States now.

What would it be like in the United States if you saw 10 million people converted in one year? That would be revival, wouldn't it? But what was remarkable about this revival was really, it was sort of no great names leading it. It was known as the prayer meeting revival. So much of the work was done through just people getting together for prayer.

And this phenomenon of the prayer meeting was really wonderful and marked in this particular revival. A similar work spread to Britain one year later, and over that year, another million people were converted out of a similar population base of about 30 million in one year. This revival had a worldwide impact after beginning in Canada in 1857.

It began with a New York prayer meeting with a guy named Jeremiah Lamphere. Have you ever heard this story? Jeremiah Lamphere was a man who was just devoted. He said, well, let's start prayer among the businessmen of New York.

And so he passed out handbills, and he said, okay, there's going to be a prayer meeting up in this room at this church at this time. And he waited for somebody to come and to pray with him. So the appointed time

for prayer came.

Nobody showed up. He waited five minutes, 10 minutes, 15 minutes. You can imagine how discouraged he felt.

And then I think something like 10 or 15 minutes late, one person showed up. And then if I remember the story, I don't remember all the details. I didn't make notes of this for me.

He had a couple people at that first prayer meeting. And so they said, okay, great. You know, we'll meet again in another week.

In another week, there were more people. In another week, still more people came. Pretty soon they were meeting every day, and that prayer meeting launched an incredible prayer meeting movement in New York City, where literally tens of thousands of businessmen would get together every day for prayer in New York City.

The whole structure and effect of those prayer meetings was remarkable. It's really worthy of study. Then the next one we want to take a look at is the fifth period of revival, what we would call the resurgence of 1880.

There were again some remarkable men of God used in this one, such as D.L. Moody and Billy Sunday and Andrew Murray. You could mark this as sort of the beginning of crusade evangelism. And D.L. Moody and his work all over the British Isles and all over America, it was a remarkable season of the work of God.

And of course, these were during the high years, too, of Spurgeon's ministry at the Metropolitan Tabernacle. Of course, he sort of encompassed both the Second Great Awakening or the Great Awakening in 1857-58 and onwards, and then this one of 1880 as well. There were thousands of volunteers for missionary work.

And for an example, revival hit Japan in the early 1880s, increasing the adult membership of the churches from 4,000 to 30,000 in five years. Is that remarkable or what? Revivals were reported in India, in Africa, in South Africa, Madagascar, Australia, Central and South America. It was a remarkable season of revival.

Now, this fifth notable period of spiritual awakening, I would say, is not really on the same level as some of the previous revivals discussed. We could use a very crude chart. And when I say a very crude chart, I mean crude.

So don't take this as documentation or anything. But if you want to regard some of these different periods of revival, you could say things start at a very low spiritual ebb. But at the revival of 1727, there was a remarkable outpouring of the Spirit of God.

You can regard it just sort of being a very crude Spirit of God outpouring chart. And then afterwards, in between this work in 1727 and this work in 1792, there was a marked decline. But in between the work of 1792 and the work of 1830, there wasn't much of a decline.

But again, you had a significant decline between 1830 and 1857. But again, between 1859 and the 1880s, not such a significant decline. That is sort of, as I said, I apologize again for sort of the crudeness of the chart.

But it just sort of gives the idea that revival doesn't necessarily have to come when the tide has gone out completely. Some people think, well, you shouldn't pray for revival because it's not bad enough. Or other times people say, it's so bad, it's useless to pray for revival.

Both ideas are wrong. God has sent revival at times when it has been as bad as it is now or worse. And he's also sent it at times where the tide has not gone out very far.

Again, it's an interesting dynamic to see this work of the historical phenomenon of revival through the centuries. Finally, we have the sixth work that we spoke about, The Welsh and the Worldwide Revival. But we're going to consider that in a little bit greater depth in our next lecture.

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