

Revival Stories: Duncan Campbell

by E.A. Johnston

The sermon emphasizes the need for revival in the Church, and highlights the importance of prayer and the Holy Spirit in bringing about true revival.

Duration: 21:28

Scripture: Psalm 24:3

Topics: "Biography"

Description

The video mentioned in the sermon transcript is described as a powerful depiction of the Lewis Revival, a true move of grace where churches were turned upside down, lives were changed, and communities were transformed. The preacher acknowledges that it is difficult to find someone who has actually witnessed a heaven-sent revival in recent times. He challenges other preachers who claim revival under their preaching, stating that if the people remain unchanged after their visit, it cannot be considered a true move of God. The video also highlights the importance of fervent prayer and faithfulness in seeking revival, as demonstrated by a group of Deacons who prayed in desperation for months and a young Deacon who questioned his own spiritual state.

Transcript

Whenever the Church fails to carry out the mandate of the Great Commission and proactively storm the gates of hell, then a vacuum is created. A healthy Church advances the gospel to the ends of the earth and makes disciples. Its members exude vital Christianity through lives of surrender and holiness and passionate, prevailing prayer is the heart of a healthy Church.

However, when the Church becomes like the world and begins to build upon its own foundations to further its own agenda, it becomes an island unto itself, interested in preservation of self rather than surrendering to the clear commands of Christ to bring the gospel to the nations and to make disciples. In many cities around the world today, the churches within their communities are visible in name only. There is little, if any, influence made upon the society in which they live.

In fact, if a church fails to bring light into a community, it creates a void, which in turn brings in further darkness, for the witness of the church is then tarnished and labeled ineffective and self-absorbed. Many churches in America, Canada, and Great Britain are experiencing division, internal chaos, and strife because they have lost the focus of what a church really was meant to be. Many falsely believe that a church is to be an organization that is continually on the grow, ever expanding its campus and facilities to

attract more of the unchurched around them.

The mentality seems to be the more a church can offer a community, the better that church is. See how churches advertise their large nurseries, their many ball fields, their huge basketball gymnasiums, exercise facilities, and there is seemingly little difference between them and the local country club. When the church ceases to be a house of prayer, comprised of holy members who live only to advance the gospel of Christ, then it becomes a self-serving, self-absorbed entity whose interests are focused upon making its members more comfortable.

Comfortable Christianity is not in the New Testament. Rather, it is a radical Christianity whose members are willing to lay down their lives for the cause of Christ. When the church prospers, it slumbers.

When it is persecuted, it thrives. When churches sleep upon comfortable cushions, listening to comfortable sermons, its members become comfortable to their environment and desire no one nor anything to disturb their peace. Meanwhile, the world waits to hear the gospel and people perish daily, falling into a Christless eternity.

When will we awake? Listen, friends. America, because of her sins against God, is on the brink of collapse, and only a heaven-sent revival can save this nation. Do we realize the desperate hour? Let us stir ourselves and lay hold of God in prayer that he will send revival in our day.

One of the most stirring accounts of revival is found in what was called the Lewis Revival. It occurred in 1949 to 1952 under the preaching of Duncan Campbell on the Hebrides Islands off the mainland of Scotland. The Isle of Lewis saw such a mighty outpouring of grace during this time that people would be found early in the mornings before dawn lying on the ground and crying out, What must I do to be saved? The human instrument used in this revival is the subject of our revival stories for today, and his name is Duncan Campbell.

I once asked a minister friend of mine who was from the Isle of Lewis to describe Duncan Campbell to me, for this man had known Duncan personally. He thought it over and then told me this, he said, Duncan Campbell was an ordinary man whom God used in an extraordinary way. Is that not like the Lord? God is pleased to use plain vessels for his purposes, the God who was pleased to take a lamb from the sheep coat and make him king, delights in the small and ignoble.

Listen friends, there is a pattern in revival and that pattern is as follows. Prayer is the first and foremost thing. The lost are awakened to their sinful condition.

A sense of the Holy Spirit pervades the atmosphere. A fear of God grips the people of God as they are confronted with the awful solemnity of the holiness of God. There is brokenness among the people, weeping and confession of sin.

Christians return to their first love and the lost are swept in like a flood. There is an indescribable presence of God felt by all. The Lewis revival had all those earmarks just mentioned.

In fact it was said that the revival was so powerful that it seemed as if God himself had saturated the entire island. But this particular revival began in prayer and that is the emphasis of this series on revival stories. Prayer is the seedbed of all true revival.

