

What Holds Back Revival

by Don Courville

The sermon emphasizes the importance of faith, humbleness, and obedience to spiritual laws in order to experience revival and have God's blessing.

Duration: 14:07

Scripture: Exodus 14:21, Psalm 85:6, Isaiah 57:15, Isaiah 58:1, Hosea 10:12, Matthew 6:33, Mark 6:5

Topics: "Revival"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of doing kind deeds as a way to open doors for sharing one's testimony. The preacher also highlights the need for personal salvation and staying excited about Jesus throughout one's life. The lack of care for the lost and neglect of spiritual input and concern for family members who are not saved are identified as reasons why God may not be blessing. The sermon also addresses sins of commission, such as worldly mindedness, pride, envy, bitterness, slander, lying, and cheating. The preacher calls for repentance, remembering the days when God's glory was present, and a renewed love for souls and sharing the gospel with neighbors.

Transcript

I have a couple or three verses I'd like to share with you, and I have a question. I was asking myself this question this afternoon. What holds back revival? What would hold back God's blessing? Or what would be the result of a church, a fellowship, having God's blessing in the past and losing it? There, I believe there's a key.

Because we've seen in revival, we've seen God come again and revive the fires that had almost dwindled out. We've seen Him do it. There, as I think it was Charles Finney, an old revivalist, who said there were certain spiritual laws, and if we would follow these, the blessing would come.

I was reading in Isaiah 57 and verse 15, which I believe is one of the keys to us finding this key. You see, I believe the key is us. Then there's a key that we have to find to unlock the blessing of God.

And Isaiah said, For thus saith the High and Lofty One that inhabited eternity, whose name is Holy. I dwell in the high and holy place with Him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite ones. The kids, when they were quoting the first 12 verses of Matthew chapter 5, called the Beatitudes, if you'll notice, there were several things that had to do with humbleness.

There was the poor in spirit. There was those that mourn, those that are meek, those that hungered and thirsted after righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers. As we go along, year after year after year sometimes, we could be like the old woodcutter who, year after year after year, his wood piles would get smaller and smaller and smaller because he had lost his file along the way and he could not sharpen his axe anymore.

Now, we are, so to say, old woodcutters. It's the Word of God that is the file. But if we refuse to use the Word of God in such a way that it will continually cleanse us, the Bible says if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

I believe it's sort of like getting a slow leak in our tire. Sometimes we don't notice it until one morning we come out and we say, ah, my tire is flat. Or one day we wake up and we just say, what's happened? Our church is just dead.

Or I'm dead. The way back. I was looking at the Psalms.

The psalmist said this on the way back. The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and save as such as be of a contrite spirit. The way back is to fall before God and say, God, I don't know about everybody else, but I want you to do a work in my heart.

Start here. Start here. A number of years ago when I was pastoring a church up in the western states, I had gotten like that.

And I began to cry out for God to send a revival. For God to send a revival in my heart and to start in me. And he did.

I was praying. Some others were praying. And when God showed up, it wasn't what I expected, but it was what I needed.

And I believe one of the keys for us to grab a hold of is faith. We come back to God and we say, God, I want you to do something in my heart and then do something in my church. Do something in my community.

Do something in my nation. We all know that our nation's in sad shape. Our moral decay has just about sunk the ship.

But we as the church, we have been the ones that have let the morality go. We have refused to stand up and be like Isaiah. Isaiah said in Isaiah 58 that the prophet was to cry out.

If I can get back to that verse, listen to this. Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet and show my people their transgression and the house of Jacob their sins. There's two problems.

One, sometimes God's people don't want to hear about their sins. Two, the prophet may be too afraid to cry out. We need to pray that God will raise up the prophets to cry out again and say, listen, this is not right in our church.

This is not right in my house. This is not right. How can God bless us when we are turning our back on the word of God? We are allowing this and that to go on and it's not according to the word of God.

And so we need to pray that God will raise up the prophets to come. Psalms 85.6, another good verse. I don't have this one marked, but I want to read it to you.

There's some good passages in the Psalms in regards to revival. Will thou not revive us again? Why would you want God to revive you again? Well, ultimately would be for his glory. But the psalmist said, will thou not revive us again that thy people may rejoice in thee? You remember the seven churches in the book of Revelation? And I remember them well because I used to live among those seven churches when I was in Turkey.

But the very first one was the Ephesian church. And God came along and he told him all the things that they were doing right. Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write these things, said he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.

I know thy works and thy labor and thy patience and how thou canst not bear them which are evil. And thou has tried them which say they are apostles and are not and has found them liars and has born and has patience for my name's sake, has labored and has not fainted. He has all that.

And then the Lord comes back and he says, nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee because thou has left thy first love. We begin to love ourselves more. We begin to love our programs more.

We begin to love our church more. We begin to love our activities, our busyness more than actually loving Jesus. And we're off the track and we're like the old woodcutter.

