

Revival When?

by David Servant

The sermon emphasizes the importance of sharing the true gospel and the need for the church to recover the biblical gospel in order to experience true revival.

Scripture: John 8:31

Topics: "True Repentance", "Revival"

Description

David Servant preaches about the transformative power of God's grace, as seen in the story of a practicing homosexual who repented and was saved. He emphasizes the importance of true discipleship, abiding in God's word, and being set free from sin by believing in Jesus. The sermon also addresses the dangers of false grace, the need for revival rooted in holiness and obedience, and the consequences of denying Christ. Through a parable, the message highlights the cleansing and transformative work of God in individuals who humbly repent and seek His forgiveness.

Transcript

Today I received a letter in the mail. It was from a man who heard me refuting antinomian errors on our daily radio broadcast. He said it was the first letter he'd written to anyone in twelve years.

He confessed that he had been a practicing homosexual. For a long time he had rationalized that as long as he did some good deeds and believed about Jesus, he was safe. But he heard me sharing what the Bible says about God's transforming grace available to sinners, including homosexuals. He heard me quote from scriptures that declare, no homosexual will inherit God's kingdom. Realizing that his dead faith was taking him to hell, he repented. He wrote to tell me that he is no longer a homosexual, quoting his paraphrase of the first few words of 1 Corinthians 6:11 in capital letters: "AND SOME OF US WERE." He has been saved by God's grace and transformed.

If antinomians had their way, this man would have remained a practicing homosexual, destined to spend eternity in hell. But, to the praise of God's grace, he heard the truth and believed it. As Jesus promised in John 8:32, the truth had set him free.

Set Free from Obedience?

Perhaps no verse in scripture is more misused by antinomians than John 8:32. They speak of how the truth sets us free from what they term "legalistic bondage," but what the Bible calls obedience to God's

clear commands. When Jesus spoke of the truth setting us free, however, He was clearly speaking about freedom from sin:

Jesus therefore was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." They answered Him, "We are Abraham's offspring, and have never yet been enslaved to anyone; how is it that You say, 'You shall become free'?" Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. And the slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever. If therefore the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed (John 8:31-36, emphasis added).

This is the message of God's transforming grace. This is the gospel. Jesus forgives and sets people who believe in Him free from sin. Those who truly believe in Him will abide, or live, in His word, proving themselves to be His disciples.

The Satanic Revival

It is indeed a dark hour. Our society is like a freight train that has lost its brakes and is picking up speed. How much longer before it is derailed? Yet, how can we decry the deteriorating spiritual state of our nation while at the same time we are offering a gospel that is void of any transforming power, a gospel that is nothing more than a thin veneer for sin? How can we hope for revival when God's grace is turned into licentiousness?

As long as filling pews, which is often called "church growth," rather than making disciples is our goal, there will be no true revival. As long as we look at people as "unchurched" rather than unsaved, there will be no true revival. As long as pastors and evangelists care more about pleasing people than God, there will be no true revival. Until the church recovers the biblical gospel, until the church is characterized by holiness so that it stands out from the world, there will not be true revival. Until then, the only revival will be the continuation of Satan's present revival, fueled by false grace, false faith, and false salvation. Under the banner of freedom, his evangelists will continue to pour forth his original lie in print, on Christian radio and television, and from church pulpits: "Go ahead and sin. You won't die."

It is indeed a very dark hour. Scores of popular teachers proclaim that if a person has faith in Jesus for only ten seconds at some point in his life, but then abandons his faith and returns to a life of practicing sin, he is saved and eternally secure. Mind you, this imaginary person could be a practicing prostitute or serial rapist right up until the time of his death and still go to heaven. All he will forfeit are some heavenly rewards that he could have earned had he been a better Christian! Is this not turning God's grace into licentiousness? Does this kind of preaching precede revivals? Yet the Bible still declares:

It is a trustworthy statement:

For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him;

If we endure, we shall also reign with Him;

If we deny Him, He also will deny us;

If we are faithless, He remains faithful; for He cannot deny Himself

(2 Timothy 2:11-13, emphasis added).

How is this verse interpreted by modern false grace teachers? Ignoring or twisting the first three lines, they maintain that the fourth line proves their view. "Even if we are faithless, abandoning our faith" they say, "He will remain faithful to save us."

But is that the intended meaning? Absolutely not.