We will speak of Duncan Campbell today but much of the emphasis will be on those praying saints whom God used to send revival to the Isle of Lewis. We must carefully study how God has moved in revival in former times if we hope to see revival in our day. God is sovereign in revival.

Man cannot drum up a revival. It is a work of grace sent from above. But we can pray aright to reach the ear of the Almighty with our desperate cries and move the heart of God with the holy violence of our prayers with the hope that he will answer and send us the blessing of our heart's desire.

There were older Christians on Lewis who became distressed in 1949 over the growing carelessness toward spiritual matters among the younger generation. High school students were making fun of Christianity and avoiding it like the plague. Jesus to them was a killjoy and they didn't want him to interfere with their local dance and drink.

Listen to how one man prayed for God to honor his word and send a revival to the island. This man was a local blacksmith but he knew his God. He stood up in a meeting, took off his cap and looking heavenward he prayed, Oh God you laid a promise to pour water upon him that is thirsty and floods upon the dry ground and Lord it is not happening.

Then the man cried out in a loud voice, Oh God your honor is at stake and I now challenge you to fulfill your covenant engagement and do what you have promised to do. Suddenly the house shook, dishes rattled in the kitchen and all were so startled a minister turned to Duncan Campbell and said, Mr. Campbell an earth tremor. But everyone there knew that God had shook that house in answer to that blacksmith's bold prayer whereby he sued God with the word of God and demanded that God be faithful to keeping his word.

Well friends God came in a mighty revival to the Isle of Lewis in answer to such prayer. There were also two sisters, the Smith sisters both elderly and one infirm and bedridden. One woman was 84 the other 82 but these mothers of Israel both knew how to lay hold of God.

They were the ones responsible for Duncan Campbell visiting the island and they were responsible for God visiting the island as well. The one sister Peggy was blind and the other sister bent double with arthritis but these praying women had power with the almighty. Peggy received a vision that Duncan Campbell would visit the island and she saw revival coming to the church of her father's and it was crowded with the teenagers of the island.

Listen friends the older Christians on Lewis became grieved over the lost condition of the teenagers on the island and when God came in revival to Lewis the main ones he brought to Christ were the teenagers. Many of them becoming the next generation of ministers on the island for the next 40 years. Also there was a prayer meeting being conducted on a regular basis in a barn.

This is my favorite story of the lot. A group of deacons had been faithful in prayer for revival many months and they did not give up and their desperation to see God move in revival increased each week as they met in that barn and waited upon God in prayer. One evening a young deacon arose and read part of the 24th Psalm.

Who shall stand in the hill of the Lord or who shall stand in his holy place he that hath clean hands and a pure heart who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity nor sworn deceitfully he shall receive the blessing from the Lord. Turning to the others in the barn this young deacon said brethren it seems to me just so

much humbug to be waiting and praying as we are if we ourselves are not rightly related to God. Then the young deacon lifted his hands towards heaven and cried oh God are my hands clean is my heart pure.

Suddenly he fell to the floor and an awareness of the felt presence of God filled that little barn to such a degree that a supernatural power was let loose in their lives. God had come to Louis. Well Duncan Campbell was a humble man who knew his God.

To get an idea of his heartbeat for God listen to how he responded to some elders who met him when he first visited the island. They asked him Mr. Campbell are you walking with God to which Duncan carefully answered I know I fear God. This satisfied them for they knew he was a man who walked near to God and he did.

When Duncan Campbell preached he was not diplomatic. He made the people face eternity and their sins. He preached the wrath of God and the common judgment of God and God used his messenger to send a mighty outpouring of his grace.

Hundreds of teenagers were gloriously saved in that revival. Soon the fields were strewn with the bodies of teenagers prostrate under conviction of sin. They remained there all night moaning and crying out to God to save them.

Duncan preached that repentance was necessary to conversion and this gripped the heart of the young people for this was their main controversy with God. They had felt that Jesus was a killjoy and he did not want to have control over their lives and they weren't willing to give him that control because that's what he wanted. So they knew they have to give up the dance hall and give up the drink if they came to Christ and they did not want to do this.

This was their main controversy. They felt if they got saved those things would go by the wayside. So at first the teenagers resisted the revival and those who resisted the longest were the ones who came under powerful agony and conviction under Duncan's spirit anointed preaching.

