

Principles That Govern Spiritual Awakenings - Part 1

by Duncan Campbell

Revival is a sovereign work of God that brings a community to repentance, and it requires a recognition of God's sovereignty and our own responsibility.

Duration: 33:24

Scripture: Psalm 85:1-2, Psalm 85:4-8, Psalm 85:10-13, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Spiritual Awakening"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a personal experience of a visitation from God on a small island in Burma. Despite initially feeling compelled to leave a convention and go to the island, the speaker doubted if it was the right decision. However, upon arriving at the church on the island, the congregation was filled with a sense of God's presence and fell to their knees in prayer. The speaker emphasizes the difference between evangelism and revival, highlighting the importance of being near to God and seeking His presence. The sermon also mentions the prayers of a man who spent the day in prayer, interceding for the parish and the young people. This man's prayers were answered as God brought revival to the island. The sermon concludes with a reference to Psalm 85:6, 'Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee?'

Transcript

Now will you turn with me to a very familiar passage of scripture. You will find it in the book of Psalms. And together we shall read Psalm 85.

Psalm 85. Lord, thou hast been favourable unto thy land. Thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob.

Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people. Thou hast covered all their sin. Thou hast taken away all thy wrath.

Thou hast turned thyself from the falseness of thine anger. Turn us, O God, of our salvation and cause thine anger toward us to cease. Wilt thou be angry with us forever? Wilt thou draw out thine anger to all generations? Wilt thou not revive us again that thy people may rejoice in thee? Show us thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us thy salvation.

I will hear that God the Lord will speak, for he will speak peace to his people and to his saints. But let them not turn again to folly. Surely his salvation is nigh then that fear him, that glory may dwell in our land.

Mercy and troth are met together. Righteousness and peace have kissed each other. A troth shall spring out of the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven.

Yea, the Lord shall give that which is good, and our land shall yield her increase. Righteousness shall go before him and shall set us in the way of his steps. The Lord will bless that reading from his word.

Now return with me to verse 6. Let's read verses 5 and 6. Wilt thou be angry with us forever? Wilt thou draw out thine anger to all generations? Wilt thou not revive us again that thy people may rejoice in thee? I mentioned the other evening that I would be speaking this afternoon on principles that govern spiritual quickening. And I would also tell you something of how God in his mercy met with me and brought revival to this heart and life of mine. Wilt thou not revive us again that thy people may rejoice in thee? These words of the psalmist express the hard cry of many of God's dear children today.

There is without question a growing conviction in many quarters that unless revival comes, that is, that God sent revival, other forces that are out to defy every known Christian principle will take the field. Indeed, the observant eye can already see shadows, a slanted world that is ripening and ripening fast for repentance or judgment. With that conviction there seems to be a growing hunger for God to manifest his power.

And so intense is the hunger and so deep the longing that the cry of the prophet of old is frequently heard upon the lips of God's children. O that thou wouldst rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains might fall before thy presence. You will observe that in that prayer of the prophet two fundamental things are suggested.

That unless God comes down, mountains will not flow and sinners will not tremble. But if God comes down, if God manifests his power, if God shows his hand, if God takes the field, mountains will flow. Mountains of indifference, mountains of materialism, mountains of humanism will flow before his presence.

And nations, not just individuals, but nations shall be made to tremble. We haven't seen nations trembling, but we have seen communities, we have seen districts, we have seen parishes in the grips of God in the matter of hours when God came down. It is true that we have seen man's best endeavor in the field of evangelism, leaving the community untouched.

We have seen crowded churches, we have seen many professions, we have seen hundreds, yes, and thousands responding to what you speak of here as the altar call. But I want to say this, dear people, and I say it without fear of contradiction, that you can have all that without God. Now that may startle you, but I say again, you can have all that on human levels.

Howard Spring was right when he wrote, the kingdom of God is not going to be advanced by our churches becoming filled with men, but by men in our churches becoming filled with God. There's a difference. On all crowded churches, deep interest in church activity is possible on mere human levels, leaving the community untouched.

The difference between successful evangelism, and I use the word successful, and revival, is this. In evangelism, you have the two, the three, the ten, the twenty, and possibly the hundred, making confession

of Jesus Christ. And at the end of the year, you are thankful if half of them are standing.