What Does 2 Timothy 2:11-13 Teach?

First, Paul says, "if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him." Our living with Him is contingent upon our dying with Him. Scripture teaches that all who truly believe in Jesus have died and have been made alive in Christ. This is the new birth, regeneration by the Holy Spirit. It is a radical change.

Second, Paul declares, "if we endure, we shall also reign with Him." Paul is not promising a special reward of future reigning for the special group of Christians who endure. Rather, he is promising that which awaits every true believer whose faith endures. Scripture teaches that it is not just a select group of Christians who will reign with Jesus. All who have been purchased by His blood will reign with Him:

And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to break its seals; for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase for God with Thy blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. And Thou hast made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth" (Rev. 5:9-10, emphasis added, see also. Rev. 20:6; 22:3-5).

Those believers who endure in true faith have the promise of reigning with Jesus. We must continue in faith to be saved in the end, and if we do, we will reign with Jesus.

Third, Paul warns against not enduring: "If we deny Him, He also will deny us." This is a direct quotation from the Lord Jesus Christ who said:

Everyone therefore who shall confess Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven (Matt. 10:32-33, emphasis added).

Jesus unmistakably promised that if we deny Him, He will deny us. It's a warning to anyone who is considering abandoning his faith, not enduring under threat of what others might think or do. Will people whom Jesus denies before the Father be permitted into heaven? If we deny Jesus, saying "I don't know Him" before others, and Jesus denies us before the Father, saying "I don't know him," will we be saved? The answer is obvious.

Finally, Paul says, "If we are faithless, He remains faithful; for He cannot deny Himself." This is a continuation of what he just said about denying Jesus. Even though we may not keep our promise to follow Him, Jesus will always keep His promises. He promised to deny us if we deny Him, and He will. (Of course, if we return in repentance and faith, He will keep His promise to accept us back.)

Notice that Paul did not say in the fourth declaration, "If we are faithless and deny Him, He will remain faithful and not deny us." That would be a direct contradiction of what he just said in the third declaration!

No, God is always faithful even though people are often not. He always keeps His promises and His threats. Consider what Moses and Joshua said about the faithfulness of God:

Know therefore that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments; but repays those who hate Him to their faces, to destroy them; He will not delay with him who hates Him, He will repay him to his face (Deut. 7:9-10, emphasis added).

And it shall come about that just as all the good words which the Lord your God spoke to you have come upon you, so the Lord will bring upon you all the threats, until He has destroyed you from off this good land which the Lord your God has given you (Josh. 23:15, emphasis added).

With this in mind, consider how one very popular antinomian teacher, whose name is a household word in Christian circles, interprets 2 Timothy 2:11-13:

Just as the faithful will receive the Father's recognition and approval, so the unfaithful will lose His special recognition and approval....The unfaithful believer will not receive a special place in the kingdom of Christ like those who are fortunate enough to be allowed to reign with Him....The apostle's meaning is evident. Even if a believer for all practical purposes becomes an unbeliever, his salvation is not in jeopardy. Christ will remain faithful (emphasis added).

When the church gladly swallows a teaching that reverses the clear meaning of Scripture, need we ask why there is no revival? God's sacred message has been edited, stripped of every reason for anyone to repent of sin and follow Jesus Christ. People who don't believe in Jesus can now get into heaven, guaranteed. One can be an atheist, a Buddhist, a follower of Islam or a Satan worshipper and still go to heaven, as long as he verbalizes faith in Jesus for a few seconds during his life. And this lie is being proclaimed by some of the foremost evangelical teachers in America.

What Now?

If you didn't understand the true gospel before you began reading, surely you do now. Perhaps revival has begun in your own life. And what is a major revival but many individuals being revived? You can and should share what you know. Like me, you also have a sacred obligation to spread the truth, regardless of the cost. Our message is the one proclaimed by Jesus, Jude, Peter, Paul, James and John, as well as millions of true and faithful believers before us. Let us not be "ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes" (Rom. 1:16).

Will there be true revival? Yes--in everyone's life who hears and heeds the true gospel. Those truly revived ones will pray and labor that others might share their joy. With that thought in mind, I close with a parable the Lord gave to me, one that fills me with hope:

A Parable of Revival...