We've lost. We may still have an axe, but it won't even cut butter. It's so dull.

Remember and repent. Those two things Jesus told the church. Remember and repent.

Remember the days when God had visited here? Remember the days in your church? We have several churches represented here. Remember the days in the past when the glory of God was there? People came and they got saved. You remember when there were testimonies of the reality of Christ living in the life? Remember those days? Would you like to see them again? You can, but you have to grab ahold of God for your own heart first and then believe him to do it.

Believe him to do it. God is waiting for a challenge. I wonder if we don't bore him to death sometimes with some of our prayer meetings.

We have a miracle working God. If he can turn, if he can turn back a red sea for the children of Israel to walk through, he can do what needs to be done. But the thing that hinders him is unbelief.

We know the scripture says Jesus couldn't do many miracles in one spot because of unbelief and he went away. They could have had the blessing. Listen to this passage in Hosea.

Hosea chapter 10 and verse 12. So do yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy, break up your fallow ground for it is time to seek the Lord. What time is it? Is it time to have a party? Well, that's all right.

But if it's time to seek the Lord, then it's time to seek the Lord till he come and rain righteousness upon you. If we're going to see God do a work in our land, we must first believe God to do a work in our heart. It's just like a missionary.

He's called to the mission field and the mission board will ask him, have you led anybody to the Lord in your neighborhood? Well, no. How about at school? Well, no. How about anywhere? Well, no.

How come you're going to go off to a foreign field and think you're going to lead people to Christ and you hadn't even done it here? Any mission board with any savvy to them will be right on that right away, spending thousands of dollars on a missionary that won't even do what he's supposed to do on the field at home. So I believe we're the key. We're the key to God doing a work.

I had a list here, and I'm not going to go through everything because time's getting a little bit late, but a list of sins. There are sins of commission and sins of omission, sins of omission. These are sins like this, of ingratitude.

Are we grateful to the Lord for what he's really done for us? Sins of, like we read about the Ephesian church, of just losing our love to the Lord, neglect of the Bible. Do you love this book? First thing you grab in the morning is a cup of coffee or your Bible. Maybe it's been weeks since you grabbed your Bible and just sat down and read it for an hour.

You read your newspaper more than the Word of God. You see, this is the kind of thing that'll bring revival when we go through things like this. Unbelief, we mentioned that.

Neglect of prayer, neglect of prayer meeting, lack of love for souls. We have a song about souls. We didn't know if we was going to sing it tonight or not, but lack of love for the souls of our neighbor.

Have you ever shared the gospel with your neighbor? I believe if you live in a neighborhood, any length of time, you should have some kind of impact for Christ on your neighborhood. Doing kind deeds will open up doors for you to share your testimony. And maybe you don't have a testimony because you haven't been saved yourself.

We could get a little bit touchy, but this is where the gospel goes. It hits your heart and you're excited about Jesus. Until you die, you should stay excited about Jesus, but we backslide and that's why we need revival.

There was a lack of care for the heathen. We don't care many times about that. Neglect of a real spiritual input and concern for our family, those that would die and go to hell without Christ.

When's the last time you fell on your face before God and prayed for somebody that you knew was lost in your family? See, that's why I'm saying, this is why God's not blessing, because we, it's me, oh Lord, standing in need of prayer, as the old spiritual song says. Neglect of other duties. Sins of commission are these, worldly mindedness, pride, envy, bitterness, slander, lying, cheating.

You see, all these things stack up and they count. The Holy Spirit is grieved and He's quenched in our lives. Hypocrisy.

This is why the world is not, basically in America, people are not turning to Christ too much because of hypocrisy. Church people, where they're Christians on Sunday, but the rest of the week, they're just like anybody else. It gets pretty hot and hard.

Robbing God, not giving our tithe to God, a bad temper, hindering others from being useful. We could go on and on and on, but the key is for us to search our heart. And then if your heart is clean in your prayer,

then you can have power with God, and then you can start praying for your neighbor, your church, and going out to our world, to our nation.

Well, we're going to come back now and share a little bit more with you, but before we do, let's just have a word of prayer. Father, have mercy upon us. God, have mercy upon me.

We just pray that you would do a work in our hearts, do a work in this church, do a work in this community, do a work in our churches that's therefore represented here. God, that you would break down barriers of pride and hypocrisy in our hearts, that we would be clean before you, that we might have power in prayer before you. We're going to believe you to start a spark tonight that's going to make a difference.

We lift up our land. We know that it starts right here in our heart and goes all the way up to our capital, that our nation is turned back from you, and we're in a dangerous situation. We ask that you have mercy upon us, you pour out your spirit upon us, and that we would be broken for our sin.

We thank you for this opportunity to come tonight and to share, to sing, and to play the instruments, and we're believing you to do something of significance through this because your word says, now to him that's able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think according to the power that works in us. In Jesus' name, amen.

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