But the community remains untouched. The public houses are crowded, the dancing salons packed, the theater and the picture house patronized by the hundreds. No change in the community.

But in revival, when God the Holy Ghost comes, when the winds of heaven blow, suddenly the community becomes God conscious. A God realization takes hold of young, middle age, and old. So that as in the case of the Hebridean revival, seventy-five percent of those saved one night were saved before they came near a meeting.

The fear of God, the beginning of wisdom. That is where the difference comes in between evangelism and revival. That is why I say our only hope is not in crusades.

Thank God for all that's been accomplished. Thank God for all that is being done through missions. I represent a mission in Scotland.

We have also workers in Canada. And we thank God for all that is being accomplished through the efforts of ministers and evangelists and Christian workers bringing one here and two there to a saving knowledge of Jesus. But our supreme need and the only answer to the problem that confronts the Christian church today is our visitation from God.

Let me illustrate what I mean by an incident that happened not in Louis or in Houst but on the small island of Borna. I was addressing the Bangor Convention. The Bangor Convention is perhaps one of the largest conventions in Britain.

I was sitting in the pulpit beside the chairman of the convention and the other speaker when I was suddenly gripped by the conviction that I had to leave the convention and leave at once and go to this island. I turned to the chairman and told him my convictions. Oh, he said, you cannot leave the convention.

You are going to give the closing address. Oh, but I couldn't give the closing address with this conviction. So, to make a long story short, it was agreed that I should leave the convention.

And I left the following morning by plane to the city of Glasgow and from Glasgow by plane to the town of Stornow and then by car across the island where a ferry boat met me and took me to this island of, say, 500 inhabitants. On arriving, I met a young lad. I said nothing to the men who ferried me across.

They were strangers to me. I was never on the island. I wasn't invited to the island and no one on the island, to my knowledge, had ever met me.

But I was there, and I said to the lad that met me, could you direct me to the nearest minister? We have no minister on the island just now. Both churches are vacant. Would you then direct me to the nearest elder? Yes, the nearest elder lives in that house on the hill.

So I said to the lad, would you mind going up to the elder and tell him that Mr. Campbell has come to the island and he asks what to Campbell. Tell him that Campbell was on the island of Louis. So the young lad went up and after a few minutes came back and said Hector McKinnon was expecting you to arrive today and you are to stay with his brother and he has asked me to tell you that he has intimated a meeting in the church for nine o'clock tonight and he expects you to address it.

Now, explain that as you will. Here was a man who on the morning of the day that I sat in the church in Bangor, Ireland decided to spend the day in prayer. He was concerned about the parish particularly concerned about the state of the young people growing up in a state of indifference to God and to the church.

His wife told me that on three occasions she went to the door of the barn where he was praying and she heard him pray, God, I do not know where he is but you know and you send him. About ten o'clock that evening he was possessed of the conviction that God had described and that I would be on the island on this particular day hence the intimation that I would preach in the church at nine o'clock that evening. We went to the church, quite a considerable congregation gathered, about eighty.

The service was a very ordinary service. Indeed at the end I wondered after all if I was led to the island but there were men there nearer to God than I was. My dear people, we've got to be honest.

This old man that I already referred to came to me and said I hope you're not disappointed that revival hasn't come to the church tonight but God is hovering over us and he will break through any minute. There is a man near to God. The sacred of the Lord is with them that fear him.

We are now walking down from the church. The church is on a hillock. The main road is down about three hundred yards beneath below the church.

The congregation are moving down. We're walking behind them when suddenly oh this is what I'm getting at noting the difference between evangelism and revival. Suddenly the elder stands, takes off his hat.

Stand Mr. Campbell. God has come. God has come.

See what is happening. And I looked around the congregation and I saw them falling on their knees among the heavens. I heard the cry of the penitent and that meeting that began at eleven o'clock that night continued on the hillside until four o'clock in the morning.

The island was suddenly gripped by God. By God. Was it because Campbell went to the island? Banish the thought.

Banish the thought. I thank God for the privilege and how thankful I am that I was near enough to God in that pulpit to hear his voice. Hallelujah.

I've often thought of that. Oh I've often thought of it. If I was out of touch with God.