As I was praying and fasting about the need for revival and the work of the Holy Spirit, I received a revelation that helped me understand what is and what will be happening in the church. It was not a vision that I saw with my eyes, but a revelation that I "saw" in my heart. May I say that I am not one who is "given to visions," and this was the first time anything like this ever happened to me. I will describe what I saw in the revelation.

First, I saw many crowds of people. Some crowds were very large, some were medium-sized, and some were quite small. The largest groups contained thousands of people. The smallest groups contained only a handful. The members of each group huddled close together for warmth, because it was very cold. All

were shivering, and when one spoke, you could see his breath. Additionally, most within the crowd were dirty. Some were filthier than others, as if they had been workers in a coal mine, covered with soot from head to toe. These ones also stunk, like the stench of garbage. Others were not as filthy, but most were in desperate need of cleansing.

These masses of people all stood at the base on an immense dam which held back a huge reservoir. The dam was hundreds and hundreds of feet high, and it stretched as far as I could see in either direction. The body of water it held back was of equal proportion.

Looking more closely at the dam, I noticed that it was built of bricks. Words were written on each brick, and as I began to read what was written on some of the bricks, I noticed that all were similar in this respect: Each one had written upon it a single sin. For example, written on one brick it said, "Gossip," and on another was written the word, "Lustful." Also written under each sin was someone's name. For example, a brick might have written on it, "Liar," and under that, "John Doe." There were many bricks that had the same sin written on them, and many people's names were written on more than one brick.

I looked back at the crowds of filthy, shivering people. Most all of them were standing, but occasionally one in the crowds would kneel, or fall on his face and begin to weep, confessing his sins and asking God to cleanse him. When he did, a brick from the dam would burst out of its place by the force of the water behind it, and once ejected, the brick would shatter into fine dust and disappear. The water that would then gush through the hole would stream through the air, pouring itself on the kneeling one, washing him of his filth. Sometimes several (or even many) bricks would burst from the dam, either all at the same time or over a period of time, as long as the person continued to kneel and pray. In those cases, the streams that would pour forth from the holes in the dam would converge to fall together with great force upon the one kneeling, and the change in the person's appearance would be quite dramatic. Some of the dirtiest became the most clean in a short period of time.

I also discovered that the water that poured forth from the holes in the dam was quite warm. When it fell upon those who knelt, it not only cleansed them, but it also warmed them to the core. They would laugh and delight and sing with joy as they were washed.

The reaction of those in the groups who stood and watched the kneeling ones was mixed. Often, many of those nearby would move away from the kneeling one, not wanting to get wet. On occasion, the entire group would draw back so far that the kneeling one was left alone under his warm waterfall.

However, just as often, some of those near one who knelt would also kneel, confessing their sins. Again, bricks would burst from the dam and water would gush out, cleansing and warming them.

On occasion, the large majority of people standing in one group would, one after the other, kneel or bow and begin to weep for their sins. The force of the many streams of water that consequently converged and fell over them would be very great, bringing enormous blessing, powerful anointing and many gifts. However, in no case did I see a group in which everyone knelt. Often, those who stood among groups in which many people were kneeling would leave to join another group in which many people were standing. Also, I sometimes saw a person kneel only because so many others were kneeling. When he did, however, no bricks burst forth from the dam, no water was poured forth, and that person remained filthy and cold.

Two other things I witnessed as I watched the crowds of people: Occasionally one of those who were standing would look up at the dam and see a brick with his name on it. Out of embarrassment, he would climb up the dam's face to that brick and try to pull it from its place with his own hands. None who attempted this ever succeeded, however, because it was impossible. Also, I occasionally saw one who had been kneeling stand up again. When he did, he immediately became somewhat dirty, and force of the waterfall upon him lessened. And if he began pointing his finger at those who never knelt, proudly criticizing them with his mouth, his waterfall stopped, and became very dirty again. Most of those who were kneeling, however, would speak lovingly to those standing around them, saying, "Oh it's wonderful under this warm, cleansing stream! You can be washed of your filth! Please, won't you join me?"

Let me tell you some of the sins that were written on the bricks. One which had my name written on it said, "Fearful of Man." When I saw it, I immediately admitted my guilt before God and asked for His forgiveness and grace to fear no one but Him.

As a pastor, I was shown numerous bricks that belonged to people in my own congregation. There were many of the same sins written on the bricks. Some said, "Friend of the World." Many said, "Lukewarm." Others said, "Judgmental." Others: "Idolater," which means you make other things in your life more important than God. Many people in the church are more excited about their hobbies and pleasures than God.