Well finally there was a breakthrough. The young people came to Christ in floods. Oh friends if you want to get a sense of this revival I highly recommend obtaining the video of this revival put out by Ambassador.

It is called Wind of the Spirit the Lewis Revival. In this video are interviews of the converts from this mighty revival. Many are now in glory but watch this video and you'll get a sense of what I'm talking about.

I'm sorry to say this poor creature can't do justice to this mighty move of grace but perhaps if you get that video and watch it it'll help you better understand how God moved in the Lewis revival. You see friends the problem is God has not visited in revival in such a long time that it is almost impossible to find someone who has actually seen a heaven-sent revival. I know some preachers claim God comes in revival when they preach but I'm not speaking of tiny dew drops of grace which is all we've had in this country for the last 150 years.

I'm speaking of a true move of grace where churches are turned upside down. Lives are changed and communities transformed by the awful presence of the almighty. Brother preacher don't tell me God is coming revival under your preaching in a church.

If I can go back to that church the next month and the people are the same as they were before you came to it for when God comes in revival he transforms the life of a church and the effects are visible and lasting

and the community is altered as well. God does bless our preacher with dew drops at times but a real revival of religion is so sudden so startling that the only explanation is God has come. Duncan Campbell knew he wasn't the reason for the revival.

He would even get mad if a church advertised him as Duncan Campbell the man who brought revival to Lewis. Duncan would argue with that and comment oh dear friends I never brought revival to Lewis it was there long before I arrived on the island. Duncan was a humble man and he knew that revival had come through the desperate prayers of burdened individuals concerned over the spiritual apathy on the island among the young people.

Allow me to share one last story with you about Duncan Campbell and how God used him in revival. He was at a conference in Ireland at a minister's conference and he was the main speaker and on the last night he felt led of the Holy Spirit to suddenly leave this conference and return to Scotland to the island of Harris. The chairman of the conference begged him to stay arguing that Duncan was the main speaker and this would hurt the conference if he left but Duncan told the chairman he must obey God rather than man and immediately he flew from Belfast to Scotland.

He finally arrived by boat to the island early the next morning and since he'd never been there before he knew no one on the island. The first person he met was a 16 year old boy. Duncan said could you direct me to the mass please? The boy answered we have no minister now.

The elders take the meeting. One lives up there. He pointed to a house on a hill.

Duncan grabbed his suitcase and told the boy could you please go tell him that Mr. Campbell has arrived on the island. Now listen friends to what I'm about to say in regard to this story. Here is Duncan Campbell on an island off the coast of Scotland where he knew no one.

He felt led by God to go to that island at the risk of ruining the conference he'd been preaching at. What he did not know as he made his way up the hill to the home of that elder was this and this is the best part of the story. Listen what had taken place three days earlier when Duncan was still preaching in Ireland is that this elder was so confident that God would send Duncan Campbell to the island he went to his barn to pray.

His wife could hear him pray in the barn this way. Lord I don't know where he is but you know and with you all things are possible. You send him to the island and so convinced was this man that God would send Duncan Campbell in three days time that this man booked a hall for a meeting and announced to the people that Duncan Campbell would be preaching.

You see friends this elder who was praying in the barn actually believed that God could send revival to his island and he asked God to send a preacher who had already been in a revival in Lewis and that man was Duncan Campbell. You see this elder had the necessary faith and his faith pleased God and God answered that faith and God heard those prayers and God sent revival to that island. Listen to how the revival came.

One evening as Duncan Campbell had finished preaching for the people he left the church and all filtered out into the road. He was walking home with this elder when another man suddenly came upon them shouting he has come he has come. Duncan turned and looked at the congregation as they huddled in the main road in the night.

The spirit of God had fallen upon the people and they were frozen for a few minutes so gripped with the subduing presence of God that no one could move. Finally sighs and groans could be heard from the sin-burdened souls who fell prostrate on the hills as they cried out to God what must I do to be saved. That night the entire island was shaken into an awareness of God as many lives were transformed all to the glory of God.

Well friends this concludes our story about how God used Duncan Campbell in revival. The main lesson from this story I believe is that we too should have the faith to really believe that God can send revival in our day. Are we willing to step out on faith like that elder in the barn and risk our reputations for God? God seems pleased with those bold praying individuals who lay hold of him in desperate prayer and sue him with his own word.

It is my prayer that this revival story will ignite you to pray for revival in our day. Please pray my friends that God will answer our prayers for revival and that thy people offer themselves willingly in the day of thy power.

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