If I was not in a place where I could hear the voice of the Savior, the voice of God. Would Bernara have missed that mighty visitation that shook the island from center to circumference? I question if there was one single house on the island that wasn't visited that night. An awareness of God.

A consciousness of God seemed to hover over the very atmosphere. The very atmosphere seemed to be charged with the power of almighty God. That's revival.

But not the principle brought into operation in my people called by my name humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways then will I in heaven hear come and heal their land. And there was at least one man on that island who fulfilled the conditions of that one passage of scripture. And because he fulfilled the conditions God being a covenant keeping God must be true to his covenant engagements.

And God to vindicate his own honor had to listen to the prayers of the parish postman who knelt in a barn for a day. The principle that governs spiritual quickening. Oh that God may find a people ready to fulfill and to comply with the governing principles relative to spiritual quickening.

Well let me touch first of all on the origin of revival. We have it in this verse. Wilt thou not revive us again? My dear people we do well to remember that in the whole field of Christian experience the first step is and remains with God.

We want to remember that. Thought, feeling, endeavor must find their basis must find their inspiration in the sovereign mercy of God. Now I believe that.

I believe it with all my heart. I remember making that statement at a conference outside of London some time ago. And at the close of the conference the German overheard a certain titled lady say that was a wonderful address that we listened to but I don't agree with all that he said particularly to the sovereignty of God.

But we must not forget that the dear man was born and brought up among the hills of Scotland. And well that is his background and we can't help it. Hallelujah.

Yes my dear people let me say again in the field of revival God is sovereign. But I hasten to say that I do not believe in any conception of sovereignty that nullifies man's responsibility. God is the God of revival but we are the human agents through which revival is possible.

And God found that man in the postman of Bernara. I believe this to be the reason for so few making contact with Christ that is vital to be one of the most disturbing features of present day evangelism. Let me say present day evangelism is our overemphasis on what man can do.

Come to the front. Raise your hand. Respond to the altar call.

Come to Jesus and be happy. God have mercy on us. I say God have mercy on us.

Man in the final analysis can do nothing but throw himself on the sovereign mercy of God. Oh let's get that clear. That's New Testament theology.

It's New Testament theology. It's Old Testament theology. I'm tired, positively tired of this gospel of simply believism.

Oh there's a difference between human faith and saving faith. I heard a prominent evangelist in Britain say something that really startled me. He said you exercise faith in a plane.

You go into that plane and you exercise faith that that plane will take you to your destination. You go into a steamer you exercise faith in the steamer and in the captain and crew to take you to your destination. Exercise that faith in the premises of God.

Did you ever hear or listen to such nonsense? That's human faith. That's human faith. But saving faith is not human faith.

It's imparted. It's given by God. It's created.

It comes to me. Oh Calvin was right and I love to quote him although I'm not an extreme Calvinist. No I'm a highlander.

Calvin said we are saved through faith alone but the faith that saves is never alone. God is in it. Surely that is what Paul tells us.

In that great passage I am crucified with Christ nevertheless I live yet not I but Christ he liveth in me and the life that I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of Paul. Oh no. Oh no.

That wouldn't get him very far. I live by the faith of the Son of God. The faith of God.

Now I'm convinced of this that if this truth was stressed there would be less appeals. If this truth was stressed our crusades and campaigns would not be producing harvests of infidels. If men and women would but recognize that glorious truth they shall seek me and shall follow me when they shall search for me with all their heart.

That means that they may not find him tonight they may not find him tomorrow night they may not find him next week they may not find him for a month or for six months but if they're seeking God with all their heart they're going to find him or God is not true to his covenant engagement. Oh let's get this clear. It comes into revival.

That's why I could count upon my fine fingers all that I spoke to about their soul during the whole of the three years I was in the midst of it. You see, in the northwest of Scotland if you were to press yourself and your advice and your help upon an anxious soul you'd be inclined to believe that it was man's work just man's work and he would much rather be left so that God himself would handle him. That's why we have known people for weeks and longer in distress of soul before light broke upon them.

But you'll go back to those villages today I'm glad I see Mr. Macfarlane of the faith mission here. He was up in Leith not so very long ago. He was in a village that saw the mighty movings of God.

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