Some said, "Immorality," which includes not only adultery, but dwelling on immoral thoughts. Some said, "Entertains Herself by Watching People do Immoral Things on Television." One said, "Views Internet Pornography." One said, "Meditates on Acts of Homosexuality." Another said, "Sexually Active Teenager."

On some bricks were written, "Bitterness Against Another," "Mistreats His Wife," and "Speaks Against Brothers." There was "Lover of Money," "Lover of Pleasure," and "Cares Only About Himself." There was "Receives Payment for Work Under the Table to Avoid Taxes," "Wasteful Steward," "Uses God's Money to Support What God Hates," and "Does Not Care About the Poor." Many said, "Does Not Even Tithe," and around those bricks were many other bricks that had justifications for this sin.

There was "Immodest," "Always Convinced She's Right," and "Not Submissive to Her Husband." I also saw many which said, "Does Not Care About Those Who Have Never Heard the Gospel."

Some said, "Gossip," "Slandered," "Fault-Finder," "Uses Offensive Speech," and "Worthless Religion--Does Not Bridle Tongue." One said, "Does Not Financially Support Young Children From A Former Marriage." Others said, "Does Not Honor Parents," "Rarely Keeps Promises," and "Listens to Music that Exalts What God Hates."

There was "Full of Unbelief," "Unclean Habits and Addictions," and "Self-Indulgent." There was "Prayerlessness," "Forsakes the Assembling of the Church," and "Does Not Desire to Read God's Word." Many bricks said, "Is not Training Children in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord."

There are many others which I have not mentioned but which are all found in the Bible--the Bible which we all profess to believe is the Word of God. On some bricks were even written, "Twists Scripture to Make it Mean What it Does Not," and "Redefines the Commandments to Fit His Lifestyle."

The mortar that held the bricks in place also had words written on it, symbolizing four sins that held all the other sins in place. They were "Pride," "Hypocrisy," "Little or No Love for God," and "Sins of Shepherds."

Before other sins can be dislodged, these must first be weakened. Pride keeps us from admitting our sins. Hypocrisy, acting one way at church and another way at other times, must be confessed. All sins are symptom of one bigger sin, "Little or No Love for God" --If we loved Him with all our heart, mind, soul and strength, we would serve and obey Him passionately. Jesus said, "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15). Finally and fourth, if leaders in the church set the wrong example, their followers have an excuse to hold on to their sins.

Let's go back to the people in the crowds. As I watched, occasionally a person who was standing would point his finger at a nearby group that was laughing and singing as they knelt under a waterfall, and say, "That waterfall can't be from God, because their doctrine is wrong in some ways." But the Lord reminded me that He didn't say that it is those who have pure doctrine who will see God, but those who have pure hearts (Matt. 5:8). Jesus didn't say that we would know them by their doctrine, but by their fruits (Matt. 7:20). He said the mark of His true disciples was not perfect doctrine, but love for one another (John 13:35). Just because a group's doctrine is partially wrong in certain non-essentials does not mean that God will not pour His Spirit on them when they humble themselves and begin to "hunger and thirst for righteousness" (Matt. 5:6). Some of the bricks in the dam said, "Puffed Up With Knowledge," "Doctrinal Pride," and "Denominational Loyalty that Transcends Love for the Entire Body."

As time passed, more and more of those standing began to kneel, weeping as they confessed their sins and repented. Bricks exploded from the great dam like kernels of popcorn, and more water poured forth with a mighty roar, until the scene compared to Niagara Falls (only on a much larger scale). The kneeling ones lifted their hands, laughed, sang and prayed in what became a great river that flowed to many dry places in the earth. Eventually, it became such a torrent that those kneeling in it were swept away, as they rejoice and sang songs to their God.

Finally the water ceased flowing, as the reservoir had run dry. Those who were still standing looked at one another with smug approval. The bricks on which their names were written were still in place, suspended in the air only by human pride. Then suddenly, without the slightest warning, every remaining brick in the dam began to fall, converging with other bricks on which were written the same names. In terror, the standing ones watched as the piles of bricks fell with deadly accuracy, first knocking them to the ground, then killing and crushing them, until all that could be seen were heaps of bricks. I was reminded that Jesus said, "Everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, but he who humbles himself shall be exalted" (Luke 18:14). Which are you?

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